

The Adventure Zone Balance: The Eleventh Hour, Chapter Six

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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.

Griffin: And as you make your way out in the street you see smoke coming through the windows of the bank. There's a dark elf woman who is lying on the ground. She is dead. There is a young man with jet black hair lying on the ground. He is also dead.

And there's a small hole with another bubble around it, and there's light coming down through this hole. And actually, from far above you, you can faintly hear the sounds of commotion, and of distant screams.

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

Taako: Alright!

Griffin: There is... a skeleton!

Luca: I would be willing to help you out, to help you seek divine intervention from Istus herself. But I will need my brother's help in order to do so. Tell him that Luca misses him, and needs his help.

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

Clint: [laughs]

Announcer: You're about to see these boys on their baddest behavior! Lend them some sugar! They are your neighbor. It's *The Adventure Zone*!

[theme music plays]

Griffin: Let's just pick up where we usually pick up, where we've picked it so, so many times before. I imagine it's sort of like how when you sit on a couch for

long enough, your butt... impress just sort of leaves, like, a little fossil in there. Um, I think there are three forms of just your unconscious bodies, like, in the dust, like you've worn it out, in that one space in front of the gate leading into Refuge. What do you wanna do?

Clint: I think it's pretty obvious we need to go find his brother. Right? Go find Luca's brother?

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, in the last episode Luca told you that he works the Stone Fruit Farms, um, and that's where he is. And he's up to some trouble.

Clint: And that was that orchard-y lookin' place we saw.

Griffin: Mm-hmm, yeah. You can see it on the map. It's, like, the northernmost spot.

Travis: The farm-ish place.

Griffin: Yeah, the place that's explicitly labeled Stone Fruit Farms in the key.

Travis: Um, so can we assume that we just are, like, moving past Roswell with our loop?

Griffin: Yeah, you can use that same loop.

Travis: Um, I also just— as we're walking past it— would like to take a peek down the well at the start of town.

Griffin: Um, as you approach the well, I would like all of you to make perception checks.

[dice roll]

Justin: Aw, dunk.

[multiple dice rolls]

Griffin: I had you do this last time too, and everybody failed.

Justin: Not this fuckin' time.

[dice roll]

Travis: I got a 12.

Clint: I... yeah, no. I got an 8.

Justin: Hmm, that's not very good, Daddy.

Clint: I know.

Justin: Do better.

Clint: So I guess I fuckin' failed.

Justin: Do better.

Griffin: Whoa!

Justin: At it.

Griffin: A lot of swearsies.

Justin: Be better at it.

Griffin: Um, Taako, how'd you do?

Justin: Yeah. [through laughter] Well, the kid has got you covered right now, with this. He's got a 23.

Griffin: Oh yeah, Jesus. Okay, no. The kid, with those keen, keen magic— with those magic eyes... um, Taako, you see from— from behind the well, kind of spying on you, it looks like, you see the shadow of a man, Scaramouch, Scaramouch. Uh, no.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: You— you do see— I mean, it does. It kind of looks like a guy's shadow, like, looking at you over the well. And to be frank, that 23 was, like, just good enough to see this thing, because it was really tough to see. Uh, and it vanishes almost as soon as you lay eyes on it. But you know, you know that was— that was somebody looking at you.

Um, and I'll actually say with a roll that good, um, you kind of piece together that... you've walked by this well every time you've come in town, and you've never seen that thing there before. Not in any of the other loops.

Travis: Now, this shadow, Griffin, does he know what evil lurks in the hearts of men?

Clint: [villainous laughter]

Griffin: No, there's no— there's no fedora on this being.

Travis: Is there, like, some kind of spiritual emotional fedora?

Griffin: Everybody's wearing a spiritual fedora, Travis! That's the secret!

Travis: Have you heard the good news? I'd like to—[laughs] I've got some pamphlets here about your spiritual fedora.

Griffin: That's what the book *The Secret* is about.

Clint: [muffled laughter]

Justin: Is there any sort of top hat? I mean, what's the chapeau situation up there?

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, no, there's—

Travis: Don't leave us hanging, Griffin. Give the people what they want!

Griffin: There's a Stetson hat.

Travis: Ooh!

Griffin: Yeah, how about that?

Justin: Nice.

Griffin: But yeah, the shadow's gone just as quickly as you saw it. It is not there anymore.

Justin: Do have a se— I mean, is it gone, or did I stop seeing it? Do I have a sense of that?

Griffin: I mean, you didn't— you didn't, like— you didn't, like... start— no. It's just gone. It just disappeared right in front of you.

Travis: Well, I didn't see it, so I'm still headed to check down the well. I just wanna kind of look down, maybe drop a penny.

Griffin: Oh, okay. Do you actually do that?

Travis: Do I have pennies? I don't wanna drop any, like—

Clint: No, you gotta drop a diamond!

Griffin: Yeah, you got gold pieces probably. Unless you spent literally all of them.

Travis: How about I just, like, drop a rock down and listen?

Griffin: You probably have a few gold pieces just as, like, per diem, that the Bureau gives you.

Travis: But I don't wanna drop some fucking gold pieces. That's like droppin' a dollar coin down—

Griffin: Okay, you drop a rock. Um...

Justin: Fuck, this is captivating! What will he drop?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You drop a rock. Well, this is actually gonna be interesting. You drop a rock and it's, like, um... you can kind of see down the well a ways. You hear the rock, um, hit something. What sound would it make? It sounds... [sighs] the sound sounds vaguely like, "[softly] Bomp."

Like, it doesn't sound like it's hitting rock or it doesn't sound like it's landing on anything. Unfortunately it's too dark down that well for you to see kind of where it stopped.

Magnus: Fellas, I've got a theory. I know that that's not my norm but, uh, remember how we could, like, hear the explosion and stuff when we were down in the mine, at the shield with the worm and stuff?

Taako: Mm-hmm?

Magnus: I think this is how we could hear it. I think we're right above it right now.

Taako: We could definitely investigate that, but I feel like the farm should still be our priority, right?

Magnus: Definitely, but this might be a shortcut to get down there a lot faster next time.

Clint: Let's remember the well.

Griffin: You're heading up to the Stone Fruit Farms?

Travis: Yeah!

Griffin: Okay. How are you getting up there? 'Cause it's, like, on the opposite end of the bubble than you're at, so it'll take you a fair while to get there, just walking.

Merle: If only we had something we could ride.

Taako: Listen, I see where you're going with this. It's not a three man—

Merle: Why not?!

Travis: Are there any horses around we could hijack?

Griffin: Um... there's— there is one horse sort of, uh, posted up in front of the sheriff's office. Um, but that's it. I mean, they don't really have need for horses in this—

Travis: Okay. I yell over my shoulder...

Magnus: Roswell, we need your horse!

Roswell: That's fine! I'm too big to ride that thing anyway. I hate that— I hate that fuckin' horse.

Travis: Alright. I grab Merle and drag him up behind me.

Justin: [laughs] I cast Phantom Steed.

Clint: Yeah!

Griffin: Okay.

Garyl: Yo.

Griffin: Garyl— Garyl appears, beautiful shimmering mane. Maybe a look of jealousy, or perhaps competition in their eyes? As they eye this other horse.

Garyl: Yo, thanks for putting the little dwarf on him.

Travis: [laughs]

Merle: Wait a minute! What's that supposed to mean?

Garyl: 'Cause of you are fat man. I don't like it.

Travis: [muffled laughter]

Merle: Man. You know, Garyl always talks the truth, man.

Garyl: You're heavy.

Magnus: Alright, Garyl. I'll follow your lead.

Garyl: You're like dark matter, you're so small but it's like, yeowch.

Merle: Yeah, we get the— yeah, I'm fat. Let's go.

Garyl: Yo.

Griffin: You're not fat, you're dense, I think is what Garyl is saying.

Garyl: You're dense, yo! You're dense!

Travis: You're a dense dwarf.

Clint: Dense is not that much more complimentary.

Travis: You're dwense.

Garyl: Yeah, but you're dense. Like a good steak, made outta metal. I'm not good at metaphors—

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Garyl: —I'm only about 30 seconds old. What's up? Let's ride!

Griffin: Wait, 30 seconds old? Is it a different Garyl every time? Every time Garyl is summoned and unsummoned, is Gar—

Clint: Surely there's some kind of race memory thing.

Justin: He's not stringing together his memories.

Griffin: Yeah, I guess that's— wow, shit. That's dark. Okay.

Clint: And yet he remembered I was dense.

Justin: What? He could just tell by fuckin' looking at you.

Clint: Oh, okay. [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, you work your way through the patch of—

Justin: I think if you're a horse and you don't get a sense of how heavy it would feel for someone to ride— that's gotta be, like, your first thing that you develop.

Travis: That's 101.

Justin: That's 101 is like, "That person looks dense."

Griffin: "That person's dense. That person's got oats."

Justin: That's 101 and 102.

Clint: Okay.

Justin: Alright, so let's ride to the farm.

Griffin: Okay, yeah. You ride through those woods. It's a fairly easy ride.

[someone makes horse galloping noises]

Griffin: You go past Paloma's hut, and get some of that good smell all over you.

Travis: I wave at it, just in case she's looking out the window.

Griffin: She's not.

Travis: Well, you don't know.

Griffin: Okay—

Travis: Well, actually you probably know.

Clint: I guess he does, yeah.

Griffin: I do know. I'm making it all up as I go. Um, and as you reach sort of the end of woods—

Travis: And I yell...

Magnus: Paloma! Paloma, I'm waving at you!

Griffin: Um, she just yells...

Paloma: Holler!

Griffin: Out the door.

Travis: Ah, so she *is* a holla back girl.

Griffin: She absolutely is. Um, you make your way to the end of the woods, and you start to some near a clearing, um, through which you can see Stone Fruit Farms. And what you see are— and it's fenced in with a small sort of picket wooden fence. Um, you see two wide plots of orchards, and they are lined with these tall, well-kept trees, uh, of— and each of those trees has dozens of these plump stone fruits, which are sort of plum-like super sweet produce that can grow in harsh environments like this one.

Um, and these— these stone fruits, you've definitely eaten them before. I think they're, like, as common as apples in this world. Uh, but these look, like, incredible. They are unblemished, with a flawless marbled purple rind. Each one's about the size of a regulation boccie ball.

And you see two people standing in this field. You see a male elf, who is gingerly harvesting some of these fruits from a tree near the center of the orchard, and you see a tall human woman, uh, who isn't doing any field work. She is practicing aiming a crossbow at some bottles that are lined up on that fence. So that woman is facing in your direction, but has not seen you yet, 'cause you haven't emerged from the woods.

Uh, to the left of the two plots you see a large, fairly inviting-looking homestead. Um, but as you look at it you notice something weird, and that is that both the fields, and even a portion of this house, have been cut off by the bubble. Um, and these fields are really wide, but they're not especially deep, because they just end at the bubble. And based on the width of these plots, you kind of surmise that they were once, like, vast, vast orchards that have been reduces to sort of a fraction of their size when the bubble went up.

Travis: And remind me, Griffin. The bubble is opaque, or translucent?

Griffin: Um, from— it's kind of... uh, it's kind of halfway. It's kind of shimmery. If you looked really hard, you could see what's going on outside. Um, but yeah.

Travis: Gotcha.

Clint: Have we really ever investigated the bubble? I mean, have we ever...

Justin: I mean, we went through it that one time, but I don't think we've been back to it, if memory serves.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, you've been— it's certainly been, like, around you. I mean, it's everywhere you can see. You look up and you can see it. Um, so that is the scene. Oh, and these two farm workers, I should mention they're wearing purple kerchiefs around their necks.

Travis: Ohh.

Griffin: And their using them occasionally to sort of dab the sweat out of their eyes. Um. They're not wearing them as bandit masks or anything like that, but they've got purple kerchiefs on.

Uh, so you are at sort of the end of the woods. You come to this clearing. You can see them. They have not seen you yet. What would you like to do?

Travis: I have rustic hospitality, so I'm just gonna go up and talk to them.

Clint: You know, you've mentioned that every episode, and I don't know if we've ever taken advantage of it.

Griffin: Uh, okay, yeah. You— you come up out of the woods. Do you say something to sort of... announce yourself? What do you do?

Travis: Uh—

Clint: Now, be rustic! But rustic!

Griffin: Do be rustic about it.

Travis: In Elven... to the— to the elf, I say...

Magnus: Hi-ho there, elf! It's a pleasure to meet you!

Griffin: You appear—

Magnus: On this fine day.

Griffin: You appear from the woods and yell, "Hi-ho—" and as you do that, you actually startle the woman that was shooting the crossbow at the bottles, and she lets an arrow fly in your direction.

Clint: Let me guess who it hits.

Travis: I mean, it's aimed at me.

Griffin: Uh, 17 vs. AC?

Travis: That misses.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, it—

Travis: And I've got my fletchers' mitt, so I'd like to imagine I catch it out of the air.

Griffin: Okay, yeah. You catch it inches in front of your face. Uh, and she panics and yells—

Human Woman: Oh— oh my god!

Griffin: And starts to nock another arrow in her crossbow.

Magnus: Uh, sorry to startle you! Did not mean to at all. We are just here looking for Redmond. Um, we spoke with his brother Luca, who said that this is where we would find him. We were hoping that you might be able to point us in his direction.

Griffin: Uh, the elf has come down from the tree that they were picking stuff from and grabs a staff from the ground, and holds it up. Uh, and I think both of them kind of instinctively actually pull the kerchiefs over the faces. And the elf says, uh...

Elf: Did Roswell send you? Are you here to stop us?

Magnus: No! We— we stole this horse from him. We're not with him at all!

Griffin: Taako and Merle, what are you guys doing?

Clint: [laughs] I'm watching this delightful exchange!

Justin: Yeah, I feel no need to hop in here. I'm good.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, then they say—

Travis: Have they seen Taako yet?

Griffin: No. They haven't— they have not seen the other two. Uh, and Magnus, they say, uh...

Both: Are you alone?

Magnus: Yep, just me! Uh, just here looking for Redmond. No big thing at all, just, uh, wanted to talk to him about fruit!

Griffin: Uh, the elf starts to—

Magnus: Big fan of fruit!

Griffin: —you see the elf start to, like, swirl his staff around kind of menacingly, and there some— there's some sort of sparks, some sort of accumulation starting at the top. He's not casting anything. He's just kind of trying to— he's flexing a little bit. Uh, and he says...

Elf: Okay. Drop your weapons right now.

Magnus: Uh, well, how about the old same time maneuver, where we both put our weapons down? You've got that swirly staff, which is quite impressive. That's wonderful staff work.

Elf: This is— no, no, no, no, no.

Magnus: What?

Elf: If you want to talk to Redmond, you're gonna do it unarmed.

Magnus: Okay, you got it! Just don't touch them. They are cursed, and might kill you.

Travis: So I put—

Griffin: [laughs] [amused] Oh, cursed weapons. I've heard of those.

Travis: Um, it happens. So I put my railsplitter and rapier on the ground.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, you set those down and you start to walk towards them. Uh, Taako and Merle, are you guys just, like, watching all this happen from the clearing?

Clint: Just waiting for our moment.

Justin: Yeah. Just waiting for that— does it seem like they're— does it seem like everybody's gonna head inside? Or...

Griffin: Um, yeah, they all start to move. One of 'em actually comes over and frisks Magnus, uh, looking for other weapons. I think you have a shortbow too, Magnus, that they make you set down on the ground.

Travis: [simultaneously] Oh yeah, I put that down. I never use that shit. Yeah.

Griffin: Um, yeah. You're being, like— you're following orders, right? You don't have some secret plan to, like, sneak a weapon.

Travis: Nope! I'm— I'm being rustically hospitable.

Griffin: Okay, cool. Yeah, and they are— they seem more at ease, actually, around you Magnus. It seems like you have gained their trust.

Travis: They like my musk.

Griffin: Yeah. This is— this is your rustic hospitality, I think, paying off. And they start to walk with you back in.

Taako and Merle, from behind you you hear, uh, rustling. Um, you hear people running, actually. And when you look behind you, you see two other guys, wearing purple kerchiefs, who you recognize as the drunk dudes who just— probably just got blasted out of the bar, and are running back to home base. And they see you and they yell...

Drunk Dude: Hey, these— we got some spies in the midst!

Griffin: Uh, and this makes the other two people turn around and draw weapons. Let's roll imitative.

Travis: Oh, I don't get a surprise round or anything?

Justin: You put your weapons down.

Griffin: Uh, I think— I think they would get a surprise round on you, if anything. Um, you are the surprised party by the backup that has come to join things.

[multiple dice rolls]

Travis: I got a 13.

[dice roll]

Travis: Oh, sorry. Plus 2, 15.

Clint: Alright. That was a 15.

[dice roll]

Clint: And another 15.

Justin: [simultaneously] Another 15, wow.

Griffin: Weird. Do you get to add—

Justin: [simultaneously] Wow, and I have a—

Griffin: You add— you add to that, right, Dad?

Clint: No, I got 0 initiative.

Justin: I have a— I— I rolled a 15.

Griffin: Oh, Jesus, guys.

Clint: Did you really?

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: Oh no.

Justin: This is weird.

Clint: Oh.

Justin: Cursed table.

Griffin: What's everybody's dex modifiers?

Travis: Mine's plus 2.

Clint: My dex?

Griffin: Taako?

Justin: I got plus— plus 3.

Clint: Plus 0.

Griffin: Alright. So it's gonna be Taako, Magnus, then Merle. Um, and in fact, Taako, you go first. Uh, you got the two that are— basically have weapons drawn on a disarmed Magnus, and you have the two ruffians that are behind you. Uh, and they are— they are drunk, and embarrassed, 'cause they just got DJ Jazzy Jeffed out of the bar. But, um, otherwise they're ready for a fight.

Clint: Are we still sitting on Garyl?

Justin: Uh, yeah, we are.

Griffin: Ehh, I think you would— that's up to you. I think you would dismount, knowing— not knowing what's gonna happen in the situation as you emerged out of the clearing, but it's up to you. Are you on— are you on the spectral horse?

Justin: I think we were being, uh— I think we probably dismounted.

Clint: Aww.

Justin: Yeah, I just don't wanna integrate him into a fight. I don't know how to do it.

Clint: I was trying to work in some really dope rodeo stunts.

Justin: That would be awesome.

Griffin: If you did want to integrate— if you want to integrate him into a fight, I think go for it. Sounds like it'd be hysterical. But, um, yeah. Up to you.

Justin: Yeah, Dad. If you wanna ride him you can. You're still on him. I hopped off, 'cause I need to do my biz.

Travis: No, no. Dad was on my horse, which I'm calling Horsie.

Justin: That's right. Um, what's Horsie's deal?

Travis: He's a horse.

Griffin: Um, if Dad's still on him, Dad's still on him.

Clint: I'm still on Horsie.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: It's time for dope rodeo shit! [laughs]

Justin: Uh, yeah. I'm gonna cast on the magical one, uh, Odaluke's Resilient Sphere.

Griffin: You're just— you're just making shit— you're just scat manning over there, making shit up.

Clint: Let me see the card. Let me see the card.

Justin: Odaluke's...

Clint: Oh, no he's not!

Justin: ... Resilient Sphere. A sphere of shimmering force encloses a creature or object of large size or smaller within range. An unwilling creature must make a dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is enclosed for the duration, which is a minute.

Griffin: That's a 6. So he's just—

Justin: So not—

Griffin: He's just floatin' round in a bubble now?

Justin: Nothing, not physical objects, energy, or other spell effects, can pass through the barrier, in or out. Though he can breathe. He can— I'll let him breathe.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Um, I like the mental image of him— the bubble maybe floating around a little bit. Like, a literal, like, soap bubble. Um, and this elf is now just kind of helplessly flying around. And some of those sparks that were, like, coming off the staff are now bouncing off the interior of the bubble, and he shuts that spell down as— he looks kinda scared. He's kinda spooked.

Taako: Yeah, be careful! You don't wanna burn off all your oxygen there, bubble boy!

Griffin: Uh, Magnus you are up next. You are disarmed. You are, like, right next to these two— or I guess next to this one now, who had a crossbow trained on you, and the other once is floating around in a bubble now. You're about 10 feet from your weapons.

Travis: Okay. I'm going to use my cunning action to use dash, and you gain extra movement for the current turn. The increase equals your speed, blah, blah, blah. With a speed of 60, for example, you—

Griffin: Sure. You just get— you just get extra move. I got you.

Travis: Yeah. Um, to head for, you know, my weapons.

Griffin: Okay. Um, and the three of you were walking into the house. You weren't inside of it yet, but that was the direction you were heading. I just wanted to—

Travis: And I was in front of them?

Griffin: Um, they probably— you were probably side by side.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: But with the cunning action they don't get an opportunity attack, right?

Travis: Uh, uh, yes? Or maybe that's disengage.

Griffin: No, that's disengage. So they are gonna get an opportunity attack if you run away from them.

Travis: Actually, hold on. We're side by side?

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Travis: Okay. Before I go I wanna just punch one of them.

Griffin: Well, there's only one left that's not in a bubble.

Travis: Okay. Yeah, I want to punch her.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Oh, you bubbled one of the two that were near Travis.

Justin: I bubbled the wizard, yeah.

Clint: Ah, okay.

Justin: I was worried that he would be the one who could cause the biggest damage.

Clint: Wow! Interesting choice!

Griffin: You— you're phantom fisting, I imagine?

Travis: Phantom fisting.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. Alright. Go ahead and roll.

Travis: I rolled a 14 plus 8, 22.

Griffin: Yeah, that works. So that's... not very much damage.

Travis: Nope, but I get to push her away from me. Uh, yeah, I only did 1 plus 4, so I did 5, and I can push her back, so then I can run to get my weapons.

Griffin: Okay. You— you phantom fist punch the one with the crossbow, and she goes flying backwards and actually hits the front door to the house, which causes quite a ruckus. And she comes— she sort of slumps down under the— right on the doormat, the Welcome doormat into the house.

Travis: Okay. I run and grab my weapons.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And then I use my second move action to charge right back to the door, 'cause I have a feeling there's gonna be a bunch of people coming out.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, Merle, you're up next.

Clint: Uh, okay. How far am I from the two guys that— the two drunks?

Griffin: Uh, they got right up on you. I think they're probably, like, five feet away.

Clint: Okay. I am going to, uh, charge one 'em with Horsie.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: I'm going to do that, that really cool, um... that, uh— like a Little Bighorn move, and hang off the side of the saddle—

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs quietly] Okay.

Clint: And I'm gonna take the Arclight Spanner and, uh, clobber one of the two purple guys with it.

Justin: So are you charging one and clobbering the other?

Clint: Nah, I think I'll charge the one and clobber the one.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, go ahead and make—

Clint: The one on the right.

Griffin: Go ahead and make an attack roll.

Clint: Okay. Um...

[dice roll]

Griffin: It's a d20.

Clint: [sighs] 4.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, I think you— I mean, you definitely miss.

Clint: Wait, wait. I— don't I add to it?

Griffin: Yeah, but there's— you're not gonna—

Clint: There's no way.

Griffin: You ain't clearing this AC, bud.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, yeah. You hang off the side of the horse with this wrench, and bring it down. Uh, and try to clobber them. Try to, like, polo them as you go, I guess?

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, but I don't think— I think you fail spectacularly.

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: And I think make a— uh, make a dexterity saving throw for me.

Clint: Alright.

[dice roll]

Clint: S—[wheezes] 7!

Griffin: You definitely—

Clint: I'm falling off the horse, aren't I?

Griffin: Yeah, you definitely fell off the horse.

Clint: Yeah, thought I did.

Griffin: And the horse goes running off into town.

Justin: Did he fall off the horse or did he do that thing where he, like, turned all the way around so he's, like, hanging upside down on the horse?

Clint: Oh, and then my head's bouncing against the ground? [laughs]

Griffin: No, yeah. That— that happens, and you hit your head on a tree trunk, and then you fall off the horse, and the horse runs back to town.

Justin: Great.

Griffin: Uh, the ruffians are up next. The crossbow one is gonna, uh, just sort of stand up and start banging on the door, saying, uh...

Ruffian: We got trouble! We got trouble! Roswell found out! We got trouble! Get out here!

Griffin: And the two ruffians are going to... I think they're both gonna whale on Merle, who is sort of laying at their feet right now. Uh, and I think because you're prone you have— they have advantage on the attack?

Clint: Sure.

Griffin: So this is gonna be not great.

[dice roll]

Justin: Nobody's trying to get their friend out of the bubble? Seems like that's what I would do. I would try to get my buddy out of the bubble.

Clint: No, they're pretty— let 'em whale on me.

Griffin: They're— yeah, they're not really near the bubble buddy.

[dice roll]

Justin: Yeah, but I would try to get over there. I mean, they're not gonna get closer. [wheezes] You know?

Griffin: [simultaneously] Shit. Well, the first one—

Justin: Just seems like somebody...

Griffin: The first one, the best roll they got was a 14, which I don't think is gonna beat your AC.

Clint: Nope.

Griffin: Okay.

[dice roll]

Griffin: Second one crits.

Justin: Oof!

Clint: Ouch.

[dice roll]

Griffin: Oh, wait. That's the wrong dice.

[two dice rolls]

Griffin: Oh man. Uh, 29 damage.

Clint: Jiminy Christmas!

Justin: Holy shit.

Griffin: They have a big old hammer, and they just bring it right down on your tummy. And, uh, you cough up some stuff, and it's gross.

Clint: Pshew.

Griffin: Uh, back to the top of the order. Actually, before anything else happens, the door, Magnus, that you have positioned yourselves in front of— um, the door opens up. You have your weapons, right?

Travis: Yep.

Griffin: Yeah. The door opens up, and the only thing you see is a guy. And, uh, he's dressed in sort of fairly humble farmer's clothing. He's got a big, bushy brown beard. Um, he looks... he looks kind of soft, for lack of a better term?

Uh, although he's a bigger— he's a bigger dude. Kind of an imposing frame. Um, and he yells with a booming voice...

Bearded Man: Everybody calm down! Put your weapons down. There's no need for us to fight over this.

Magnus: Redmond?

Griffin: And, uh, the people— the people— these farmers and the drunk people from behind you, they all drop their weapon. Bubble boy also drops his staff, and it's just kind of floating around in the bubble with him. And as you say his name, Redmond, he says, uh...

Redmond: Oh. [through laughter] I see my reputation proceeds me.

Griffin: And he kind of laughs.

Magnus: Your brother, Luca, sent us?

Redmond: You— you met Luca?

Magnus: Yeah.

Merle: Sorta. [wheezes]

Taako: Sort of. It's confusing.

Redmond: You might as well—

Merle: He's lost a lot of weight.

Magnus: We met most of him, yeah.

Redmond: The— the skeleton, yes. I'm— I know.

Magnus: Yeah. Oh, okay.

Redmond: Yeah, I know all about it.

Magnus: Wasn't sure if you guys had kept in touch re: skeleton-ing.

Redmond: You might as well come inside, my little— my little wood nymphs!

Griffin: He yells to the woods, towards everybody in the woods— woods party. Uh, and the two drunk guys kind of sulk in.

Drunk Guy: Ugh. Such a— it was a big mistake. These guys are gonna ruin everything.

Griffin: And they sort of slump inside.

Justin: I kick the bubble as I'm going in.

Griffin: Yeah, the bubble guy is, like, trying to hamster—[through laughter] hamster wheel his way inside, and everybody retreats inside. And Redmond motions you in. He's like...

Redmond: You may as well come inside. I've got a stew going.

Magnus: Ooh!

Justin: Um, the bubble moved half of his movement range, by the way, when I kicked it, so.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: In case you were curious how far it went. It looked awesome. I kicked it, like, 15 feet.

Griffin: Okay. He says...

Redmond: Would you mind unbubbling my friend there? He's— he actually is—

Taako: Just wait. It's not a good spell.

Redmond: He's kind of claustrophobic, and I can't imagine—

Taako: Hold on, wait. Five... four... three... two... one.

[pop]

Griffin: Oh, yeah. The bubble pops and he falls to the ground and he hits his butt.

[pop]

Justin: [laughs] Dad did a great bubble sound effect. Can we just get— isolate that for—

Griffin: Yeah, just isolate— give it to me one more time? Let's get a few more takes of the bubble pop.

Justin: [simultaneously] Dad, can [crosstalk] one more time, isolated for post?

Clint: One more time. Alright. [pop]

Justin: [through laughter] Great.

Travis: That's good. That was great. We'll plug that in there, and a couple other places.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, let's move on. You've made your way inside, and this is, like— this is a fairly humble little home but it's, like, very cozy. And you see pictures of Redmond, uh, with his arm around a slightly smaller, almost identical person, uh, who is actually clean shaven, but you can tell this is Redmond's brother. This is what Luca looked like in life. They're both wearing robes with the sigil of Istus.

There's some of the, like— there's, like, a banner of Istus hanging up on the wall, but there's not, like, a lot of it. There's not a lot of stuff. There's an office with, like, a bunch of plots sort of laid out. Uh, like designs for how the orchard would be laid out.

But you all are all in the kitchen now, which has one interesting feature, and that is that, like, a corner of it is just gone. It's just bubble. You could, like, reach over to the side of the kitchen and touch the bubble, which Redmond actually recommends that you don't. And Redmond has served you all up, and the four ruffians in his sort of party, some stew. And Redmond says, uh...

Redmond: Okay. Now it's time to tell the truth, boys. What are you doing here?

Taako: I forgot.

Clint: [wheezes]

Magnus: Yeah. Um... [clears throat] uh... so, let me see. I think we need Istus's help, according to Paloma. You know, that witch lady in the woods?

Redmond: Oh, I love Paloma. Have you tried her scones yet?

Magnus: I've heard they're great. I have not had them. Taako was—

Taako: They were off the chain!

Magnus: Yeah. Um, and so we went to the temple, only to find it demolished.

Redmond: Yeah, that happened.

Magnus: Yeah, you probably know. Um, and then we found your skeleton bro in a cave, and he said—

Taako: Cool dude.

Magnus: —he said he could probably, like, get us Istus's help, but he needed your help to do that.

Redmond: I mean... [sighs] the two of us could maybe raise the temple, if Istus wants that. I mean, it's kind of a long shot. It would only be raised if she deemed it so. She's not really one to interfere in our machinations, but I could certainly... hmm. I could certainly help out.

Magnus: I'm pretty sure— I'm pretty sure she'd be on board, because I think time and fate has kind of been fucked with?

Redmond: Oh, it's all goofed up, yeah.

Magnus: Yeah, it's real messed up. The problem is—

Taako: If it helps, we have a member of our party who's very strong in faith. And he may be able to help with this endeavor. He's a very faithful man, very popular with gods and what-have-you.

Merle: [in Clint's voice] And I'm really—

Magnus: He literally has a hand of god.

Merle: —[in Clint's voice] I'm willing to convert to Ist—

Justin: No, what? Nope-ope-ope. Nope. You don't sound like that.

Merle: Oh! And I am willing to convert to Isthmasism.

Justin: I got fucking swept away for a second there. Did you guys feel that? I did.

Merle: Yeah!

Griffin: Yeah, I felt it too.

Redmond: Wow, you're so quick to abandon—

Griffin: I think actually when you say that, um...

Justin: [wheeze-laughs] Oh yeah, this man is deeply religious—

Griffin: [simultaneously] When you say that, Merle—

Justin: —but, like, will flip on a dime.

Griffin: He will drop his god.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: When you say that, Merle, your pinky falls off of the wood hand, and it lands in your stew. Plop! It, like— it just withered up and died.

Merle: Or I could stay with Pan!

Justin: [laughs loudly]

Griffin: And it grows— it grows back.

Merle: Yeah! Yeah.

Griffin: It grows back, but it's a little bit smaller than it just was.

Merle: And I bet it makes the stew taste like shit!

Griffin: He says, um— Redmond says...

Redmond: I'm willing to help. But you all have sort of come here at arguably the most inopportune time. There is something in motion that... I'm gonna need help with.

Magnus: Yep, that sounds about right.

Taako: Yeah.

Redmond: Me and my party here have one interest, and that is to burst the bubble and escape from town. They started calling us the Liberation Brigade, which I think is kind of goofy.

Griffin: And everybody else at the table's like, "Aww!" He's like...

Redmond: I— I— I mean, I get it. Like, you want to have some— some— some intrigue and stuff. I just want—

Magnus: Branding. Yeah, we get it, yeah.

Redmond: Yeah, some branding. I just wanna get out of here. Um, and I have this... this is going to sound silly. I follow the whims of fate. That is sort of my creed. It always has been. And I know, my gut is telling me that the way out of town is— is in the vault in the bank of Refuge.

Magnus: Got it.

Redmond: And I'm going to retrieve it with or without you. But the fact that Lady Istus brought you here to me today tells me I'm on the right path, and you

all can help me get in that vault. So you help me get in that vault, and me and Luca will— will— will try to raise the temple up for you. I s— I swear it.

Magnus: Let's reverse that, and I think we've got a plan.

Redmond: I— listen. Unfortunately, things are... hm. The plan's already kind of underway.

Magnus: Ah. Mm-hmm.

Redmond: we actually need to get going... basically right now. Um...

Magnus: I'm gonna shoot straight with you here, Redmond. Um, we're in a bit of a loop. About an hour. And midway through— we've done this a couple times— you robbin' that there old bank, uh, everything's gonna go to shit.

Redmond: What are you talking about?

Magnus: Uh, well, there's a thing under the town... and it's gonna rip everything... just a new one, if you know what I mean.

Griffin: Yeah. Make a, uh— make a— I want you to make a roll for this. Make a, um... what's it called where you try to convince somebody?

Travis: Persuasion.

Clint: Persuasion.

Griffin: Yeah, make a persuasion roll. I think that's the only way to do this and...

[dice roll]

Travis: That is a... well, it's a 12 plus a 1. That's not gonna do it. It's a 13.

Griffin: No, I don't think this line of reasoning is gonna get him there. He says, uh...

Redmond: I don't—[scoffs quietly] I appreciate what you're saying, but we— what you're telling me goes against what my faith is telling me, so I hope you understand that we've gotta go ahead with this.

[twangy guitar music plays in the background]

Merle: Oh, I hear that.

Magnus: I mean, we were the ones sent here by your— your god or whatever, but that's cool.

Redmond: And I appreciate all the help. Um, so you help me rob this bank. It'll take five minutes! I know you're in a hurry. It's a foolproof plan. It's gonna go great. What do you say?

Taako: Hell yeah!

Merle: It's a caper!

Magnus: Yeah, fuck it. What's the plan?

[twangy guitar music plays]

Griffin: Hey, everybody! This is Griffin McElroy, your dungeon master, your best friend, and your... weatherman. It looks like it's cloudy with a chance of meatballs. I love that movie! I have no fucking idea what I'm talking about!

Thanks for listening to episode 46 of *The Adventure Zone*. It's, like, the fifth or sixth or maybe even the seventh episode of the Eleventh Hour arc. Um, we're getting kind of close to the end of it, and some— some stuff goes down. Not gonna spoil it, but prepare for some stuff.

I want to thank everybody for tweeting about the show using the #TheZoneCast hashtag. If you do that, you might end up as a character in the show. Talking about characters like Luca, PurpleMFTW Twitter. Ren, Ren Fraley on Twitter. Like Redmond, Chris Fromlet on Twitter. Uh, if you want to end up as a character on the show, just use the #TheZoneCast hashtag, and you might end up doing it. There's, like I said, probably just a couple more episodes left in this arc, um, but then we're gonna be moving on to a new one with new characters and new availabilities for names. Not only that, we just, like, really appreciate you spreading the word about the show. We don't pay to advertise it at all, so word of mouth is the only way that we get new listeners. So if you have a friend that you think would be into this show, tell 'em about it! Send 'em a link! Burn 'em a— a

flash drive or something. Don't burn a flash drive. Burn a CD. Don't burn flash drives. That's probably bad for the environment.

[ad break]

Griffin: Got a personal message here. If you want to get a message on the show, just go to Maximumfun.org/jumbotron and find out how to do it. It's easy, and we have some availabilities here at *The Adventure Zone* industries. I don't know why everything has to be a small business this week, but here we are.

This message is for Shannon Dapper. It's from Killian, who says:

"I wanted to be the first at the Bureau of Balance to wish you a happy birthday! I think you're incredible. You're strong, smart, funny, and have great taste in characters. I hope you have a great year. And when it's hard, remember: I got your back. BTW, Taako made you some fried chicken macarons. I hope you get them, but fantasy post can be screwy, so he might owe you one."

Not exactly sure how a fried chicken macaron would—it seems like—it seems like the grease would sort of disrupt the natural chemical processes that form the macaron, although if anybody could make it work, it would certainly be Taako.

Got another message here. This one's for Anthony Amato and it's from Nicole Klein, who says:

"Anthony! Since the first day we met playing D&D, I knew I wanted you in my life. These five years have flown by. You do more than make me happy. You make me realize I deserve happiness. I adore our life together and want to be with you forever. So, hopefully Griffin will give me a sec to get down on one knee to ask. [pause] Anthony, will you marry me?"

Holy shit! I didn't— sorry, I'm interrupting your moment. Do your thing.

[pause]

Okay. This is the part where I admit that I didn't read this message, like, start to finish before I just kind of jumped right into it. And I guess that's the right way to do it, 'cause I would've— I would've stumbled all over myself if I knew that this was gonna be a wedding proposal. I'm sorry, I just get so nervous! This is the first one of these we've had on the show. I hope it went well! It's, um— this is a

very, uh, profound, magical moment, and thanks for letting me be a part of it, and thank you— thank you for listening, and I hope— I hope the love is good!

Hate to move on from such a nice moment into more advertisements, but we gotta feed the beast. If you enjoy the show, check out Maximumfun.org and just click on some podcasts and go listen to 'em. We are so proud to be a part of this network. It is such a cool thing. And there's so many good shows, like *The Flop House*, and *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* And *Baby Geniuses*, and *Can I Pet Your Dog?* And *Stop Podcasting Yourself*. Um, all of these show— and *Throwing Shade!* Uh, all of these shows are so great, all free at Maximumfun.org.

If you wanna hear us do more shows, just go to mcelroyshows.com and you can find all the podcasts we do, like *Shmanners*, a show Travis does with his wife Teresa about manners. You can find *Sawbones*, a show that Justin does with his wife Sydnee about medical history. You can check out *Rosebuddies*, a podcast I do with my wife Rachel about the Bachelor franchise, or *Cool Games Inc*, a video game podcast I do with Nick Robinson at Polygon. You can find all the shows we do, so many, all at mcelroyshows.com. That is it for this commercial break. The next episode will up on August 25th, so we'll talk to you then. Bye!

[twangy guitar music plays]

Griffin: He tells you— he's like...

Redmond: I'll explain on the way, but were really do need to get going.

Griffin: Um, and leads you out of the house, and you start to go back through the woods towards the town. He says, uh...

Redmond: The plan is really simple. We're gonna blow the vault. First we're gonna get everybody out of the bank. There shouldn't be that many folks there. Um—

Taako: I'm not sure you do that.

Redmond: We're gonna get everybody out of the vault. We're gonna get everybody out of the bank—

Magnus: [simultaneously] Well...

Redmond: —we're gonna place—

Griffin: He has a small sort of lock box on him, and he pops these two latches in it and opens it up. And, uh, encased inside, sort of in, like, a little styrofoam little divot, is— it looks like a single cluster of the cluster bombs that you saw earlier, only it's, uh, pitch black and it's buzzing. Um, and half of it is actually transparent glass, and you can see inside, and some kind of combustion has already started inside of this bomb. It's about the size of a tennis ball. He says, um...

Redmond: We're gonna use this, and it's gonna blow the shit out of the vault door. We're gonna get inside and hopefully find whatever we need to pop the bubble. What do you guys say?

Travis: Now, Ditto, remind me. The couple times that we've been in the bank after they've tried this, the vault door was not open, correct?

Griffin: The vault door was closed. It was unscathed.

Travis: Okay.

Magnus: Yeah, I don't think that's gonna work. I think you're underestimating that there vault.

Redmond: Hm... well... uh... I mean, it's a pretty good bomb, and I feel very good— listen. There's a lot of things about this plan that are a bit hinky. The bomb ain't one of 'em. Look at that thing.

Magnus: Well, I mean, you say that.

Taako: Okay, listen. Can I tell you something right now?

Redmond: Yeah.

Taako: You saw the bubble I made earlier?

Redmond: Uh-huh.

Taako: I'm, like, pretty cool. You understand that, right?

Redmond: Yeah.

Taako: What if I told you you could get in the vault without the use of any explosives whatsoever? Walk in, walk out.

Redmond: Um... okay. Uh, I— that does sound enticing.

Griffin: Make a persuasion roll.

[dice roll]

Justin: 14 plus... okay, 14.

Griffin: That's— no, that's still not good enough.

Travis: Is there any way to assist?

Magnus: Yeah! What he's saying— like, what he's saying is true! I've seen him do it.

Griffin: Um, I don't think you could, 'cause you've already failed, like, almost this exact same persuasion roll. But Merle, if you wanted to try to, like, hype him up, I would give... I would—

Clint: Let me try it.

Griffin: Yeah. If you wanna, like, attest for his magical prowess.

[dice roll]

Clint: 14 plus 5 persuasion.

Merle: Hey, listen! He knows what he's talking about. He's— he's pre-med! I'd listen to him if I were you.

Redmond: I'm intrigued by you, and Lady Istus obviously wants you to be involved with this caper for some reason.

Griffin: And he closes the lock box and snaps the latches.

Justin: What's he drinking? What's my boy drinking?

Griffin: He's not drinking anything. What are you talking about?

Justin: I thought we had all sat down to—

Griffin: No, you're on your way— you're on your way to the— you've left the house. You're, like, on your way to the bank now.

Justin: Okay. I'll pour him a glass of water from my water skin.

Griffin: Okay?

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: He says—

Taako: You wanna see— you want— you want proof that I know what I'm doing? Check this out.

Griffin: He says...

Redmond: Yes, this is not the most opportune— I'm, like, walking and you're just handing me a glass of water, but sure.

Taako: Yeah.

Merle: But it's so hot and thirsty!

Taako: It's hot, huh? Wouldn't you love a chill one?

Justin: And then I point my ring of frost at it, and it has the ability to make beverages frosty. I say...

Taako: Give that a whirl!

Griffin: [wheeze-laughs] He sips it and he goes...

Redmond: That's a very cool beverage.

Magnus: You are the Kwisatz Haderach!

Clint: [laughs]

Redmond: I knew it. You were the chosen one. Listen, I'll make this plan B.

Taako: My LR is, like, so strong, you have no idea. I can make anything cold! It's not even a thing.

Travis: He taps in steel, baby!

Griffin: He taps the box and he says...

Redmond: I'll make this plan B. Um, for bomb. That's how I file things away. Um, but you— you get in there. Time is gonna be sort of of the essence of this heist.

Taako: Sure. My way's quicker.

Redmond: So, um—

Taako: And safer.

Redmond: You— you— I'll give you guys two minutes. And we'll hang out— we'll hang out sort of towards the outskirts. We'll hide, and you go in, and we'll give you 120 seconds to get in there, do your thing, do your magic thing. And if you guys get in trouble and it doesn't work out, we'll come in and you help us just sort of crowd control, and we'll do it our way. Does that sound fair?

Taako: What are you getting out of the vault? Is it just money?

Redmond: I don't know what's in there. I just know what it is is gonna help us pop the bubble. I know it.

Taako: Okay!

Magnus: Cool.

Merle: Let's do it!

Taako: Let's do it.

Griffin: I wanna make it clear, like, that's not just, like, um, a shitty McGuffin. Like, I think the— him and his brother's faith in fate is, like— they've been following their guts their whole life, so their intuition is their religion.

Travis: I'm sold on it, baby. You don't gotta sell me.

Griffin: Okay. So yeah, you come to— all of you are sort of by the elder's manor, and you're kind of creeping behind the fence that is surrounding it. Um, and they send the three of you out first, and as you start to approach the bank you see Roswell standing in front of it, 'cause that's where you told Roswell to fucking be!

Travis: I know.

Griffin: Roswell's standing there, and they are patrolling the bank. And they say...

Roswell: How's everything going? Have you figured out how to stop the disaster?

Magnus: Yeah. I— I— we need to get everyone out of the bank. I have a cunning plan. I can't share it with you now, 'cause I don't know who we can trust on your team. But we need to get everybody out of the bank.

Roswell: I don't have a team, it's just me! What are you talking about? I'm not gonna empty the bank out!

Taako: There's a— there's a mole.

Griffin: [laughs loudly]

Roswell: A literal—

Merle: A great big giant mole.

Taako: There's a mole.

Roswell: Okay.

Taako: Like he said. It's a mole! [snorts]

Roswell: Um... I'm not gonna— I'm not gonna make the bank empty out. I still don't know you guys from Adam, I just trust that you have some sort of otherworldly knowledge. You might use that knowledge to rob this fucking bank! I'm not gonna— I'm not gonna empty it out!

Taako: Hey, can I ask you a question? Are you Anderson Cooper?

Roswell: I don't even know who that is!

Taako: Are you Ahmad Rashad?

Roswell: I have no idea who that is either!

Taako: No. Then you do not know the identity of the mole.

Clint: [wheeze-laugh]

Taako: What I'm telling you is there— there is a mole, okay? And we don't know who we can trust.

Magnus: But we know we can trust you. You're on board with whatever we need, am I right?

Roswell: N—no. Abso— crabsolutely not.

Magnus: What if I let you hold on to my fish as collateral?

Griffin: I don't think Roswell's gonna empty the bank out for you, 'cause that would be crazy. It would also make this heist not very exciting.

Clint: Well, we got 120 seconds.

Travis: Okay, we're just gonna poke our heads—

Justin: Are we on the timer right now?

Griffin: No, not yet. They probably wouldn't start it until you go inside. But are you gonna just let Roswell kick it there while you rob the bank, or...

Travis: We're not gonna attack Roswell, Dad. Maybe you don't remember, but he was, like, skull level to us?

Griffin: Yeah, Roswell will fuck you up.

Justin: Yeah, he cons really high to us. Um...

Travis: Okay. Go get— go get Lucas. Is that the name? No.

Griffin: Lucas? No. Wrong arc, bud!

Travis: Who's the name of, uh— what's the name of the elder?

Justin: It's Mark Blucas.

Griffin: [laughs] Um, Sheriff Isaac.

Magnus: Go find Sheriff Isaac! We'll post up here.

Roswell: [sighs] Okay—

Magnus: Right? When you guys get back we'll tell you everything you need to know.

Roswell: I haven't seen him today, but I'll go wait in the office for him.

Magnus: Great.

Griffin: Okay. Uh—

Magnus: We'll instigate our plan— we'll start at 12: 05.

Griffin: [laughs] Okay. Roswell clambers off to the sheriff's office, and now the bank is unprotected by Roswell.

Travis: You boys ready to do this?

Clint: Can I be George Clooney in this?

Travis: Always.

Clint: Okay. Phew. I thought you were gonna make me Casey Affleck.

Travis: No.

Clint: Phew, good.

Griffin: Uh, alright. You going inside?

Travis: Yep. I kick open the door.

Griffin: Fuck, okay!

Clint: That's unobtrusive.

Justin: Unnecessary, but sure.

Griffin: Yeah, you— you kick the door open and one of the guards goes...

Guard: Hey! It's a nice door! Come on!

Magnus: Fuck your door!

Guard: [dejected] Okay... you're kinda rude.

Griffin: Um, this is your first— are you all going inside? Like, what's your— are you formulating any kind of plan before you do this, or you just gonna fuckin' improvise?

Travis: That doesn't really go along with the whole character I've built?

Griffin: Yeah, that's fair. Uh, okay. Well, then this is your first time all being inside this bank unexploded. And you notice a few things. First of all, it's the nicest building you've been to in Refuge. It's very well kept, very nice interior. Uh, there's a couple of potted plants in front of a long wooden desk with a sort of glass partition, um, protecting Brogden, who you see behind it, sort of counting out some diamonds and putting them in a till.

There is that heavy metal vault door right behind them. Uh, and that vault door looks as imposing as it ever has, 'cause it's never really been affected. It's nine feet in diameter, all unrelenting black iron.

You can see that there's a huge combination lock dial towards the center of the vault door, and that is flanked on three of its sides with what looks like small metal hatches. That is the makeup of the vault door.

There's a glass dome on the ceiling that doesn't appear to be a light fixture. It's just kind of hanging into the room. It's about two feet in diameter. Um, and there are two large, heavily armored guards flanking the desks. Each of 'em are wearing polearms, and, um... their whole loadout is basically identical to Roswell's. Um, like it's the same armor, it's the same equipment, and it's probably what Roswell was, like, outfitted with.

Um, and yeah, you see Ros— you see Brogden behind the desk wearing a— she's wearing a pair of small glasses. She's going over some spreadsheets. And she says, uh...

Brogden: Can I— can I help you? Please don't kick any more pieces of furniture, okay?

Travis: I point at one guard and look at the other and I say...

Magnus: By the order of Sheriff Isaac! Guard, arrest that man!

Griffin: Oh boy. Okay. Um... are you pointing at the one— are you accusing the one that complained when you kicked the door in?

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Okay... he says...

Guard: What did I do?!

Magnus: He's been working with the bandits to try to tear this town apart from the inside out!

Griffin: The other guard looks at the one you're accusing and he says, uh...

Guard: Jerry, have you been... have you been working with the bandits?

Griffin: And Jerry says...

Jerry: No, man! I didn't— I didn't! I don't even know any of the bandits that you're talking about!

Travis: I whisper...

Magnus: Taako, get moving!

Justin: Uh... what's their, like, visibility on me currently?

Griffin: I mean, you all said you walked in.

Justin: Yeah, I did walk in.

Griffin: It is good. It's good visibility.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: They got— they got four eyes full of Taako.

Justin: Uh, okay. I put my hands on my head and I say...

Taako: I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I— this is terrible of me, I'm sorry. I— I surrender!

Justin: And I lay down on the ground while they continue talking.

Griffin: [wheezes] [incredulously] What the fuck is going on with this robbery?!

Magnus: This man is an informant with the bandits! He told us everything, Jerry! You're gonna have to come with me.

Justin: There's enough shit in the bank that— I'm imagining there's stuff between us and them, that they lose visibility on me if I lay down on the ground.

Griffin: I don't unders— like, they— okay.

Justin: Isn't there— like, so you said there's, like, desks and stuff, right?

Griffin: Um, yeah. If you're hiding behind something that's fine, but if you're just laying down on the ground you don't turn invisible!

Justin: Well, I don't turn invisible yet, my dude!

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: They stop seeing me 'cause I, like—

Griffin: There's one of those desks that you can, like, fill out a deposit form on. If you want, you can hide behind that.

Justin: Yes.

Griffin: Okay.

Taako: I'm behind the desk. You can just arrest me whenever you want. I'm sorry.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, what— Merle, are you doing anything to help in this charade?

Clint: Yes I am. I have a spell called Command. I speak a one word command to a creature I can see within range.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Target has to succeed on a wisdom saving throw. And I want to cast this on... the guard that's not Jerry.

[dice roll]

Griffin: You know, I'm looking at this spell now. You know there's only, like, six things you can make them do?

Clint: What are the six things?

Griffin: You can make approach you, you can make them drop whatever they're holding, you can make them flee, you can make them grovel, you can make them halt. And then there's—

Clint: Got it. Got it.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, yeah, they do not save. Uh, what are you—

Merle: [in Clint's voice] Flee!

Griffin: Okay. So you're making them—

Justin: But with a character voice.

Clint: Okay.

Merle: Flee!

Griffin: This is important. Which one are you using it on?

Travis: Use it on Jerry.

Clint: Nah, I said the one that wasn't Jerry.

Griffin: [laughs quietly] Okay. Um, then the one that Magnus was trying to get to arrest the other one—

Clint: No, no, wait!

Griffin: —suddenly just fuckin' runs out— no, we gotta go with this because it's too good!

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: It's too good that the plan has been this bad so far. Uh, the one that was going to arrest the other one, or you were trying to get to arrest the other one, just runs out of the room.

Magnus: Oh, wait. You were Jerry? Sorry, I meant him.

Jerry: Wait, you're s—

Justin: Okay. Okay. I, um— as soon as he takes off I pop a piece of mockingbird gum and make my voice sound like Roswell's.

Griffin: Okay.

Taako: [in Roswell's voice] Jerry! He's the— he's the real criminal, Jerry! Go after him! You gotta get him! Quick! I'll be right in!

Griffin: Um... uh, I want to paint a picture. Brogden at this point stands up from the seat she was sitting on at the desk and she is looking very, very nervous right now as Jerry says, uh...

Jerry: I trusted you, Greg!

Griffin: And he fucking bolts after the building after the person that you just commanded to run away.

As that happens, they, um... fuck yes! Okay. Uh, as that happens they— as they run out of the room, they brush past two people who have walked into the bank. Um... and these two people, one of them is a dark-haired man, and he's carrying, like, a— the drawer from a cash register that is just heaped with diamonds. And you haven't seen this guy before, just 'cause you haven't gone to the place where they are. But the last time you saw them was dead on the floor of this bank. And another person comes in, also carrying a register drawer full of diamonds. That's Ren.

Justin: Oh...

Griffin: And, uh, as you see Ren walk into the bank you piece together that every time you've been in here, there's been a dead dark elf woman on the floor.

Justin: [gasps]

Griffin: Uh, and she comes in as the two guards are running away. And I think the dark-haired guy actually gets spooked as two guards come fleeing from the bank. Uh, he goes running out of the building. Ren doesn't. Ren just drops her till full of diamonds, which kind of scatter everywhere. And she sees you, Taako, uh, underneath the desk, and yells...

Ren: Oh my god, Taako! What are you doing here?!

Merle: [whispers] Desk inspection!

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [snorts]

Taako: Ren, do you trust me?

Ren: I— I trust that you're an excellent chef! Holy shit!

Griffin: She's come down to, like, kneel and be like...

Ren: Can I— can I have an autograph or something?

Taako: Absolutely. Meet me outside right now.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, that dark-haired guy that went bolting out of the building, you hear him yelling for Roswell.

Justin: Right, okay. Hold on...

Clint: What time is it? What time is it?

Griffin: It's 11: 45.

Clint: Shit!

Magnus: Listen. Consequences don't matter. We need to move!

Taako: Hey, listen. Ren, I'm wicked sorry about this.

Justin: I cast Banishment on her.

Griffin: Holy shit, okay! Uh... she rolls to save?

Justin: Yeah, charisma.

[dice roll]

Travis: Charisma check?

Griffin: Uh, that's a 19!

Justin: Shit.

Griffin: She does— she is not banished, but she knows that you cast some sort of harmful spell. And she actually—

Justin: No, it is not a harmful spe— no, it's— no, no, no, no, no. Banishment is not a harmful spell.

Griffin: No, no, but she knows you tried to, I mean... if you knew somebody just cast a spell—

Taako: I was trying to save you! Shit's about to break bad in here.

Griffin: She scurries backwards on her hands and knees—

Taako: [dejected] That's fine.

Griffin: —and, like, tears, she's got tears in her eyes.

Taako: Yeah...

Griffin: And she stands up and bolts from the bank. She looked really, really upset.

Justin: Well, that fuckin' works too. Whatever. Sorry. Sorry, Ren. Well, then I just fucking walk over to the fucking vault, I guess!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: One other thing happened. When you cast— the second you cast that spell, from your position underneath the desk, you hear the sound of breaking glass, and the dome above you, uh, had shattered. And you hear a "Clunk!"

And sticking out of the desk looks like a dart that is dripping with something. But because you were underneath the desk, it didn't hit you. It landed— uh, it connected with the desk, and the dart didn't hit you. But you can see, now that the glass dome around it has broken, there is what looks like a small turret hanging from the ceiling. And at this point, um, I'm gonna pop it off. Brogden reaches down under her desk and you hear a "Click!"

And her desk starts to change.

Travis: I grab Taako.

Griffin: Okay.

Magnus: We gotta move!

Griffin: What are you— what are you doing? 'Cause we could get into some shit, or you could try to stop this action. Let me describe it. As she hits this button, a metal gate that is, like, the width of the room starts to drop down from the ceiling, and it is going to cover up basically her half of the room, uh, and sort of separate all of you from her. Not a metal gate, like, a— like bars, like jail cell bars start to drop down from the ceiling. But I'll give you time to make a reaction to this, but you've gotta do it.

Clint: Is the vault on the other side of those bars?

Griffin: Uh, yeah, it's on the other side.

Travis: They're lowering down, yeah?

Griffin: Uh.

Travis: Yeah, I'm Indiana Jonesing under that shit.

Griffin: Okay. Taako, Merle, what are y'all doing—

Clint: Is this a roll?

Griffin: I mean, describe what you're gonna do.

Clint: Scoot under the bars! We gotta get to the vault.

Griffin: Okay. Taako?

Justin: Is Brogden doing something?

Griffin: Uh, she's just hit a button under the— under her desk. And, I mean, that is what she did, and that is what started this gate lowering from the ceiling. The desk— there are panels on the front of the desk that have started to rotate, but you can't really see what the desk is transforming into because we're, like, in bullet time right now.

Justin: Okay. Um, yeah. I'll get under the gate as well.

Griffin: Okay. All of you are gonna need to make some dexterity-ass saving throws.

Justin: Okay.

Travis: Okay. Like athletics?

[multiple dice rolls]

Griffin: And these are going to be, uh— I mean, if you can think of a skill, if you wanted to, like, describe how you're using the skill. I think it could be dexterity, I think it could be— athletics would probably be fine. I think acrobatics would be fine.

Travis: I'm going to throw Taako. It is more important for him to get there than me.

Griffin: Okay. Um, then I'm gonna— I'll just give Taako advantage on whatever he tries to do as he fastball specials you, Taako.

Justin: Yeah, okay.

Clint: Do I have time to cast a spell?

Griffin: Yeah, if you also want to assist in Taako getting through.

Clint: I am going to cast Enhance Ability on Taako, Cat's Grace.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Which increases his, uh, dexterity.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I got a 21 strength check.

Griffin: Okay, you throw Taako.

Justin: By how much, Dad?

Clint: I don't know.

Justin: It should say on there how much—

Clint: It doesn't.

Justin: —it increases it by.

Clint: It says see page 237. [wheezes]

Justin: Alright, what's the name? Wait, hold on. I got the player's handbook up. What's the name of the spell?

Clint: Enhance Ability.

Griffin: Oh, this is gonna be fucking great.

Justin: I have advantage on dexterity checks— I— okay, I have advantage on dexterity checks.

Travis: Well, so you get double advantage.

Justin: Okay. Alright, cool.

[multiple dice rolls]

Griffin: You have double advantage. You have super advantage. Uh, why don't you just roll your— are you doing acrobatics?

Justin: I am doing an acrobatics check, yes.

Griffin: Okay. Here's what you're gonna try to do. I'll describe how this would be resolved with an acrobatics check, with your permission. I think you— Magnus has just thrown you, and I think you are going to try and contort your body so that you go, like, the hole in the teller's window that, like, diamonds and stuff would be passed through. 'Cause I think that would be, like, the only opening that would make sense. And also, it would be amazing.

Justin: Okay, great.

[dice roll]

Justin: That's an 18 plus 3, 21.

Griffin: Yeah. You make your body into basically a sphere—

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: —and you go perfectly through that window. And in doing so I think you just knock Brogden right out. You just go through the window, thrown with a tremendous force and, like, enhanced in the air by Merle, and you make your way through just as the gate ka-chunks to the ground, sort of separating you from Magnus and Merle.

Justin: I land perfectly and throw my arms up in the air and shout...

Taako: Taako gets the gold!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You yell "Taako gets the gold." Uh, Merle, we need to resolve this. Make a dexterity saving throw.

[dice roll]

Clint: Uh, 17.

Griffin: Okay. You dodge just barely out of the way as you cast that enhancement spell on Taako, and a dart plugs into the ground at your feet, fired from that turret about.

Clint: Chunk.

Griffin: Yep.

Travis: Oh yeah. I'm— just for future reference— I'm gonna just hold my shield over my head, and as much over Merle's head as I can.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I don't got—

Clint: Because you care.

Travis: —what the kids call the magics.

Griffin: Uh, and Taako, before I think you start your assault on this vault door, you all hear "Ka-chunk, ka-chunk, ka-chunk, ka-chunk, ka-chunk!"

And barreling through the door to the bank, poleaxe— halberd in hand, Roswell appears and says, uh...

Roswell: In the back of my mind I always knew it. I— I knew it! I knew you guys were up to no good!

Magnus: I know how this looks.

Griffin: No, it's initiative time.

Travis: Phew. Cool.

[dice roll]

Travis: Okay, well that's not bad.

[dice roll]

Travis: I got a 19.

Clint: I got a 5? But wait!

[dice roll]

Clint: And an 18.

Justin: 17 for me.

Griffin: 19 for Magnus. What was yours, Dad?

Clint: 18.

Griffin: 17 for Taako.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Merle, what's your dex again?

Clint: My dexterity— it's a zero dexterity modifier.

Griffin: Alright. Roswell got the same thing. Um, Magnus you are up first. You have that turret above you. Oh, and by the way, uh— no, I think the desk would stop its transformation. That Brogden fight could have gone very bad, but I think you nullified it. So you have that turret above you. She was— yeah. She— I don't wanna tell you what was gonna happen. But you got the turret above you, you got Roswell in front of you, and Roswell's ready to just fuck you up. Uh, yeah. And Taako is through the gate and you have Merle at your side.

Merle, by the way, you're still damaged from the fight earlier.

Clint: Wait a minute! I ate magic stew!

Griffin: Yeah, that— no, I don't think [laughs quietly] it was magic stew. What are you doing, Magnus?

Travis: Magic stew is my favorite character we've created so far.

Griffin: Yeah, definitely.

Travis: Love that guy.

Justin: "Hey, it's me."

Clint: He's like Magic Brian.

Justin: "Anybody wanna see some prestidigitation?"

Travis: "It's me, Magic Stu."

Griffin: By the way, it's been longer than two minutes now. Um, and I think seeing Roswell run into the place, the— the other robbers are kind of [laughs quietly] hanging back to see if you can take care of them first.

Travis: Okay, I'm gonna charge at Roswell. If this is what we're doing, this is what we're doing.

Griffin: Okay. Go ahead and make— make them rolls.

Travis: Two-handed... well, one-handed, 'cause I'm holding my shield up. One-handed railsplitter.

[dice roll]

Travis: Okay. 16 plus... 9. 25?

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Travis: Cool. And I'm gonna use Disarming Strike, and then that's d8.

Griffin: I get to roll to save that, right?

[dice roll]

Travis: I think so, yes.

Griffin: Side note. I've been fucking around with Roll20 lately. I don't know if you guys know anything about it, but it is an online app that you can do all of

your rolls in, save all of your character data in, visualize things with maps and tokens, and get descriptions on every, like, spell, in this game and every other roleplaying game basically ever. It's very fucking cool, and I think we should give it some serious thought using it. It's, like, super lightweight and free. I've been messing around with it, and it's pretty cool.

Travis: Um, so it says that you have to make a strength saving throw, but doesn't say what you have to hit. How do we figure that out?

Griffin: What's your strength modifier?

Travis: My strength modifier is...

Griffin: It's whatever— it's 8 plus the relevant stat.

[dice roll]

Travis: Cool, yeah. So...

Griffin: Uh, yeah, I save.

Travis: Shit. Is his strength, like, real good?

Griffin: [through laughter] Yup!

Travis: [distantly] Yeah, thought that might be the case. Okay!

Griffin: You attacking again?

Travis: Well, I'm gonna do damage first. Okay, so that's 7 plus 2. It's 9.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I'm gonna attack again.

Griffin: Okay.

[dice roll]

Travis: Okay, that's 17 plus 9.

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: 26.

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: And I'm gonna hit him with Goadng Strike.

[dice roll]

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: [unintelligible] dice. 5 plus... damage...

Griffin: They have to attack you now, right?

Travis: Oh yeah, they have to attack me. Yeah, yeah. Uh, and then... plus 7, plus 5. So 12— 17 damage, and 17 is what he has to beat for a wisdom saving throw to avoid it.

[dice roll]

Griffin: Uh, no. They do not save.

Travis: Cool.

Griffin: Uh, you done?

Travis: Yep.

Griffin: Okay. Roswell's gonna take two swings at you.

Travis: Yep!

[dice roll]

Griffin: Uh, the lowest one is a 20.

Travis: I mean, yes.

Griffin: Okay.

[multiple dice rolls]

Travis: Oh my God, that's a lot of damage.

Griffin: 56... damage, altogether.

Travis: Okay! Well, I'm gonna use— I'm gonna use, uh... yeah, I'm gonna use Parry.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: [muffled giggles] "Hey, it's me, Perry! I see you're gettin' killed! How can I help?"

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Travis: You know what? Actually...

Griffin: Huh?

Travis: I should've used my cunning action. Is it too late to do that?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Sounds like it.

Justin: [wheeze-laughs loudly]

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: The definition of cunning is you forget to do it!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah...

Clint: "I have a cunning plan! Well, I had one."

Travis: So it's reduced by 9.

Griffin: Okay. So, uh—

Travis: 47.

Griffin: 47 damage.

Travis: I am instantly bloodied.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, next in the order is Merle.

Clint: Okay. Um, I'm gonna cast— I'm gonna Mass Cure Wounds on Magnus.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: On— on Magnus.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: And that's a 3d8 plus my spellcasting ability.

Griffin: It says Mass. Is that, like, area of effect?

Clint: It can be up to six creatures. So how about myself and Magnus? 'Cause Taako is not hurt at all, right?

Justin: Nah, I'm good.

Griffin: Okay, cool.

Clint: So it's 3d8— what, and my spellcasting ability modifier, which I don't know what that is.

Travis: It's 8.

Griffin: Uh, it's 8.

Clint: Okay. So 3d8s plus 8?

Griffin: Uh-huh.

[dice roll]

Clint: So that's 3...

[dice roll]

Clint: ... 8...

[dice roll]

Clint: ... 3. So that's...

Travis: 14.

Clint: 14 plus 8, so that's— we're both healed for 22, correct?

Griffin: Yes!

Travis: Yes.

Clint: Well, that was good of me.

Travis: That might keep from dying on the next round.

Griffin: Yeah, some of Magnus's— when Roswell just, like, cut you— like, slashed an X across your chest and you had, like— you could see, like, pools of blood starting to come out of Magnus and, uh, Magnus's wounds close up somewhat. Uh, next in the order is Taako.

Clint: Is that the first time I've ever healed anybody? [laughs]

Griffin: No, but it's been a while. Taako, what are you doing?

Justin: I'm gonna use the hole thrower on the vault.

Clint: [gasps]

Griffin: Okay! Uh, yeah. Go for it.

[dice roll]

Justin: It is a six foot hole, so I fuckin' assume I'm— that's through the door, right?

Griffin: The metal is five feet deep, so... just barely you got through it.

Justin: Perfect.

Griffin: I had hole thrower in mind, and I kind of wanted to make it a 50/50. So— so yeah. You create a six foot hole. It's six foot wide, six foot deep. Um, and you— it just sort of opens up before you, and you can see into the vault.

Justin: Here's my question. When I look into the vault, are there any gems in there?

Griffin: There's so many fucking gems. This will be the temptation of Taako. Um, because there are quite a few gems on the ground. There's big boxes, big wooden boxes with a sign that say "To be filed," um, and the boxes are full of diamonds. It's, like, shimmering, bright, beautiful, bright in here.

There's also... the only sort of thing of interest in the room, um, other than these beautiful, expensive-ass looking diamonds— uh, you see a pedestal, almost perfectly in the center of the room. And I think just for dramatic effect there's a single overhead light shining down on it.

Justin: [wheeze-laughs]

Griffin: And this journal says "Isaac" on the side of it. Um... uh, that is what you see into the vault. You haven't moved yet, so you can still move.

Justin: I, um... I run into the vault and grab— 'cause I could scoop something up as part of my move, right? Not an action.

Griffin: I think now that we're this deep into the podcast you can.

Justin: Okay. I scoop up a handful of the most expensive looking gems I can find.

Griffin: Fuckin' fantastic. Wonderful.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: You scoop up some wonderful, beautiful diamonds. Merle and Magnus, I think you can see what's going on in this room at this point.

Magnus: Taako! What the fuck!

Clint: [wheeze-laughs]

Taako: Hey, listen, guys! Trust me for once!

Magnus: [uncertainly] Okay... anything we can do to help?

Taako: Stay alive and stay out of my way!

Magnus: We'll fuckin' see. Okay.

Clint: We can do the second one easy.

Magnus: Tall order.

Griffin: Alright Magnus, you're up.

Travis: Alright. Um, I'm going to disarm— atta— attempt Disarming Strike again on him.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Let's see how it goes. Attack!

[dice roll]

Travis: Uh, 14 plus 9, 23?

Griffin: Yeah, that's a hit. Strength check. I have to beat a 16.

Travis: Yes, okay, yep.

[two dice rolls]

Griffin: Uh, no, I don't— I do not beat it.

Travis: Fuck yes! Okay.

Griffin: Uh, Roswell's halberd goes spinning out of their hands, and I think actually back out through the door outside. And you hear it sticking to the ground out there. Um, you doing something else? You doing another attack?

Actually, you know what? Because this is, like, an attack on your enemy's hands, that's what the description actually literally says, when you do that you don't just get rid of the halberd. You knock off their gauntlet that was sort of giving form, and now you can just see, like, the living red clay that was inside that gauntlet, forming kind of a round end to Roswell's arm.

Travis: Got it. Got it.

Griffin: You doing something else?

Travis: Yes.

Clint: [wheezes]

Travis: Is there any fire anywhere nearby?

Griffin: Yeah, sure. There's two torches hanging by the wall.

Travis: Okay. I'm gonna dash, and I'm gonna grab that torch and move back.

Griffin: You're defo gonna take an opportunity attack.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Okay.

[dice roll]

Taako: I said one thing: to stay alive! Literally one request: don't die!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, that's gonna hit. Um...

Travis: What is it?

Griffin: 21.

Travis: Yeah, that hits! Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[dice roll]

Griffin: Uh, okay. Roswell, just using that clay arm, just punches you in the ribs as you go past. Um, but it's— it's still a very powerful strike, and it hits you for 11 damage.

Travis: Okay. I can take that.

Griffin: Okay. And you grab this torch, and what are you doing?

Travis: And I'm gonna move back and I'm gonna attack his hand with the torch.

[dice roll]

Griffin: Uh, okay, yeah. You— I don't even think you need to roll for this. You just jab this torch into the clay hand. And, I mean, it's not— this isn't— Roswell's not made out of gasoline. They're made out of clay. But you do see sort of— you do sort of see that arm kind of stop animating so much, and you hear Roswell scream. Um, and that arm—

Magnus: I'm really, really sorry! I'm really, really sorry!

Griffin: And that arm kind of becomes hard. Yeah, you guys are getting deep in the paint with some beloved characters right now!

Travis: [pained] And I'm gonna action surge.

Griffin: Uh-oh!

Travis: [pained] And I'm gonna chop that arm!

Griffin: Oh, Jesus! You love this shit! It's your—

Travis: I'm so sorry!

Griffin: You're a fuckin' pervert! Fetish— exposing everybody to your fetishes!

Travis: I'm so sorry! 16 plus, uh— plus 9 is a 25.

Griffin: Yeah, I don't— yeah, it just shatters. That arm shatters. Um—

Magnus: I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry!

Griffin: Yeah. Go ahead and roll damage.

[dice roll]

Travis: Okay. So [wheezes] that's a 7? Plus... well, I didn't hit him with the Disarming Strike. I didn't do damage with that.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: So that's 16 points of damage for that, and then I rolled a 7 plus 5, so it's 28 points of damage altogether.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Um, do I get— do I roll damage for the torch attack, or is that just the arm?

Griffin: That's just the arm, I think. Okay. Uh, Roswell is up next, and they are just kind of holding where their arm was. Um, and—

Travis: Is my action surge just an extra action or an extra turn? I can't, like, run away or anything, can I?

Griffin: No, you took— no.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Um, Roswell is going to— they just kind of point, like, their— the remainder of their shoulder of the arm that you just removed and a— a fount of red clay is going to basically try to encase you, um, and hold you down. Um, so that would be...

[dice roll]

Griffin: Uh, 21. Jesus. 21 city over here.

Travis: Is that the A— is that against my AC?

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah, I mean, that hits.

Griffin: Yeah. So Roswell just sort of in retaliation, just kind of, uh, forces some— animates some of its red clay body. You actually see— after this attack they kind of slump down a little bit in their armor. Their armor doesn't fit as well anymore 'cause they used some of their body in this attack. Um, but a big heavy blob of red clay hits you, uh, and you fall to the ground, and you're basically kind of— you are incapacitated. Um, but it does— I don't think it would do any damage.

Um, Merle, you're up next.

Clint: What time is it?

Griffin: Uh... you intuit that it's about 11: 49.

Clint: Okay. I'm—[sighs] I'm gonna cast a spell on Roswell.

Griffin: Okay.

Magnus: Don't cast a spell! The turret!

Clint: Obviously!

Griffin: No, no-no-no. You definitely can't say that. You're under clay.

Travis: Oh, okay. I thought maybe I could breathe? No? That's alright.

Griffin: No, that's gonna be something we're gonna have to deal with. Uh—

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Go ahead, Merle.

Clint: Obviously he has to be powered by magic, right?

Griffin: Um, yeah. They are powered by a very, very, very powerful magic that you don't quite understand yet.

Clint: So, if I were to cast Dispel Magic?

Griffin: Yeah, you could give it a try.

Clint: On Roswell?

Griffin: This'll be cool. This is a great idea.

Travis: Go for it!

Griffin: Um, I don't think there's any— you don't have to roll or do anything. You just cast Dispel Magic. Uh, like, dispelling the spell that causes Earth elementals to, like, move around. Because I think both you and Taako are familiar with the concept of how elementals and familiars and stuff work, like, animating inanimate objects to make them do your bidding. Um, although you've certainly never met one with as much personality as Roswell.

So, when you cast this at Roswell, Roswell kind of contracts in their armor and shrinks back and recoils at the spell, and they stop moving for just a couple of seconds. And then it's almost like the spell just... reactivates. And it's not like any magic you've ever seen before.

And, again, this sounds like DM bullshit, but it's— there's some— there's something keeping Roswell alive. There's something that makes Roswell Roswell that your Dispel Magic spell for some reason doesn't dispel.

Justin: 'Cause Roswell's an elemental, right?

Griffin: Yeah. Um, Taako. And trust me, I'm not gonna let that go too unresolved, depending on what Taako does on this next turn.

Justin: Yeah, I got it. Don't worry. I, uh, slowly walk out of the vault. I grab the journal on the way out.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: So, for what I'm gonna do, I had to get these really powerful gems. Uh, they have to be worth at least a thousand gold pieces in order for me to cast this.

Griffin: Oh, fuck.

Taako: My name is Taako, and you work for me now.

Justin: And I cast Planar Binding.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay. Alright. Uh, what's that do?

Justin: With this spell, you attempt to bind a celestial, an elemental, a fey, or a fiend to your service. The creature must be within range of the entire casting of the spell. At the completion of the casting, the target must make a charisma saving throw. On a failed save, it is bound to serve you for the duration.

Griffin: [excited] Okay. Oh, God, this is gonna be—

Justin: If the creature was summoned or created by another spell, that spell's duration is extended to match the duration of this spell.

Griffin: Okay. Fuck, this is gonna be good! Okay. Uh, do I have to make a roll? Do I roll to save?

Justin: Uh, charisma.

Clint: Charisma saving.

Griffin: Well, okay.

[dice roll]

Griffin: Uh, 12. That's not gonna do it. Um, okay. Here's how this is gonna pan out, 'cause this scene is about to change pretty dramatically, and also we need to start tying it up.

Have you ever seen Akira?

Clint: Yes.

Griffin: The movie— the movie Akira?

Clint: Yeah.

Justin: [simultaneously] Uh-huh.

Griffin: You know at the end, where the boy turns into the big blob monster whose being just—

Clint: Yes.

Griffin: As you cast this spell, Taako, you feel something wrong. You feel— you feel like you're trying to command and control that magic that I just described to Merle that you don't quite understand, and it's almost like a computer error. Like two— two things are running simultaneously that should not be running simultaneously.

Um, and this conflict causes something happen to this— the very spell that gives Roswell life, that is horrifying. Because the armor just goes flying off of Roswell, and you just see this, like, straight up clayface shape. And the clay just expands and, like, shoots out of where their arms are and their legs are and their head is, and it's just flooding this— this room. Like, it's pouring out of the building, and it's just flooding this room with clay, and it's starting to, like— uh, Magnus, I think

for you it's just, like, all over you now, 'cause you were already kind of laying down on the ground. Merle—

Travis: Yeah, it had already broken pretty bad for me.

Griffin: Merle, it pushed you up against the wall. Taako, I think you are a little bit less affected by it. Um, because you were a little bit further away, but it's definitely— it's creeping through the bars, and I think the— you feel, like, something knock the book out of your hands, and the pages start to move it, and you feel sort of a divine force, almost like Istus's hand is sort of, like, guiding you once again with the hand of fate to look at this journal that you have recovered, despite the fact that you are standing in the fucking danger zone.

Justin: Okay, so I look at the journal.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: I do that.

Griffin: You open up Isaac's journal at sort of the behest of fate, um, and it is open to the next-to-final entry in the journal. And this'll be the last thing that we do here. The entry is Isaac, who you have not met yet, although you start to sort of understand what kind of a person Isaac is as you read this journal entry. Do you want me to read it, or you want me to send it to you so you can read it?

Justin: Uh, it seems... it seems like it would be weird for me to read it out loud, but I guess I prob—

Travis: [simultaneously] You read it, Griffin.

Justin: What?

Griffin: I can read it— I'll read it. Um, Isaac's next-to-last entry in Isaac's journal reads... [clears throat]

[melancholy guitar music plays in the background]

"My Daddy was a safety inspector for mines operating all throughout the northern counties of the Sword Coast, and as you might imagine, that made for a very cautious upbringing for myself and my kin. Every bit of wisdom my old man

passed on to me dealt with how to avoid the dangers of the world outside our cottage's doors. How to evade bandits and ward off hungry beasts in the wilds, and how to prevent accidental hazards in the home, stuff like that. But nothing prepared me for today. Nothing prepared me for that fucking cup."

And I just want to paint the picture of you, like, reading this as clay is, like, climbing up your legs and waist. Um, you continue reading.

"From the moment I saw it, I knew there was nothing I wouldn't do to get that cup. I just didn't know why. I trusted myself to resist that temptation, to put it back toward the back of my mind, to focus on the hard work of bringing this diamond mine back to life. And today, I faltered, just for a moment, and I ruined three lives in the process.

I killed Jack. That's my first time thinking that thought, not protecting myself from the awful truth of what I've done. We were looking for June in the mines together. She's wont to get lost in the mines. And I could just tell he had it on him.

That cup had a tight grip on my guts. I could feel it through a six foot thick lead wall. And I did it as quickly as I could, as cowardly as I could. I pushed him over the edge of Shaft B, and he fell. As he fell, he turned to face me and he shouted his last word. It was a spell that he flung in my direction. And in that moment, just after dooming him, I prayed it was some kind of killing curse.

But he missed. It flew over my head as he sank into the black below. And when I looked behind me, I saw my prize: the cup I had killed my very best friend for, in June's hands. She grabbed it right where he dropped it. Only by perfect irony, she was frozen in place right there, by a barrier that I just cannot penetrate. Shielded by a power that I craved enough to kill for. There's nothing I can do to get her out of that state. I tried it all, and there's nothing I can do for Refuge, now that she's trapped us all in here, too.

I deserve damnation for what I've done. Refuge doesn't."

That's the next-to-last entry. And as the clay has, like, almost completely overtaken you, you read the final entry, which says:

"I figured out what that spell was. Jack's last spell. He conjured an Earth elemental, a guardian to protect June, protect all of Refuge in his absence. I met

it just on the outskirts of town. Refuge deserves a better guardian than myself, that's for sure. So I equipped them with some gear, gave them a name— Roswell, for my Dad— and set them on patrol, using the summoning spell's command word. And that word might be the hardest thing to stomach.

It was Jack's dying wish, his hopes for a safer life for his daughter and his home, manifest into a single word, his final word, his final thought."

So you read this final word, um, just as the clay is about to overtake your head.

Taako: Junebug!

[music builds in intensity]

Griffin: And just as quickly as this monstrosity had sort of exploded and enveloped everything in this room, the clay contracts and is pulled back in to Roswell's sort of base form. And you see them standing there, and Roswell says...

Roswell: What would you like me to do?

[music plays]

[chord]

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