

The Adventure Zone Balance: The Eleventh Hour, Chapter Five

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Griffin: Previously, on *The Adventure Zone*:

Director: The fifth Grand Relic, the Temporal Shalice... or Chalice, depending on just sort of what region you're from.

Cassidy: I've been falsely accused, boys! I'm locked up here. They said I blew up the temple. I don't blow any damn temples! I blow up the earth, and I get those diamonds out from under 'em! Best there ever was. That's sure as shit... true.

Ren: Oh... my... god.

Taako: It's actually "Taako."

Clint: [wheezes]

Ren: You're Taako!

Taako: Oh! Well, it's always nice to meet a fan.

Clint: [laughs]

Ren: The magical— the magical chef! I saw your show in the Underdark!

Griffin: There is some kind of force field, and it's surrounding the only other door in this room.

Through that hole in the floor you can see teeth. Both the flame and the purple worm burst through the bubble, and you do not live long enough to hear the 12th chime of the clock above you.

Announcer: I hope our boys have a very big salt shaker! I don't actually know if salt kills worms, it's hard to think of things to say sometimes. *The Adventure Zone*!

[theme music plays]

Griffin: So the three of you just died again. Oops-a-doodle.

Travis: What are you gonna do, you know?

Griffin: Every time you do that your KD ratio goes down a little bit, and there will be leaderboards at the end of the campaign.

Travis: Aw, man!

Justin: Aw, man!

Griffin: Keep an eye on that! You're not gonna get the— the fun... um... kill shot banners. I haven't played *Call of Duty* in a while.

Travis: Griffin, what kind of achievements have we earned so far in this run?

Griffin: Not a whole lot. They're mostly, like, the ones that you have to unlock to, like, move through with the story. Most... Improved?

Travis: Oh, okay, I'll take that!

Griffin: Um... so you're back in that white space after dying. And you see the old woman again. Um, and she looks exhausted, like she did while you were working your way through the mines sort of trial-and-error style. Uh, but she actually kind of looks kind of pleased with you? And she says, uh...

Old Woman: You're getting very close.

Magnus: Are we hot or cold?

Griffin: And then you fade out and wake up again, and you're in front of Roswell, and you're in front of the beautiful village of Refuge like you have woken up in front of just so, so many times! World's your oyster.

Travis: Um, quick show of hands poll, even though we're in an audio medium. Um, were we all cool with the quick play of, "Here's all the names and the people, and skip this loop"?

Clint: Yeah, I think so.

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: Jump right up to the locker room. I just raised my hand. Justin has his up.

Griffin: Well, um— you're gonna go back to the quarry?

Travis: No, I just wanna get through the Roswell exchange. I don't know that we need— yeah.

Griffin: Okay, yeah.

Clint: [dramatic voice] The Roswell exchange.

Travis: The Roswell exchange, as it shall become known in all the documents.

Clint: Protecting your investments.

Justin: Which puts us, like, five minutes in. Okay. Um, hmm. I was kind of hoping that we would've found a diamond by now. Because I feel like we need at least, like, a little more guidance. We definitely know what's destroying the town, but we don't have the faintest clue what to do about it.

Travis: I had an inclination to go try to talk to Isaac, finally? 'Cause we've heard a lot about him and we haven't met him yet, and I feel like he's got something to do with those barriers.

Griffin: I will say this—

Travis: But I also—

Griffin: I will say this re: diamonds. They are the currency in this town. So it's not like you have to find them in a mine, in the same way that you don't go to the, like, US Treasury to get dollar bills from the printing press.

Justin: You want me to get a fucking part time job? What do you want?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: I wouldn't hate that.

Justin: Okay, I'm gonna get a part time job.

Travis: You do have a strong connection with Ren.

Justin: Uh, let's go to R— let's go— okay. Yes. Yes. Let's go to Ren.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Okay. I'm gonna go try to find Isaac. Are you guys cool splitting the party?

Clint: I've got all the party points, so yeah.

Justin: Dad, do you wanna go with Trav? 'Cause he may need muscle, and I'm just gonna trick people. Or do you wanna go with me?

Clint: Oh, man. My first big choice. I'm rolling a die. If it's odd—

Travis: Wait, shit! This is your first big choice?! We were playing this game for, like, 45 episodes!

Clint: I am— I am— if it's odd I go with Justin, if it's even I go with Travis.

[dice roll]

Clint: It's even.

Justin: Alright.

Clint: I go with Travis.

Travis: Cool.

Griffin: Okay. Um, Taako—

Travis: I lean in to Merle.

Magnus: We're just gonna go take a nap.

Griffin: Yeah. Merle and Magnus, I want you to think about how you would find this dude. 'Cause, like, you haven't seen them anywhere. Um, and so I don't know how you plan to accomplish that. But, um... we'll get to that. Taako, we'll start with you. You're just rolling up to the Davy Lamp?

Justin: Yeah, I'm heading in the Davy Lamp.

Griffin: Okay. Um, you're in there, and you're in there so early that you actually see these two purple kerchief ruffian-looking folks, um, and they're just— they're drunk. They're not, like, threatening anybody. They're just kind of drunk and they're causing a scene, and they're talking about how, uh, shitty the bubble is, and how they're gonna— they're gonna pop this thing one way or another. Um, and they got big, big plans.

It's kind of like that scene in *Hamilton* where— the story of tonight, only if everybody was, like, dicks. And they're just, like, talking about their big plans and ambitions and stuff.

Travis: [laughs loudly]

Justin: Got it.

Travis: If everybody was literal wangs.

Griffin: Um, and Ren looks, like, kind of frustrated with these two folks. Um, otherwise the scene is just as it was the last time. There's a piano player playing some smooth-ass jazz jams. Um, the gambler and their—their—

Travis: Did you say jock jams?

Griffin: Yeah, they're playing jock jams on the piano. And I'm leaving a silence here for what that sounds like. I don't know if I'll be able to learn how to play jock jams on the piano.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: I have 25, 24 hours until this episode goes up. Um... uh, yeah. The gambler and their big goliath friend are sitting at a table, and yeah, it's the usual scene.

Taako: Uh, hello, madam.

Ren: Oh my God, you're Taako!

Taako: I am! I'm looking for a— a—

Ren: I'm your biggest fan! I saw you play in the Underdark!

Taako: I r— I— I r— wait a minute. Are you... are you Ren?

Ren: You remember me!

Taako: Little Ren?

Clint: [laughs]

Taako: Oh! I— I can't believe that. I remember, you were right there in one of the rows! In one of the seats, right?

Ren: Yeah, Row... D.

Taako: Row D, right. That's—

Ren: Seat—

Taako: Uh, Seat—

Ren: —[slowly] seventeen!

Taako: [simultaneously] see-even... teen!

Clint: [wheezes loudly]

Travis: [laughs]

Taako: I remember that very well. I love playing the Underdark. How are you?

Ren: Uh, I'm doing okay, except I got a couple of these rowdy boys in here, and they're trying to really cause a stink.

Griffin: And one of the rowdy boys says, uh...

Rowdy Boy: Hey! I don't appreciate that. I'm just trying to tell everybody about my big, bold plans, and come— come along! Join the liberation brigade.

Taako: Well, listen. I have some business to discuss with you. Do you need me to get rid of those fellas?

Griffin: She says, uh...

Ren: No, I think I got it.

Griffin: And she pulls out that rod from behind the, uh— from behind the counter, and the two guys just— uh, they draw on her kind of sloppily, and she blasts them outside of the bar, uh, over your head. They go flying out of the bar. Um, and they are gone. And she— she blows the gun smoke off the rod and puts it back under the counter.

Taako: There is no way you could have anticipated this, but that is exactly what I came here to see.

Travis: [laughs quietly]

Ren: Um, what— what— what can I do for you, Taako? What are you even *doing* here?

Taako: Well, I'll tell ya! Um, you remember the cooking show, so that's sort of on... hiatus. Kind of a revamp we've got going right now. And in the interim, I decided that I wanna share what I know with the people of the— the world! And honestly— and you're gonna find this hard to believe— but word of your magics has sort of gotten around! Um, what you just did there? Really nice.

Ren: Thank you! I— I've been working on that. It's kind of a new spell I've been working on, and it's called... Jerk Remover.

Taako: Jerk Remover!

Ren: Jerkwad— Jerkwad Remover.

Taako: Jerkwad Remover, yeah. I've, um— I'm super impressed. Can I be honest with you, though? A little bit frank? Just a touch sloppy. A little bit. I mean, you know this, right? I'm not telling you anything you don't know. It's a work in progress, right?

Ren: Yeah, I mean, it's... I could've removed those jerkwads I guess a little bit faster, a little bit more efficiently.

Taako: Well, and there's other magics. More subtle magics. Uh, here's what I'm gonna do. Here's what I'm working on right now. I am going from town to town and holding some... hm, I think you'd call them seminars.

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Taako: They're, uh— uh, sort of a help your— they're called "Help Yourself, Cast Yourself, Into Ma—"

Travis: [laughs loudly]

Taako: Can I finish? They're called "Help Yourself Cast Yourself—"

Ren: [holding back laughter] Cast— cast yourself, yeah.

Taako: "—Into Magic Legend."

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: It's the— it's the use of the word "cast" that makes me think of every, "Have you ever wanted to be a model?"

Justin: Yeah, that's exactly right.

Griffin: You're talking—

Travis: [laughs]

Ren: You're talking about HCYIML. [pronounces it "hi-key-mikel"]

Taako: Right. It's called— yes, that's what it's called. I'll have a better acronym soon, and hopefully you—[through laughter] next time around I'll have a better acronym!

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs] "Let me die once."

Taako: Let me— let me die and I'll, uh, cook something up.

Ren: Um—

Taako: Uh, but anyway, so— so it's a seminar! It's a one-day thing. And I'm basically— I do it in a town once. Um, but the only sort of hitch is that I need sort of the, uh, payment up front, because I use it to secure venue and all the supplies that I'll need for the class.

Ren: Uh, how much is it? I would pay anything. Are you kidding me?

Taako: Uh... how much... this is a weird question.

Griffin: [laughs loudly]

Taako: How much is a diamond?

Griffin: [laughs]

Taako: How many is that? Is that... good?

Ren: I mean, when the bubble went up the trading price was about, um... about 300 gold to one ounce. So...

Taako: Sure... of diamond?

Ren: Yeah.

Taako: [clicks tongue]

Travis: Ditto, remind us. What was Paloma's rate?

Griffin: Uh, it was one diamond for small prophecy, ten diamond for big.

Justin: We can't introduce weight of diamonds into this— into this.

Griffin: We'll say about one diamond is one ounce.

Taako: One diamond is 300 gold. Okay, so it costs... one diamond. Can you believe that?

Ren: That's— but that ain't very much at all! Okay, yeah!

Griffin: She opens up the till on the counter, and you can actually see this thing is, like, chock full of diamonds. Like, literally full of diamonds. Like, if somebody came in here and gave her diamonds she might actually have a hard time putting them in the till. And she fishes one out and, uh, flicks it in your direction.

And actually, I think that gambler elf and the goliath, the gambler stands up and says, uh...

Elf: Uh, I think I would actually love to get down on this lesson as well. I'm always looking to hone my craft. Um, are you— can you see multiple people at once?

Taako: I— it is best if I do that. Now, here— how— how much magic do you know going in?

Elf: Uh, [through laughter] quite a bit, thank you.

Taako: Quite a bit! That was not the answer I was hoping for.

Griffin: [laughs loudly]

Taako: Listen. Listen. The rate's a little different for you, my friend. It's gonna be—

Elf: Now, that's— that doesn't seem fair at all.

Taako: I know! I know, but this is the way of magic. The arcane arts are a mysterious haze anyway.

Clint: You'll learn that in the seminar.

Taako: In the seminar you're gonna hear all about that. It's, uh— it'll be nine diamonds.

Elf: Goodness! O—okay. Uh...

Taako: But here's the— here's the best part. After the seminar—this is mainly to secure my venue and what-have-you. After the seminar, you get half of that back.

Elf: Wow, that's a great deal! Okay.

Clint: [wheezes]

Taako: Yeah. It's a great deal!

Elf: I'm— I'm skeptical, but bored.

Griffin: Uh, they said. And flip— uh, you see 'em, like, sort of flip their— part of their poncho to the side, revealing a coin purse. And they also have, like, a badass looking wand in a holster at their side. And they open up that coin purse and hand you a fistful of nine diamonds.

Taako: Great! Oh, great. This is excellent. Now, listen. This is binding, so prom— everybody has to promise me that you'll show up tomorrow for the seminar. Does everybody promise?

Elf: This is a reservation fee, then? I'm kind of confused about...

Taako: Right. Well, it takes place tomorrow. I wanna use today to get everybody together, and we're gonna start— 'cause, you know, dawn's light, and the effect that that has on magics?

Elf: No! I don't— I have no idea what you're talking— will this be covered in the seminar?

Clint: You'll learn that in the seminar.

Taako: Hell yeah it'll be covered in the seminar!

Elf: Uh, oh—

Taako: Don't get uppity now! You haven't even passed 101!

Griffin: Ren— Ren takes out a little day calendar and, like, jots it down. She says...

Ren: I can't wait. I'm excited already.

Taako: Great. I do just have to say, my lawyers— this is funny, it's gonna sound like a joke. But, uh, my lawyers have told me to say that if there isn't a tomorrow, this is null and void. But—

Griffin: [wheezes]

Taako: [through laughter] Of course there will be a tomorrow, right?

Ren: Yeah, that's a— that's a weird thing to even—

Taako: It's a weird thing!

Ren: —hypothetical even to bring up.

Taako: For sure, for sure. So, listen. Everybody start working on your magics, and I'll see you bright and early first— let's meet up here. Tomorrow.

Ren: Uh, yeah, I mean, I work here, so that'll be great for me.

Taako: Perfect.

Ren: Oh, and Ash is always here, so, um... that should be great.

Taako: Great, excellent.

Travis: Always here, catchin' 'em all.

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: Um... alright. So yeah, you have ten diamonds and you did that fairly quickly. Um, we'll say it's about 11:10 or so. Magnus and Merle, hop over to you. What are you doing? How are you finding this— how are you finding Isaac?

Magnus: Alright, Merle. So I feel like... he's got this big house, right?

Clint: Yeah.

Magnus: Character voices.

Merle: Yeah?

Magnus: And we haven't been there yet.

Merle: Right?

Magnus: So, like, let's... go there!

Merle: Okay!

Magnus: Yeah, good planning! [laughs]

Merle: On we go!

Griffin: Uh, alright.

Travis: We take off down the road.

Griffin: Okay, yeah. You make your way to the elder's manor. Um, and it is a fairly secure looking location. There is kind of a barbed wire fence going around it, and there is... uh, it's a two-story building, one of the only two-story buildings in town. Uh, and it looks pretty nice.

Through that fence— the fence is locked— you can see a big heavy metal door that looks about the only entrance into the building, aside from some windows on the second story. That is heavily padlocked, and it looks extremely secure. There's actually a few locks on that big heavy metal door.

Uh, and yeah, the— this fence is running the perimeter of the building.

Magnus: Merle, do you have any kind of, like, Detect Life or, like, Find Person, or Where's That Dude? Spells?

Merle: I have been searching through my vast litany of spells.

Griffin: [laughs]

Merle: And I can't find anything like that anywhere in there. But! I do have a spell called Legend Lore?

Magnus: Okay?

Merle: Where all I do is I describe a person... and I get a brief summary of knowledge about that person. It can come from forgotten stories, or secret lore. Maybe it'll tell us something about him that'll help us get in.

Magnus: Sure, why the fuck not?

Merle: Yeah!

Griffin: I don't know— so that would be, like, for some sort of legendary character in history. I don't know that that would, like, apply to some dude in a small town that has been removed from time.

Justin: He's the most prominent figure in the town, though! There's no legends or lore about him in the town?

Griffin: I guess there would be, but it wouldn't tell you where he is currently. 'Cause that's not lore. That's just, like— that's, like, information about where they are.

Travis: I would say my keen D&D senses are telling me we're not supposed to go into the elder's manor yet.

Griffin: Um, I would also remind you that Paloma is literally built into this game for situations where—

Travis: Yeah, but Taako's taking care of that.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Um, let's see. He's not at Helpington's. He's not at Davy's Lamp. He's not at the bank.

Griffin: Let me do something, actually. While you all are checking out the elder's manor, can you both make perception checks for me?

Travis: Yes.

[dice roll]

Travis: That's a 1.

Griffin: Jesus!

[dice roll]

Clint: That's a 7.

Griffin: Okay. Nothing happens and it's all good, don't even worry about it, dog.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Well, let me do an investigation check of the manor. That's something I would do.

[dice roll]

Travis: That's a 20.

Griffin: Okay. Um...

Travis: I got no perception, but when I'm trying, I can definitely see stuff.

Griffin: I mean, that investigation check is so good that I will tell you, like, there's no lights on in the manor. You put your fucking ear to the ground. There's no [laughs quietly] sound coming from the manor. You use the Lens of Straight Creepin'. There's no— nobody's come in or out of this manor for a— a grip of time. It has been a really long time since somebody's been in this building.

Travis: Cool.

Magnus: Merle, let me ask you a question.

Merle: Fire away!

Justin: There it is.

Magnus: There's a couple different places we haven't checked out yet. The cave, the fallen temple, Stone Fruit Farm.

Merle: Have we actually been to the clock tower? I mean, we've seen it... blow up and burn up.

Griffin: Um, there's not much to the clock tower. There's not an inside to the clock tower, I don't think. I think it's just a big— big ol' clock.

Merle: We haven't been to the farm, right?

Magnus: You know what? Let's go a different direction.

Merle: Okay!

Magnus: We're gonna go to the sheriff's office.

Griffin: Okay.

Merle: Right! [uncertainly] Where we've been, and he wasn't there, right?

Magnus: Yeah, but just follow me on this one. Come— come with me on this one, won't you?

Merle: [laughs] Sure!

Griffin: Alright.

Merle: Lay on, Macduff.

Griffin: Alright. What are you doing in the sheriff's office? Roswell is—

Travis: We're gonna go—

Griffin: —Roswell's not there. Roswell's at the bank, where you've just warned him to be— or warned them to be.

Travis: Now that we know what was going on at the mining place, I say we grill the shit out of Cassidy.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Justin: They prob— they probably, um— they probably pass me on the way and I'm, like, juggling diamonds and, like, shaking my butt at 'em. Like, "I'm done."

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Magnus: Taako, what are you gonna go do?

Taako: Yeah, right, absolutely, see you there!

Magnus: Okay.

Griffin: [laughs] Okay. Uh, let's finish up this thing, and then we'll do Taako. Um, you're grilling Cassidy?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Alright. You walk in and she just instinctively, like...

Cassidy: Gerblins!

Magnus: Yeah, okay, great. Listen—

Cassidy: Who are you? What are you doin' in my home?

Travis: I wanna do an intimidation check.

Griffin: Okay.

Magnus: Shut the fuck up!

Griffin: Alright, roll. You gotta roll it.

[dice roll]

Griffin: You can't just say a lewd word.

Justin: He should say it, though. It's good to know what kind of intimidation check we're dealing with.

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Uh, 15 plus 5 is a 20.

Griffin: Okay.

Cassidy: Okay!

Clint: [laughs quietly]

Magnus: Look me in the eye, Cassidy.

Cassidy: Here comes my peepers. Put 'em right on me.

Justin: [laughs]

Magnus: We've been down in the quarry.

Cassidy: What?

Magnus: We've seen the traps in the lockers. We've seen the smoke that eats flesh.

Cassidy: What are you talkin' about, traps in the— traps in the lockers?

Magnus: I think you know exactly what we're talking about.

Cassidy: Better not be in my locker!

Magnus: You buried a cluster a bomb underneath some brush outside the quarry, am I right?

Cassidy: I did do that. That one is on me!

Clint: [laughs]

Magnus: Because you wanted to get back into the quarry to find something out, right?

Cassidy: Um... hey, who are you?

Magnus: That doesn't matter right now, Cassidy. What matters is that you tell us the truth.

Cassidy: I ain't tellin' you shit! I don't know you from Jake! From State Farm!

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, you're gonna have to come up with some way of convincing her to tell you. You can't just, like, Batman growl at her and expect the truth.

Clint: I have another suggestion. I cast Zone of Truth!

Justin: Hell yes!

Clint: Yeah!

Griffin: Uh, okay. She has to roll a wisdom saving throw.

Justin: [laughs]

Merle: Scooby-oo-bop, diddy-oo-bob!

Griffin: That was actually a 14.

Justin: Super effective.

Griffin: Does that...?

Clint: Nope! Not enough.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Trust me.

Griffin: [laughs] No, you're right. I think it's— uh, 8 plus your spellcasting modifier, so that won't do it.

Cassidy: Uh, okay. I feel compelled to now tell you my story of the quarry. My quarry story's what I call it.

Travis: [laughs]

Cassidy: I don't call it that. I've never told my quarry story. Why would I— why would I need—

Magnus: [simultaneously] Okay, go ahead, do it. Just please— please—

Cassidy: —a catchy name for the quarry story?

Magnus: Okay. Just go ahead and do that please.

Cassidy: So yeah, the mine went dead a few months ago. We lost the motherload, and so I was part of a small team of people that were working down there, just trying to find a new vein of diamonds to try and keep Refuge alive, try to save up some diamonds so when the bubble comes down we can all have fat stacks and retire rich.

Um, and so I was down there. It was a small team of my dedicated buddies, and we were digging... we were digging too deep. And, um... we found something down there. Uh, down by where the edge of the bubble was. We found a— found, like, a nest. A big nest. It had this big, nasty worm in it. And, um... it— the nest looked like it'd been cut in half by the bubble. Looked like it had somehow got cut up, and then the mom— that— that big worm, that big nasty worm, it woke up! And it killed my friends. And I managed to get out, and as I was getting out I saw something happen to it where it just kind of got— kind of stopped, kind of got

stuck. And then I hit my head on a big rock! Woke up here in jail. It's the damnedest thing.

Magnus: And you didn't see anyone on your way out? There wasn't anyone else in the mine?

Cassidy: I noticed some sort of... this is gonna sounds stupid but, like, just a shadow? Of a man? And I saw it. He had his hands up. And that's what— honestly, that's what spooked me, and I ran and bumped my head and ended up here in this jail. And then they said a blew up the temple. That's just crazy talk. That ain't true. That never happened. Try again!

Magnus: Wait, what about the temple?

Cassidy: They said I— that's what I'm in here for. They accused me of blowing up the temple, 'cause I'm— I mean, that is sort of my character. I blow up shit, like, all the time. I'm the best there is or ever was at it. And so when something gets blowed up, like, everybody turns to ol' Cassidy. But to me, I think that's racism? I never— I don't know what that is—

Magnus: Okay, great, great, great. What is the— what's the deal with the temple? What is the temple?

Cassidy: I guess it got blowed up. I haven't got a chance to get outta here and go—

Magnus: Cool. Before it got blowed up, Cassidy. Like...

Justin: [laughs]

Magnus: What was it?

Merle: The non blown up version of the temple.

Magnus: Yes, pre-blown up.

Cassidy: Oh. Yeah, it was just a little— kind of a— it was a small temple. It was opened up by these two bros and, um, it was, like, all about— it was to a god named Istus? Is what they said? Istus? Maybe... Christmas? Isthmas? Bis... Biscuits?

Magnus: That was probably it.

Merle: Ooh, biscuits.

Magnus: Um, Cassidy, where would I find Isaac, off the top of your— if you had to guess. Where's he hang out?

Cassidy: Um, I don't know, man. Um... I would say here. This is like his house, I guess? No, that doesn't make sense. It's his workplace. Dammit, Cassidy!

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: Could you work a land o' Goshen in there somewhere?

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: Just— just for me.

Travis: Or a by gum?

Clint: Oh yeah.

Cassidy: By— um, I don't buy gum, I rent!

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs]

Cassidy: I'm having fun with you gerblins.

Magnus: Okay, bye!

Travis: Um... real quick, before you hop over to Taako, would— can I, with my Lens of Straight Creepin', see... Isaac-y footprints anywhere, or anything from the sheriff's office?

Griffin: No. You don't— you don't— no.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: I don't even know if that's how the Lens of Straight Creepin' works, but no.

Travis: It's not. But, you know, like, we make up the rules, you know? There's no rules in D&D.

Griffin: Taako, are you going to Paloma?

Justin: Is there a shop in town?

Griffin: Uh, there is. There's Helpington's.

Justin: Yeah, I should just go to Paloma, 'cause nothing I buy is gonna stick anyway.

Griffin: It's up to you, dog.

Justin: Yeah, I'm going to Paloma.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, you go to Paloma's hut in the woods, and you knock on the door, and you hear...

Paloma: Come in!

Griffin: I'm gonna try to really nail this accent down this time. 'Cause I listened to that last episode and I was embarrassed.

Justin: Just wrangle that bad boy to the ground.

Clint: Is that the Bork voice?

Griffin: Uh, yes. And then— so you come inside, and there's Paloma, and the floating—

Travis: Wait, hold on. You know her name's not Bork, right?

Griffin: What?

Justin: What?

Clint: Is it Bjork?

Travis: It's not Bork. You know that, right, Dad?

Griffin: Oh, God! See, I just agreed to what Dad said without really processing what it was that he said.

Clint: Yeah!

Griffin: And what he said was the name Bjork as Bork.

Justin: [laughs loudly]

Clint: Yeah! You gotta watch that shit, Griffin!

Justin: Bork. [laughs]

Griffin: I was almost an accomplice in that heinous act.

Clint: Well, maybe I was thinking of former chief justice Bork. Did you ever think of that?

Justin: Bork! [laughs] Okay. [laughs]

Travis: Bork is the only nameplate that Bjork can find at, like, touristy places.

Justin: [unintelligible] [high pitched] Believe it or not, someone already got B-J-O-R-K, so I have B-O-R-K."

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um...

Justin: [Bjork impression] It is on a sedan. Lifted by four geese.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: [Bjork impression] There's a plate that says Bjork. Bork! Very embarrassing.

Griffin: Uh... okay, Taako. You see Paloma, and she looks you over and says, uh...

Paloma: We met already, yes?

Taako: We did, actually, yeah. Uh, good to see you again.

Paloma: We can skip the niceties. It seems like you're in a hurry.

Taako: Listen, skipping niceties is our speciality.

Clint: [laughs]

Paloma: Uh, what do you need? Big, small prophecy? Tell me, what?

Griffin: Um, let's make this a little bit easier and retcon and say that Ren gave you two diamonds, so you have 11. 'Cause I don't think it makes much sense for you to have 10 and have to pick and choose.

Justin: Uh, okay.

Taako: You know what? I'm gonna treat myself. To both.

Paloma: Uh, which first?

Taako: Uh, let's go big!

Griffin: Uh, she says...

Paloma: Okay!

Griffin: And takes the diamonds and sits you down at the table. She says...

Paloma: Do you need a— would you like a treat? I just popped out the cranberry scone from the oven. It tastes so good, and it's creamy and berry-y-y.

Taako: Bork, you know I'm gonna eat a cranberry scone.

Griffin: Uh, she slides a plate across the table to you, and it's a fuckin'... good scone, dog!

Taako: You know what I like here? I can see here at the bottom, you've got the bake on this perfectly right. This is really hard to nail exactly without burning the outsides, still keeping some of the interior softness. Did you use a cold butter and cut it up, or did you go room temperature?

Paloma: I— mostly just scone magic.

Taako: [disappointed] Oh. Okay. Well, this isn't quite the in-depth cooking conversation I was hoping to have.

Travis: Don't eat that, Taako.

Taako: That's fine.

Griffin: Don't eat that, Taako. That's a bad bake, Taako. Uh, no, it's a good bake. Okay. Uh, yeah, she sits you down, and while you nibble away at this scone...

Justin: I'm not nibbling away. As near as I can tell this is the first time I've eaten in two years.

[all laugh]

Justin: There is no nibbling to be done!

Griffin: Uh—

Justin: Travis got to eat a magic stone, I think, once. [laughs] That's it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: No, I— and I'm all full up for the next two years.

Griffin: Uh, okay. Yeah, she— while you're devouring this scone, one of the bigger crystal teardrops on the ceiling sort of naturally unties itself from the string holding it to the ceiling, and it falls, and it shatters on the table, and this cloud of smoke appears. And it's actually a much bigger production than the first small prophecy that you got I guess a couple episodes now from Paloma.

Um, and in this cloud it looks like it's, like, a movie being shot in first person, and all you see are tracks. Like, uh, almost like train tracks or something, with a, like, light cast down on them. And they're just, like, sort of flying towards you. And, uh, Paloma looks up at this thing. And in this vision of the tracks you see a two-way junction come up, and then the picture just kind of stops as soon as the cart hits that junction. And Paloma leans right into you, Taako, and grabs your face and squeezes your face cheeks— your face cheeks together and gets really close and says...

Paloma: [deep, distorted voice] Turn right!

Griffin: She says.

Paloma: Turn right!

Justin: Okay, I turn right.

Griffin: She gets, like, really— she's nose to nose.

Paloma: [whispers urgently] Turn right!

Justin: Okay, I turn right.

Travis: Wait, and that's the big prophecy?

Justin: You don't hear any of this. Shut your mouth.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And it, uh— the smoke dissipates.

Justin: This is my prophecy. I earned it, through lying.

Griffin: The smoke dissipates and she says...

Paloma: Sorry. I got kind of aggro there.

Taako: It happens.

Paloma: I don't really control what happens when—

Griffin: And as she's talking, a second big crystal unspools itself from the ceiling.

Clint: What?!

[music plays in the background]

Griffin: And this one looks different from the first one. Like, all the other ones here are kind of, uh, clear with, like, a little bit of illumination inside of them. This crystal is—

Travis: But this one has a beard.

Griffin: This one is, um... this one is, like, pitch black inside. Um, save for these, like, strands of bright red and yellow and green that are just kind of flashing around on the inside. And she looks up as she sees this crystal start to lower and says...

Paloma: Oh my God, what?

Griffin: And it falls and shatters on the ground. And you see, um... you see, like, two side-by-side visions in this black cloud that appears as it shatters on the table.

The first one just looks like an ocean made out of tar with a black sky above it. And this tar is, like, bubbling, and you see some stuff moving under the surface of the tar, but you can't, like, make out what it is. And that's on, like, the left picture.

And the one on the right is just a grey world covered in, like, ash, that is just completely barren and lifeless. And Paloma looks up over this black cloud, and she looks, like, completely— when she's done her other prophecies it kind of looked like she's having, like, this out of body experience. Now it looks like she is just a— a baker possessed.

Um, and she says in this deep voice, she says...

Paloma: In the future, you will be offered a terrible choice between two options that will determine the fate of reality itself. In this moment of crisis, remember: there is always a third option.

Griffin: And then the smoke dissipates, and it's gone. And she slumps back in her chair, and she looks kind of winded. And I think she just kind of silently reaches over and fishes a scone out of a little bowl and starts to nibble on it.

Taako: One more time?

Griffin: The prophecy?

Taako: Yeah, could you just do it again? I— I spaced.

Paloma: Yeah, I can't do it again. What are you talking about? That almost killed me! That was horrible! I can't just do it again, there was just the one crystal and it fell and broke! Were you not paying attention?!

Taako: Now, I have a question for you. Interesting question. If we were to die— God forbid— or Pan forbid, I guess— if we were to die and come back tomorrow, would that crystal be fixed?

Paloma: What are you talking about? Die and come back tomorrow? Yes, I guess so? I don't know, that's a— again, a— kind of a— that's kind of a weird hypothetical, Taako.

Taako: It's a little bit esoteric. Hey, listen. Lemme get that small prophecy from you, if you still got some juice in those old bones.

Griffin: She says...

Paloma: Oh, yes. Small prophecy is easy. I burp and a small prophecy happen.

Griffin: She snaps her fingers, and a small crystal falls down and shatters. Um, and she says, uh...

Paloma: You were close to your goal, but you are missing what you need to break the barrier.

Griffin: She says, uh...

Paloma: You will need divine intervention. You will find it at the Temple of Istus.

Taako: Alright!

[music plays]

Griffin: Hey, everybody! This is Griffin McElroy, your dungeon master and your onion... blaster. What does that mean, Griffin? Sometimes you just say a bunch of malarkey in *the Adventure Zone* commercial text.

Yeah, maybe! You wanna make something of it? Don't fight me now, it's my birthday!

Thanks for listening to episode 45 of *The Adventure Zone*. It's the fifth episode of the Eleventh Hour saga. I want to thank everybody who's been tweeting about the show using the hashtag #TheZoneCast. If you do that, you might end up as a character in the show. Uh, characters like Luca, PurpleMFTW on Twitter. Uh, Paloma, Church of Fear on Twitter. Redmond was named for Chris Fromlet on Twitter. Actually, you haven't met Luca and Redmond yet, but you're kind of about to here in a second. Those are all folks just named after— oh, Cassidy's named after Cassidy Sharples. All folks who tweeted about the show using the #TheZoneCast hashtag. Please tweet about the show. We really, really appreciate you getting the word out. We do not pay to advertise *The Adventure Zone* at all. Oh, if you can leave a review on iTunes, that would be killer too.

[ad break]

Griffin: Got a personal message here. If you want to get a personal message on *The Adventure Zone*, just go to Maximumfun.org/jumbotron. This one is for Camden and it's from Callie, who says... oh. I'm supposed to read this as Angus. Here goes.

[as Angus] Happy birthday, sweet baby brother! Your sister loves you so much that she paid me, Angus, the world's greatest detective, to send you, Camden, the world's second greatest DM. Great job, Griffin! A message from the past! And she got Griffin to tell you what program he uses to make the music for the show, which is...

Griffin: Okay. There's so many problems with this. How would Angus know who I am? He would possess some sort of knowledge of, like, the creator behind his very existence. And I don't know that there's an in-fiction justification for that.

Um, he also wouldn't know that I use Garage Band to make all the music for this show. Um, except for the theme song, which is a Mort Garson track called "Deja Vu" off the album *Ataraxia*. Um, which I don't know that I've ever mentioned on the show before, which is heartbreaking. Mort Garson is fucking incredible. Uh, was a pioneer for electronic music. You can look up any of his music. The album *Plantasia* is fantastic, and very, very, uh, important to me. Uh, yeah. That's Mort Garson. Uh, and I make the rest of the music in Garage Band. You can find all my music on my Soundcloud page. It's just soundcloud.com/griffinmcelroy, I think? Thank you for the sweet message, Callie and Camden, I hope I did Angus good enough. It's been a little while.

Got a message here for My Spooky Daughter, Cynthia, and it's from The Spooky Announcer, who says:

"Mom and Dad are so proud of you for making it into the spooky academy of the arts and sciences. Your first term will probably have started by the time this message airs, but that's okay. Just promise me you'll be safe at those haunted house parties. Spooky XOXO, your Spooky Dad, and your Mother."

And it doesn't say the mother is spooky, but I'm just gonna assume that it's, like, a full-blown Adams Family situation over there.

Uh, that is it for the commercial. Thank you all so, so much for sticking with us. The next episode will be up on August 11th, so I'll talk to you then. Bye!

[music plays]

Griffin: Do you guys wanna regroup?

Justin: Yeah, I think we should regroup at the temple.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. Um, it's about—

Travis: [whooping]

Griffin: It's about 11:30 at this point, so the earthquake happens while you all meet up back in town. Uh, and while you meet up I think you walk past Roswell and Roswell's like...

Roswell: When are you guys supposed to go to the quarry? You told me to wait here and you would go to the quarry! What's going on? What's with the plan?

Magnus: Alright, listen. We've been to the quarry. There's a big bad down there.

Roswell: What are you talking about?

Magnus: Um, I need you to find Isaac.

Roswell: You're giving me a lot of mixed messages right now, 'cause you told me to wait here 'cause the bank was gonna get robbed. And now you're telling me to leave the bank?

Magnus: Yes. Get everyone out of the bank. Tell 'em to close for the day. Tell 'em it's a bank holiday, it's Happy Hug Day or whatever. And go find Isaac, and meet us at the temple.

Roswell: It is Hug Day. Like, it is Hug Day, so I don't— we have our own sort of holidays that we made up, 'cause we've been in this bubble for a while, and so Hug Day is one of them. So yeah, that tracks.

Griffin: Roswell says. And says, uh...

Roswell: Okay. I'll— what should I do when I find him? Bring him back here? What do you want me to do?

Magnus: Bring him to the temple. Meet us at the temple in 20 minutes.

Roswell: Okay, sounds good.

Griffin: And Roswell, uh, runs off towards— probably back towards the sheriff's office, and you make your way up to the temple. So, this involves, like, a little climb. There's, like, a small ramp, almost like the ramp that you took down into the quarry, that leads up to this plateau. And once you're up there you can overlook all of Refuge, and you can really see, like, how fairly small this little village is. Um, and you can really see, like, the— the big patch of woods behind the elder's house that leads back to what looks like a small little bit of— almost like an orchard that, uh— it looks like it has also kind of been vivisected by this bubble, and there's only sort of a small portion that remains in the town. Um, and

behind you on the plateau is what remains of this temple. Um, which I will describe as soon as I find that part of my notes.

Y'all are doing shit, like, [stammering]— wildly out of order at this point, and I love it, but it's very hard to keep straight.

Justin: Okay, okay. Uh, point of order, you just had an old lady tell me to come here. So, like, you're gonna have to take some ownership of this.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: So this temple, uh, that Cassidy has been accused of destroying by, uh, exploding, it's definitely fallen. And what is left of this temple tells a story of its— its former glory. It looks like an old, like, California Mission-style church, with terra cotta walls, um, that comprised a single large sanctuary space, with massive double doors that overlook the town. Um, Magnus, you're kind of, like, picking out these architectural details, despite the fact that, like—

Magnus: Look at the joists!

Griffin: —the building— yeah. Despite the fact that, like, most of this building is on the ground. Like, you can see the space where this massive sanctuary was. The door frame is still standing. But, like, very little of the building is.

Uh, you— you can see at the front of the temple, over this teetering door frame, you can see that there's some wooden framing that would've supported this steeple that has collapsed through the side of the building. Um, that steeple has a circular indentation that used to hold a clock face that's currently laying on the ground. You're assuming it's a clock face. The numbers on it have almost completely worn off. The only signs of its, like, former function, are these clock hands, which— they're rusted to hell, but they look like they were at one point these beautiful, intricately woven, sharp looking hands of the clock.

And so just, like, every part of this temple is on the ground, and just beat to hell.

Magnus: Um, Merle... do you know anything about Istus?

Griffin: Merle about to make his first religion check.

Merle: I know Istus of Panama.

Magnus: Cool.

Merle: Uh... yeah, I'll— I'll make a religion check.

Magnus: Look out! [laughs quietly] Stand back!

Merle: For my religion!

[pause]

Clint: What do— what do I do?

Travis: Roll!

Griffin: Uh, you have a skill that's called Religion.

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: And you just roll a d20.

Clint: Alright, here we go!

[dice roll]

Clint: 13 plus 3 for religion. 16!

Griffin: Um, yes. Istus— you recognize the name. It is a fairly— it is a less trafficked, uh, goddess. She's not so, like— not a lot of people are worshiping Istus. Um, but she is called The Lady of Fate in most circles. Uh, and she is represented by a woman who kind of moves between these different ages, and is sort of, in some ways sort of thought of as, like, the keeper of fate and, uh, time.

Clint: I'm impressed with the amount of knowledge I have about this entity.

Griffin: Yeah. You also—

Clint: How did I spell her name?

Griffin: I-S-T-U-S. You also recognize a sigil on this door frame that again is, like, really super tarnished, but you make it out to be the sigil of Istus.

Travis: And Ditto, is it so collapsed that we can't get into it? Or...

Griffin: I mean, you can walk o— you can step over the wall and get into it. There's just, like— there's just, like, not... really a lot there to get into. You know what I mean? Like, you can see, like, the floorboards. Like, you can step over those and be in the building. But it's, like, most of it has just completely collapsed.

Travis: Okay. Well, I'm gonna do an investigation check, I guess, and see if there's anything important here.

Griffin: Okay.

[dice roll]

Travis: Uh, that's a 16 plus... nothing. So a 16.

Griffin: With that investigation check, like, you don't see any signs of life. There hasn't been anybody here in this building for what looks like— like a thousand years. Um, and with that investigation check I will also tell you, you don't see, like, scorch marks. You don't see... nothing has been, like, shattered and broken. It's just kind of... fallen apart.

So you don't see signs of an explosion. Um, which is weird, considering Cassidy is in jail presumably because she blew up this temple. You don't see any signs of, like, a bomb going off, or an explosion or anything.

Travis: Is there anything else about the clock? Like, where are the hands pointed?

Griffin: That is a good question. I think the hands— I mean, some innocuous time, like 7:15 AM.

Clint: Don't I have something where I can call on a deity? Or is it just my deity?

Griffin: I think it's just yours.

Clint: Poop.

Griffin: I don't think you have a cell phone. Like, you can call up Istus and she'll be like, "New phone, who dis?"

Travis: Okay, I have an idea.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I would like to step into the middle of the ruins.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And I would like to close my eyes and quietly say a prayer to Istus to guide our fate.

Justin: [laughs quietly]

Clint: Isn't that kind of my gig?

Justin: Yeah, I would say that maybe you should let the priest do that.

Griffin: Why don't you all do a quick group prayer.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Just hold—

Travis: We'll do— we'll lay hands.

Clint: [simultaneously] Can we hold hands?

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Okay, perfect.

Clint: Just like church camp.

Travis: [singing] Our God is an Istus God!

Clint: [laughs loudly]

Griffin: Uh, okay. Uh...

Merle: [in Clint's voice] Oh, holy Istus! Hear the plea of us, your earthbound servants, as I we try to keep all hell from breaking loose in this lovely town, that's kind of shitty looking.

Taako: And please cure... my friend's voice.

Merle: And then—

Taako: So that he sounds...

Merle: —beam down upon us—

Magnus: It's a miracle!

Merle: —your fate— your fate changing beams of power, and just... [tearfully] love us, and let us love each other! Amen.

Taako: [snorts] God, that was powerful.

Griffin: Um... a... [pause] nothing happens.

Justin: [wheeze-laughs]

Travis: Oh.

Clint: Shit!

Griffin: And there is this— a breeze, um, that comes through. Uh, and it's a nice, soothing breeze. Again, it is— it's kind of sticky here. Very humid. Your shorts are helping out some with that, but it's just a sticky place.

But a breeze comes through, and it feels nice, and it blows some of the dust up from the floor, and... a... a small white piece of cloth that, uh, looks like it just kind of rotted off one of the curtains that are laying on the ground starts to get blown around in this wind, and you see it just start to float effortlessly on this

wind away from this church, uh, and you see it blow up and to the northwest a little bit. Towards, you can see in the distance, like, it's flying towards the cave.

Travis: I follow it.

Griffin: Just Forrest Gump style?

Travis: Yep.

Justin: [dooting]

Travis: No, that's *Hook*.

Clint: Run, Magnus, run!

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: Okay. Are you all going to the cave?

Justin: Probably, yeah.

Clint: Not as fast as Magnus, but...

Griffin: Yeah. I do love Magnus chasing things. It's, like, one of my favorite things from this game, and now you're just chasing a rag that is flying through the air.

Travis: And I wanna be clear. I'm doing it full on, like, kid trying to catch a butterfly style. You know? Like— like, my— I'm just arms akimbo, running, so happy.

Griffin: Giggling, yeah. Uh, okay. You make your way north to this cave, which is also up on the plateau. Um, it is tucked away into, like, this outcropping, almost like a second plateau on top of this plateau that is fairly large, and ends at the bubble. Um, and you go in this cave entrance and you go through a bit of tunnel. What's your, like— what's your method of approach? I should ask that whenever you go into, like, a building or new situation.

Travis: I think you know.

Griffin: Just, like, barreling?

Travis: Yeah!

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: [laughs] It's a thing!

Clint: We have kind of established the dynamic of him barreling in, me trying to make him stop, and Taako hangin' back.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, well then Magnus I guess you're the first one to see, but all you boys see— uh, there's, like, a slight curve in the entrance to this cave after you go through a short tunnel. Um, you see lantern light kind of flashing off the walls on the inside of this cave. And you see what looks like the shadow of a guy reading a book in this lantern light. And as you come, like, barreling tactlessly into this cave, you see this shadow move really quick, like, look to the side, and then throw the book down, and then the lantern light goes out.

Magnus: Hello?

Griffin: Uh, there's no response.

Magnus: Now, don't be like that.

Griffin: [laughs]

Magnus: I'm sorry I caught you reading. I won't make fun of you, I promise.

Clint: He wasn't sitting on a toilet, was he?

Travis: Ohh, hate to see that.

Griffin: No.

Clint: Oh, okay.

Griffin: No, there's no— there's still no response.

Magnus: Aziz, light!

Griffin: What?

Travis: I— I was... it's from *Fifth Element*. Dad, could you make some—

Griffin: Holy shit, dog!

Travis: There's, like, one person, though, who went crazy when I said that. Um, Dad, could you make some light, or Taako? I can't see. [laughs quietly]

Clint: I certainly can. All I have to do is touch one object that is no larger than 10 feet in any dimension, and that object will spread light in a 20-foot radius.

Griffin: The human spell library, Clint McElroy.

Clint: That's right.

Justin: What are you touching?

Clint: I'm going to—

Travis: [laughs] My butt!

Clint: I'm going to— I think it'd look really cool— I'm going to touch the amulet around my neck, and it'll beam light forward like Doctor Strange.

Griffin: You touch your joke amulet [pronounced like 'omulet'] and it illuminates, and you can see, uh— I'm assuming you've moved a little bit further into the cave. You see this small chamber that, like, the cave kind of dead ends into, uh, and there's a couple barrels in this chamber. There's a cart in this chamber with a couple boxes on it. One of the barrels has a lantern on it, and then laying on a rug, sort of—

Justin: So, wait. We needed the light to see the lantern?

Griffin: The lantern got turned off.

Justin: Okay. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Um, seeing it— and in the midst of this little scene, at the back wall of this little chamber, there's a rug, and there's a book laying on the rug that is actually open and face down like it was just, like, thrown down. And with its back up against the wall, there is... a skeleton!

[calm music plays in the background]

Griffin: And the skeleton is wearing a sort of brown sackcloth robe, uh, and it has— it is also wearing an amulet, and Merle, you recognize that amulet. It's also the sigil of Istus. And this—

Travis: Why do you keep saying omulet? Like ah— like an omelet amulet?

Griffin: Um... I mean—

Clint: Because it— look, that's what it's made out of.

Griffin: Yeah, it's an egg necklace.

Travis: He got it at a magical store of Denny's.

Griffin: And this skeleton, um, has another interesting thing about it, in that its skull has been, like, painted in bright, like, yellows and purples and, like, green segments, almost like a Día de los Muertos mask, to help sort of give you an idea of the aesthetic. Its skull has been, like, intricately and beautifully painted. But it is just laying down with its back up against the wall.

Travis: Is it... alive?

Justin: Well, it's a skeleton. [wheezes]

Travis: Well, yeah, but we're in D&D where there's, like, centaurs and ghosts and shit. So, like...

Justin: That's a fair point.

Travis: Skeletons move around, and sometimes you gotta fight 'em.

Justin: Hey, Griffin. Is the chair alive?

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: It's D&D.

Griffin: Oh, by the way, when you came into this cave you heard the explosion behind you from the bank.

Justin: Aw, dunk.

Griffin: Just to give you—

Clint: What time is it?!

Griffin: Uh, it's gettin'— it's gettin' there.

Clint: [stammering] I read— I read the book! I grab the book and read it!

Griffin: The book is, like— uh, oh shit! Let's tie it all together. The book is not some religious text. It's a *Caleb Cleveland: Kid Cop* novel.

Travis: I see.

Griffin: It's like a— it's from, like, a— it's one of the later ones, which aren't as good, because he's a teen cop.

Justin: And it's like, what's the point?

Griffin: What's the fucking point?

Clint: Isn't... no, no. I'm thinking of something else. No.

Travis: I'm gonna check out the skeleton?

Justin: Wait a minute. Those are Angus's favorite books, right?

Griffin: Um, I mean, they're a very, very popular book series.

Justin: Oh my God. The skeleton is Angus.

Travis: Nooo! Only now do I miss him.

Clint: Yayyy!

Justin: Nobody saw this coming. How did he get here?

Travis: Um, I'm gonna check out that skellington.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Hey, where is Angus? Didn't he come with us?

Griffin: No.

Clint: That's what I was—

Justin: No? Okay.

Griffin: That was the live episode that we did.

Clint: That was the live episode, yeah.

Justin: Oh, that's right! Okay, okay, okay, okay.

Griffin: Things got really conflated, 'cause we did two episodes two nights in a row. Um, but no, Angus is not with you. And in fact, I should point out, since you've been in this town, your stones of farspeech are not— you have not had any messages from anybody at the Bureau on your stones. They are just completely dead silent.

Clint: Well, we knew that. That's why we hadn't checked 'em. We figured that.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Justin: We knew.

Clint: Pshh, c'mon, man.

Travis: Wait, hold on. There's a rug in the cave?

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: I'm gonna look under the rug.

Griffin: You find a trapdoor to— no. There's nothing under the rug.

Travis: Fuck.

Justin: Does it bite him 'cause it's alive?

Travis: [wheezes] Skeletons move in this game! And sometimes you have to fight 'em. I'm not making this up, Justin! I don't wanna—[sighs]

Justin: Carpets can fly. Read your *Aladdin*.

Griffin: Uh...

Travis: Suck my butt.

Griffin: What are you doing?

Travis: I'm checking out the skellington.

Griffin: How are you doing that?

Travis: Are there any pockets in the robe? What's the deal with the amulet?

Griffin: Um... as you— yeah, there's pockets in the robe.

Travis: I find some receipts.

Griffin: Okay. You reach into the pocket—

Justin: [laughs] Whoa!

Griffin: You reach into the pocket, and as you do, um, the skeleton— you can't tell if you just, like, disrupted it and knocked it over, but it moves, and you hear, like, a...

Skeleton: Erf...

Travis: See?!

Clint: I have a spell to cast.

Justin: Uh-oh.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: I hope that skeleton's ready to spill its secrets.

Clint: It's called Resurrection.

Justin: [whispers] Oh shit.

Clint: I touch a dead creature that has been dead for no more than a century. Its soul is free and willing, the target returns to life. Yeah, it restores life to a creature.

Griffin: Does this spell take, like, an hour to cast? 'Cause this seems like the kind of spell that takes, like, an hour to cast. Otherwise if you can just instantly bring back any dead person to life, it may reduce the narrative stakes of *The Adventure Zone* podcast a bit.

Clint: Well, it's seventh level... necromancy...

Justin: [cackles loudly]

Clint: Why are you laughing?

Justin: [through laughter] 'Cause you're— you— no, you're, like, level 8 or something! Like, level 10!

Clint: I also have—

Travis: And you're also not a necromancer.

Justin: Not in any way, shape, or form!

Clint: I also have—

Griffin: It also takes one— it does take one hour to cast.

Clint: Fine.

Justin: Okay, wait, what's the time?

Clint: No, no, no! No, go ahead! Have your fun! I'll just sit here—

Griffin: You understand why I can't allow you to, like, instantly bring any dead person back to life no matter what.

Clint: Even if I'm using a spell I don't know?

Justin: And don't have.

Griffin: And don't have, and can't have.

Justin: And can never have, and will never have.

Clint: Even though I can use a spell I don't know, because I have Mathias, the Living Grimoire.

Griffin: Ohhh.

Travis: Yes, but that doesn't make it not an hour.

Griffin: Yeah, you still— yeah.

Clint: [sighs] Fine. Take that out.

Griffin: You don't have a magic— you don't have a magic owl that— you don't have a resurrection owl that can bring back any dead person from life.

Clint: I have an owl that lets me use a spell I don't know!

Griffin: That's fair. That's cheating. Dammit! Cheated the system again. What are you doing with this skeleton?

Clint: No, that's fine. If it's gonna— I don't have time.

Travis: Okay, so here's the thing. Something was in this room and moved, right? And dropped the book and turned off the lamp. There's no other exit to this room.

Justin: Uh, I grab the skeleton and shake it and say...

Taako: Give us your secrets!

Skeleton: Okay, stop! Stop, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop. Stop, stop, stop.

Travis: See?! Suck my butt, Justin!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Was that in universe?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

Magnus: Suck my butt, Taako!

Skeleton: Unhand me, please!

Taako: Oh, sure, no problem.

Griffin: Um—

Clint: Can you make it a little bonier?

Skeleton: [nasally voice] Unhand me, please!

Clint: That's— yeah, nice.

Justin: There you go.

Travis: [simultaneously] There you go.

Skeleton: What do you hooligans want? You've come into my little hutch here. I was enjoying a good Cleveland tale, and he just broke the big case! And you randos rolled up on my spot!

Merle: [in Clint's voice] And what is your name?

Skeleton: That— what is *your* name? Hooligan?

Merle: I'm sorry. What is your name?

Justin: There we go.

Skeleton: What is *your* name, *hooligan*?

Merle: I'm Merle the hooligan.

Magnus: I'm Magnus the hooligan.

Taako: I'm Taako. You're alive. I don't believe it. There's egg on my face. You don't know how big of a— I guess you are. You heard the whole thing.

Skeleton: I did! You really ding-donged this one up!

Taako: Yeah, I stepped in it. Good news is I'll be dead soon.

Skeleton: What do you mean?

Merle: So, tell us your name.

Skeleton: My name is Luca!

Magnus: Are you of the temple Istus?

Luca: I am the chief cleric of the temple Istus! Not that— I mean, not so much anymore. But, um... but yeah. That's me alright.

Merle: So your name is Luca?

Luca: Are you about to do a joke about the song "Luca"?

[pause]

Merle: No.

Griffin: [wheezes]

Merle: Not now!

Luca: No, go— please, go ahead! I live on the second floor.

Merle: Forget it. Just forget it.

Luca: No, what floor do I live on, Merle? Tell me!

Merle: Nobody wants my input this week! Fine, fine, fine.

Taako: If you wanna get literal, you live in a cave underneath a pile of rocks.

Magnus: Are you one of the brothers?

Luca: How do you know about that?

Magnus: I heard about it in town.

Justin: Well, that's... that's not true.

Travis: It is true! Cassidy told us about it.

Justin: Oh, okay. Sorry, I was getting my prophecy confused with your horseshit.

Griffin: By the way, Luca is talking, like, not moving a whole lot. Like, his mouth is moving up and down almost imperceptibly when he talks. Um, but he says, uh...

Luca: Yes, I— my brother and I came to this town together. What— what do you— what are you doing here? Why did you come looking for me? How did you find me?

Magnus: We're, uh— we're investigating the bubble, and a chalice, a big worm.

Griffin: I debated about this, because you've talked about looking for a thing, and people are like, "Why wasn't that staticked out?" But I think if you just reference a chalice, it's not— it's not staticked.

Travis: A lowercase C.

Griffin: He says, uh...

Luca: I—[sighs] you're here to stop the bubble? Here to stop what's going on in this town?

Taako: Yes.

Magnus: Yes?

Taako: Yes we are.

Griffin: Um, he says...

Luca: [sighs] Okay. I... I... I like where you're coming from. I would also very much like to stop what's happening in this town. You guys understand that time is, like— time is sick in Refuge, right?

Magnus: Yeah.

Taako: Yeah, we've gathered.

Luca: It kind of goes against everything we do in the Church of Istus. We celebrate the normal passage of time, and that is... anything but that is happening here in Refuge. Um, what do you need? How can I help you?

Magnus: Like, any information? [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Luca: I was in the— I was in the temple, uh, just doing my prayers, doing my scribing and such, counting the offerings. When it just— something happened, and everything inside the temple aged very quickly. And luckily I was the only person inside, um, and none of the followers of Istus were harmed. But I— that's how I ended up in this sorry state, and how the temple ended up in its sorry state. Um, and I don't know what did it, but I suspect it's the same thing that's causing everything to be all screwy in this town!

Magnus: Luca—

Justin: I'm gonna— I'm gonna ask that Merle take over questioning, because he is a man of the cloth as well, and I feel like he might be able to get a little further. And we don't have a lot of time.

Merle: Okay. So... explain one thing to me. I know it's D&D and everything, but how the hell—

Travis: Okay, so you wanted us to save time by putting Dad in charge.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Yeah, let him finish!

Merle: How are you talking?

Luca: That is an excellent question that I'm not entirely sure of myself. I assume it is only by the grace of Istus herself that I am allowed to continue to function in this goofy-ass town. But, uh, I'm not 100% sure. I'm not complaining, though! Although it is— I haven't really interfaced with anybody else in town, uh, since I've entered this sorry state. It's, as you can imagine, pretty upsetting to see a living skeleton man!

Magnus: Merle, ask him about his brother.

Merle: Hey! How 'bout them brothers?

Luca: Are you a— like, the idea of brothers in general? I guess it's great! Two boy—

Merle: No, your brothers!

Luca: —two— two boys, related, with the same parents! I love it.

Merle: Tell me about your brothers, my— my bony friend.

Luca: I only have the one... brother. And I haven't seen him—

Merle: Aren't we all brothers?

Luca: In Istus, sure! I haven't seen my brother Redmond in quite some time he... [sighs heavily] we came to this town together to start up the temple, and he went off into, let's call it the private sector, and opened up his own farm here in town that was very lucrative. Um, but he got kind of screwed when the bubble went up and, well, I think he harbors quite a grudge about that. So he's been trying to brute force his way out of town, and I don't know that that's the way to go. I think we should rely on the grace of Istus, but, you know, who am I to— I am not my brother's keeper.

Merle: Well... kinda.

Griffin: He said, uh...

Luca: I would be willing to help you out, to help you, uh... to help you seek divine intervention from Istus herself, but I will need my brother's help in order to do so. Can you please go find him and talk to him and— and tell him that Luca misses him, and needs his help.

Magnus: Yeah, probably not in this loop, but...

Clint: [laughs loudly]

Griffin: He says...

Luca: What are you talking about, this loop?

Magnus: Yeah, don't—

Griffin: And as you say that, you feel the tremors start again from outside, and you hear the bell start to chime.

[music and chiming plays in the background]

Luca: What are you talking about, this loop?

Taako: This has been so much fun.

Merle: I've got it! I've got the solution to everything! I know the answer to every question!

Magnus: Hey. I know the joke you're setting up and it's not gonna work, because we remember on the next loop.

Merle: Aw, shit.

Griffin: Yeah, I think this time the— this supersonic explosion happens outside, and I think the cave just collapses on all of you, and Luca, and you get crushed by rocks.

Clint: Ow! That— that hurts!

Griffin: And when you come into the white space this time, the old woman is lying on the floor.

Justin: Shit.

Travis: I— I move to her.

Griffin: And you wake up.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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[music and ad play and end]

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