

The Adventure Zone Balance: The Crystal Kingdom, Chapter Eleven

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Griffin: Previously on *The Adventure Zone*.

Director: Lucas, our scientific advisor, he's found a Grand Relic. It's the Philosopher's Stone. We're sending you in to detain and extract Lucas for his abuse of confidential information.

Lucas: I found it for my mother, Maurine.

Magnus: Is your mother the robot?

Lucas: Something went wrong.

Magnus: Yeah, okay, okay.

Kravitz: Merle Highchurch. You have died 57 times.

Clint: [wheezes]

Kravitz: 57 times.

Legion: Living ones, permit us entry into this world.

Magnus: N— no?

Philosopher's Stone: You don't want the candies and sweets? Come on, think about this!

Travis: I tap it with the Glutton's Fork and I swallow it.

Griffin: What the fuck!

Justin: [laughs loudly]

Clint: I look at Legion and I cast Banishment.

Legion: Nooo!

Announcer: But wait! They already killed the big skeleton thing. What else could be left in this arc? Two skeletons? It's *The Adventure Zone*!

[theme music plays]

Griffin: The three of you with your NPC associates have solved my ghost robot riddle.

Travis: It's time for orange slices and Hi-C.

Griffin: Everyone gets orange slices and Hi-C. And those— it's not the battles that you've won and the puzzles that you solved that are gonna allow you to level up later. It's actually the orange slices and Hi-C.

[soda can opening]

Justin: Can I get Little Debbie's and Hi-C?

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: I prefer Little Debbie's to orange slices.

Clint: You know, that's— that's such a misnomer, because Little Debbie's, there's hundreds of Little Debbie's. Are you speaking specifically about the oatmeal cakes?

Justin: No. Just, like, any kind of... Little Debbie dish.

Griffin: See, you say that, but then you get a fuckin' pecan roll and you're like "Aww... "

Travis: I love that Dad just embodied Twitter in talking about Little Debbie's.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: "Uhh, excuse me. Hold on. Which Little Debbie's?"

Justin: Quick round robin. Worst Little Debbie. Mine is star crunch.

Griffin: Um, yeah, star crunch, you blink and you miss a star crunch.

Travis: That's gonna be cosmic brownie.

Griffin: Oh...

Justin: Is the best?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Is the best one. Um, so the dust has settled from the big climactic battle after Merle, with a little extra juice from Pan, banished Legion back to the astral plane. Um, by the way, the mirror that was in the middle of this room is still on top of you, Magnus, which we need to resolve.

Travis: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: At some point.

Travis: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Griffin: Um, but yeah. We're hopping back in literally just after this battle has finished.

Magnus: [panting] We did it!

Griffin: Uh, Magnus has sex really quick, I guess. Um...

Clint: [wheezes]

Travis: No, it's on my lungs. The mirror's on my—

Justin: Yucky.

Travis: It's on my RPG lungs.

Griffin: That makes sense. Noelle and Carey actually high five.

Travis: [laughs] I've got fantasthma.

Griffin: You've got what?

Travis: It's like asthma, but it's RPG asthma. Fantasthma.

Griffin: [laughs] Alright.

Justin: Alright.

Griffin: No, I really like that one, Trav.

Travis: Thank you.

Clint: I do too.

Griffin: And, uh, you all almost simultaneously hear static coming through your Stones of Farspeech, and the static clears up, and you hear a voice through it say...

Director: Come in. Taako, Merle, Magnus. What's going on? Carey. Situation report. Have you secured the Philosopher's—

Magnus: Go for Magnus.

Director: Have you secured the Philosopher's Stone?

Magnus: Yes. Very secure!

Director: What are you— what's going on? We lost contact with you for so long. What's the situation?

Magnus: We went through a tunnel.

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Taako: A crystal tunnel.

Director: I feel like you're goofing on me. All that matters— did you— did— do— are you in possession of the Philosopher's Stone?

Magnus: Yes.

Taako: Oh, we— I— that's putting it mildly.

Clint: [laughs loudly]

Magnus: It's— it's very— we've got it on lockdown.

Taako: We're not in possession of the Philosopher's Stone. We're in digestion of the Philosopher's Stone.

Clint: [laughs]

Magnus: Uh, kaboom.

Director: I guess we'll have to unpack what that means. Is everyone okay?

Magnus: It's in my tummy.

Taako: Magnus ate it, yeah.

Merle: And he is gonna have to unpack.

Director: I—

Magnus: I ate it. I immediately regretted it. I consumed it.

Director: I imagine you had a good reason for doing so. It was—

Magnus: Nope! I— I absolutely did not. Um... you know, heat of the moment. Sometimes you eat a thing and you're like, "Oh, I shouldn't have eaten that." Like a dog, you know.

Taako: You get a bit in your mind and you think it's gonna be a grand slam. You commit.

Travis: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Director: I'm glad to hear that everyone's safe and that you've accomplished your mission. And Lucas, is he— have you detained him?

Magnus: Yeah, he's not going anywhere fast.

Director: Okay. Well, bring him home, and secure the Philosopher's Stone and return it to me as quick as you possibly can. I'm so happy to hear that everything went so well! And was worried we were gonna have another Phandalin situation on our hands.

Magnus: Unfortunately, uh, Director... uh, Lucas is dead.

Director: What?

Magnus: Yeah, we won't be able to bring him home.

Travis: I— I wink at the robot mom.

Griffin: Um... she can't wink back 'cause she doesn't have a traditional face, but the light in her tummy kind of flickers very quickly. And she's, uh...

Director: How did he— how did he die? That's—

Magnus: He was killed by some kind of big scary skeletal thing that we'll tell you all about. But apparently he'd been messing not only with the Philosopher's Stone, but with the forces of nature that bind the universes together—

Director: Jeez!

Magnus: —and there were some people— yeah. It was real messed up.

Taako: It was heavy.

Director: I mean, jeez— I mean, Jeezy Creezy.

Magnus: Yeah, juicy crust, y'all. It was some heavy stuff. But he is super dead, so we what be able to bring— he was blasted to nothingness. He is ash.

Taako: We— we do have a robot would like to bring back, though. Can we do that?

Magnus: She's super cool.

Taako: She's the best.

Director: [hesitantly] I guess— I guess that would be... fine. Um... why don't you extract who you need to extract, and we'll debrief once you return home. Be careful getting back here. It's pretty snowy outside.

Magnus: Sounds good.

Griffin: You see— you actually see Maurine-bot trying to tend to Lucas's wounds. If you remember, she did a really— she did a critical first aid roll, which actually stabilized him, but he's still— I mean, he got lit up by these robo-lasers. And her hands are kind of fucked up because she smashed 'em to turn them into sort of makeshift... shocky paddles? Those have a name. Defibrillators. And she turns to all of you and says, uh...

Maurine: I'm terribly sorry, but do any of you have any medical training? I've stabilized my son, but he's in terribly poor health.

Merle: Ooh! Ooh! Ooh, me, me! I do, I do!

Justin: Don't you dare. Don't you dare say another word until you have a character voice.

Merle: I— I am a— I'm quite an accomplished healer.

Justin: There we go.

Magnus: Well, "accomplished... "

Justin: Hold on. I just gotta say, I just got fuckin' swept up in a world of imagination and fantasy.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [wheezes]

Justin: And I just want to say how transportive that was. Just, thank you, fa— thank you, everyone. It's been so good.

Maurine: Yes, if you could please do whatever you can to help my son, please.

Merle: Okey-doke!

Magnus: Can I talk to you over here while he tends to Lucas?

Maurine: [sighs] Yes, yes. I just— I want to stay in eyesight, you know.

Magnus: Understand.

Maurine: Okay. What's crackin'?

Magnus: We're not gonna take Lucas in, as you heard. I— I lied. I protected your son, because that was the promise I made you when you gave me the stone.

Maurine: I really appreciate that. That was very kind of you.

Magnus: If I ever see either one of you again after this...

Maurine: It seems unnece— I understand why you would be... I understand why you would be upset. Listen. I swear, if I knew what was going to happen when I began to plot my escape from the astral plane, I would not have gone through with it, I promise. I did not know... when I came through, I didn't know that all of my fellow prisoners in the eternal stockade were going to come through me. I wasn't in my... I wasn't in my right mind. My mind was destroyed. I had no control over myself.

Magnus: I don't give two shits.

Justin: Can I sidebar with, uh, Merle while they're doing their sidebar?

Griffin: Uh, yeah. Merle is currently probably over Lucas, helping him out. Okay.

Justin: So while he's doing that...

Taako: So... I'm confused. Why do you think Magnus decided to help? Like, he made it pretty clear that he was pissed.

Merle: I, uh... I think he's... just that kind of guy. He blows in the wind. He goes back and forth.

Taako: That's true. That's true.

Merle: And he's also, you know, trapped under a big mirror, so he's probably feeling a little vulnerable—

Griffin: [through laughter] Yeah, wait, yeah! Are you— is this sidebar happening with—

Travis: [simultaneously] Oh wait, hold on, sorry! I forgot about that. [snorts]

Griffin: This sidebar's like, "Listen. Listen here. If I ever see you again I'll kill you, once I get out from this mirror."

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: It kind of— it kind of, you know, diminishes the threat a little.

Travis: Yeah. I forgot about that.

Clint: Not quite as badass as you thought it was.

Justin: God, when Dad has to remember our story, we're in a bad way, huh?

Clint: [crosstalk]

Travis: [laughs loudly] When Dad is our— is our RPG compass, it's a real problem.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um... Lucas actually comes to under your healing hands. Um, and turns towards you and Maurine, Magnus and says, uh...

Lucas: I'm not sorry at all.

Griffin: He says...

Lucas: Magnus, if you lost somebody important to you, what— what wouldn't you do to get them back?

Merle: Ohh, I slipped with the stitches! I'm sorry!

Lucas: Oh, God, ow!

Justin: Character voices. I swear to God, I'll come across this table.

Merle: I did! I want as character voicing!

Justin: That was not a character voice!

Travis: [simultaneously] That was not!

Justin: Debra, repeat the tape, Debra.

Merle: [Doc Brown voice] I slipped with the stitches, sorry!

Justin: Fuckin' swept away right now.

Clint: That was the repeat.

Justin: [giggles]

Griffin: A rift opens up in the room. No crystal kingdom crinkle tinkles, but a rift opens up in the room, and a white light comes through, as you've seen it come through many times before. Um, and it lowers itself into a dormant robot that Carey and Noelle kind of trashed earlier. It's missing an arm already. It's already been Magnus-ded.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Magnied.

Griffin: It's been Magnied, and—

Clint: Semi.

Griffin: —this robot stands up, and it's all beat to hell, and this robot says, uh...

Kravitz: Okay. Okay. Okay. Listen, gang. We dealt—

Griffin: What is his voice?

Justin: It was— it used to be Cockney.

Griffin: Alright, okay, okay.

Travis: Oh yeah, it's Cockney.

Kravitz: Okay. Okay. So... we dealt with things... over on our end. It's me, by the way. Kravitz? Hi.

Magnus: Yeah. Well, we got that.

Taako: Oh!

Kravitz: You didn't recognize me probably 'cause I'm not inhabiting some sort of crystal beast, but it's me. It's Kravitz.

Merle: Sup.

Kravitz: Yeah. Um, that was quick thinking, Merle. You're a powerful dwarf. I didn't think that you would have the ability to banish a being as dangerous as the Legion back into the, uh... back into the astral plane. I've got to say, I am genuinely impressed.

Merle: Still waters, my man. Still waters.

Taako: And to be fair, let's give credit where credit's due. He had some help from his god, Dan.

Travis: [laughs]

Taako: What's so funny?

Merle: God Dan! [laughs]

Travis: God dannit.

Taako: What's the joke?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: He, uh— he—

Travis: Dan Godinson.

Griffin: He pulls up— he waves his one remaining robotic hand in the air, and that floating book appears once again. And it's floating out in front of him, and a quill appears in his hand, and he starts doing some scratching around in this book. And he says, uh...

Travis: "Dear diary. You'll never believe what happened to me."

Griffin: "Dear man in the moon."

Clint: "Dear Penthouse forum."

Griffin: He says...

Merle: Okay. Here's the deal. You all saved my bacon, okay? You saved my bacon. If that thing had come through and opened up a more permanent portal into the astral plane, that would've been the ball game, basically. Um, and it would've looked really bad for me. I mean, it would've been the apocalypse and, like, the end of both of our worlds, but it would've been bad for me, in my career.

Travis: It would've hurt your quarterly review.

Kravitz: Absolutely it would've shown up.

Magnus: Yeah, yeah. We've all been there.

Kravitz: So... here's the deal. Merle, Magnus, and Taako... despite the fact the fact that you've died nearly *100 times* between the three of you... you've technically never—

Magnus: Still don't remember that.

Kravitz: Yeah. It's— it can be tricky, dying. Um... technically you've never checked into the astral plane. And therefore you've never escaped. So I've... on

that technicality, I've called off your bounty. But I s— I swear, if you die again, that is it. No more Mr. Nice Death. That's it. Kravitz is gonna come a-callin'.

Taako: So are you... should we— when we listen for your voice echoing after us, should we listen for a Cockney voice, or kind of a distinguished gentleman voice?

Clint: [wheezes]

Kravitz: [exaggerated Cockney accent] Alright. Yeah, I jump between the two— I jump between the two at will, don't I?

Taako: The other— the other head on your shoulders Zaphod Beeblebrox style has begun addressing us.

Clint: [laughs]

Kravitz: Listen, I can jump been them at will. Check this out. [indistinct Cockney accent?] Oi, now I got another accent. What's this one even called? I don't know!

Merle: What's all this, then?

Magnus: I think that's still Cockney but with a mouthful of marbles.

Taako: That's still Cockney...

Merle: Yeah.

Kravitz: [Transylvanian accent] I've got to switch between different accents to trick my prey! [Cockney accent] That's not true. It's just a fun little character trait I've got.

Merle: You sound like Harry "Snapper" Organs from *Monty Python*.

Justin: [laughs]

Merle: "Dinsdale... "

Kravitz: I can also do a bunch of fun Michael Winslow style sound effects.

Travis: [laughs]

Kravitz: [imitates gunfire]

Magnus: What's that?

Kravitz: Now, Lucas—

Merle: That was a machine gun.

Kravitz: Yeah.

Magnus: Anyhow.

Kravitz: Lucas, you've technically never died at all. And I can assume your necromancy days are behind you. So I can call off the dogs on you, too. But... Noelle, Maurine, I'm sorry. You're ghosts. You have got to come with me, back to the astral plane. We've gotta take you back.

Magnus: Well... hold on.

Merle: Oh, this is not gonna go over well.

Magnus: Without...

Taako: I... well, you— you first. You first.

Magnus: Without them, we wouldn't have been able to stop Legion and save your ass.

Kravitz: I get— I totally get that. But Legion was a bunch of escaped ghosts, and that is also what Noelle and Maurine— if I allow them to go, it— it— if we allow a little bit of exception to the rules of life and death, then anybody could take advantage of it.

Taako: Slippery slope, slippery slope.

Merle: [simultaneously] Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Magnus: [simultaneously] Yeah, mm-hmm.

Taako: So would you— I have a— let me ask you a question. Would you kill somebody whose soul was still in their body?

Kravitz: Well... no, of course—[sighs]

Taako: Okay, well—

Kravitz: If— under the right circumstances—

Taako: [simultaneously] No, I—

Kravitz: If it means collecting a soul that belongs to the astral plane, then yes. It's—it's...

Justin: But their souls have found new bodies. Just because they happen to be mechanical doesn't mean that that life is any less valid, *Battlestar Galactica*.

Griffin: [laughs loudly]

Magnus: And what if we just changed a couple words. Rather than "if" it was "when" you collected the soul.

Kravitz: What do you—

Taako: When...

Kravitz: Are you talking about, like, a... like a time limit or something?

Magnus: Yeah. Maybe we just negotiate a time. Say we phrase it as they need some time to finish affairs in the earthly realm that they couldn't before they were, you know, killed before their time, so you need to give them... blank.

Noelle: I would— I'd appreciate that. I got some stuff I'd like to... I've got some stuff I'd like to pop off. Um...

Taako: Hey, let us sweeten the pot. If you let them stay on board with us, you can come collect their souls at a later date, and in return, if you let us keep doing our sinister work, I can guarantee you an influx!

Magnus: Yeah!

Kravitz: Okay, that's not really how this... this *really* isn't how it works.

Merle: We deal in lead, friend.

Taako: We deal in lead, as my friend has said. And I know you want these souls, right?

Magnus: And these are gonna be top notch. Mmm, mmm, delicious souls.

Kravitz: This isn't— right, right. This isn't—

Taako: Oh, before their time! Delectable!

Kravitz: This is not really a— it's not like we're playing— this isn't a *Dark Souls* game. It's not like a—

Taako: Kravitz wanty souls!

Merle: Hmmm!

Taako: He love 'em, mm, mm, mm!

Magnus: So, sound good? You give them... say... what, 20 years?

Kravitz: J— oh my. That's probably longer than you three have got left in you. Um...

Magnus: That's fair.

Merle: What?! Wait, what?

Kravitz: I'm just saying, I— just based on your sort of habits and... um...

Taako: Sure, yeah.

Kravitz: I'd be willing to... here's my thing. Here's my thing. I love... games and gambling and, you know, risks and wits and wagers. I— I— I love all that.

Taako: I know, I saw in *Bill and Ted*. You went crazy on that stuff.

Kravitz: Oh, you're familiar. Wonderful. Um... so... if you can sweeten the pot, make something in it— get something in there for me. I'm not so much interested in you just murdering a bunch of fools. Because that does, you know, nothing for me. But, uh, you know, put something— put something in ol' Kravitz's pocket.

Merle: Anybody in particular you want snuffed?

Kravitz: No! You—

Magnus: Yeah, I've got an idea.

Kravitz: Okay. Hit me.

Magnus: How about a card game?

Kravitz: [Cockney accent] Alright. Uh... let me switch to my Cockney card game playin' voice. What, uh— what we talking 'bout? We talking 'bout Uno? We talking 'bout Scrapple?

Merle: Euchre!

Magnus: How about we just make it simple high card draw?

Merle: [snores]

Kravitz: O... kay. This seems like we could be—

Taako: Unless you're afraid.

Kravitz: No, I would—

Taako: [chicken noises]

Merle: [chicken noises]

Kravitz: I prefer a nice game of baccarat over a cigar, but yeah, alright, let's play high card draw. Let's do it.

Travis: See, I'm very excited, 'cause I have a set of cheating cards.

Kravitz: Oh, well, let's not use those.

Travis: No, no, that was Travis saying that. I didn't do it in character voice, Griffin.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: A line we've— we've worked so hard to keep clear.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: What do the cheating cards do?

Travis: No idea.

Griffin: Mmkay.

Travis: Probably should've looked that up before I engaged in the card game.

Justin: Were they in Fantasy Costco scraps?

Travis: No, I think I picked 'em up off a body in, like, the first—

Griffin: Yeah, like episode two, you did! You picked them up off of the, like, slave trader... hillbillies. Okay, we can use those— how would we resolve cheating— a cheating deck of cards?

Travis: I would say that the best way to go is, like—

Justin: Blu— I would think bluff check, right?

Griffin: Um, I also have a deck of cards here, and I'd love to do some prop work. Um, so maybe we just, like, all draw one, and that'll be Kravitz's cards.

Clint: "Find the lady! Where's the lady? Yes, everyone keep your eye on the lady."

Griffin: Here's what we'll do. I'll draw one for Kravitz, okay? And then we'll draw one for you, Magnus. And then if it beats it, you win. If it doesn't beat it, you

make a deception check, or a sleight of hand check. Either one. And if you're successful, you can go again ad infinitum.

Travis: Got it.

[pause]

Griffin: That's a Nine of Clubs. And that's a Five of Clubs for you. So why don't you make a... whichever one you want. And we'll say you beat a DC 13.

[dice roll].

Travis: Okay! That was a 14. Sleight of hand 12 plus 2.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Thank you, Jesus.

Griffin: There it is. Jack of Diamonds. Okay, yeah.

Kravitz: Alright. That felt like maybe a little anticlimactic. Maybe we should go best two out of three, what do you say?

Magnus: We could also arm wrestle.

Kravitz: I mean, we didn't sort of establish a wager for me, what I would get out of that. But, uh... I was just gonna sort of collect all of your souls if you'd lost. But, um...

Magnus: Oh, tits!

Kravitz: But no, you did good. You did great. You know, I wanted to let you have this anyway. You three have done a lot of great work tonight. Let's just, uh... those rules of nature are there for a reason, so let's just stop running afoul of them, as if this was all just sort of funsie fun make believe. What do you say?

Magnus: You got it!

Griffin: Um... he starts to walk back towards the rift that he has opened up, and he, uh... he says...

Kravitz: Well, it's been real, and it's been fun. And it's been real fun. But I'm gonna head back to the other side.

Griffin: Maurine bot stands up from— you know what? I'm gonna go ahead and say that Maurine bot helped you get out from under the mirror, 'cause this is getting fucking ridiculous.

Travis: Yeah, thanks.

Clint: No, no, no! I was having too much fun envisioning Travis doing all this stuff while under the mirror.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: You did— you did that whole card trick thing using the mirror on top of you as a makeshift card table.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Shuffle up and deal!

Justin: Where's the lady? Find the lady.

Griffin: Um...

Travis: She's on my tummy.

Griffin: Uh, Maurine walks towards him and says, uh...

Maurine: Lucas, I'm so sorry. I know you did so much to help me out, but I can't stay.

[music plays in the background]

Maurine: I can't stay. I have to go back. I... I... when I entered the cosmoscope, I saw something I should not have seen, and it killed me, and it destroyed my mind, and I lost myself, and my willpower was taken from me. And the only way I was able to recover and fight off the spirits the inhabited me in that crystal stalactite was to partition what I saw in the cosmoscope to this conduit's internal

memory. But as long as I'm here, I'm in danger of remembering, and I can't lose control like that again. I won't.

Griffin: Um... and she walks over to— to you, Taako and Merle, and says...

Maurine: Please. Whatever punishments you require for Lucas, I understand. But please promise me, do whatever you can. Just keep him safe. Please?

Merle: Team meeting. Can I have a quick team meeting? Quick team meeting.

Maurine: I'm making a dramatic exit, but as long as it's quick, yeah, sure.

Merle: [whispering] I stitched the word "dickhead" in his body.

Magnus: Nice.

Merle: [whispering] Just so you guys know. Shh!

Magnus: Cool.

Merle: So we get our revenge in secret.

Magnus: Yeah, that pretty much makes up for it. Good job.

Merle: Yeah. Trying to kill us and everything. Okay. [clears throat]

Maurine: Can you promise me that you'll keep my son safe, and not stitch the word "dickhead" into his body?

Magnus: You've got it!

Merle: No, no. Can't promise.

Griffin: She walks over to Lucas and sort of kneels down over him, and Lucas looks, like, really upset, but he's not really saying anything. He kind of seems like he's in shock a little bit. Um, and she says...

Maurine: I know this seems unfair, but it's really not that bad over there. As dour as this sounds, we'll see each other again someday.

Griffin: And then she leans in close and whispers something to him. And then the light pops out of her conduit and floats over to the robot that Kravitz is in, and the light pops out of his conduit and—

Magnus: Kravitz!

Kravitz: Yeah, yeah. Yeah? Yeah.

Magnus: Tell Julia I said I love her.

Kravitz: Al... alright. There's a lot of Julias over there, but— never mind, I'm kidding. I know who you're talking about.

Magnus: Thank you.

Kravitz: Alright. Maurine, you ready to go?

Griffin: She says, uh...

Maurine: Yes, I'll... see you later.

Griffin: And disappears through the rift, and he goes through the portal as well, and it closes up.

Merle: Wait, wait! Wait, wait! Aww...

Taako: You were gonna ask about Elvis, weren't you?

Griffin: [simultaneously] He po— a rift— a rift opens back up—

Merle: [simultaneously] I was, I was gonna ask about Elvis.

Justin: [crosstalk]

Griffin: A rift opens back up and he pops out. He goes...

Kravitz: What— sorry, what?

Merle: How's Elvis?

Kravitz: Hmm... still alive. The mystery continues. Bye!

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Justin: Dad had a fish named Elvis.

Griffin: Did he? Didn't we have a fish that, like, got froze over in real life?

Travis: No, that was Bob Schuby.

Clint: [simultaneously] That was Bob Schuby.

Justin: Bob Schuby got frozen in real life.

Clint: And came back to life.

Justin: Came back to life and grew so large that we had to let him go in Four Pole Creek.

Griffin: Is that true?

Justin: Yes, it's true! Oh, wait a minute. You flushed him, didn't you? You son of a bitch! That was a—

Clint: You were too ten— you were too tender and gentle.

Justin: Son of a bitch! I thought until just now.

Clint: You were only a sophomore in college. You couldn't have handled that heartbreak.

Justin: Dad said he had to let him go to the creek 'cause he was so big.

Griffin: Well, that also just—

Travis: I thought that was true!

Griffin: Well, guys, let me just—

Justin: How could you?!

Griffin: Let's just dial this in real quick, 'cause that would also definitely still kill him.

Travis: That's fair. It was not a very clean creek.

Clint: Yeah, that's true.

Justin: It's a bad cr— I mean, it's still not a very good creek.

Clint: Elvis was a Plecostomus, one of those scum suckers, wasn't he?

Griffin: Lucas stands up, um, still not really saying anything, and walks over to a console and punches in some buttons. And you feel the lab around you start to come back to life. Um, and Noelle actually walks over to— Magnus, are you out from under the mirror? Let's say this is the time where Noelle comes over and with her four robot arms, uh—

Justin: We're cool on crystals, right?

Griffin: —cranks it up.

Justin: The crystalline menace is, like, done?

Griffin: Oh yeah, it stopped. Maurine was the one in control of that, and she stopped using it.

Travis: Griffin, is the crystalline menace, like, a propaganda poster about some far-off country?

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Uhh, no.

Travis: "We must stop the crystalline menace."

Griffin: Um... the, uh... so Noelle helps you out, Magnus. And says, uh...

Noelle: Magnus, I really appreciate you going to bat for me, there. That was real brave of you, real sweet.

Magnus: Anytime.

Merle: Ladies love him.

Taako: It was my... I mean... yeah.

Noelle: And Taako, and Merle, and Carey. All of you. You all did great today.

Griffin: She lifts the mirror up off you and pulls you out. Um—

Magnus: Oh, thanks. That was crushing my wiener!

Clint: [wheezes]

Noelle: You really broke the tension, I appreciate that, Magnus.

Griffin: Lucas says, uh...

Lucas: Alright. I stabilized the lab. The exterior hull has reverted back from its crystallization, so the weight differential is able to be supported by the core. But most of the interior systems have been compromised so, um... I don't really have an escape route, but I think I have another way out.

Griffin: And he presses a few more buttons on the console, and through the wall of this lab chamber like the Kool-Aid Man, a familiar face appears.

Clint: [deep voice] Ohh, yeah.

Griffin: One with a glowing red clown nose, and terrifying facial features, perched on some elevator doors.

Magnus: Mr. Upsy!

Griffin: And he goes...

Upsy: Looks like everyone came out of this scrape safe and sound! It's a Candlenights miracle!

Travis: Oh yeah, this is still happening at Candlesnights, wasn't it?

Upsy: Yep!

Clint: [laughs]

Upsy: By the way, I rescued your orc friend and that big family of dogs!

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [wheezes]

Griffin: And Carey goes...

Carey: Oh, you got Killian out! Oh, thank God. I was so worried.

Merle: Yeah, me too! Yeah.

Taako: Me three.

Upsy: Well, you know the drill! Climb in my belly!

Griffin: And his doors open up.

Taako: [groans]

Magnus: Okay... I reluctantly do so.

Griffin: As his elevator door face opens up there's actually, like, some strings of goo that separate. Uh... uh, [through laughter] as he opens up, some sort of elevator slime that sort of falls to the ground.

Magnus: Oh God.

Upsy: [mouth open] Come on! I don't got— I don't got all day!

Merle: [gags]

Travis: Magnus gets in.

Justin: Alright. Yeah, I get on.

Clint: Oh God.

Griffin: All of you pop in. You three, Carey, and Noelle. Lucas starts to walk towards the elevator, and then turns and walks over to Maurine's disabled conduit and takes a small screwdriver out of his coat and pops out the central fuse that she had in her conduit. And it kind of looks like a small lantern, now that he's just sort of holding it free from the robot. Lucas takes this lantern and walks over and, uh... holds it out in your guys' direction. And says, um...

Lucas: [sighs] I know I... I know I fucked you guys over tonight. And... I'm probably never gonna be able to make that up to you. Um... but whatever my— whatever my mom saw in the cosmoscope, I don't— I don't— I don't wanna know what it was. And if what she said is true, it's somewhere in here. I want you guys to take this and keep it safe. Um... and I'm gonna— I guess I'm gonna make myself scarce.

Merle: Before you go.

Lucas: Yeah.

Merle: Listen. Take care of those stitches. You know, so they'll heal right.
[wheezes]

Lucas: I— yeah, I have medical training, so I'll be able to, you know...

Merle: Oh, good, yeah.

Lucas: ... take care of 'em.

Magnus: Lucas, go out and do good.

Lucas: Okay. I'm gonna do my best, I promise. You'll never see me again, but if you do... I'll be doing good, and don't kill me instantly.

Magnus: We'll see.

Lucas: I'll try to stay away from you, but I don't know. Like, we should, like, match up—

Magnus: No promises.

Lucas: Let's match up our schedules just to make sure that we don't, you know, go to the same—

Magnus: I'll put you on a Google Calendar and we'll try to figure it out, but no promises, okay?

Lucas: That sounds good. I'll Skype you. I'll Sky— I'll Skype you.

Magnus: No, don't do that. We don't have very good reception on the moon.

Griffin: Upsy's face closes—

Travis: And digestion begins.

Griffin: The digestive process begins. Hold on, I'm really gonna take my time with this part. Um, and you can actually see through Mr. Upsy's eyes as he— he's not, like, on a wire. He's basically straight up wonking on some shit. Uh, as he flies backwards out of the hole that he made in the wall, and out of the lab, which you see sort of getting smaller and smaller as your party inside of Mr. Upsy sails through a snowy sky, led my Upsy's bright red nose, and back up into the hole in the moon.

[calm music plays]

Griffin: Hey, everybody. This is Griffin McElroy, your dungeon master and your fungeon master. Now, what's a fungeon master, I hear you asking? It means I... am... I do, like, corporate retreats. Thanks for listening to *The Adventure Zone* Episode 39, the final chapter— and I swear I mean it this time— of the Crystal Kingdom story arc. I know I've been beating that drum for a while, but it felt weird for it to just be like, "Hey, here's a big final boss fight. Anyway, it's immediately on to the next thing."

Um, we're gonna do a lunar interlude next week, and then it's— or not next week, two weeks from now. And then it's on to the new campaign arc. I'm really excited to get to it.

I want to thank everybody who's been tweeting about the show using the hashtag #thezonecast. We're gonna do kind of a different lunar interlude for the next episode, which I'm very excited to get to. And then after that, we're gonna start a new story arc. There's gonna be lots of new characters, lots of opportunities to be named after one of those characters. Sorry, no, wait. Flip it. You're not— like, you're not gonna name yourself Taako. That doesn't make any sense. But we'll name the characters after you. Just tweet about the show using the hashtag #thezonecast, and if I see your name and it sounds like something that would match up with a character I have designed, then you'll end up as that character. Easy— easy peasy, um, lemon squeezy. Also, thanks for telling your friends about the show. We don't pay to advertise for *The Adventure Zone* literally at all. Your word of mouth is all that we have to go on, so if you have a friend who's kind of a geek that you think would enjoy the show— or not a geek. We don't wanna geek shame. Uh, then tell 'em about *The Adventure Zone*. We sure to appreciate it. You can also help us out by leaving a review on iTunes and subscribing, but you know all that shit.

[ad break]

Griffin: Let's read some personal messages. If you want to get a message on the show, just go to Maximumfun.org/jumbotron. You can find out how to do it there. Got a bunch on this episode, so let's dig in. Got a message here for Kira, and it's— I'm specifically told it's pronounced like the female Gelfling's name in *The Dark Crystal* and/or Keira Knightley, and that helpful tip was sent in by Kira's mom, who says:

"Happy 13th birthday to the most brilliant, gorgeous, talented, snarky geekling and junior delicate flower a mother geek could ever hope to spawn. I love that we can enjoy so many fandoms and shows together, including *The Adventure Zone*. Remember, when all else fails, accio giant piece of plywood. Love you bunches."

This... I don't have anything funny to say. This is a very, very sweet message, and this sounds like a pretty ballin' family unit. Sorry that the show has so many... just, like, what I would call hypermature themes.

Got another message here. This one's for Stephen the Crazy Bot, and it's from Garret the Night Shift Knight, who says:

"Hey, homie. Happy birthday. Man, we've been on so many crazy-ass adventures, huh? Let's hope sometime this year we can actually try playing D&D ourselves, and if not, more Adventure Zone adventures to adventure the adventure."
[laughs quietly] "Adventure! DM, Stephen's character is a ranger, and the roll is an 8. What does he get from the Fantasy Gashapon?"

I don't have a Fantasy Gashapon loot table designed for a ranger, but I'm gonna say... a nice... grey hat. Just a hat that looks real nice.

Our next message is for Caverine White, a Templar, and it's from Northern, a Dungeon Master, who says— in a fiction that I desperately want to know more about:

"Tristan, synthetic. As you move into this next season of your life with the wonderful partner you've found, I want to congratulate you and wish you the best. May you two grow deeper and greater together. If you change your mind, we can still live the dream we once held, so meet me with Vixie at the OPH off Bass Lake on Sunday." or potentially Bass [pronounced "base"] Lake. I'm gonna assume all of that was in fiction. And I now I want to— I kind of actually want to know more about Bass Lake. Is this, like, some sort of dubstep fantasy world? Because if so... hold on. Let me just delete the rest of the campaign notes I have for *The Adventure Zone*. Okay, and they're gone, and I'm gonna chase that bliss. I'm gonna chase that dubstep fantasy setting.

And one last message for this episode. It is for the Dread Pirate Ian, and it's from Katie, who says:

"To my dashing rogue: I can't believe it's been four years since we had that epic sword fight and then got married. What a crazy day! Since then it's been nothing but adventure and quoting Magic Brian, and I wouldn't have it any other way. You're to the Elon to my Haley, the Merle to my vines... " yuck. "And I'm settling this once and for all: I love you more."

I think that's evidence by the fact that you got up on this show before the Dread Pirate Ian. So... yeah. By my metric, my judging, you crushed it.

Go check out the other shows on the Maximum Fun Network. There's a bunch of totally great, all totally free programs on there. How about the newcomer, *The Beef and Dairy Network*? It has become my number one source for all kinds of news— any kind of news that I could ever hope for regarding steak and milk, and

how to, like, feed cows and take care of them properly. I've learned a lot from it. Again, *The Beef and Dairy Network* on Maximumfun.org. It's essential.

If you want to hear us do other podcasts, we have a whole fleet of 'em, you can find 'em at mcelroyshows.com. I've got one that I do with my wife called *Rosebuddies* where we talk about *The Bachelor*, another one that I do for Polygon called *Cool Games Inc* where we design cool video games. Justin has one that he does with his wife, Sydnee, called *Sawbones*, which is a medical history show. Travis has a whole bunch of shows including *Interrobang* and *Shmanners*, a show he does with his wife, Teresa, about the history and proper execution of manners. They're all great, and they are all at mcelroyshows.com.

Thanks for listening. We're gonna get right back into the episode now. The next episode of *The Adventure Zone* will be up on Thursday, May 19th. Again, like I said, it'll be a lunar interlude. We're gonna do our usual character management stuff as well as some new storytelling stuff that we haven't really tried before. We did do Fantasy Costco, but we already recorded that bit already, so hold on to your item submissions until the next time that they return to the shop. And yeah, until then, until May 19th, hang— hang— hang in there? Yeah, hang in there.

[calm music plays]

Griffin: So, you've returned to the Bureau of Balance headquarters. And, uh, as the doors of Upsy open you see— it's actually not as thoroughly staffed as the Bureau HQ usually is, 'cause it's very late at night at this point. We'll say it's probably around, like, four in the morning. Um... still Candlesnights. You began this adventure, like, early evening in Candlesnights, and just made it through. Although I'm pretty sure the timing on that doesn't work out, based on the arbitrary time limits that I kept setting throughout the— well, whatever. And you are met with applause. It's not as fervent as it usually is because, again, people are pretty drowsy. But people are— you are welcomed warmly by adoring fans, um, as you step out of this weird, living elevator and start to walk towards the main hall. And as you approach the main hall and you walk across the quad, which is protected by some sort of barrier from the blizzard around you, you see a large shape wearing a null suit charging at all of you from the main hall. And as this shape gets closer, you realize it's actually Killian, who rushes in and swoops up Carey in a big old spinning hug. And she says, uh...

Killian: You good?

Griffin: And Carey says...

Carey: Pssh. Yeah.

Griffin: And Killian looks at the rest of you guys and says, uh...

Killian: Are y'all good?

Magnus: Yeah.

Taako: Yeah.

Merle: Ehh...

Magnus: I mean, pretty good.

Merle: Comme ci, comme ca.

Magnus: All things considered. I've been better.

Killian: How's the arm, Merle?

Merle: Hmm... thorny.

Killian: [wheezes] That doesn't sound good at all.

Merle: [laughs] It's not!

Magnus: But, like, in a good way.

Griffin: Um... all of you, Noelle, Carey, Killian, and the three of you, have made it to the main hall, and you are standing in front of the Director. This is the room where one of the walls sort of opens up to a massive window into the chamber where the relics have been destroyed. Um, it is really late. Some groggy looking staff have assembled to help sort of conduct the destruction of the Philosopher's Stone. Davenport is in the room by the Director's chair. Angus is off in a corner somewhere, basically half asleep, but he gives you guys a big thumbs up and a big cheesy grin.

Taako: Angus?

Justin: I give Angus a thumbs down.

Griffin: [wheeze-laughs]

Justin: And I go...

Taako: [blows raspberry]

Travis: I do the thing where you put your hands together and then you put two fingers through and you twist 'em around, and then you wiggle the two fingers.

Griffin: He looks amazed.

Angus: Wow! Oh my—

Griffin: He runs up to you, Magnus.

Angus: Oh my god, sir! Have you become— have you been learning wizardly magics?

Travis: I take his nose.

Angus: Oh my god!

Magnus: Got your nose!

Angus: Why doesn't it hurt?

Justin: I cast, uh— I cast, uh... Prestidigitation to make it look like his nose isn't there.

Clint: Oh, good.

Travis: Wow.

Griffin: All of a— all of a—

Travis: And even Magnus is surprised.

Griffin: His childlike wonderment, uh, turns to absolute terror. As he goes, uh...

Angus: No, please, give it back! Give it back! I need that to smell!

Travis: [simultaneously] I eat it.

Magnus: [eating noises]

Clint: God, you and your eating!

Magnus: Oh no.

Taako: Hey, Angus. Do you know how you're gonna smell now?

Angus: [dejected] No.

Merle and Taako: Terrible!

Taako: How could you?

Merle: I was chiming! I was just chiming.

Griffin: He reaches up and touches that his— feels his nose is still there and goes, uh...

Angus: Wow, okay. That was kind of a dark one. Um...

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: "That's kind of messed up."

Griffin: And he says...

Angus: Good job, by the way. I'm really proud of you guys.

Griffin: And walks back to the corner he was standing in.

Magnus: Couldn't have done it without you, Danguus.

Griffin: Uh, the Director, who also looks pretty tired... let's just assume that you kind of debrief her on what happened there, 'cause I don't think anybody wants to hear a thorough rehashing of the last 11 episodes of *The Adventure Zone*.

Travis: We passed all of our appropriate bluff checks and deception checks.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Yeah, are we telling her the truth?

Griffin: Uh... okay, I guess we can play this out. I guess if you do want to bluff about, uh... let's just skip ahead to that part. Uh, to the final encounter. And she says, uh...

Director: So tell me exactly, how did Lucas... die? Are you certain that he is gone?

Magnus: He was— uh, he was trying to stop the terror he created. But it turned on him. He was blasted by some kind of spectral energy blast. We're not sure. Um, and it—

[dice roll]

Magnus: —it blew him away. He was cinder.

Merle: He's no longer with us.

Taako: And, uh... uh... also his mother was in a robot, and she took— she took— she took him.

Merle: Hm.

Director: What does that— what do you mean, she took him?

Merle: It was very— very sweet.

Taako: Listen. I'm trying to use appropriate language, okay? She took him.

Director: Like...

Merle: [whispers] Took him.

Taako: She took his body.

Merle: His remains.

Taako: Yeah.

Director: That's— that's very unfortunate. Lucas was instrumental in the creation of the Bureau of Balance, and to think that he could be turned by a Grand Relic is very disheartening.

Magnus: There were a lot of other factors.

Director: Hopefully he can find some rest in the astral plane.

Travis: I rolled a 16, by the way, plus 1.

Clint: [muffled laughter]

Griffin: On your bluff check?

Justin: [wheezes]

Travis: Yeah. Deception check.

Griffin: On what?

Travis: Deception check. There's no bluff in 5th Edition.

Griffin: Oh, weird. Okay. Um, yeah. That'll be sufficient. I was gonna make one of you guys roll it, so that's fine.

Justin: And I didn't lie, so.

Griffin: And you did not lie, yes. You were very careful. Um... uh, okay. And she— now she walks over to Noelle and addresses her and says, uh...

Director: I've heard a lot about you through their Stones of Farspeech. Rather, I should say I heard you. Um, more specifically I heard you kill a bunch of ghost-filled robots.

Griffin: And Noelle says...

Noelle: Uh, yeah. That was me.

Justin: Ditto, point of order. Is No— like, when she was just talking to us about the Bureau of Balance and Lucas's import to it, was Noelle hearing that? Is she just getting a lot of static? Or, like, is there a way to get her— like, will the Voidfish's ichor still, like, work on her?

Griffin: Um... I mean, you could ask her.

Justin: Ask— I guess I could—

Taako: Hey, Noelle. Um, have you been hearing any, like, weird static?

Noelle: No. What do you mean?

Taako: Cool.

Clint: [wheezes]

Griffin: And the Director says, uh...

Director: I had the same suspicion, Taako. Um, Noelle, I'm the Director of the Bureau of Balance. We're an organization dedicated to the collection and destruction of the Grand Relics, like the one that destroyed the Millers' laboratory earlier tonight, and killed you in Phandalin some months back. Now, please, this will sound weird, but please repeat the name of our organization.

Griffin: And Noelle says, uh...

Noelle: Oh, the... Bureau of Balance?

Griffin: And the Director looks at the three of you.

Magnus: Whaaat?

Griffin: She says...

Director: Anyone else see a problem with this?

Taako: Well, I do worry, if... ooh. Okay. I do see one problem, is that, um... if souls are gonna keep coming back over from that side, that's something we're going to have to be aware of, because it seems like once you've slipped past this plane and returned to it, you've maybe freed yourself from the Voidfish's magic.

Magnus: That— oh shit!

Director: I had a similar suspicion. I could hear you all through your Stones of Farspeech. I lost contact with you once you went to the lower levels—

Magnus: Director.

Director: —but I heard you fighting with what sounded like Magic Brian, and Magic Brian... his two accomplices knew who he was, which they should not have been able to do if they were not inoculated. Magic Brian's been erased. It seems like the undead... or I should say the living dead, are immune to the Voidfish's powers.

Magnus: Director, is it possible the red cloak people are extraplanar, are undead... spirits?

Director: I... I don't have enough to go on right now, but I'm fairly certain that might be the case.

Magnus: 'Cause I tried to give one a whoppin' of choppin', and I couldn't get at it, which makes me think maybe it's like a ghost thing.

Director: Um... [tense] let's debrief about that later.

Griffin: She says, kind of under her breath.

Magnus: Cool. Cool, cool, cool. Got it. Wink!

Merle: I've got another problem.

Director: What's that?

Merle: I've got a bigger problem.

Director: Yes.

Merle: Our initials are BOB!

Griffin: [wheezes]

Merle: Yeah, that— that doesn't bother anybody?

Director: Um...

Merle: We're the agents of BOB?

Director: Well, we used to be the Bureau of... Outstanding Balance. [pause] And that was— that's just a nonstarter.

Griffin: She says.

Magnus: Bo-ab?

Director: Yes, Bo-ab.

Griffin: Carey says, uh...

Carey: Okay. So, Noelle already knows what we're up to here. Why don't we put her to work? Like, I think Noelle would make a pretty ballin' Regulator, and now that Boyland is gone, God rest his sweet soul, me and Killian could use a replacement for our trio.

Griffin: And Killian says...

Killian: Hell yes. I love this plan. Me and Carey and a robot ghost with a gun arm. Fuck yeah. That's awesome.

Magnus: Sounds like a spinoff.

Killian: That sounds like— yeah, that's some *Torchwood* shit. I am into that.

Griffin: And Noelle says, uh...

Noelle: Well, if I can stop more stuff like this from happening, I'd be happy to join up.

Griffin: And the Director says, uh...

Director: Well, by my count, you killed about a dozen ghost bots tonight, so I think we can skip the formalities of the Rites of Initiation. You boys remember that, right? You had, uh, no problem at all taking care of those ogres. Well, Noelle, congratulations. I guess we'll figure out a way to put a bracer on... that... later. Just for more sort of a press— a more pressing issue that we should try and get into right now is, Magnus, um—

Taako: [shrill voice] Payment! [normal voice] Is that what you were gonna say? Were you gonna say payment?

Director: Payment will be delivered—

Magnus: Uh-huh?

Merle: Here we go!

Director: —upon receipt...

Merle: Sweet, sweet luker!

Director: ... upon the receipt of the rock that is currently working its way through Magnus's digestive system.

Magnus: Right. I'm gonna need some magical prunes.

Clint: I cast Zone of Stool Softener.

Griffin: She says...

Director: We don't have that kind of time. I don't want you to be constantly subject to the— the temptation and the thrall of the Philosopher's Stone—

Magnus: I'm good.

Director: —for the next 36 hours, or however— it's going to— you can't just poop out a rock.

Griffin: She says.

Magnus: Well—

Director: I've done a lot of re— I've done a lot of research.

Magnus: I've pooped out a lot of things.

Director: Um, we need to figure out a way to get that rock out of you right now.

Griffin: She says.

Magnus: I could, uh, puke it.

Director: That would take some real doing.

Magnus: Oh. Um...

Merle: I think I need to do surgery.

Magnus: Oh no.

Merle: Yeah! Let me help out my good friend who helped me out with my hand.

Justin: [laughs quietly]

Merle: Let me help out my buddy.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: I just start sticking my fingers down my throat.

Magnus: No, I'm good! [dry heaving]

Merle: Come here. Lay down.

Noelle: Boy, this is a real horror show.

Magnus: Just give me a second. [dry heaving]

Griffin: That rock has— you ate that rock about 45 minutes ago.

Magnus: [dry heaving]

Griffin: So it's, like— it's, like, down there. It's not— it's—

Magnus: [dry heaving]

Griffin: Yeah, that doesn't seem to be working. I don't have a solu—

Travis: Magnus starts punching himself in the stomach.

Griffin: That works. That's fine. I don't have a solution in mind for how you guys are gonna do this. I want you to really explore the space.

Justin: Okay. Um...

Magnus: Do you have any transportation magic?

Director: Do I have any— I— I don't. I can see what Leon has.

Magnus: Yeah, get Leon. What's Pringles doing?

Director: Pringles has been imprisoned for several months.

Magnus: Uh-huh.

Director: And the fact that you have forgotten that makes me think that maybe he wasn't so important to you to begin with.

Magnus: No, he's— I meant, like, what's he doing as far as, like, magic, these days?

Director: None. He's in— he's in the— in the— the pokey.

Magnus: Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

Taako: I think we should see what our cleric can, uh— can cook up.

Magnus: Oh god.

Taako: This definitely seems like his area. Um...

Merle: I would be kind of what I do. I have a suggestion, actually.

Taako: Let's hear it.

Magnus: [pained] Okay...

Merle: I have a spell called stone shape.

Griffin: [laughs]

Merle: Where I can influence the shape... of a stone. To change it, and alter it, and perhaps, if I change the shape of the stone inside of him, it, um, you know, might come out a little easier. Might have an easier egress.

Griffin: Okay. Um...

Merle: I'm thinking something with hooks.

Griffin: Jeez!

Merle: And a big bulbous... no, sorry. I mean, I can change the shape of the stone inside of him so he can pass it easier.

Magnus: Now... I do want to remind you, I chopped off your hand and saved your damn life. It's not like I did it out of malice.

Merle: I'm trying to save you, so you don't have peritonitis!

Magnus: Really?! 'Cause your tone of voice does not convey that at all, Merle! I'm listening to you with my ears!

Merle: Really?

Griffin: If possible, I would love to avoid a shitting-based solution. A) because I don't know what exists beyond the explicit tag in iTunes.

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Griffin: Like, is there a fucking NC-17 rating? I don't wanna— I don't think I want to be a part of that. But also, I would also not like this scene to drag on as long as a human being's digestive cycle.

Justin: Wait a minute. No, no, no, wait a minute. I got it. I got it.

Taako: We can work together on this, you and me.

Merle: Okay?

Taako: See, okay. [giggles]

Merle: [laughs]

Taako: Okay. So—[laughs] okay. I have a spell called Stone skin.

Griffin: [laughs]

Merle: [gasps] Okay, okay.

Taako: So, here's what I'm suggesting. Instead of changing the shape of the stone, let's change the shape of the Magnus.

Merle: Ohhh! So we're looking alimentary canal.

Taako: Exactly. Just—

Merle: Alimentary, my dear Watson!

Taako: Okay, here we go.

Merle: Okay.

Taako: So... I'm gonna cast Stone Skin on...

Travis: Is this where we can do, like, a propeller cutaway, and then it comes back and it's done and everything went great?

Justin: I'm casting Stone Skin on Magnus.

Griffin: Okay. Magnus, you gonna lie down for this, or...

Magnus: Knock me the fuck out!

Justin: Uh, I cast Sleep on Magnus.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: I got spell slots to burn, here. I cast Sleep on Magnus. Magnus is out. And I'll cast Stone Skin on Magnus to make his skin into stone.

Griffin: Okay. Magnus, your skin is stone, but you are asleep.

Travis: I'm dreaming of large women. Go on.

[pause]

Justin: Alright. So now you have stone...

Clint: I have Stone Shape. I just have to decide what shape.

Travis: Like a tube! Come on, man!

Clint: Shh! You're asleep!

Griffin: [incredulously, through laughter] You're gonna turn him into a man tube!

Travis: [wheezes]

Griffin: You could just turn him into a bag, or a shelf with the rock sitting on it!

Merle: It would pass a lot easier if it were, like, a spiral.

Taako: A fun spiral, I was thinking the same thing.

Merle: Like a screw kind of coil kind of thing.

Taako: Like a fun spiral.

Magnus: [cartoon snoring] Please just do it and get it done! [cartoon snoring]

Clint: [laughs loudly]

Merle: Okay, that's what I go with. I go with the spiral.

Griffin: [snorts]

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Travis: Woop-woop-woop-woop! It falls out.

Griffin: Okay, hold on. I need to— 'cause I imagine I'm not the only person having a hard time visualizing what literally just happened to Magnus's human body.

Justin: I think Dad is saying he changed the bottom half of his body from waist to toes into a large stone, fun... stone spiral.

Clint: Yeah!

Travis: Like a water slide.

Justin: Like a fun water slide that the rock could just harmlessly slide down.

Clint: You know, like those bubble gum machines. You know, and they go down the little pass, and they [imitates sound of marble rolling] and they roll—

Griffin: So you turned... the bottom half... just making sure I got this, 'cause people are gonna draw fanart of this, and it's gonna be fucked.

Clint: I'll turn it back.

Griffin: You turn the bottom half of his body— you turn him into, like, Springy, the Spring Sprite, and waited for the stone to just kind of tumble out of his butt tube that you've created.

Clint: Yep!

Travis: Yep.

Justin: Yep.

Clint: Yep, that's it.

Travis: Sounds good.

[pause]

Griffin: Dungeons and Dragons is a great game.

Travis: [laughs loudly]

Justin: It's a very good game.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: You don't get this shit in Chutes and Ladders, that's for sure.

Griffin: You do actually— you explicitly get this in Chutes and Ladders!

Clint: Actually, true.

Justin: Yeah, you do get to— now, we're playing, I would say generously, fast and loose with some of the 5e. We may have moved— may have given everybody a sneak preview of 6e.

Griffin: [laughs] 6th Edition's mostly scat magic. Okay. Um, the Philosopher's Stone comes tumbling out of Magnus's supine form.

Clint: And pee-ew!

Justin: Stinkerooni!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Like a child on a marquis waterslide at Schlitterbahn. And tumbles and rolls across the floor.

Clint: And to make it even worse, we videoed the entire thing.

Griffin: Absolutely you did. Um, and you kind of get a better chance to look at it, now that you're not also fighting a big ghost monster, and it just looks like a plain looking rock. It's light brown.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: It's got smooth edges. It's, uh...

Clint: [wheezes]

Griffin: Gross.

Travis: [simultaneously] Like poop!

Griffin: Okay, yeah, I just changed it. It's light gray. Uh, it's got smooth edges.

Travis: It looks like a little nugget of poop!

Griffin: No. It's a— it's a pretty— again, we're teetering on the NC-17 rating. It's an innocuous looking object, but you can't help but feel a sense of unease just being around the Philosopher's Stone.

Clint: [laughs] No ki— no shit!

Travis: Am I still a sleeping slinky?

Griffin: Yeah. Can somebody please un-slinky him? 'Cause it's getting— it's goofy.

Clint: Um, mekaleka hi, meka hiney ho.

Griffin: Okay, he as back in human form. But still stony, I guess?

Justin: He still has Stone Skin for the next hour, but it doesn't limit his movement.

Griffin: Uh, so yeah. You get this sense of unease, being around the Philosopher's Stone. It's giving off an energy like... you know when you used to, like, lick a AA battery and you'd feel, like, uncomfortable? That's what it's like. It's an un— it's giving off an uncomfortably energetic aura.

Taako: Uh, we're ready for you to summon Davenport.

Griffin: Davenport's actually standing right there. And he says, uh...

Davenport: Davenport, Davenport!

Magnus: Feel free to destroy my stone baby.

Griffin: Carey actually starts to walk towards the Philosopher's Stone. And she seems, like, out of it. She just starts, like, reaching out towards it, with a hand outstretched, and starts walking towards it.

Justin: I use the handle of the umbrastaff to knock it over to Davenport.

Griffin: Okay. You give it the old knuckle puck?

Justin: Yeah, the old knuckle puck.

Griffin: Okay. As you knock it towards Davenport, he actually catches it... perfectly. And Carey, like— Carey, like, falls forward to her knees, like she was about to jump on it, and she falls forward and, like, shakes her head and looks up at you guys and is like...

Carey: What just— oh, man.

Taako: It's a thrall. I know, right?

Carey: Yeah, that was— that could've been really bad. Thanks—

Taako: Sucks.

Magnus: Try having it in your tummy!

Carey: Thanks. That would've been— that would've been super duper bad.

Griffin: And everyone agrees, that would've been super bad.

Travis: Does everyone agree? Let's go around the room.

Griffin: Daven—

Justin: A competent person with one of the artifacts? Yeah, that would've been bad.

Griffin: Davenport looks down at the Philosopher's Stone, and his eyes... seem to just sort of go into a daze.

Magnus: Davenport!

Merle: Davenport!

Magnus: Put it on the tray.

Griffin: He looks up at everybody and goes...

Davenport: Davenport!

Clint: Aww.

Justin: Beloved simpleton.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And he tosses it into one of those big lead balls and shuts the hatch on it, and a couple of guards start to wheel it out of the room. Uh, back into the back room. And then a few seconds later you see it appear. The Director draws a curtain and can see the window into the Cerebro chamber, and the guards lift the ball up into the central pillar of the chamber, and the Director taps her white oak staff on the ground and, like you've seen three times now, these huge columns of light stab through the ball. Um, as you do, you can faintly hear the encased screams of Joe Pesci, because that's what—

Justin: Now, what does that sound like? Just from a sonic...

Griffin: Oh, yeah, sure. Um...

Philosopher's Stone: Aww, nuts!

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: The pillars pierce the ball. Uh, the room goes dark. The guards come and fetch the lead ball, wheel it back into— wheel it out of the Cerebro chamber. A few seconds later they appear, back into the main hall. They open up the ball, and it has emptied out.

Travis: Cool!

Justin: So that's four. So that's the Glove, the Belt, the Stone, and what's the—

Griffin: And the Oculus. The Lens from the—

Clint: And the Wardrobe.

Justin: And that's what— the Oculus is what, uh...

Travis: Jenkins.

Justin: ... Jenkins had.

Griffin: Uh, yeah. That was the, uh... that was the one that you rescued from the train.

Justin: So we're— we're, um— that's, like, halfway, right? Over halfway.

Director: More than half— we're more than halfway there, yeah. That's...

Taako: More than halfway! Good for us!

Director: This is going better than I ever could've expected. You three...

Merle: [through laughter] Us too!

Director: Well, you six did excellent work tonight. I'm very proud of all of you.

Griffin: She says, uh...

Director: Davenport!

Griffin: Davenport heads into the back room and comes back out with six small burlap bags. Uh, actually they're not pretty small. These bags are actually decent sized. They look like something that a burglar might bring out of a bank or something, 'cause each one contains 2000 gold pieces.

Clint: Whoo!

Griffin: And a token for the Fantasy Gashapon.

Magnus: Well, happy Candlenights to us, huh, everybody? [exaggerated laughter]

Griffin: Um...

Travis: Freeze frame.

Director: Not quite.

Magnus: Oh, dammit.

Justin: He said freeze frame. I mean, he said it.

Travis: I said freeze frame, Griffin.

Director: Unfreeze—

Clint: Freeze frame?

Director: Unpause.

Griffin: She says, uh...

Director: You're all free to go. But Merle, Magnus, and Taako, I'd like to see you in my office before you retire for the evening.

Magnus: Okay... [sighs]

Taako: Alright.

Merle: No trouble.

Magnus: Sounds good.

Griffin: You walk back into her office through a door directly behind her chair in the main hall. You've been in this office before. It's the, uh... it's— I can't remember the last time you were in here. I don't know if you guys do. You came in here once during one of the lunar interludes.

Travis: Oh yeah! It's when we wanted to tell her about Captain Captain Bane.

Griffin: Yes, that's right. You are— so you're back in this office, and there are three seats pulled up to her desk. Um, she sits down at the seat behind her desk and, uh, invites you to sit with her. And she says, uh...

Director: I'll be quick. I know you've had a long night. What have I done...

Magnus: Hm?

Director: ...to lose your trust?

Taako: Um...

Director: I— I was—

Taako: What do you mean?

Director: [sighs] I was listening in, and I heard you parlay with the red robe again, after I explicitly asked you not to.

Magnus: When did we—

Merle: You were spying on us?!

Travis: Now, this is a legitimate Travis McElroy question. When did we do that?

Griffin: Uh, in the cosmoscope, when the red robe thing appeared before you and you talked to it.

Travis: That seems like so long ago.

Griffin: If you'll remember, at the end of Petals to the Metal you talked with it and she said next time you see that thing, just fuckin' run away and don't talk to it.

Magnus: Director, everything up to this point has taught us not to trust anybody. We haven't been getting all the information, and I think you would agree that that's true.

Director: I have told—

Magnus: If you want us to trust you, we need to know everything you know about the hooded figures.

Director: I don't know about the hooded figures. But if you want to know whether or not you can trust me, I... [sighs] I have no reason to—!

Griffin: She reaches down under her desk and opens up a drawer.

Merle: Gun!

Griffin: And she pulls out a gun and just opens you fools up! Um, she pulls out a small glass orb. Uh, and produces a small wand. And she touches the wand to the orb, and from the top of this orb, these three-dimensional images, like these holograms, sprout from the top of the ball. And they start to cycle through a series of shots of what look like destroyed towns of different sizes.

Clint: Uh-oh.

Griffin: And she says, um...

[music plays in the background]

Director: This is the settlement of Armos, where a seven-year-old girl found the Philosopher's Stone and turned the city into peppermint candy.

Griffin: And sure enough, this— it looks vaguely candyland-esque, this settlement. And she says, uh...

Director: 714 people were killed.

Griffin: And then she taps on the orb again, and a different village appears, and she says...

Director: This is the village of Greenhold, where a warlord used the Oculus to manifest a small black hole, which annihilated the entire town, killing 1152 people.

Griffin: She taps it again, and you just see an ocean. And she says...

Director: This used to be the archipelago of Moonshay, which drowned in three minutes under the weight of a storm summoned by the Gaia Sash. 2512 people.

Griffin: She taps it again, and you just see a sequence of black glass circles. And she says, uh...

Director: Certainly this looks familiar. Certainly you recognize Phandalin, and the other seven cities that have been destroyed by the Phoenix Fire Gauntlet. Eight cities destroyed, total 12,000 dead. I— I swear to you, I am trying to stop this from happening. And we're over halfway done, but if you give up on me now, if you stop trusting me now, we have already lost. I need to know, are you with me, or are you against me?

Taako: Director, here's the truth. What did you have for lunch... on December 3rd, 2015?

Director: [sighs]

Taako: You don't remember, right?

Director: No.

Taako: Well, that's when you told us not to talk to the red robes. So... what I'm saying is...

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [wheezes]

Taako: We— I'm— what I'm saying is we forgot, okay? It was a very long—

Magnus: It's not necessarily mistrust. It's just stupidity!

Taako: Like, just write us a note, okay?

Merle: Have you just met us?

Taako: Yeah. Like, we— just write a note!

Merle: We're really stupid!

Magnus: Next time, if you can hear it happen on the stone just be like, "Hey, dummies. Remember?" And I'd be like, "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah."

Taako: [simultaneously] "Hey dummies, remember?"

Magnus: "Yeah, oh."

Griffin: She puts the orb and wand away and kind of laughs to herself and says, uh...

Director: I'm sorry. I just... we're getting so close. We really are. And I just— I don't... I mean we're getting close to finishing our goal. And I guess we're also getting, you know, closer as people. It's just—

Magnus: High five.

Director: Okay.

Griffin: She high fives you.

Magnus: Yeah!

Director: I just... I guess I have my own trust issues as well. If you say it was a mistake, I... I believe you. Just, please, it— whatever the—

Magnus: But in the future, Director, don't you want us to get as much information out of the red hoods as we can? You have to trust us too.

Director: You're right. You're right. I apologize. I got over dramatic there for a second.

Taako: Listen, we forgive you.

Magnus: [laughs]

Merle: And how are you listening to all this shit? You have invaded our privacy!

Magnus: We have stones.

Griffin: She takes her Stone of Farspeech out of her pocket and she's like...

Director: Look. There's a little switch right here. You can just sort of flip it and...

Magnus: Oh shit!

Taako: Oh dunk!

Merle: Oh shit!

Taako: Well, come on!

Merle: [laughs]

Magnus: Oh, get right outta town!

Merle: It's got a mute button!

Director: I'm sor— I'm—

Taako: Now who has trust issues?

Merle: Yeah!

Director: I'm sorry for getting so serious.

Magnus: I've just been putting my hand over it like a dummy!

Merle: This is— this is gonna take a couple of thousand pieces of gold for me to get over this.

Director: Oh, I'm— unfortunately my per diem is empty. I—

Merle: I don't believe you!

Director: Listen. I... this is a work in progress. This thing we're working on here. I'm sorry to raise a stink on Candelights of all nights. You're free to go.

Taako: This is, as you say, a work in progress. And this... is a twerk in progress.

Justin: And I start twerking.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Taako: Ooh! You like that? You like it?

Travis: Freeze frame.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: But I'm still twerking quick.

Travis: Yeah, everybody else is frozen.

Clint: [imitates music]

Justin: Yeah. Like if you know police squad, I'm just... twerking as everyone else freezes.

[music plays]

Griffin: I'm gonna do a little post credits epilogue to the crystal kingdom.

Justin: Uh-oh. Okay, should we listen? Or...

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: You've returned to your upgraded bedroom suite, and started to unpack your adventure kits. Um, you're also cleaning up after the Candlenights party. Your bedroom is still kind of decorated with Candlenights regalia. There's gift warping sort of strewn across the room, and some drinks and refreshments are left out. People left this party in a hurry to kick off this mission. Through the glass window below you can see the dim lights of the Millers' lab shine through a thick blanket of snow. And as you're unpacking and getting ready for bed, Taako, you hear a voice coming out of your bag. As you rustle around, you find the source of it, and it's the fuse that Lucas recovered from his mother's conduit and handed to you all. And it's unlit.

Travis: Are we all together, Griffin? Or is Taako by himself?

Griffin: Yeah, you're all together. Um, and it's—

Clint: We're eating shawarma.

Griffin: And it's— you're having some Candlenights shawarma. It's cold but it's still good. And this lantern is unlit. There's no spirit inside of it. It's vacant. But you can feel some machinery inside of it faintly whirring. And you hear a voice inside of it, and the voice sounds kind of like Maurine's voice, but, like, totally lifeless and, for lack of a better term, inanimate. Um, and you hear this voice deliver what sounds like kind of a grim prophecy. And this lantern says...

Lantern: I saw all of existence all at once. I saw a dark storm, a living hunger eating it from within. But I saw a brilliant light, heralded by seven birds, flying tirelessly from the storm. I saw seven birds. The twins, the lover, the protector, the lonely journal keeper, the peacemaker, and the wordless one.

Griffin: And then it repeats that list again.

Lantern: The twins, the lover, the protector, the lonely journal keeper, the peacemaker, and the wordless one.

Griffin: And it actually repeats it several more times before the machinery inside of it dies down and it is silenced.

Magnus: That's the worst Candelights carol I've ever heard.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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[cow moos]

[music plays]

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[cow moos]

[music and ad end]