

## The Adventure Zone Balance: The Eleventh Hour, Chapter Four

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

**Griffin:** And you're being crushed by the shattered earth, and you hear an anguished scream come from something massive and furious.

**Old Woman:** Well, you'll have to do much better than that, loves.

**Griffin:** And then you wake up.

**Paloma:** [echoing] Imminent destruction comes from below. Turn your eyes to the quarry. You're not ready to face what awaits you there, but you must know its face.

**Griffin:** And then the light comes back on.

**Taako:** Man, I was gonna go to the quarry anyway! What a— what a rip-off!

**Griffin:** Cassidy is holding what looks like a giant cluster of green... grapes? That is attached to a long wire with a plunger.

You are burned, and you are crushed, and you... are dead. And you wake up again. The bad news is...

**Travis:** No diamonds.

**Justin:** Shit!

**Griffin:** You do not have 50 diamonds.

**Travis:** Okay. Well, that answers that, huh?

**Justin:** I'm gonna delete the YouTube video I was making about how to do an infinite diamond glitch in *The Adventure Zone*.

**Griffin:** [laughs loudly]

**Clint:** [laughs loudly]

**Announcer:** Wow! This arc is going to wreck the boys KD ratio. Let's hope they can break the cycle and escape from... *The Adventure Zone!*

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** In the last loop, you did a bunch of dumb shit and learned that you can't take things with you through the loops. You were told to go to the quarry. Merle, you spied on Cassidy and sort of found a way into the quarry, 'cause she had some sort of explosives stashed down there. And... yeah. I think that— anything else happen that I forgot? You made some new friends. A lot of fond memories were had.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm, yeah. I think everybody had a great time.

**Travis:** I— I— I wish I had pictures, but at least I have my memories!

**Griffin:** Um, so you wake—

**Justin:** [Nickelback impression] Look at this photograph.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [Nickelback impression] It's me gettin' blown up again. I lost my photograph.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [Nickelback impression] This thing doesn't work like that!

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Whoa, that song is a paradox.

**Griffin:** Yeah, shit!

[clattering]

**Clint:** A song paradox.

**Justin:** Song paradox.

**Griffin:** And a parody.

**Justin:** I love Weird Al Yankovic's song paradoxes.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] Um... so yeah, you have woken up in front of Refuge again, and...

**Travis:** Now, I know that we did the loop last time. But I wanna try something different.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah, what you got?

**Travis:** "[scratchy voice] Alright fellas, I have—" wait, that's Merle's voice.

**Magnus:** Fellas, I have an idea. Go with me on this one.

**Travis:** I charge right up to Roswell and I say...

**Magnus:** Your name is Roswell, we're visitors from outside the dome. You haven't had visitors in the long time. Is that correct?

**Roswell:** [hesitantly] Yeah, that's right.

**Magnus:** Okay. There's a statue in the center of town of three people: the visitor, Jack, and June.

**Roswell:** Yeah?

**Magnus:** Jack and June died in the quarry.

**Roswell:** Yeah!

**Magnus:** The name of your Sheriff is Isaac. He's the elder, he lives in a big house at the end of the road—

**Roswell:** Who are you? How are you doing this?

**Magnus:** There's a witch in the woods named Paloma, there's a woman right now in your jail named Cassidy, and there's a dwarf woman who works at the bank named Brogden, is that correct?

**Roswell:** Okay, okay, yes, I get it. What— what— wh— who are you? What are you doing here? How do you know all this?

**Magnus:** This is not our first time here. We seem to be stuck in some kind of loop. At noon today, something terrible happens, and the only way we can stop it from happening is if you come with us to the quarry.

**Griffin:** I think this is gonna take a— a— everything that you're saying to Roswell right now is absolutely true, and they're pretty freaked out, they seem. Um, I need you to roll a... not bluff, 'cause it's certainly not bluff. Maybe d— diplomacy? I need to brush up on the skills, 'cause I don't really know the charisma skills very well. But what we be the right sort of charisma roll here?

**Travis:** Uhh...

**Clint:** Is there a bullshit line?

**Griffin:** Well, it's not bullshit, is the thing!

**Travis:** It's not bullshit. It's absolutely true.

**Griffin:** Like, this is true. It's just like you're trying to convince...

**Travis:** Persuasion?

**Griffin:** Persuasion would be it, yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah.

[dice roll]

**Travis:** Welp, that fell off the table.

[dice roll]

**Travis:** 19! Plus 1, that's a 20. And I'm rustically hospitable.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I would've given you advantage on that too, just because it's a good play. But, um, yeah. Okay, Roswell says, uh...

**Roswell:** Okay. I don't— what are your names?

**Magnus:** I'm Magnus.

**Taako:** [simultaneously] Taako!

**Magnus:** Yeah, Magnus—

**Merle:** Merle!

**Magnus:** Yeah, that's— yeah.

**Roswell:** And you said something horrible happens at noon. Is there anything else you can tell me about the next hour?

**Magnus:** Yes. So—

**Merle:** Something horrible happens at 11:30, too.

**Magnus:** There's going to be a bank robbery shortly before then. Um, and you're gonna go inside and you're gonna fight the guys. But if you don't come out, the whole bank is gonna collapse on you in fire. Fighting the guys is a fool's errand, don't do it. Cassidy escapes during an earthquake from the jail cell. She goes to the quarry and attempts to blow something up in the quarry, and that's where the bad stuff happens. If—

**Roswell:** Okay, so what— what do—[sighs] wh—[sighs]

**Clint:** And you're hell on furniture.

**Roswell:** I knew that already! I—[sighs] okay. I believe you. Obviously you know a lot about... this town. Obviously you know a lot about what's going on. But my duty's to protect the town. I can't just go off with you if there's about to be a bank robbery.

**Magnus:** What can you tell us about the—

**Taako:** [simultaneously] Okay. I mean, we can handle it.

**Magnus:** What can you tell us about the quarry?

**Roswell:** Um, nobody's been in there in— in quite a while. There was a rock slide, and it's all closed off. We— uh, operations slowed almost to a halt, and then, um, there— there was a disaster down there. Uh, uh, [stammering]— a few weeks ago, about six weeks ago. And a few miners died. Cassidy was the only one that made it out and, um— and so from that point on, just no— nobody's gone inside since then.

**Merle:** I have a question.

**Roswell:** What? What?

**Merle:** If the diamond mine dried up a while ago, why were there miners in the mine?

**Roswell:** You know, they're thirsty. They were thinking maybe there was more secret diamonds, lookin' for a second vein.

**Merle:** Hm.

**Magnus:** Gotcha. Alright. You go, you keep an eye out on the bank.

**Roswell:** Okay.

**Magnus:** Whatever you do, don't stay— get everybody out! Don't worry about fighting the guys. Your safety is more important. The town needs you, remember that.

**Roswell:** Okay. [huffs] Thank you. Go, go. Just go! Go, go, go, go!

**Magnus:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And Roswell takes off running towards the center of town and takes up, like, a defensive position. So, I think you probably did that faster than you did the last sort of convincing of Roswell, so let's say it's, like, 11:05 right now, and then just, like, any time in future loops, you can just do this.

**Clint:** That's our checkpoint.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Clint:** That's our save point.

**Griffin:** Yeah. So you're going to the quarry?

**Travis:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um—

**Travis:** Well, hold on. Let me— I want to decide. Boys? Do you feel good about that move?

**Justin:** It seems to be the best place for us to sort of explore right now.

**Travis:** It's what Paloma said, right? When we went and talked to her that she said—

**Griffin:** Yeah, Paloma—

**Travis:** —there was something?

**Griffin:** Paloma said that there was something you need to see in the quarry, even though you're not sort of ready to face it.

**Clint:** And Carrie was messing around with some blow-up juice.

**Travis:** Cassidy.

**Griffin:** Uh, Cassidy, yeah.

**Justin:** Yeah, Cassidy.

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Carrie was messing with explosives probably wherever she is, somewhere.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, okay. Yeah, you go to the quarry. You go to that same locked gate that you were at before, Merle. And even though Roswell's kind of in the center of town and sees you, like, get through it, either by picking it or climbing it... Magnus, maybe you wanna pick it? 'Cause it'll be the first time that you pick a lock, and...

**Travis:** Yeah! You know what? I do.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um...

**Travis:** That'll be nice.

**Griffin:** Sure, go ahead and roll, uh... I think... what would that be? Thie— thief— how do you—

**Travis:** Thieves' tools.

**Griffin:** Thieves' tools, yeah.

**Travis:** And I rolled a 14, and I'm, like, super proficient at—

**Griffin:** [simultaneously] You get plus 10, it's insane, yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay, yeah, you pop that gate open. And Roswell sees you do this, but is just like— gives you a thumbs up and, like, waves you.

**Roswell:** Just go! Go, go, go!



**Griffin:** Um, and you make it down that same winding ramp that Merle you pursued Cassidy down in the last loop, and you are at the bottom of this quarry. And if you look at the map, like, it's a pretty wide open space. Um, coming off the ramp to the north you see that caved in entrance, and otherwise you're just kind of surrounded by flat earth. Uh, to your right, um, the only sort of thing of notice against the wall, sort of the sheer wall that leads back up into town, you see a patch of bushes. Um, and that's pretty much all that you see down here. Um, but the entrance is caved in. There's just— there's a ton of rocks sort of in there, and that is where Cassidy deployed the explosives in the last loop.

**Travis:** Ditto, I'm gonna investigate the bushes.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** I guess, since you brought 'em up. [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] Okay, yeah.

**Travis:** I mean... when people ask me, like, what my apartment's like, I'm not like—

**Griffin:** [simultaneously] No, yeah, sure.

**Travis:** —"Well, it's great, but there's these bushes out front."

**Griffin:** It's Chek— it's Chekhov's Bush.

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Travis:** Yeah. [laughs loudly] Can we please not talk about Chekhov's Bush? He's very self conscious about it.

**Griffin:** Just sayin'.

**Justin:** [attempts a Russian accent] Uh, listen. I do my best. It's untameable, wild lands—

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I just— I just don't think you're putting in enough—

**Justin:** [attempts a Russian accent] All the shaving!

**Travis:** [wheezes]

**Justin:** [closer to a Transylvanian accent] All the trimming. Oh, [unintelligible shouting]. These are the names of my pubic hairs.

[all laugh]

**Justin:** [attempts a Russian accent] Let me start again. [unintelligible shouting]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [attempts a Russian accent] Little Pietor.

**Griffin:** Um... uh, roll that—

**Justin:** Sneaky Dave.

**Griffin:** —roll that investigation check before I die.

[dice roll]

**Travis:** Uh, it's 15... yeah, 15 plus nothing.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um... Taako, Merle, you wanna check it out— check—

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** —scope this bush?

**Justin:** [snorts]

[dice roll]

**Travis:** That's my favorite 80's comedy.

**Clint:** *Scope That Bush.*

**Justin:** I got a 19.

[dice roll]

**Justin:** Well, Pop, that's a 4 for you, old buddy.

**Clint:** That's a 4!

**Griffin:** That's a stinker. Um, okay.

**Magnus:** You're looking the wrong way, Merle. Over here.

**Griffin:** So, Magnus, with that 15 you see a few instruments tucked away inside of Chekhov's Bush. You find a shovel, presumably the one that Cassidy used on Merle in the last episode. Uh, there is a mattock, like a pickaxe with a broad side to it, and a head lamp, tucked away inside of this bush. And Taako, with your 19, you see those items, but you also notice that the dirt kind of immediately underneath that bush has— it's, like— it's been disrupted. It's, uh... it looks like somebody has buried something here.

**Travis:** I grab the headlamp. It seems useful.

**Griffin:** Yeah, 'cause I don't think you have special magic eyes.

**Travis:** I don't.

**Justin:** [low voice] I got magic eyes.

**Travis:** [snorts]

**Justin:** [low voice] I can see in the dark.

**Travis:** Should I write down "temporary head lamp"?

**Griffin:** Yeah. I mean, that head lamp... yeah.

**Justin:** What's there again?

**Griffin:** Uh, there's like a pickaxe situation, there's a shovel, and then the dirt has been disrupted underneath the... underneath the— the bush.

**Justin:** I'll grab the shovel.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** I'll take the pickaxe.

**Griffin:** Okay, everybody gets a little treat.

**Justin:** [laughs] A little bonus.

**Travis:** Gotta check out that dirt, or our listeners are gonna go insane.

**Griffin:** I'm gonna die!

**Justin:** Yeah, I'm gonna dig in there with my shovel, my new shovel.

**Griffin:** How hard would you say you bury that bad boy in there?

**Justin:** Uh, like an inch and a half. And I'm like...

**Taako:** [shakily] Ohh! Oh, the labor. [laughs quietly]

**Clint:** [mockingly] Oh, the pain!

**Griffin:** Oh, I see, I see, I see.

**Taako:** [simultaneously] Oh, labor.

**Griffin:** You're having a hard time with it just because you don't wanna work very hard.

**Taako:** Yes. These beautiful hands! [laughs quietly] My beau—[wheezes] my beautiful hands aren't used to this sort of thing.

**Magnus:** Okay, I can take a hint. I got it.

**Taako:** Okay, good.

**Travis:** I sit down and start digging with my hands.

**Taako:** What a relief!

**Travis:** [blows raspberry]

**Justin:** [unintelligible]

**Clint:** I cast healing on poor Taako.

**Taako:** Thank you, oh, what a relief.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Um, okay. By avoiding digging with much pressure, and digging with your hands, uh, you safely exhume a cluster bomb, which is that thing that you saw Cassidy carrying in the last episode. There's probably about 15 of these things. They're about tennis ball size, and they're all sort of connected and wired into a central wire, which connects to a plunger. Um, and now you have that in your possession as well.

**Justin:** Sweet.

**Travis:** Okay. So we weren't with Merle, so I'm gonna ask this, like, of Griffin, which you can handle however you want to, describing it through Merle's perspective. When he saw Cassidy setting everything off, did that seem connected to the world tearing apart?

**Griffin:** No, no.

**Travis:** Or were they separate events?

**Griffin:** They were separate events. Before she detonated it, um, the rocks got blown outward by some sort of force inside the quarry.

**Travis:** Got it.

**Magnus:** You guys wanna, like... blow this up?

**Taako:** No! What?

**Magnus:** No, like, where the cave in is. Like, we have nowhere else to go if we don't... you know, blow it up and get in there.

**Merle:** So we're done investigating the dirt?

**Griffin:** Yeah, there's nothing left in the dirt.

**Clint:** Ahh.

**Justin:** I'll look fondly on this time, though.

**Griffin:** Oh, I'm sorry, no. You keep digging and you find... the... magic rod of... j— uh, the...

**Travis:** Of Todd.

**Clint:** Once you say it, it's canon!

**Griffin:** No, you don't find anything in there. The magic rod of—

**Travis:** [simultaneously] The Rod of Todd.

**Griffin:** The Magic Rod of Eternal Todd.

**Taako:** You know what? Let's play it safe. I'm just gonna go in.

**Justin:** Um, I pull out the hole thrower.

**Griffin:** Okay.

[dice roll]

**Travis:** Ooh!

**Justin:** And I will tell you what kind of size hole we got goin' on here. Let me get my... my d10 poppin'.

[dice roll]

**Justin:** Okay! That's a five foot deep and wide hole.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um... I'm trying to imagine— so, this is many rocks, right? That are all kind of piled up. So... um...

**Justin:** Many rocks are also called pebbles, Griffin.

**Travis:** Good job.

**Clint:** [wheezes]

**Griffin:** Okay. Um, we'll say you point this at the sort of biggest rock in the bunch, and you launch this five foot deep and wide hole. Uh, and you can— you basically pierce right through this big rock, but you can't really see much of anything in there. Except, well, I guess you have that head lamp.

**Travis:** I click it on.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Yeah, looking in there you just see sort of a— a cavern moving inwards.

**Justin:** And I can see in the dark, so.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah. Uh, yeah, you just kind of see a cavern moving inwards.

**Magnus:** Let's go!

**Griffin:** But yeah, you have managed to find, I would say, maybe a safer way into the—

**Travis:** We solved your stone puzzle!

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Plus we kept the bomb.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you're gonna keep that bomb with you?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It is— I will say this: it is a bomb. So be... careful.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** No. I put it in a different pocket than Steven.

**Griffin:** Okay. [laughs quietly] Yeah, no, that'll— yeah. You have thick lead pants that will contain the blast to a single leg. Um, okay, yeah. Uh, you— you move into this quarry through the hole— I mean, a five foot hole is easily big enough for you to move through. Um, and climb in, and as you move in, the cavern that you sort of opened up is fairly short, before it opens up into a room. And this room, um, essentially looks like the, like, entry room or like the— it maybe doubles as the break room for this diamond mine.

There is— in one corner there is a sink and an icebox. There are, like, three or four tables, like round tables with some chairs around them. A few of the chairs are upended. Um, right next to the entrance that you first walked in through is a little time card station where you can punch your card.

[music plays in the background]

And there's, uh— there's about, uh... there's about 15 cards tucked away in there. Um, on the far side of the room opposite you is a big, heavy metal door. Uh, almost like a vault-like door. And it is kind of similar to the doors that were in the Wave Echo Cave Mine. Like, these are industrial strength, big doors.

Uh, and to your right, past the tables and chairs, are 26 lockers. And these lockers are stacked up in two rows of three, uh— er, two rows of 13. And each of them has a little piece of tape that has crudely sort of marked down whose lockers they are. And you assume that these are former mine employees. And if you will refer to Skype, I will now send you the list of names that are on these lockers.

**Travis:** Griffin, this just says "Butts, butts, butts, butts, butts."

**Griffin:** No, Travis, it doesn't.

**Travis:** [snorts]

**Griffin:** Stop lying to try and embarrass me.



**Justin:** Mine says "Butt," just "Butts" over and over again. Okay, I'm gonna try to figure out how to get Dad to... hold on.

**Griffin:** I'll read the names just real quick, just burn 'em right down for our listeners. There's Lawrence, Abernathy, Cassidy, Ulrick, Farnsworth, Xavier, Vanessa, Randall, Perkins, Williams, Galding, Yael, Harland, Dana, Jerry, Barnes, Emeric, Zelda, Morrison, Isaac, Osha, Keith, Quincy, one label has been kind of scratched off and is unreadable, uh, Terrance, and Niall.

**Justin:** Are those all listeners?

**Griffin:** No. That would be crazy. Maybe, though.

**Travis:** We don't have that many listeners. [laughs quietly]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I'm checking out that scratched off label one.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, it just looks like all the other ones. The lockers are in fine shape, it's just the label is—

**Travis:** No, like, I'm opening it.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay. You, uh—

**Travis:** I'm not just, like, looking at it like a dummy.

**Griffin:** Yeah. These lockers don't have any kind of, like, uh, padlock or dial on them or anything like that. They're just, um... they're just labeled, and then there's, like, a little lever that pops 'em open.

**Travis:** Uh, I'm doing—

**Clint:** Okay, I'm gonna check—

**Travis:** I'm doing that kind of thing where, like, I open it but I, like, lean away from the opening. You know what I mean? In case, like, bugs fly out or something.

**Griffin:** Uh, you pull on the lever to this locker, and all three of you hear a horrible sound that lasts, like, a split second. And it's like— the sound is like "Bshh!" And it was actually the sound of this room more or less exploding.

**Travis:** What?

**Griffin:** And all three of you have died!

**Justin:** Aw, son of a bitch!

**Clint:** Damn!

**Griffin:** And you're back in that white space and the— the— the old woman— the old woman in this white space—

**Justin:** She's like, "Good job, fartknockers!"

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** She just looks— she doesn't actually say anything to you this time. Um, when you actually, like, come into the white space to this time, she's, um... she looks like she's, like, catching her breath. She looks, like, kind of tired. And then you're back in front of Roswell.

**Travis:** Okay. So can we just jump back to where we were?

**Griffin:** Yeah, in the interests of time, we can just fast-forward, because you've done a lot of things to sort of get you to where you need to be.

**Travis:** I will say—

**Griffin:** You're back in this— you're back in this room, and I've just described it again.

**Travis:** My concern, Justin and Dad, is that this woman is, through effort, allowing us to loop, and it's possible we may have finite attempts, or we need to space some time between attempts. For her to recoup—

**Justin:** Well, let's find out.

**Travis:** Yeah. No! Hold on.

**Clint:** How about if you don't blow the shit out of us?

**Travis:** To be fair, I said I leaned away!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Hey, can I—

**Travis:** I don't know what Griffin wants from me.

**Griffin:** Can I ask a question that I've literally never asked the three of you in the whole time that we've been running this game?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um, how do you— how does your— how do Taako, Merle, and Magnus, like, feel? Because, like, we're having a lot of fun here with our Groundhogs Day shenanigans, but now they've died three times, and it probably hasn't been great.

**Travis:** You know, Griffin, I'm glad you asked. I think for Magnus it's a matter of, like, this is how he would live his life anyways.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And so I would say he feels emboldened by being able to rush in, fuck up, and then rush in again.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, that's fair.

**Clint:** Okay. Um, Merle's not a fan.

**Griffin:** [through laughter] Okay, yeah, I figured as much.

**Clint:** Nah, not a fan. Um, a little chafed. And a little gassy from the whole thing.

**Travis:** How's Taako feel? I very much want to know.

**Clint:** How do you feel?

**Justin:** Uhh...

**Taako:** Just another day at the office, baby!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay. Um—

**Justin:** I would assume it would be very disorienting, I feel like.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Dying like that and then not dying.

**Griffin:** Okay. What do you— what do you guys wanna do, here? You got some— I'll tell it to you straight. You got some puzzles coming up.

**Clint:** I have Detect Traps.

**Justin:** Oh, that's good.

**Travis:** Oh, yeah! [scoffs] What the fuck!

**Justin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Travis:** Just— can you constantly do that?

**Justin:** I mean, it probably won't be as good as Travis's method of detecting traps, which is to say, leaning away from them.

**Travis:** I leaned away! I don't know—[through laughter] what do you want from me?

**Justin:** [laughs] Uh, go ahead and do your magic!

**Clint:** Okay! [holding back laughter] Now I can't find it!

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Detect— Detect Traps. Do you have a card called Detect— Detect Traps?

**Clint:** I thought I did! I just saw a card that said Detect Traps—

**Travis:** You wiener.

**Clint:** —and now...

**Justin:** I cast—

**Clint:** I can't find— I— I cast Detect Traps.

**Griffin:** Okay, that's not a spell. So...

**Clint:** It— it is!

**Griffin:** You just shout "Detect Traps" into the void.

**Clint:** No, it is a spell. It is a spell.

**Justin:** What did you think you saw?

**Clint:** I saw Detect Traps!

**Griffin:** There's Detect— there's Detect Magic.

**Clint:** No, there's something about traps. Find Traps!

**Justin:** *Find* Traps.

**Clint:** Thank you.

**Justin:** There we go.

**Clint:** Find Traps. You sense the presence of any trap within range that is... within line of sight. These cards, the print is so small!

**Griffin:** Okay. Um... here's what I can tell you about that. First of all, the— with Detect Traps you can tell that the door is trapped. If you try to open it before you do something else, um, it will activate the trap. Um, you can also tell that... and you can't tell specifically which ones, but you can tell that 16 of these lockers have mechanisms in them that will just set off the traps instantly. Um, the others have, uh— the others are still kind of trapped but, uh, in a different way, where they have to be set off in sequence.

**Clint:** Do— could I look at the rack of time cards and see if there's one with Cassidy's name on it?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. Uh, there is. Cassidy has one in there. How many did I say there were?

**Justin:** When was the last time that Cassidy checked in?

**Griffin:** So, the last time Cassidy checked in was six weeks ago.

**Clint:** When she brained me with a shovel.

**Griffin:** No, it was six weeks ago. Um, and—

**Justin:** Wait, is it six weeks— okay. Is the date on her time card six weeks prior to what we understand today's date to be?

**Griffin:** Yes. Um, it was the date of this accident that Roswell mentioned earlier. And sure enough— I forget how many people I said died in the thing, but there are four other time cards with the same punch-in date, and none of them, including Cassidy, have a punch-out date. Um, the rest of the cards just kind of taper off, like, going back through the months, where people just, like, kind of quit working here. Emeric stopped working here, like, a few months ago. Morrison was in here about a few months ago, quit working here. Isaac is in there, quit working here even— like, much, much longer ago. Hasn't worked here for a while, but their time card is still in the machine.

**Travis:** Griffin, you clever bastard! All of these names— there's 26 of them. They all start with a letter of the alphabet.

**Clint:** Right.

**Travis:** So there's something about the puzzle... I don't know if that's we need to trip the vowels in order, or we need to spell out a word, but if 16 of them are trapped, that means there's 10 that need opened in a certain order.

**Clint:** Well, what are the four names on the cards that were the most recent ones?

**Griffin:** Um... let's say Vanessa, let's say Williams, let's say Jerry, and Quincy. I'm picking those completely— I'm picking those completely at random now, though.

**Clint:** And also Cassidy?

**Griffin:** And Cassidy, yeah.

**Clint:** Those are the highest scoring tiles in Scrabble.

**Travis:** [snorts]

**Justin:** Maybe that— can we spell Kwyjibo?

[all laugh]

**Griffin:** Um, I literally just picked those names at random. That has nothing to do with the solution.

**Clint:** Or you're telling us you just picked—

**Griffin:** No, I—I promise. I'm also just sort of putting that fact into the universe so that if I forget who the specific people were that died in the future, it's because I... don't— it doesn't matter.

**Clint:** I like Travis's theory. I think we have to enter the cards in a certain order.

**Travis:** No, I think it's that we need to open the lockers in a certain order.

**Justin:** Open— open the lockers?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** I was thinking in the time clock, but we'll go lockers.

**Justin:** Is there— does— okay. In Dad's spell, does there seem to be any connection to the trap to the time cards—

**Griffin:** No, the time cards— no, the time cards are not trapped at all. There's nothing.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** There's nothing there.

**Clint:** Hmm...

**Justin:** Ahh. You know what we need, are diamonds.

**Clint:** What?

**Justin:** If we had some diamonds, then we might be able to buy some information from the witch in the forest, 'cause it seems like, barring other clues, that would be a fine— I mean, it can't have repeating letters, I guess? Because that wouldn't really make much sense.

**Travis:** What— what time card begins with the letter S?

**Griffin:** Yeah, there is one that starts with the letter S in the machine. Um, and it's Susanna.

**Travis:** Okay. That's the name that's scratched out.

**Clint:** Ohh, Susanna.

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Travis:** That is the name that's scratched out. That's the S name that we're missing. Is there anything written on that card? Other than her name?

**Griffin:** Nope. It's just one of the miners that quit working here a few months ago.



**Justin:** And everybody hated her. [laughs quietly] That's why they scratched her name out.

**Griffin:** That's why they scratched her name out, yeah. The only hint I'll think I'll give you is, think about what you want to do in this situation.

**Travis:** Open door. No. Enter.

**Justin:** E-L-Z.

**Travis:** You know what? What if we just blow up the whole room. [laughs quietly]

**Justin:** Um, I don't think—

**Clint:** Well, we tried that once.

**Justin:** Yeah, and it killed us. It did kill us.

**Travis:** Well, no, no, no. We go back through, we close your hole, we set it off.

**Justin:** Um...

**Travis:** We reopen said hole. [pause] No? Okay, that's fine.

**Justin:** [muttering] There's gotta be— gotta be a way to cheat with magic.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** If there's something that makes better podcast audio than trying to solve a puzzle.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I would recommend you just— yeah, just try to— just try shit. And if you— and if you—

**Justin:** [simultaneously] Well, no, I don't wanna try shit!

**Travis:** [simultaneously] I did that, Griffin!

**Griffin:** And if you die— if you die, then you die. But you'll just start right back here.

**Travis:** Okay, what do I have?

**Justin:** Yeah, but it seemed— it seemed to kind of, like, bum that lady out pretty bad that we died again!

**Clint:** So fast!

**Justin:** Yeah, so fast and furious.

**Clint:** By the way, what time is it?

**Griffin:** Uh, right now it's probably about 11:15.

**Travis:** Okay, I'm gonna put on the Lens of Straight Creepin' and see if I can see any pattern of steps—

**Griffin:** [simultaneously] Oh, interesting.

**Travis:** —from locker to locker.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah. Here, I'll, um... yeah, okay! How about this? The— the steps are, like, all over this room. Like, this was a highly trafficked room. But there's one pair that is slightly fresher than the rest.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Um, and even this pair kind of, like, walks back and forth around these lockers so much so that you can't tell the exact path that they walked. Um, but you can see that they started at the name Dana. That is where the footprints, this fresh— uh, this was the first name that these fresh prints of Bel-Airs walked to.

**Travis:** Dana.

**Justin:** Dana.

**Travis:** And I can't see where it ended?

**Griffin:** Yeah, how about that? You can also see that it ends at Niall. And then it walks to the door.

**Justin:** Okay. You know what? I'm gonna go open D.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, you pull the lever for Dana and, um, you open it up and it's empty, and you hear a click.

**Justin:** That's great. That's a great start.

**Travis:** [snorts]

**Justin:** Very good.

**Griffin:** One down.

**Justin:** One down.

**Travis:** I mean, demolition has ten letters... but it has I and O in it twice.

**Justin:** Are there any other Jake Gyllenhaal movies? That we...

**Travis:** De-to-na-tion... no.

**Justin:** So it's D...

**Griffin:** Mm-hmm.

**Clint:** Well, so far!

**Travis:** You know what, I'm gonna open—

**Justin:** [simultaneously] Bap, bap, bap, bap, bap, bap, bap, bap, N.

**Travis:** I'm gonna open E next.

**Griffin:** Boom! The room explodes.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** Alright.

**Griffin:** And then you wake up in the white space, and the woman doesn't—

**Clint:** What does she look like?

**Griffin:** I mean, the same as the last time you were here. It has not been that long... since your last visit.

**Magnus:** We're working on it! Sorry!

**Griffin:** [laughs] Okay. And you're back in the room.

**Travis:** So it's not E.

**Clint:** Hey, gotta go with A.

**Griffin:** [wheezes]

**Justin:** You're— what?!

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Okay, you dim bulbs! Hold on.

**Clint:** Well, if you're trying to—[slowly] don't blow up. [laughs]

**Justin:** So, the last letter is N.

**Clint:** Don't blow up! That's ten letters.

**Justin:** That's D-O-N... so you used the N in the third place. You can't— the s— uh, uh... *Do* blow up would work, but that's...

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Disarm... disarm...

**Justin:** Disarm...

**Clint:** Entrance.

**Justin:** Okay, it has to end with an N. You gotta hang with me here, Clint.

**Clint:** Right.

**Travis:** And it's only got ten letters, Clinton.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Here, look. This is what we're working with. In some... there's, uh...  
[croaks]

**Clint:** Destruction?

**Travis:** I open I.

**Justin:** [simultaneously] You know, I'm gonna—

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh—

**Clint:** I'm really good at this in *Fallout 4*.

**Griffin:** You pop— I'm assuming you popped open D first, please, God.

**Travis:** Yes. Yes, yes.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you pop open D. It is empty. You hear a click. You pop open I. It's empty. You hear a click.

**Justin:** Whoa, okay! D-I...

**Clint:** Diamond?

**Griffin:** By the way, you didn't pop open—

**Justin:** Ends in N.

**Griffin:** —these lockers don't just have letters on them. You popped open Isaac, Isaac's locker.

**Travis:** I don't care about Isaac.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Um...

**Justin:** Uh...

**Travis:** Should we go with S?

**Justin:** Dis... dis...

**Travis:** Disarm... dis— distract...

**Justin:** Dad, why don't you try S, and I'm gonna stand back a little bit.

**Travis:** Yeah, [laughs] I lean away.

**Griffin:** Um, so this is the un— the unreadable, scratched-off label that you figured out was Susanna's.

**Clint:** Susanna.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Okay, yeah, you pop that one open and there's a click and it's empty!

**Justin:** Wooo! Do you wanna go A?

**Travis:** Hey, you know what? Let's keep— keep these bones a-rollin'. Go for it.

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Justin:** Yeah. A, I'll pull A.

**Griffin:** Okay. You pull open Abernathy's locker and it clicks and it's empty!

**Justin:** Okay.

**Clint:** R—

**Justin:** Go, go ahead, Dad. Pull open R.

**Clint:** R!

**Griffin:** The— the— oh, I love— you guys are adorable right now. Yeah, you open it up and it clicks and it's empty.

**Travis:** Okay. M?

**Justin:** Alright, N.

**Travis:** M!

**Justin:** Q!

**Griffin:** [wheezes and laughs loudly]

**Justin:** The quick Q.

**Travis:** No, no! We pull Morrison.

**Griffin:** [wheezes] Uh, okay. Morrison clicks and it's empty. Um, and—

**Travis:** Okay, that's as far as I got.

**Griffin:** And when that happens, you hear the vault door— you hear something click behind—

**Travis:** [simultaneously] Got it.

**Griffin:** You hear something click behind it, but it does not open up.

**Travis:** Osha.

**Justin:** [simultaneously] Okay.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** No!

**Clint:** I— I got it.

**Justin:** Say it!

**Travis:** It's two words that— we think it's a phrase. I think it's disarm and open... are the two things we wanna do.

**Clint:** That's what I just said.

**Justin:** Dad said open before you did.

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Justin:** Dad, you have to speak up.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** I'm doing my best here to try to highlight your brilliance.

**Griffin:** Alright, do the thing.

**Clint:** O!

**Griffin:** Click! Opens.

**Clint:** P!

**Griffin:** Click! It opens, it's empty.

**Clint:** E!

**Griffin:** Click! It opens, it's empty.

**Travis:** We win the trip to the Bahamas! [laughs quietly]

**Clint:** [triumphantly] N!



**Griffin:** Uh, it opens, and is empty. And when it opens, the vault door starts to swing open, and 16 of the lockers all swing open to reveal, uh, cluster bombs wired to the insides of them.

**Travis:** We don't touch them.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Merle:** [stage whisper] Don't touch the bombs!

**Justin:** We *don't* touch the bombs this time.

**Griffin:** Um, but they very slowly swing open, alongside the vault door. Um, revealing, uh, an entry into the next room. And I just wanna say, I'm very, very proud of all three of you.

**Justin:** Yeah, we did a good job.

**Travis:** Were you hoping that would take us longer?

**Clint:** Although we've got listeners right now that knew it 20 minutes ago.  
[laughs]

**Justin:** Yeah, that's fine, guys. [holding back laughter] Keep it to yourselves.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** So the door opens. Can we just stroll on through?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Clint:** [discouraging noises]

**Griffin:** It explodes and you die. No, I'm just kidding.

**Clint:** Can we... look?

**Justin:** Err...

**Clint:** First?

**Justin:** Errm... okay, you can look.

**Travis:** What— yeah, that— that's a good question. Are cluster bombs the only things in the lockers?

**Griffin:** Yep, that's it.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** Hey, guys. Bad lockers!

[all laugh]

**Justin:** That's not really what lockers are for!

**Travis:** Don't you feel bad for the people who aren't D-I-S-A— who are like, "Don't keep anything in your lockers you like." [laughs]

**Justin:** "[shaky voice] Hey boss, listen, um... you know I bring my lunch [unintelligible] to the office. My— I'd really like to— be able to—"

"[gruff voice] I told you once, I told you a thousand times! Only one thing goes in your locker and that's cluster bombs!"

"[shaky voice] I know, but the other [crosstalk] too."

**Travis:** Is there anything in the icebox?

**Griffin:** Uh, two things.

**Justin:** My sandwich.

**Griffin:** Two things of note. First of all, um, this trap seems like it was... uh, rigged together, um... like, it— you—

**Justin:** Don't say hastily, because that would be madness.

**Griffin:** Not hastily, no. This took— this obviously took a while. But this is— this is not standard mine procedure. This was a trap that was laid here... for people coming into the mine.

**Justin:** Right, okay, I'm with you.

**Griffin:** Uh, Travis, to answer your question, yeah, there's some meat in the icebox. The icebox is perplexingly still kind of cold? Um, it's not a refrigerator. Like, there's actual, like, ice in it keeping things cool, and that ice is still, like, going strong. Um, it's kind of chilly in here, so maybe that has something to do with it, but there's meat, uh, just, like, raw... steaks, in the icebox. Um.

**Magnus:** Hey, Taako? Is... is this magic, this icebox, is it magic in anyway?

**Justin:** Let me run a, uh... [imitates sounds of pages turning] arcanum check.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Or arcana, sorry. Arcana. I've been listening to too much—

**Clint:** Arkham Asylum.

**Justin:** Too much, uh... Patrick Rothfuss. Okay.

[dice roll]

**Justin:** Uh, 15... plus...

**Griffin:** That's enough. I'll say that the ice— the ice in this box—

**Justin:** 18, 18, 18.

[dice roll]

**Griffin:** The ice in this box— and I hadn't planned on talking about the specific type of ice that was in this box— but let's just say it is kind of a magic ice that stays colder for longer, and I'm gonna call it Good Ice.

**Justin:** [laughs loudly] Hold on, I'm being swept away by the fantasy tapestry you're weaving!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** This is Good Ice, and it's kept this old meat, which is how it would show up in your inventory, fresh for longer than you thought it would last.

**Travis:** Why would a mine keep raw meat?

**Justin:** Well, this is by all means the highest priority mystery we had to solve.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Let's— let's remain on this meat question! And now—

**Travis:** I just wanna say that we're gonna walk into a room with, like, a huge slathering beast in it and be like, "Ohhh. It was for—[clicks tongue] ohhh."

**Justin:** I mean, like, take it or don't! But we don't have to run an *Unsolved Mysteries* episode about what kind of meat and where— why we have meat!

**Clint:** I take the meat and the ice!

**Justin:** Thank God.

**Travis:** It explodes! [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah, it was on a weight— uh, a weighted trap. Uh, and a voice comes out of the box. "Not my meat and ice!" Boom. No, you—

**Justin:** I make a bag of sand that looks like it weighs as much as the meat and the ice. [wheezes]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** And then I swap 'em out.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Now we're gonna have to go running down this tunnel while a big-ass rock chases us!

**Griffin:** The door that you opened up opens up into an elevator, which of course it does.

**Justin:** Oh, fuck me.

**Griffin:** And it's not— it's not— it's not Upsy, your lifting friend. It's just, like, a— it's sort of an industrial elevator. It has sort of exposed walls. There's, like, no ceiling on it whatsoever. It's like a freight elevator.

**Justin:** There's gotta be a company logo on it though, right? They had to have made it.

**Griffin:** Um, yeah. I mean, it is a— I guess it's part of the, um... the Miller family of products.

**Justin:** Nice.

**Griffin:** Um— and, uh, yeah, there is a— there is a mine cart on the side of it with some boxes, and then a panel that has an up and down button on it. And as you open the elevator sort of lattice, you see two small shapes run out from under the mine cart full of boxes, and they look like little, um, furry bugs. Uh, and they have big, adorable ears, and a couple little black, furry wings with white spots— uh, or no— no white spots, just all— all just all black fur. And they scurry out from under the mine cart and kind of run up to— uh, to your party, um, kind of expectant.

**Magnus:** Well, hey, there!

**Merle:** Hi, little furbugs!

**Griffin:** They make a little... [high pitched chittering] noise as they come up close to you.

**Magnus:** Is there trouble down in the mines?

**Furbugs:** [high pitched chittering]

**Clint:** [laughs loudly]

**Magnus:** There is?

**Furbugs:** [high pitched chittering]

**Travis:** Now Griffin, with my animal proficiency—

**Clint:** Oh, God!

**Travis:** —can I understand what they're saying?

**Griffin:** Um, no.

**Justin:** Do they seem to appreciate his folksy charm?

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh... no, but they offer you a f—

**Clint:** Could he carve something for them?

**Griffin:** They offer you a free night at the Furry Bug Inn.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I take it!

**Griffin:** Um, no, you can't understand what they're saying. This isn't—

**Travis:** If I've learned one thing in Los Angeles, it's when you're offered something free, you take it.

**Griffin:** You take it, yeah. No, they're just kind of...

**Furbugs:** [high pitched chittering]

**Griffin:** At you.

**Magnus:** Do you— do you guys wanna come with us? Is there anything we need to know? Can you show us anything important?

**Griffin:** Mmkay, you're talking to bugs. You are talking to bugs. And they just—

**Justin:** Yeah, he's talking to bugs.

**Griffin:** They just— they just...

**Furbugs:** [high pitched chittering]

**Travis:** Can I, uh, real quick just point of order 'cause it just struck me, did we take Taako's hole with us?

**Griffin:** No, that's not how any of this works. [laughs]

**Justin:** It only works— it's a gun that shoots holes.

**Travis:** Okay, I wasn't sure if it was, like, a, you know, like a Roger Rabbit, like, you peel the hole back off the wall.

**Griffin:** No. That would be incredible, though.

**Magnus:** Okay, well, you boys scurry along. Uh, we're gonna adventure on. Uhh... have a great day!

**Merle:** Good seein' ya.

**Griffin:** Um, Merle—

**Magnus:** Thanks for— thanks for everything.

**Griffin:** Merle, one of 'em scurries up onto your boot. Um...

**Justin:** Aww.

**Clint:** Aww!

**Griffin:** And starts, like, climbing up— climbing up your boot a little bit, towards your jortpers. um—

**Travis:** What's in your jortpers?

**Clint:** Um, which has meat in it. Which has the raw meat in it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, the other one— the other one follows suit and starts scurrying up the same leg.

**Clint:** I hold out the raw meat and let 'em have a little nibble.

**Griffin:** Okay. They, um— they almost completely devour it, faster than you could ever imagine. They, like, jump up onto it and it just kind of disappears, and they run off outside through the hole that Taako made, just "[high pitched chittering]" the whole time. Um, but they seem very contented and very happy. And I would— if there was a thing like karma points in this game? You would get those. That may be the first selfe—

**Clint:** [simultaneously] Well, give 'em to me.

**Griffin:** —the first self— okay, you get karma points. I don't know what they're gonna be used for, but...

**Travis:** No, that's inspiration. Inspiration?

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah, I'll give you inspiration. Just for being kind to animals, which is very Pan, very Pan of you.

**Travis:** I talked to them! Ugh.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** They didn't understand you though.

[music plays in the background]

**Travis:** Let's go down.



**Griffin:** Okay. Um, I had a puzzle here, but I think it would probably take too long to get past it.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Griffin:** [laughs] So you did it.

**Travis:** Thanks. Thanks.

**Justin:** What was it? [laughs quietly]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Yeah, tell us. So you can't ever use it again.

**Griffin:** Uh, you had to hit the elevator button in a certain way or else it explodes. Stop me if you've heard this one before.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

[music plays]

**Griffin:** Hey, everybody! This is Griffin McElroy, your best friend, your dungeon master, and your... local handyman. Stop flushin' all that junk down the toilet! This is episode 44 of *The Adventure Zone*. Thanks for listening to it! Um, I think it's, like, the third or fourth episode in the Eleventh Hour Arc, and boy, our boys are just— they're just having fun with all the dying, and all the— the Groundhog's Day-ing, and just having a grand ol' time, and I hope you are too.

I wanna thank everybody who has tweeted about the show using the #TheZoneCast hashtag. Uh, if you do so, you might end up as a character on the show! We have a couple more NPCs in this area that I haven't picked names for yet, so if you wanna see your name on the show, just tweet about the show using the #TheZoneCast hashtag. We really appreciate that, because we also don't advertise the show in any way, so word of mouth is really the only way we have of getting this show in front of new people, and we work really hard on it, and are really, really proud of it, so anything you can do to help spread the word, we really appreciate it.

[ad break]

**Griffin:** Got a personal message here. If you want to get a message on the show, just go to [Maximumfun.org/jumbotron](http://Maximumfun.org/jumbotron). You can find out all the details on how to get a message on the show there. This one is for Our DM, Nikolai, and then in parentheses, (The Creator). I'm guessing that's Tyler's brother. That was a fun Tyler, The Creator joke, everybody. This message is from Mikhail, Rodux, or Ro-dux, uh, Sevina, Garyl, and Islude. God, I hope that Garyl... I don't know if it'd be funnier if that Garyl was named after the Adventure Zone horse or just, like, this was, um, just sort of separate creation. Anyway, they all say to Nikolai:

"On behalf of all the residents in the world of Sharpie, we would like to wish you a happy birthday! We had boxed up a magic fox to give you, but it kind of exploded. Our bad! Anyway, sorry for ruining all the great plans you had for us over the last few years. We would say we'll do better, but I think we all know that's a lie, especially with the... " and unfortunately the message cut off. Um, but especially... with the... D&D... local tournament coming up. We have to really prove ourselves.

I don't know if that's a thing. Is that a thing? Competitive D&D? Maybe I'll be not-lazy enough to google it later. Uh, anyway, happy birthday, Nikolai! Keep up the good work.

There's a bunch of other shows on the Maximum Fun Network, which we are a proud member of, that I think you're just gonna love. Just go to [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org) and just start clicking! Just start clicking on things. Maybe you'll accidentally click an ad and you'll put, like, a quarter in my pocket or something.

I don't actually know how that works. But there's great shows on the network, like *Getting Curious*, and *The Next Generation*, and *The Beef and Dairy Network*. Um, a lot of really good shows, all at [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org).

We also have a website called [mcelroyshows.com](http://mcelroyshows.com), uh, and that's got all the different podcasts and video things that we do. Um... uh, I'm pretty sure it also has all our PO Box information. I just opened up a PO Box here in Austin. It's PO Box 66639, Austin, TX, 78766.

Um, so I know the boys have been getting postcards and stuff like that for a while. If you want to send stuff Austin-wards, that's how to do it. Um, but go to

mcelroyshows.com and you can see all the shows we do, like *Shmanners*, the show that Travis does with his wife Teresa, uh, about doing manners good. Uh, or *Sawbones*, a show that Justin does with his wife Sydnee about medical history. Or *Rosebuddies*, a show I do with my wife Rachel where we talk about the *Bachelor* and *Bachelorette* television shows. Again, that's mcelroyshows.com.

That is it for this week's commercial break. Thank you all again very much for listening. Um, we are actually leaving today to fly to Boston to do our live show tomorrow on the 15th, so Boston, what's up? We'll see you— we'll see you then. Uh, just a reminder, this one's not gonna be the next Eleventh Hour episode. It's gonna be a little side story, and I think we're gonna release it later this winter, once Travis and I are on paternity leave and need some content to help fill the feed. Um, so yeah, it's gonna be fun little weird little side story. I'm excited to do it, excited to see all these shining, wonderful faces, hang out with some people that have been tweeting with us for the past, like, two years now. Um, I'm just so excited. We'll see you then, and if you're not coming to the show, look for the next episode of *The Adventure Zone* on July 28th. See you then, bye!

[music plays]

**Griffin:** You make your way down, um, and actually, horrifyingly, on your way down, this is when the earthquake happens. Uh, because your la— this is the loop in which you solved the puzzle, and it took you a very long time— well, not a very long time. But, um, yeah. So you hit that 11:30 point. There's an earthquake. And so just, like, while you're going down— and this descent takes quite a while. This descent takes probably about five minutes of going down. Um, just everything starts shaking, and this freight elevator kind of, like, bangs off the walls a little bit. Um, and at one point it actually drops a few feet, but it doesn't fall all the way. Like, there's probably some sort of emergency brake on it that catches it, and then after a few seconds of not moving, it continues its descent after the earthquake stops.

**Justin:** Another fine Miller product.

**Clint:** [wheezes]

**Griffin:** Uh, and you— you open up, um, and as the door opens you get just a blast of cold air on your face. The exterior door, not the lattice door to the elevator. Um, and you are in a humongous cavern. Um, the only light being provided is— well, I guess Magnus has his headlamp on. There's an orange light

above the elevator door that's also kind of illuminating things a little bit. Uh, and you can see in front of you is a, um— another cart, like a tram, um, that is on a— a track that is going down into the cavern. And this cavern is going pretty steadily constantly down. And, um, the cart actually has a broken wheel, so it's not exactly on the track. Um, but this is not like a mine cart for moving minerals. This is like a personnel cart for getting people, like, deeper into the mine much faster. But it is currently broken. And, um, you can see actually some cracks in the ceiling that some dust is falling from. Like, these cracks were just sort of hewn into the stone with the earthquake, and there is a sort of a faint, constant buzzing noise happening in this room. Which, despite the fact that you have these two lights in it, is kind of— uh, is still very, very dark.

**Travis:** How broken is it? Is it like a wooden wheel, like something I could fix?

**Griffin:** No, it's like a metal— it is a metal wheel that is broken. That's not to say you can't fix it, but it's, like, the metal is broken.

**Travis:** Is the buzzing, like, sound like insects?

**Griffin:** Um, maybe a nature check would reveal that to those who want to roll a nature check.

**Travis:** I'm going to do a nature check.

**Justin:** Nature.

[dice roll]

**Griffin:** You know who would probably be very good at a nature check?

**Travis:** Yeah, not me! I got an 8.

**Griffin:** You really can't tell.

[dice roll]

**Clint:** [morosely] 7.

**Travis:** But you got your pluses.

**Justin:** [simultaneously] Plus... you gotta have a plus.

**Clint:** I do have a plus.

**Justin:** Dad's always looking at his cards.

**Clint:** Well, I'm planning ahead.

**Justin:** For what? You have no fuckin' clue what's happening!

**Clint:** I have a great idea, pal.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Nature check. Uh, okay, so it's 11.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah, with an 11 you can tell just sort of by the fluctuations in the noise that whatever is making it is alive.

**Clint:** I have a spell called Mending.

**Griffin:** Oh!

**Clint:** That allows you to fix things. Metal, stone... and I know you're looking it up right now.

**Griffin:** No, I trust you. Um, here's a fun fact. That spell is actually baked into the Arclight Spanner, your weapon that you got from Hurley during the battle wagon races.

**Clint:** Why don't you two go investigate, and I'll fix the wheel on the cart?

**Justin:** [singing] Daddy fix the wheel.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Alright. That sounds pretty good. I think we're in okay shape right now. And if we die, no big whoop.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah. Uh, Merle, you get to work—

**Justin:** Hey, what would happen if one of us died?

**Griffin:** Um... I don't know!

**Justin:** I guess everybody would just—

**Clint:** [shouting] That's the key to the mystery!

**Justin:** [quietly] Dad, please.

**Clint:** Oh. [hoarse whisper] That's the key to the mystery!

**Justin:** Sorry, my microphone's already broken. It exploded in a million pieces like a fucking gizmo [crosstalk].

**Clint:** I mend it with my spanner.

**Justin:** Blathering blatherskites, dad. You exploded my mic.

[all laugh]

**Travis:** Okay. We're gonna move forward. Merle, keep your Stone of Farspeech on.

**Griffin:** Yeah, Merle's working on the wheel. It's gonna take him a couple minutes. Um, but the pieces of the wheel— it shattered into, like, four pieces— start to float through the air and start to fuse together, and it's almost like some sort of invisible force is welding it, as sparks come flying out of your wrench.

Um, okay. Magnus and Taako, what are you guys doing? You got about, um— the light from the elevator gives you about, like, a 20-foot radius circle into this cavern, and the— and you got the tracks going right in front of you, and Merle's behind you working on the cart.

**Clint:** What time is it?

**Griffin:** Uh, I mean, by now it's about probably 11:35.

**Clint:** Alright.

**Travis:** I'm gonna go to look down the path, I guess? Look down the track, see if there's been any damage, any cave-in, anything like that.

**Griffin:** Investigation?

**Travis:** Yeah, sure.

**Justin:** Sounds good. I'll run one too, just to...

[two dice rolls]

**Justin:** Ope. I didn't find shit.

**Travis:** I got a 13... nothing. So a 13.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um, no, it seems like the tracks are pretty clear. Taako, what'd you roll?

**Justin:** Uh, a 3. I'll be lucky if I find my own asshole.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, yeah, you move around your cheeks for a bit and you're like, "[distressed] Wha— no, no, no, no!"

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Not again!

**Griffin:** Um... you done transmuted it shut again, dammit. Um, Merle— Magnus, with that check actually— and because you have the headlamp, you can actually tell, there's no, like, big rocks or anything blocking the path. Um, but as you move your light around this tunnel, and specifically, like, around the floor checking to make sure that the tracks are okay, it almost looks like there's, like, smoke on the ground, and all around. And as you, like, shine your headlamp into the smoke, like, it kind of parts for you a little bit, revealing the track underneath.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Magnus:** Hey, Taako?

**Taako:** Yes?

**Magnus:** See this? I know you're looking for your butthole—

**Taako:** What— I don't understand your voice. Why do you sound like a— a person called McElroy.

**Magnus:** I know you're looking— I know you're looking for your butthole. Um, what is the— is the— uh, is this— this smoke seems unnatural.

**Taako:** Yeah.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** For sure.

**Magnus:** Uh... touch it.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Uh, okay. I'll cast Detect Magic, see what we going down here.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** [blows raspberry]

**Travis:** [laughs] And he does!

**Griffin:** Uh, there doesn't seem to be any magic.

**Justin:** Dad just— Dad just handed me Detect Magic while I was searching for it, as if to reinforce that his card sorting system is better than mine. Which it most certainly is.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Yes, it is!



**Griffin:** I mean, I'll simplify it. There's no— there's no, like, magic that you can— except for the mending spell that's happening right behind you, you don't pick up on anything.

**Merle:** Sorry, didn't mean to interrupt!

**Justin:** Okay, sounds good.

**Griffin:** At this point, the cart has been fixed.

**Justin:** Oh, great. Another great adventure, Magnus.

**Travis:** Yeah, we did it. I think we solved the weird smoke puzzle. I have a suspi— okay. This is an interesting D&D conundrum. I, Travis McElroy, have a suspicion in something I would test out, but I don't think Magnus would. So, like... I'm just gonna move forward and not do it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, 's— 'spect the fiction, bro.

**Travis:** Yeah. So, like, let's get in the cart and let's go.

**Justin:** Yeah, let's do it!

**Griffin:** Merle, you down?

**Clint:** Yeah. Do we know how to operate the cart?

**Griffin:** Yeah, there's a lever that seems to have three settings. Right now it's in the middle, um, but there's one to, like, go back, and one to go forward.

**Clint:** Okay, I'll come catch up to you guys. Aren't you a little bit ahead of me?

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah.

**Clint:** I get in.

**Griffin:** Merle goes right—

**Clint:** I threw that lever.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Clint:** Toot toot! Tink tink! Chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga chugga.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um...

**Travis:** I will say that when Magnus gets in he kind of holds his shield kind of over his head like a... like an umbrella a little bit.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um, and you're just moving on down the cave?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Clint:** I'm gonna call this my magic trolley.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** I'm gonna open the umbra staff [wheezes] up above my head too. Just let Merle really wonder what's going on.

**Clint:** [dooting]

**Griffin:** Okay, you move away from the entrance, away from that orange light above the elevator door. And this is gonna be a fun, like, *Dragon's Lair* style death where just like in a cartoon, like, just something happens to you, and then all of a sudden it's just skeletons standing there holding the umbrella and the shield and somebody, like, whistling while they move a lever. Um, because all three of you are almost instantly devoured by something as soon as you leave the light.

**Travis:** Got it. By the Vashta Nerada.

**Griffin:** And you're back in the white space, and same deal. Just kind of exhausted, and you're back in front of Roswell.

**Justin:** Okay. Hole thrower. Done. Gideon—

**Travis:** We know the code.

**Justin:** We know the code.

**Griffin:** You do the puzzle. And let's exactly— to further 'spect that fiction, you pop that code in pretty quickly this time, right? And you go down. You have your little interaction with the dark bugs. And then you go down the elevator.

**Justin:** Well, no, not necessarily. Because I don't know that we want to... I wonder if the meat would be more useful if, like, we didn't offer it to them. Like, do we need to do that?

**Griffin:** I guess not.

**Travis:** But Dad got inspiration out of it, and it seemed to make them happy.

**Griffin:** It's true.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Clint:** I did get karma out of it.

**Griffin:** Um, and my point was, you did that so much faster that you probably made it down the elevator before this earthquake happened, right? Like, before 11:30. And now when you get to the bottom, the scene's the same. The cart is broken. Um, but you don't hear buzzing, and there aren't no— there aren't no cracks in the ceiling. Um, you do just hear the occa— you hear, like, [high pitched chittering]. So you can hear some stuff in there but it's not like— it doesn't sound like— whatever it is, there's not billions of them.

**Travis:** Is there still smoke covering the tracks and stuff?

**Griffin:** Yeah. I mean, when you investigate you don't see smoke. You just see, um, like— you see a handful of those little bugs, and they run away from the light as soon as you shine it on 'em.

**Clint:** Griffin?

**Griffin:** Yo.

**Clint:** Do our spell slots reset every time?

**Griffin:** They do, yeah.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Travis:** Cool, cool.

**Clint:** Okay!

**Griffin:** Uh, what do you want to do? Let's say at this point you can get down here— the fastest you can get down here is, like, 11:15.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Oh, let's actually— 11:20. Yeah, that'll be good.

**Magnus:** You guys got, like, spells that do light, right? That makes things glow?

**Justin:** That's actually what I was looking for. I thought I did. I mean, my magic eyes can see in the dark.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Yeah, but what I'm saying is if light seems to drive these things away... why not make, like, the cart glow?

**Justin:** That's not a bad—

**Clint:** I have a spell called Light. I touch one object—

**Griffin:** That's a fucking really efficiently-named spell!

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Yeah. And the object sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius.

**Justin:** Oh, cast it on the cart.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** I cast it on the cart. Skidoosh!

**Griffin:** Are you repairing it as well?

**Clint:** Yeah, it's not gonna go anywhere till I fix it.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, yeah, you repair this cart and you make it super duper shiny. You have repaired the cart, and it's about 11:25.

**Travis:** Let's move.

**Justin:** Let's go.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Clint:** Let's bust ass.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you hop in the cart and, um, begin moving down the track. And sure enough you can see these little bugs, like, scattering as you move down the path, and they are giving your cart a wide berth. You are, uh, curving around to the left a ways. There's kind of like a, um— after you've been going for a few minutes there's, like, a hairpin turn. Not exactly a hairpin turn but, like, you are turning almost 180 degrees to the left, and then you're just going down and down and down this path for a super long time.

**Clint:** So we passed the point where we got devoured?

**Griffin:** And— well, it's— at 11:30, um, just past that hairpin turn, there is that earthquake. And then sure enough, cracks in the ceiling start opening up and some shapes— those— thousands and thousands of those little bugs start crawling out of it, and I'm gonna say maybe a few of them land— let's say maybe, like, uh—

**Travis:** I've got my shield over my head, thank you very much.

**Griffin:** Okay. You've got a— okay, so you're protecting your... your dome. I guess you did establish that in the last...

**Clint:** And you're protecting your... self. Okay, go ahead.

**Travis:** What do you want me to do? Grow my shield bigger?

**Clint:** Protect us!

**Travis:** How?

**Griffin:** Let's just say that, like, some bugs are about to fall into your cart. How would you deal with that?

**Travis:** I— I can only speak for myself. I'm holding my shield over my head.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** I say we try to, like, kill 'em?

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** We haven't killed anything, like, for five episodes.

**Griffin:** That's a good point.

**Justin:** Kill some bugs? Kill the bugs? Are the bugs [crosstalk]?

**Clint:** Well, obviously my good karma isn't working!

**Justin:** Yeah, that's a good point. Yeah, I'm having a hard time thinking of any other way to defend us. I'm sure there's some magic I could cast.

**Travis:** Well, you've got your umbrella. We could just, like, keep 'em off us, you know?

**Griffin:** The bugs are— the bugs— I don't know if I described them accurately enough. They're very cute.

**Clint:** Aww!

**Justin:** Aww. But they did eat us?

**Griffin:** They di— yeah, yeah.

**Justin:** Yeah. But they're cute. Okay, hold on.

**Griffin:** You guys have spent five minutes trying to figure out how to kill some bugs.

**Justin:** They're gonna eat us!

**Griffin:** I'm just saying, in real life—

**Clint:** And you said they're cute!

**Griffin:** —in real life, Griffin could've done this in, like, ten seconds, man.

**Travis:** To be fair, Griffin, this is your fault, 'cause you put us in the mindset of solving puzzles and traps.

**Griffin:** That's a good point. Fair enough.

**Clint:** How do we know they'll bother us? I thought light chased 'em away, and aren't we still surrounded by a nimbus of light in this trolley?

**Griffin:** Um, yeah, but there's a few that are, like, in the cart with you, and they don't know how to get out, and they're, like, freaking out, and they're starting to, like, nip at your boots.

**Travis:** Oh, I thought they were falling.

**Clint:** I hit one with my warhammer.

**Travis:** Hold on. I thought they were falling from the ceiling. They're already in the cart with us?

**Griffin:** Yeah. They, like, fell from the ceiling into the cart.

**Travis:** Oh, stomp, stomp, stomp, stomp, stomp.

**Griffin:** Okay. [laughs quietly] Uh, yeah, you can just stomp 'em. That's fair. Uh, it's gross— it's gross and it's horrible.

**Clint:** [laughs] Kinda anticlimactic though, isn't it?

**Griffin:** Maybe a bit. But sometimes the easiest solution's the best one.

**Clint:** Well, that's true.

**Griffin:** The stompiest. Okay, you— you go down this path, and it's again, like, a long cart ride. This mine— they had dug, like, a lot out, and as you go down the path the bugs are still giving you a pretty wide berth. Um, and you can see, like, some other sort of passageways that don't have tracks coming out them, sort of branching off to the left and right, and then just, like, deep, deep holes going down from those. Um, and, uh— so this was like the main vein of this mine. Not vein like motherload but, like, where people would move down.

It was a pretty long journey. It took you about 15 minutes to go down, so you don't have a ton of time. But you've made it to the end of this tramway, and you've pulled in front of another door with another orange light on top of it that is keeping all these bugs at bay. Um, and this door just has a button on it that says "Open," and that's pretty much it.

**Travis:** Yeah?

**Justin:** Do you wanna... well, I mean...

**Taako:** Uh, listen—

**Travis:** All this time Magnus is slowly just pushing his finger towards it.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Merle, do you wanna try detecting— uh, searching for traps?

**Clint:** I cast Find Traps again.

**Griffin:** Um, okay. The door is not trapped. You can tell that.

**Travis:** I push it!

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Click!

**Griffin:** Um, there is something behind the door that is trapped.



**Travis:** Dammit.

**Griffin:** But you did not activate it. You press it and you hear the sound of, uh... the sound of machinery moving far beyond the door. And then you hear silence. Like, nothing happens for a while. And then, um, after about a minute your door starts to slide open, and it takes it a real long time. It takes it, like, 30 seconds for it to completely open up. And then inside is a very, very, very small room. Um, it's kind of reminiscent actually of the airlocks from the Crystal Kingdom stuff. Um, and you just see another door inside with an "Open" button. And then on the back side of the door that you just came through is another "Open" button. Um, so there's a button on either side of this door. You come through and then there's another door on the opposite side that has an open button on it.

**Travis:** Are there windows or anything, any kind of portholes?

**Griffin:** No. There's no windows, there's no way to see through it.

**Justin:** Let's go ahead and do it!

**Griffin:** Okay. Um, you punch the "Open" button on the other door, and the one that you came through begins its slow cycle, again, of shutting. Um, and once it does you—

**Justin:** This is a bug thing. It's to keep the bugs out.

**Griffin:** —uh, the door shuts. You hear a "Tssss." And then, um, on— there's a wall to your right when you came in. And, um, a panel on this wall opens up, and you see a clock. And this clock is a 60 second timer, and it's counting down. And underneath the clock, immediately underneath the clock, is another small metal panel that has, like, a slot in it? Almost looks like a key card slot at a hotel. Um, and that's... that's what you see. And the clock is counting down from 60.

**Clint:** What's it at right now? Oh, it just started 60?

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. We're not gonna move it in real time.

**Clint:** This is the trap from the elevator, isn't it?

**Griffin:** No, this is a different one.

**Clint:** Oh, okay.

**Travis:** There's like a slot, you say?

**Griffin:** Yeah. Slot like a key card slot.

**Travis:** Is it something I could use my thieves' tools on and pick and disarm?

**Griffin:** Um, if you wanna use— if you wanna use your—

**Travis:** [simultaneously] Is there wires?

**Griffin:** No, there's no exposed wires. If you wanna use your thieves' tools to see what you can do, um, you can do that.

**Travis:** [quietly] Is everybody cool with that?

**Justin:** Well, bye everybody.

**Clint:** [wheeze-laughs]

**Justin:** It's been a good life.

**Travis:** I— I do that.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Whee!

**Travis:** I mean, that's a 12 plus 10, so 22.

**Justin:** I put my hands up in the air like Superman, 'cause I'm getting ready to go to heaven.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I mean, I rolled a 22.

**Griffin:** Okay. With a 22, um, you realize that there are some very, very, very small screws on the corners of this key card panel, um, and you screw them off, and you have exposed, after removing this panel, um— you can still see this key card slot, like, right in the center of things, but the center is surrounded by five wires. Um, and there's a red, a yellow, a blue, a green, and a black wire.

**Travis:** I cut the green wire.

**Clint:** Wait a minute!

**Justin:** Whee!

**Travis:** What— what do you know? Hold on. Real quick Dad, if you wanna share with me—

**Justin:** Blue, green— what's the other color? Red, yellow, blue, green...

**Griffin:** Black.

**Clint:** Black.

**Griffin:** Um, I'm gonna just take— I mean, canonically Magnus did say it, so you do have a trip to heaven.

**Travis:** Whee!

**Griffin:** And we can just hop right back into the room, 60 seconds on the clock. What do you do?

**Travis:** I've eliminated one option.

**Justin:** I'm not gonna do it like this. Um, let's think about what we know for 60 seconds.

**Clint:** Hmm... red, yellow, blue, green...

**Travis:** Black.

**Clint:** Well, they always say cut the red wire. Isn't that what it was in *Speed*? Wasn't *Speed* the red wire?

**Justin:** Um... the...

**Clint:** What is it in the M&Ms movie trailer?

**Travis:** I cut the black wire!

**Griffin:** [singing] To heaven we're going on a trip together.

**Justin:** Wait. Did you just say that—

**Clint:** Wait a minute! You just cut the same wire!

**Justin:** You cut the same fucking wire! Again.

**Travis:** No. No, I cut the green.

**Griffin:** No, he did green— he did green last time. But both have killed you.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Clint:** So are we back there with this timer at 60? There's gotta be a better way to figure this out!

**Griffin:** So, it can be. Um, so there's a... there's a couple ways to solve this one, and that's all I'll tell you. But if you don't wanna be in this room and you wanna be in an earlier place, you let me know.

**Clint:** Ah! Ah!

**Justin:** What?

**Clint:** The time cards.

**Justin:** You really are into those, huh?

**Clint:** Well, he just said there's a slot, a small metal slot. He didn't say what you had to insert was metal.

**Justin:** Ohh, okay. Get, uh— so get, um... I don't know. You wanna go with Cassidy's?

**Travis:** Well, if we're already there, hold on.

**Magnus:** I'll get us out of here!

**Travis:** I use railsplitter to cut all five wires at once.

**Clint:** [wheeze-laughs]

**Griffin:** [through laughter] You are in heaven.

Uh, okay, yeah. No, you're back in the— you're back in that entry room. Um, I forget the exact names that I laid out for you that there are cards for. Um, Cassidy's was among them. The four people that died in the accident are among them. Um, uh... Niall I think is one of them. Terrence is one of them. Isaac is one of them. Quincy is one of them.

**Justin:** Hey, you know what? We should get Isaac's. He's the sheriff now, and it seems like maybe he would be a high-ranking person that would have access, right? Does that make sense?

**Clint:** It does indeed.

**Justin:** Okay. Let's grab, uh, all of them. [wheezes]

**Clint:** There you go!

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Because we can.

**Clint:** And we'll think about it on our long trip down.

**Justin:** [simultaneously] And we'll think about on the way down.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Um, if this is the case, this time I want to use my shield to kind of, like, keep bugs from getting in our cart so I don't have to squish any adorable bugs.

**Griffin:** Okay, you don't kill any bugs this loop. Um, and you make it to the end and you make it in the room, 60 seconds on the clock.

**Clint:** And how much time on— altogether? What time is it right now?

**Griffin:** Um, I mean, the fastest you could probably get here is, uh— the fastest you could get here is, like, 11:50.

**Clint:** [sighs]

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** So someone's been building traps. And the only one that survived the cave in—

**Justin:** [simultaneously] I put in Isaac's card.

**Travis:** —if the only one to survive the cave in was Cassidy, maybe Cassidy put in the traps and we should use her card.

**Justin:** Does that stand to reason?

**Clint:** Well, but Isaac survived.

**Travis:** Well, that's assuming that it's the same Isaac. There could be more than one Isaac in the world.

**Griffin:** Chris Isaac.

**Clint:** Griffin wouldn't do that.

**Justin:** Let's, uh— why don't you...

**Clint:** I like— I—

**Justin:** You agree with Travis or me? Isaac or Cassidy, Dad? I'll let Dad pick.

**Clint:** [pained] Oh! Uh— Isaac.

**Griffin:** Okay. You put Isaac's punch card in. And the clock stops. And you hear that "Tsss" sound again. And the door in front of you slowly starts to open.

**Justin:** Nice.

**Clint:** You're not mad at me, are you Trav, that I picked Isaac over Cassidy?

**Travis:** No. I— Dad, I don't give two shits.

**Griffin:** Well, you were right. Um, the panel snaps shut as the door on the far end starts to open up, and after completed its long cycle of opening, you reach the largest room you've encountered in this mine so far. It's a big circular room, about 300 feet in diameter. And the first thing that catches your eye is the hole in the floor. There is a guardrail around this hole. But beyond that rail it's just this gargantuan chasm that runs nearly the whole span of the room. There's only about ten feet of walkway, lined with cart tracks, going around the room. Uh, and the rest of the room's just all hole, baby.

Um, there is a thick metal ring running along the exterior of the hole, and you could see some, like, thick— like, really, really, really thick ridged metal poking out of either end of that ring, so it kind of looks like a— a really sturdy metal hatch that is currently open.

And there's a sign hanging on the railing directly in front of you, and it's labeled Shaft A. And next to that sign is some sort of control—

**Travis:** Are you sure it's not Shafta?

**Griffin:** It could be Shafta.

**Travis:** [snorts]

**Griffin:** Um, no, it's Shaft A. And next to that sign is a control box with a long lever coming out of it. And there's another really important thing that you noticed about this hole, and that is that there is some kind of force field in it. And it's just below that heavy metal hatch, and it looks kind of similar to the bubble that is surrounding Refuge.

It is— it's more translucent. You can see through it. It's not, like, refracting light. But there's this force field inside of the hole. It's kind of, uh, wavy. Um, and it pitches outward a bit, giving it kind of a similar shape to the bubble around town.

But you notice there are actually a total of three of these bubbles in the room. There's this one inside the pit. There's a much, much smaller bubble on the ceiling that a faint light is actually shining down from through a hole that is maybe only just, like, three feet wide. It's a much, much, much smaller hole, immediately on the ceiling. The ceiling is way high up. Um, probably about 20 feet, 20, 30 feet up. Um, and there's a small hole with another bubble around it, and there's light coming down through this hole. There's a bubble around that hole that's just a bit wider than the—the, uh, diameter of a hole.

And then there's a third bubble, and it's surrounding the only other door in this room on the opposite end of the pit that you're currently standing over, and that door looks identical to the one that you just came through, except that it has this big bubble force field around it.

And actually, from far above you, you can faintly hear the sounds of commotion and of distant screams.

**Clint:** Bye-bye! See ya!

**Griffin:** Nope! It's only about 11:55 right now. Uh, well... it's late. But, um, the world hasn't exploded. You just hear, um— you hear some— you hear some commotion. And actually, because you've done this so many times now, it sounds like the commotion of people rushing to try to put out the bank.

**Travis:** Does it sound like we're, like, directly below it?

**Griffin:** Um, not directly below it, but you can hear it, and you're below it.

**Justin:** I— listen. I know that there's an— I know our impulse is usually to act. But I think we would be best served to just chill and see what happens.

**Clint:** [simultaneously] And see what happens.

**Travis:** [simultaneously] Yeah, let's watch.

**Griffin:** Okay.



**Clint:** Can we—can we see through the force field bubble?

**Griffin:** You can, yeah.

**Clint:** That heads down?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Travis:** I— I suspect that this is a case of, like, they dug too deep and hit something they weren't supposed to, and that kind of thing.

**Clint:** Or somebody.

**Justin:** Let's find out.

**Griffin:** Um...

**Clint:** [whistles melodically]

**Travis:** Okay. You wait around a couple minutes.

**Clint:** You guys want any of this ice?

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Clint:** [whistles melodically]

**Griffin:** You're just chewing on ice?

**Travis:** That ice is too good to waste.

**Clint:** I gave the meat to those bugs.

**Griffin:** Through that hole in the floor, I forget who asked if you could see through it and see down it.

**Clint:** Yes, it was me.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um, through that hole in the floor you can see, shining through the darkness, teeth. You can see thousands of them arranged in countless rows that are pouring down a mouth that is easily 200 feet wide.

**Travis:** Huh.

**Griffin:** And emerging from that mouth are two big, rectangular flaps that are also lined with teeth, that are curling and dripping with malice. And that mouth is lit ever so slightly from within with dozens of small flames, uh, that look kind of like pilot lights for a furnace that looks like it's about to explode. And with the help of the light shining directly downward, you can see what owns that mouth. And it is a gigantic body that is, uh— has a thick skin— thick, ridged, purple skin. And this is a body that is halted mid-attack that is moving now, almost imperceptibly, but it is moving a bit, and the fires inside of its mouth are starting to, uh— to grow and become alive.

And it is pushing with enough force to give this force field, apparently, like, a workout. Because waves are starting to ripple across the surface of it, almost in a panic. And from above you, you hear the chime of a clock.

**Travis:** I throw the cluster bomb down!

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. You throw the cluster bomb.

[dice roll]

**Griffin:** Uh, I like that play. All of you— all three of you, because you got a good chunk in, you're not, like, right next to the blast, but all of you take, like, 24 damage, and are knocked backwards.

Um, and it doesn't seem to have any— any effect on this thing.

**Clint:** Wait, did it go through the force field?

**Griffin:** It didn't, no. It just kind of bounced off the top of it. Actually, some— this thing was just about to breach it, so, like, it maybe hit it? But even if it did, it didn't seem to stop it at all, 'cause this thing is 200 feet wide. Um, and is essentially, um, a weapon of mass destruction. And now that you sort of work your way back towards the hole after being blown away back from it, and the movement that this thing has is now, like, no longer imperceptible.

You can see it moving. It's coming up through the hole. It's moving upwards a few inches, and then a few feet, and the flames in its mouth are expanding and intensifying. Um—

**Clint:** Can we hold hands, guys? Can we all hold hands?

**Justin:** Yeah, that's fine.

**Griffin:** And all of you hold hands as both the flame and the purple worm burst through the bubble. Um, the force field ultimately giving up the ghost. And the room is flooded with fire, and you are destroyed by a blast of nearly supersonic force. And the last thing you hear is a scream of unbridled fury, and you do not live long enough to hear the 12th chime of the clock above you.

**Clint:** Well! [laughs quietly]

**Travis:** Okay. So just— I just want to throw this out, because [stammering]— Griffin's probably already cut this, but just for Dad and Justin. Remember we fought, like, some purple worms at the very beginning of the thing?

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Before we entered the thing? This is probably connected to that, right?

**Griffin:** This one is much, much, much, much, much, much, much-much-much larger than those.

**Travis:** Got it.

**Justin:** Yeah, but we beat them, so I like our odds. [laughs quietly]

**Clint:** Actually we just chased 'em off.

**Justin:** We chased 'em off. That's right, Dad. Thank you for the reminder. Okay, I feel less good about the odds!

**Griffin:** [laughs]

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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