

The Adventure Zone Balance: The Eleventh Hour, Chapter Nine

Published on September 22, 2016

[Listen on TheMcElroy.family](https://www.themcelroyfamily.com/)

Griffin: Previously, on *The Adventure Zone*:

Griffin: Quickly emerging from the ground, you see three very large, very purple worms. These three little piggies just cry the whole way home. Just, like, cryin'! Doing a sad little purple worm cry.

Clint: So I'm the bad guy.

Griffin: As they run away. The thing that most catches your eye on this main drag is the statue. This figure standing behind them is tall, and muscular, is wearing a robe, a bright crimson red.

Travis: Oh! Like the bad guys.

Paloma: [echoing] Turn right!

Justin: Okay, I turn right.

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

Paloma: [whispering urgently] Turn right!

Griffin: And the metal sliding hatch that you saw over the top of Shaft A that hadn't been shut is actually shut over this hole, so it's covering the entirety of Shaft B. And you see June in front of you, and she's young again, and she falls to her hands and knees, and the cup rolls away from her and lands perfectly at your feet.

Announcer: That's enough dilly dallying and pussyfooting around. These heroes are out of time. It's *The Adventure Zone*!

[theme music plays]

Griffin: I love you guys, and I can't record another podcast all in the same with you all again.

Travis: This is very weird. I've never played D&D *with* you before. I've played of you.

Justin: Yeah, we've played in live settings before.

Travis: Oh, I wasn't playing. That was serious.

Griffin: But that's for the— that's for the *money*.

Travis: That was just for money. This is for the funny.

Griffin: This is just for the funny, and I can see just the waves of nerd energy just radiating out of all our pale, sallowy skin.

Travis: The fun will be when we start communicating just purely nonverbally with all, like, looks and nods.

Griffin: That's good podcast shit, yeah.

Travis: What is this?

Clint: That's good podcasting.

Justin: In accordance with Dungeons and Dragons protocol, I have provided for you a giant loose pile of Doritos in the middle of the table, and I have soaked the carpet with Mountain Dew that you may suckle at your leisure.

Griffin: I'm just gonna put my mouth down there and just kinda go buck wild.

Travis: Can I tell you the most upsetting thing about the loose pile of Doritos?

Griffin: What's wrong?

Travis: Each Dorito is a different flavor, and I don't know how he did that. There's one of each from every— and not just, like, current flavors. Every flavor that's ever existed.

Clint: Well, each flavor will give you dog breath, so go ahead.

Griffin: This is a weird energy to start the show with. Uh, okay. You guys wanna play some D&D? I would really like to finish this arc today.

Travis: I'm so horny for it, Griffin. Welcome to the same room with me, fellas. I say horny a lot.

Justin: [snorts] Ugh.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay. So when last we left off you just sort of beat the, uh— the offer given to you by the Temporal Chalice, and June. You're back at the top of Shaft B, and June has sort of collapsed after giving up the cup, and it fell and landed at your feet.

Before we get to, like, what you guys do next, there's a quick off camera cutscene. And it shows a few folks around the town of Refuge. You see Cassidy sneaking out of the crack in the wall in her cell, and as she makes her way outside she kind of shakes her head and closes her eyes and looks kind of confused.

And then you see everybody in the Davy Lamp, and the Davy Lamp just falls silent, and Ren stops polishing glasses for a second and kind of looks confused. And you see Brogden in the bank kind of sit up with a start, and then she flips a switch under her desk in the bank and it drops these heavy metal gates over the entrances into the bank.

And you see the liberation brigade and Redmond, their leader, stop their march into Refuge and just kind of shake their head like they're remembering something, and they head home. And there's this air of confusion as everybody in the town of Refuge starts to remember the things that have happened in these past loops.

Travis: Uh? [laughs]

Griffin: Um, but there's also a lot of—[laughs] yeah.

Travis: Whoops!

Clint: Egh...

Travis: We did a lot of things assuming they were erased from time!

Justin: Oh no.

Griffin: But they're also— they also look kind of afraid, 'cause each of them knows what's about to happen to their city. Um, and down in Shaft B, you know the truth, and that is that the Temporal Chalice is laying at your feet. It is no longer active, and this is the final loop.

Travis: I wanna do something, 'cause I've been meaning to do it since I think episode maybe 46 or 47, it's hard to remember. Uh, I pick up the Chalice and I look at stupid what's-his-face in his face—

Griffin: Isaac?

Travis: And I say...

Magnus: I told you we've dealt with this before, asshole!

Travis: Okay, yeah! I just really wanted to make that clear, 'cause he didn't believe us at first.

Griffin: Isaac is kind of in shock. Isaac is laying on the floor after being thoroughly sacked by Roswell, and he doesn't respond to that. But Roswell, uh, picks Isaac up by the shirt collar and just kinda holds Isaac right up to their face, and reaches down, and plucks off Isaac's sheriff's badge.

Clint: Ooh.

Justin: Ooh.

Griffin: And attaches it to themself.

Travis: Fuck yeah!

Justin: Yeah!

Griffin: And just drops him back down on the floor with a thud. And Roswell looks at the three of you and says, uh...

Roswell: What's the plan, boys?

Griffin: Just to describe the room again, it's almost identical to Shaft A, only the hatch on Shaft A was open and there was a lever there that hadn't been deployed. Uh, in Shaft B the hatch is closed. There's a little platform that June is on. June is now again—I think we said she was, like, eight years old when all of this started. She is a little girl again. She is not the old, old, shriveled up person that you saw in the white space.

Travis: And what time is it?

Griffin: Uh, you would estimate that it is about— it's, like, right before 11: 30.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Um, you do hear some rumbling in the other room, over in Shaft A. And June says, uh...

June: Oh, God. I'm— I'm not using the cup anymore. I don't— I'm not gonna be able to sustain the barrier. He's gonna— he's gonna bust through it. We gotta do something.

Magnus: Alright, boys. I— let's think this through.

Clint: That'd be a switch.

Magnus: I know, but we're in the same room now, so— I mean, we've been in the same room the whole game! Don't worry about it. Um, evacuate or fight?

Taako: Hm... it seems to me that if we evacuate, they're just gonna wreck shop anyway. I mean, they're gonna destroy the whole thing.

Griffin: Isaac says, um...

Isaac: [exhausted] You can't— you can't fight it. You can't fight it. You— boys, listen to me. I've done this loop... a couple thousand times. I've tried everything. You can't— you can't fight it. It's all over. There's nothing you can do to kill that purple worm. Trust me, I've tried everything.

Taako: I mean, you can't fight *us* either. I mean, like, so if we're doing greater than less than kind of equations...

Magnus: That's fair. I mean, that's a really good point.

Taako: Yeah, I mean...

Merle: It is kind of a three brains against one thing.

Taako: Yeah. Well... two and a half. [wheezes]

Merle: Well, maybe.

Magnus: June? June.

Griffin: Uh, she stands up and dusts her little yellow dress off at the knees and said—

Clint: Does she look like a Fanning? Can we say she looks—

Griffin: She looks a young— a minor Fanning, yes.

Travis: One of the minor Fannings?

Griffin: Yes. One of the lesser Fannings.

Magnus: June— and Isaac too I guess, as long— and maybe Roswell. When did the worm attacks start? Was it before or after the big bubble?

June: Oh, it was after the big bubble. It was hibernating—

Griffin: This is June talking.

June: It was hibernating in its nest, and when the bubble popped up it cut its nest in half, and she got separated from her babies. I don't think we should kill it. It doesn't feel right to kill it.

Magnus: It sounds to me like the bubble needs to come down.

Isaac: I don't think that's a bad idea, but if she breaks into the surface, you're not gonna have time to convince it. We gotta keep it underground. If we could keep the worm underground but somehow get it out of town... we might have a chance, but there's no way to bring the bubble down. I've tried everything with that, too.

Magnus: Shink! What about this?

Travis: That's the chance lance. I don't have a good sound for it yet.

Griffin: Yeah, we'll—

Travis: Chance!

Griffin: We'll keep working on it.

Travis: Lance!

Isaac: I mean, that can bring the— that'll pop a bubble?

Magnus: It'll pop a bubble real good!

Isaac: I have an idea.

Griffin: He says. Uh, and he walks over to the lever of Shaft B and he says...

Isaac: In all the loops that I've done, I haven't pulled this lever. This mine works with a ventilation system where the hatch has to be closed over either Shaft A or Shaft B, and I've been afraid to open up this shaft, because if the worm comes up here and killed June, that would be the whole ball game for all of us. So if we flip this shift we can close Shaft A and open up Shaft B, and that'll at least keep the worm from destroying the town the same way it has some 2500 times already.

Magnus: It'll at least change something.

Taako: So kind of a fun kinky new way of destroying the town. That'll feel very fresh and vibrant.

Magnus: Destroy new!

Isaac: Maybe, but we've tried everything else. It's worth a shot, don't you think?

Magnus: Sure— yeah! You know what? Fuck it!

Taako: I don't have much of a plan outside of that. Let's go for it!

Magnus: Flip that— flip that beautiful lever.

Taako: And hey, worst case scenario? We die, we come back to live, no big deal.

Magnus: Whoa, hold up— no— well...

Taako: Let's do it!

Justin: And I hit the lever.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, you hit the switch and the hatch over Shaft A closes over the bubble that was placed there, and the shaft into Shaft B opens up. Uh, and while Shaft A was just like a straight shot down, like, that was where they found the original mother lode of diamonds and they just bored right down into it, Shaft B you can see is kind of more of an exploratory shaft.

Like, they were using Shaft B to look for where more diamonds might be. And so the cart track that you're standing on goes into that shaft. and kind of spirals all the way around it, branching off into little tunnels here and there, uh, as these tunnels were them just sort of looking, trying to find more— as they go it kind of looks like a roller coaster down there of mine cart tracks.

And as you open up that shaft, there's a small hole at sort of the start of the track, and four mine carts roll out into them. And Roswell doesn't hesitate for a second. Roswell runs and jumps in one of the cars and says, uh...

Roswell: I'm gonna lead the worm away from the city. You three are more than welcome to join me if you want.

Magnus: You got it. Um, Isaac?

Taako: Seems like fun.

Magnus: Isaac?

Isaac: Yeah?

Magnus: For once in your miserable life, do something cool. Get June outta here, get her to safety.

Isaac: Where is safe? What's— what's gonna be safe?

Magnus: Safer than here man!

Taako: Fuckin' everything's gonna be safe when we're done, bubbeleh. Don't you worry.

Magnus: I— let me hypothesize. Things are gonna go bad in this mine at least.

Taako: Oh no, it's gonna get whack, definitely.

Magnus: It'll get whack before it gets better.

Isaac: I don't even know.

Griffin: He goes to the three of you and sort of says, uh, discreetly...

Isaac: I don't even know if she's gonna want to come with me, man.

Taako: She's eight, my dude!

Magnus: You're way big, she's way little!

Merle: Offer her cake. Tell her there's cake.

Isaac: [quietly] She saw me kill her daddy. I don't— that doesn't—

Merle: Cake— cake trumps that.

Isaac: I killed her daddy. That doesn't seem like the type of thing you just easily forgive.

Magnus: She's had a lot of time to think about it.

Taako: Like a lot.

Isaac: Yeah, I guess we all have.

Griffin: And all of a sudden June is behind him with her hand outstretched, like...

June: Alright, come on. Let's go. Dummy.

Magnus: That's a good one, June. Sick burn.

Griffin: She points to the three of you and Roswell and says...

June: I'm begging y'all please don't kill it. Please don't kill it. It's just a momma that's lookin' for her babies. Promise me. Promise me you're not gonna hurt her.

Merle: Hmm...

Magnus: I promise.

Griffin: No— no such promise from the other two?

Taako: Yeah.

Merle: I've lied to kids before. Yeah, I promise.

Taako: Yeah, like he said.

Griffin: Uh, okay. They head out through the airlock, and it's just you three and Roswell, and you get into the cart.

Travis: I would like to try something. Before I get into the cart I wanna close my eyes...

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Hold out the chance lance...

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And whisper a small prayer to Istus to point me at the best track.

Griffin: Uh... so there's only one starting out track, but it can point you towards one of the cars. And it points you towards the first car.

Travis: Okay. I get in the first car.

Griffin: Okay. There's three other cars, two, three, and four. What positions do you guys wanna be in? Roswell will fill in wherever you don't wanna go.

Justin: I feel like—

Taako: I feel like I could be the most use in the back, 'cause I can cover us back there with magical spells.

Griffin: Okay. Merle?

Merle: I'll take, uh, three!

Griffin: Okay. So the order is Magnus, Roswell, Merle, Taako. Alright, y'all ready?

Clint: By the way, folks. Keep an eye out on your news feeds for the announcement of the new theme park, *The Adventure Zone: The Theme Park*.

Griffin: There probably is one of those called *The Adventure Zone* already that is not affiliated with our brand.

Clint: Aww.

Griffin: There's lots of go-kart tracks called *The Adventure Zone* I found out after we called the podcast that, and I've been working with our lawyers to shut down every last one of those fucking places.

Travis: If Griffin has any power at all, he will kill go-karts forever.

Griffin: I will ruin everybody's go-kart memories. Uh, okay! There's a small, very small motor on the back of each of the carts, and as you all get in they kick into gear, and you start down the track. And the track, for this first leg, it just kind of spirals all the way around. It does a long loop, spiraling down the length of Shaft B.

Travis: Do we have to do a constitution check to see if we puke?

Griffin: Hmm... I mean...

Travis: We haven't eaten in, like, 70 days.

Griffin: That's not a bad idea. Yeah, let's just roll just so I have an idea of how you guys handle the wet and wild nature of these stunts.

[multiple dice rolls]

Travis: I got a 2!

Justin: 4.

Griffin: Okay, you're all...

[dice roll]

Griffin: 5. Okay, so nobody's—

Justin: Seasick boys!

Griffin: Nobody's loving it.

Travis: Well, mine's plus 7, so it's a 9.

Griffin: Still. Okay, then you are kind of loving it. Okay, yeah. So you're spiraling down the length of Track B, moving downward. This event, by the way, is gonna be separated into several legs. This is leg one. This is how we're gonna handle this. You're moving down the track as you spiral downward, and just barely after you get started you hear that roar that you've heard so many times before, but it's interrupted almost immediately by a loud crash. And then you hear the roar again, but it's even, like, angrier this time, and you feel the ground around you start to rumble as you are spiraling down the track. Uh, and once you get about 100 feet down from the top of Shaft B, you see from a wall on the opposite end of the spiral, you just watch it explode open, and there is the purple worm, and it's got a mouthful of fire that it's, like, charging up, and—

Travis: I wanna say something cool, like "It we got its attention!" something like that as we go, but I'm screaming 'cause of the— the wind.

Griffin: You actually don't have its attention, 'cause it smashes through the wall and it arcs its head up and starts to head up towards Refuge. What do you do?

Travis: Are we safe to assume that, like, if we conned Roswell and he was like a skull to us, is this like quadruple skulls to us?

Griffin: Just using sort of your, like, logic, this thing is a fucking, like, nightmare beast the likes of which you've never, ever seen before.

Travis: Cool. I'm gonna level my short bow at it, then, and see if I can just, like, hit it with an arrow. 'Cause listen, we promised we wouldn't hurt it. I get the impression a single arrow ain't gonna do much.

Griffin: Yeah, make an attack roll.

Justin: How far is it from us?

[dice roll]

Griffin: Uh, it's about 40 feet from you.

Travis: That's a 3. That's not great.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, you get impre— this is like shooting an arrow at, like, a super train. It's like shooting an arrow at an airplane. Like, it just, like, "Bink!" and bounces right off.

Clint: But would it not get its attention? Aren't we trying to lure it away?

Griffin: Maybe, if it had been a sick ass arrow roll. Uh, so that was Travis's action.

Clint: We're trying to get its attention so we can lure it away, right?

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: Okay. I've got a spell called Geas.

Griffin: Geas?! [laughs quietly]

Clint: Geas!

Travis: [crosstalk] in case of geas.

Clint: It has to save on a wisdom saving throw or it becomes charmed by me for the duration.

Justin: [snorts]

Clint: But while it's charmed by me, if it doesn't do what I tell it to do it takes 5d10 psychic damage. Every time it acts in a manner directly counter to my instructions.

Griffin: Okay. How long does that last?

Clint: I don't know how long it lasts. It says "The duration." 30 days.

Travis: 30 days?!

Griffin: 30 fucking days, wow. Okay.

Clint: 30 days.

Griffin: Okay, I rolled a nat20, so I'm pretty sure that's gonna save against Geas.

Clint: Yep, that saves against it.

Justin: Alright. I cast Shatter. A sudden loud ringing noise, painfully intense, erupts from a point of your choice within range. I'm gonna do it from 11 feet away from us.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: How faraway is it from us?

Griffin: Uh, it's about 40 feet away from you.

Justin: Perfect. I'm casting Shatter, 'cause it' makes a huge noise, but nothing is within range, so there's no damage. I'm just casting it.

Griffin: Alright, yeah. So that— you cast Shatter and it makes an earsplitting noise, and it also— it has a special effect on, like, crystal and rock and shit, right?

Justin: It has— if the creature's made of inorganic material it has disadvantage.

Griffin: It echoes all through Shaft B and just shoots up past the worm's upward trajectory. Like, the echoes of it hit the ceiling, and a few big rocks come down from the ceiling and smash into the purple worm's head, and it turns to find the source of the noise, and it sees the three of you boys— four of you in your mine cart. And sure enough, it pivots downward and starts to head in your direction.

Justin: I flip it off with both hands and stick my tongue out.

Travis: Nice.

Justin: It looks like this.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: [laughs] That's good

Travis: You can't see it at home. It's really rock and roll. Think Denis Leary at his coolest.

Griffin: Uh, okay, yeah. You have the worm's attention. It is now flying downward at you. And at this point it has cleared its body from the hole that it first smashed in through. This thing is long as hell. Uh, and right when it's actually about to catch up to you guys, the track branches off into a tunnel, so now you're not spiraling downward anymore. Now you're just kind of on this straightaway going through a tunnel.

Travis: While I've got a second I just kind of calmly switch my hero's belt to fire.

Griffin: Yeah. Do you do it discreetly so nobody else sees?

Travis: [laughs] Yeah. Just like, [coughs]

Griffin: Okay. So you are now on a straightaway and you see the worm behind you crash through a bunch of the different tracks, just kind of shredding them. Uh, and then stop itself and arc its head up and then all of a sudden it is following you through the tunnel. And it is way too thick for this tunnel so it's kind of, like— its rows of teeth are grinding in opposing directions, clockwise and counterclockwise, just drilling into the tunnel behind you. Um, so you're on this straightaway. All of your carts are good and going, but the purple worm is gaining ground. What do you do to slow it down? And this is leg two.

Justin: Before—

Clint: Are we in any particular order?

Griffin: Uh, I mean, you're in cart order, which can affect things later on. But I'm just kind of—

Justin: I don't have anything to slow it down, Dad, so let me do a— what are you gonna do?

Clint: I'm gonna cast Shield of Faith on Taako. Which adds to his AC. He's now in the front, because you're in the back.

Griffin: He's wormwise, yeah.

Clint: You're closest to the worm, and I figure you're gonna do more damage than Magnus does. So I cast Shield of Faith. Shimmering field appears and surrounds Taako, granting a plus 2 bonus to AC.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: *That* is what a cleric does, boys.

Travis: That's really good.

Justin: Uh, good uh, I am going to unsatisfied or perhaps untrusting Merle's acumen, I cast Fire Shield on myself to add additional— this is actually a 10 foot radius, so I think it would get me—

Griffin: I think it would get all of you, yeah.

Justin: Yeah, get us all. So this is a— what it is specifically is a chill shield. So this chill shield grants a resistance to fire.

Griffin: Yo, what up?

Clint: Oh wow.

Justin: Very chill shield.

Griffin: Yeah, I'm gonna protect you, I guess.

Travis: Right now are we all still in line too?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Justin: So I've done that.

Griffin: Okay. Those are your actions. Magnus, what are you gonna do? All you're trying to do is slow the purple worm down.

Travis: Super good question. Well, with all of my magic and cool stuff... [laughs] I'm gonna do nothing!

Clint: [mockingly] Why don't you make a chair and throw it at him?

Travis: I do that.

Griffin: You don't have anything to make a chair out of.

Travis: Aw, dammit! Ugh, okay. I mean, I have— I'll tell you the one thing that I've always got.

Griffin: What.

Travis: An idea! Um...

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: Oh, wow.

Travis: Thank you. I liked that line. Um, okay. Looking at the ceiling, do I see any cracks or anything?

Griffin: Um... yes, just in front of you, you see some cracks in the ceiling.

Travis: Okay, great. I'm gonna aim the chance lance at the cracks.

Griffin: Okay.

[dice roll]

Travis: That's a 16 plus 9, 25.

Griffin: Okay, what was your goal with that? You're just trying to wedge it in there?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay, yeah, you throw the chance lance up and—

Travis: And then I call it back to me.

Griffin: Okay. Alright, yeah. So you throw it up and leave it and it sort of passes over all of your heads, and the purple worm is basically between you and it, and you recall it?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. Then I think how we could make that work is we'll just use that roll as the attack on the purple worm. The purple worm was going to go next and you actually saw from its, like, neck it has these frills of tentacles, and one of them was starting to whip forward, but the chance lance actually cuts right through that tentacle and cuts it off in a spray of purple goo.

Magnus: Sorry, June!

Griffin: And hear the purple worm kind of wail. Um, so I think with that you prevent the penalty that was gonna happen on leg two, but I don't think you guys are out of leg two. I think you still need to slow this thing down so we can start another round of actions.

Clint: And to be clear, you didn't promise June not to hurt it. You promised not to kill it.

Travis: One of those two. I promised something.

Griffin: Uh, who's gonna slow this worm down?

Clint: I'm gonna use my scrying bones.

Griffin: Hoo boy.

Clint: When I use my scrying bones I get to ask the DM a yes or no question once a day.

Griffin: [laughs] Okay. So you are— you kneel down in your cart and you get these bones of your pocket like "Oh, god, here we go, here we go!"

Clint: Here we go. Please, baby. Daddy needs a new pair of shoes. And my question to you. Is the worm more vulnerable on the inside than trying to go through the outside? In other words, if we attack it will it have more effect if we aim for the mouth and the inside?

Griffin: Uh, yes. Its outside is covered in, like, really thick leathery skin that allows it to move through— chew its way through solid rock without, like, getting all cut up and torn up, so.

Clint: So the mouth and the inside are more vulnerable.

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: There. That was for you guys. [wheezes]

Travis: Okay, but that— but you still get an action, right? Is that his action action?

Griffin: But that answer should've been given to you like [unintelligible noises] 'cause these bones are just rattlin' and rumblin' on the floor of your mine cart.

Clint: Well, I didn't know the bones could talk. That would be really cool.

Griffin: Uh, Justin, I see you going through a bunch of spell cards.

Justin: Just trying to find something useful, man.

Travis: Okay. I'm trying to picture it. So we have four carts. He's coming through a tunnel and he's kind of chewing it up, right?

Griffin: It's a she. It's a momma worm.

Travis: It's a she. Describe to me her teeth?

Griffin: She has, like, a bunch of— like a dozen rows of teeth that sort of spin in opposing directions.

Travis: Okay, great. I'm gonna throw a whole bunch of robot arms into 'em.

Griffin: [wheezes] Okay. So you just have a hefty bag full of roboid arms...

Travis: And I'm just, like, waiting, holding 'em off the side, and then I just kind of dump 'em in the way. So it's a whole bunch of metal arms in there.

Clint: Ohh, but you worked so hard to collect those!

Travis: Yeah, but I don't wanna die.

Justin: [snorts]

Griffin: I mean, I'm gonna take every robot arm from you. You will have no robot arms.

Travis: Every one?

Griffin: All of them.

Travis: I'll rebuild.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Okay, you— you send some roboid arms. They bounce backward down the track, and a few of them get wedged in her teeth. I guess make an attack roll. This would be a...

[multiple dice rolls]

Travis: That's a 10 plus my standard pluses, plus 8. 18.

Griffin: Okay, yeah. It doesn't stop her—

Travis: What's the opposite of unarmed?

Griffin: Uh, you—

Clint: Disarmed?

Travis: Super armed?

Griffin: I would say several of the arms just don't go in her mouth at all. Uh, a few do and she just, like, handily eats them, no big deal, but a couple get wedged in a couple of rows of her teeth, and it slows her down a little bit, but she's still pursuing. Taako, it sounded like you had some hot shit.

Justin: Not hot shit. I don't know. I'm just gonna try something.

Griffin: Alright.

Taako: Alright! Um, I have... I have tentacles of my own!

Justin: And I cast Evard's Black Tentacles.

Griffin: I remember this one.

Justin: Uh, squirming ebony tentacles fill a 20-foot square on the ground that you can see within range. For the duration, these tentacles turn on the ground in the area into difficult terrain. So basically casting on the tracks as it's following us, so behind myself, basically when it enters the affected area for the first time on a turn or starts a turn there, the creature must succeed on a dexterity saving throw or take d6 bludgeoning damage.

Griffin: I'll do this right now.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, 'cause this thing's, like, right behind you so it would happen... ooh! That's a 6. Okay, so we'll say this is that money. As it moves its way through, these tentacles reach up and grab the worm, and it pulls these tentacles to the point where they're about to snap and break, but the purple worm for just a moment gets held up and has to fight its way out of the grasp of these long tentacles, and it gives you all time enough to move out of this straightaway safely from the purple worm's approach. So you've made it through this—

Magnus: Good job, Taako!

Taako: Magic is easy!

Griffin: You've made it through the straightaway, and exit out over a large black chasm. It's just like the tunnel you were in just stopped and all of a sudden there's nothing but track ahead of you. And from the rear cart, a lever springs up from the floor. And Taako, for a split second ahead of you, you realize that the track branches off to the left and the right, and you can change the direction of all four carts by choosing the direction to go. Which way do you pull it?

Justin: So there's just two ways I can pull it.

Griffin: Left or right, yeah.

Justin: Just the two different ways.

Travis: Oh, I just so badly wanna—

Clint: [strained noises]

Justin: Okay. Uh... I'm— so I can either pull it left or right?

Griffin: [holding back laughter] Yeah.

Travis: Oh, God! This is killing us!

Griffin: [laughs loudly] If you all could see Travis.

Justin: [crosstalk] just gonna turn it left it right.

Travis: [muffled] Remember [mumbles]

Justin: Uh, I... can I...

Griffin: Travis is on the floor.

Travis: Oh, God! I'm gonna lose it. Go right!

Justin: So, wait. I can just left or right?

Griffin: Yeah, it's the two options.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Go right!

Justin: Hmm... hmm...

Clint: [muffled] It's the prophecy.

Travis: Please, it's the prophecy!

Clint: [muffled] Remember the prophecy.

Travis: The prophecy! You gotta go right!

Griffin: [laughs loudly]

Travis: The prophecy!

Justin: Trav, please. My daughter's sleeping. Please try to keep it down.

Travis: [unintelligible]

Justin: No, I understand. So just left or right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Please!

Justin: [blows raspberry] Do I see anything to the left?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: No, it's kind of dark in here. It's hard to tell, like—

Justin: Do I see anything to the right, or...

Griffin: Again, it's kind of hard to tell. You just kind of see the branch, yeah.

Justin: I wish I had anything to go on.

Travis: [wheezes]

Clint: I've got some control spells. I could control him.

Justin: Okay. Um... [pause]

Clint: It was the worm.

Justin: Maybe right. I guess right.

Clint: [through laughter] Oh, God.

Griffin: Okay. You jerk the lever to the right, and all four of the cars go off into the right path. And you go down a ways on the track, and then into another tunnel. And right before you go in that tunnel, you actually see the left track, and it just ends, and then below that you see, like, ten carts just, like, all piled up on the ground 100 feet below with some skeletons [laughs quietly].

Travis: Can we just say, the mine company did a really bad job if after the first cart they weren't like, "You know what? We're gonna close this one."

Justin: "This one doesn't work."

Travis: "We should get rid of that lever, now that I think about it."

Clint: We owe a big one to Penumbra, I believe.

Travis: Yeah, Paloma.

Clint: Paloma.

Griffin: Okay, so you've moved into another tunnel. The purple worm has caught up, uh, almost. It is again just about behind you. And all of a sudden, levers pop up out of all of your carts. Taako, actually the lever you just used sort of recedes back into the cart and a different one pops up. These move up or down, and all of you have to flip them into one of those positions, including Roswell. Do you go up or down? And you all don't have to pick the same thing.

Clint: I'll go down.

Travis: Yell it out in character, 'cause I think we should at least be two and two.

Merle: I'm going down!

Griffin: Okay. You flip yours into the down position.

Magnus: I'm going up!

Griffin: Magnus flips his into the up position. Taako?

Taako: Uh, which way is Roswell going?

Griffin: Roswell will go whichever way you don't go, if we want to do an even two-two split.

Taako: Down!

Griffin: Okay, you flip yours into down position. Roswell flips it into up. So Roswell and Magnus are going up, Taako and Merle are going down. And sure enough, the track kind of does a branch going upwards, and carts number 1 and 2 branch off and go up the track and Merle and Taako you stay on the lower track, which actually dips down a little bit and the purple worm just gets a burst of speed out of somewhere and is basically in between the two of you on these

tracks. Uh, and let's say Magnus and who's in the front of the lower section now, Merle, Magnus and Merle, make a dexterity saving throw.

Travis: Here, you can use one of mine, Daddy.

Clint: Thank you.

[dice roll]

Griffin: That's good enough.

[dice roll]

Clint: 12.

Travis: 15?

Griffin: Yeah, you're good. You sort of beat away these tentacles as they whip up from out the worm's mouth.

Travis: We beat them off?

Griffin: Gross!

Travis: What?

Clint: We already said we were going down.

Griffin: S— gross again! Two grossaronis. This one's getting the explicit tag on iTunes for sure. Um, so Merle and Taako, you are above the purple worm. Magnus— er, I'm sorry, reverse that. Magnus and Roswell, are above the purple worm. Merle and Taako, you're below the purple worm. What do you do to slow down or handicap the worm from these positions?

Clint: I cast Spiritual Weapon.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: I'm gonna cast Spiritual Weapon, which creates a floating, spectral weapon. I shape it to look like a giant fishhook.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: 'Cause if that doesn't scare the shit out of a worm, I don't know what will.

Justin: Nice. Nice.

Griffin: Okay. So you just roll an attack?

[dice roll]

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: 18!

Griffin: That'll definitely do it.

Clint: Alright. And then I roll a d8, correct?

Travis: I'm so glad I'm here so that I can give you my dice.

Clint: I'm sorry! I'm sorry. So I roll a d8.

[dice roll]

Travis: You're not supposed to touch another man's dice.

Clint: It's a 5.

Travis: You're using up all my luck.

Clint: [crosstalk] spellcasting modifier? Is it plus 8? So that's, uh, 13.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, yeah, you hit it for 13 damage, which isn't a ton of damage for the purple worm, but the hook does get caught in its giant mouth full of teeth and drags it backwards just a little bit, which kind of moves it from in between all four of your carts to now just kind of behind it.

Clint: Nice job, Merle!

Travis: Good job, Merle.

Griffin: Good work, Merle. Taako and Magnus, you're still kind of in danger from the worm. It is still close enough to get some damage on you.

Travis: Okay. So it's me and...

Griffin: You and Roswell on top, Merle and Taako down below.

Taako: I've been doing a lot of bacon saving. You got anything you wanna try?

Magnus: With what?

Taako: Uh, you gotta spear or whatever.

Travis: Okay. A spear— okay, with my spear and my bow.

Griffin: Oh, I've seen that fucking look before.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Have you?

Clint: Actually, you haven't. Have you?

Griffin: That's a good point. I've heard of this look.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Okay. Describe the skin of the worm to me.

Clint: Oh my god.

Griffin: Thick and purple and leathery.

Clint: I know what you're thinking.

Travis: Okay. Any openings? [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Um... there's a small opening that was made by the hook just now on the, like, side of its cheek.

Travis: Okay. Um, I wanna... uh...

Clint: [quietly] Yes. Yes.

Travis: I wanna...

Clint: Come on, do it.

Travis: Tie a rope— well, so my— okay, this is what I wanna do. Tie a rope to the chance lance and tie the rope off to my cart and aim that... hmm. No, no, no. I tie it, hold one end, tie it to a crowbar, and I'm gonna aim the chance lance for that hole.

Griffin: Okay. This is gonna be a tough shot.

[dice roll]

Travis: 19.

Clint: Ho-ho-ho!

Travis: Plus 9 is 28.

Griffin: Uh, yeah, that'll do it. You throw it and it manages to wedge its way into the hole—

Travis: [crosstalk] That crowbar on the— the— the rails.

Griffin: Okay. You now have a taut rope leading between you and the—

Travis: No, not on my cart. I'm gonna, like, poke it between the rails.

Griffin: Oh, shit! Okay! Yeah, you— okay, this is how this is gonna work out. Uh, you do that. You put it down— you just drop the crowbar into the rails, and I think we get a closeup on the purple worm's eyes, its, like, 17 eyes as it, like, realizes as the rope sort of whips backwards behind it. It goes, like...

Purple Worm: Uh-oh!

[music plays in the background]

Griffin: And it just comes to almost a complete stop. Uh, and you have definitely handicapped the worm and kept it from catching up to you. Side effect: you have almost destroyed the track that you and Roswell are on, and you've pulled it completely off the wall that these iron bars had secured it onto, and now the track is sort of free and wobbling and about to go down.

Travis: I recall the chance lance.

Griffin: Okay, you recall the chance lance and you have it back, but the track is still about to fall over with you and Roswell on it. What do you do?

Travis: Are the two boys below us?

Griffin: Yeah, more or less.

Magnus: Junebug!

Roswell: [scoffs] Yeah, what do you need? It's not a great time.

Magnus: We gotta jump!

Roswell: This is a shitty, shit, shit, shit plan, you know that right?

Magnus: So I figure you can do, like, a stretchy thing? I saw you do it in the bank.

Roswell: You want me to do what now?!

Magnus: I want you to do big stretchy arms like Stretch Armstrong. You know what I mean? We're gonna get down there.

Roswell: You want me to stretch my body and connect our carts to their carts?

Magnus: Very much so!

Roswell: This is a stupid idea, but—

Magnus: Junebug! Do it!

Roswell: Okay!

Griffin: Roswell flings— like, whips its arms to the side in a T, and the armor on its arms just goes flying off and backwards into the abyss, and now it just has these two long clay arms, and it whips them down from your carts on the top track, and grabs onto the back of Merle's cart and forms basically, like, a clay bridge with its body.

Travis: Okay. I grab onto Roswell and say...

Magnus: Let's get over there! Tighten her up, Stretch!

Roswell: Uh, uh, uh, you go first! Just go, cross my arms!

Travis: I slide down their arms using, like, my shield as, you know, the zip line. Like whee!

Griffin: That's fucking great. Okay, because of that, you just do it. You work your way down. Uh, how is Roswell— you're commanding Roswell right now. How does Roswell get down? 'Cause they can't use their own arms as a bridge.

Travis: But they're holding on, right?

Griffin: They are holding on, yeah.

Magnus: Okay. Just jump!

Roswell: This is a shit idea! Are you sure?

Magnus: It's gonna be great!

Griffin: Okay. Uh, they're gonna make an acrobatics roll. I'll say they have plus... I mean, they're not acrobatic. They're a huge ball of clay. So we'll straight up or down. We'll see how they do.

Okay, here's what's gonna happen. Roswell manages to sort of, like you said, retract itself. So Roswell manages to get in but it's not, like, a clean entry. And

Roswell loses some clay. Like, their legs and their leg armor and the clay that was on their legs just gets, like, knocked off as it gets caught in the tacks.

But Roswell pulls themselves off, and you see some of their torso siphon down and form new legs, but there's no armor on them at all. And the bird on Roswell's shoulder, like, looks completely frazzled right now because of what just happened, but Roswell stands up and puts up a naked fist with nothing coming out and then, like, looks at their fist, and forms some clay to make a thumb to give you guys a thumbs up.

Travis: Yeah!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: But now all of you are sharing two cars. And you see the track above you just, like, fall. It's actually wobbling and kind of in danger of falling over onto your lower track, but it goes the other way and collapses into the wall.

Clint: Phew. That was close.

Griffin: Okay. Fourth leg. You are nearing the end of this tunnel. The worm is way, way behind you at this point. But you realize that, um, in all the commotion that just happened the power unit for the back cart, the engine must be going out or something, 'cause it's got a big gash on it and it's shooting out sparks. Um, and your carts are starting to lose speed very quickly as you hear the worm making its way in your direction from deeper behind the tunnel. What do you do to get these carts moving again?

Magnus: Don't you have a wrench, Merle?

Merle: I have the Adamant Spanner!

Magnus: Yeah. Isn't it like a magic wrench that fixes things when you hit 'em?

Merle: Yep!

Griffin: Okay.

Magnus: Super cool.

Clint: Wang!

Griffin: Uh, Merle, you are—

Travis: I do have a sleeping baby.

Griffin: You are in the rear cart, so you hit the engine with the Adamant Spanner, and the gash on it seals up and the sparks stop shooting out. However, there's way too much weight in these two carts that they weren't sort of meant to carry. So your carts are moving again, but the worm is catching up really fast, so if you have another way to sort of gain some speed right now—

Travis: Are all three of us in—

Griffin: All four of you are in two carts.

Merle: I say we make Roswell jump out.

Magnus: No!

Merle: And then it's less weight and we'll go faster!

Magnus: Listen. I don't argue with your logic.

Griffin: Roswell says, like...

Roswell: If that's what you— if that's what you guys need—

Magnus: No. Ros— Ros? Not gonna do that to you.

Taako: Roswell. It's a good idea. Hang on.

Justin: And I cast Levitate on Roswell.

Griffin: Okay. Roswell is now— okay. You've lifted the weight out of the cart that was Roswell, and Roswell still has their two clay hands on the back of the cart, floating behind you. And the removal of that weight was exactly what you needed, uh, to get the speed back and going again. Um, the purple worm has more or less caught up to you, and Roswell— their arms are stretching out, 'cause they're

made of clay, and Roswell is starting to fall backwards. What do you do to save Roswell?

Travis: We— we pull them back?

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, you grab onto Roswell's arms and, like, pull them forward as the purple worm snaps its mouth shut, just narrowly missing Roswell. Uh, one of you will have to keep a hand on Roswell's armor to keep its clay from stretching out. Who does that, if you do that?

Travis: Cool, I'll do that. They need both their hands for magic and stuff.

Griffin: So Magnus, you are kind of holding on to Roswell, keeping them from floating away. Uh, and you've cleared this leg. And you come out of this tunnel, and you are in a massive underground cavern with tons of small tunnels bored in nearly every direction, all searching for new veins of diamonds. But there aren't tracks leading into these tunnels, and you actually realize with horror that the track that you're currently on comes to a full stop in this room.

There's a steep about 120-foot ramp leading downward, followed by a brief incline, and then just nothing. And about 70 feet in front of the end of that ramp upward is the only source of light in this room. It's the shimmering light coming off of the exterior bubble of town. It is a full sphere, and so it reaches underground too, and that is where you are. So you're basically heading down a ski jump, essentially, leading into the bubble. Um, and you have reached the end of the line.

Travis: How much time do we have?

Griffin: You have just kind of moments.

Magnus: Okay. I have a plan! It's a little nutty, but go with me on this. Merle, grab Roswell!

Merle: Check!

Magnus: Okay, Taako, get into this cart!

Griffin: Okay. Merle is now holding onto Roswell's arms, keeping them from floating away.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Okay.

Merle: Whee!

Magnus: Get in the cart!

Taako: Yeah, I'm in!

Magnus: Okay, great!

Griffin: And Taako hops into the front cart.

Magnus: Now you've got a thing that, like, makes things bigger, right? A spell?

Taako: Yeah.

Magnus: Like you did with the motorcycle, right?

Taako: Yep!

Magnus: Okay. Soup up the engine on the back of the cart!

Taako: That's dumb!

Magnus: It'll be great!

Taako: That seems dumb!

Magnus: We gotta break through, right? And remember the cannon? The only way to get through the bubble was the high speed, right? And I've got this lance?

Taako: Okay.

Magnus: Let's do this.

Taako: Brace your asses! [snorts]

Griffin: As you are clearing the tunnel you also realize there's another source of light, and it is the purple worm, and it has a big old fireball that it is about to barf out on all of you. Merle. What are you doing?

Clint: Quick question.

Griffin: You're holding up a card like you're in *Yu-Gi-Oh*.

Clint: I'm gonna.

Travis: Do it! Play it!

Clint: I play— okay.

Griffin: Blue Eyes White Dragon!

Clint: We're sending the empty cart towards the worm or towards the bubble?

Travis: We're in the cart towards the bubble. There's a cart behind us that's empty now.

Merle: I cast Guardian of Faith on the one we're cutting loose that's sending it back to the worm to do damage. And slow it down.

Griffin: Alright. An angel appears in the rear cart. Della Reese appears in the rear cart and says...

Della: This feels right.

Travis: [laughs] Della Reese!

Griffin: And that rear cart skips. She jams a beautiful golden heavenly spear into the hitch connecting the two carts and goes flying backward. And, uh, does an attack on the purple worm I guess. We're kind of playing calvinball with the purple worm at this point.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, okay. So you have this very, very fast cart, and you are— oh, wait! You cast that spell, but in doing so you definitely, definitely let Roswell go, and now Roswell is just sort of floating off backwards.

Taako: Oh no you don't!

Justin: I cast Bigby's Hand and a large hand appears and grabs Roswell and holds them.

Griffin: Okay. Here's the scene. All the three of you are now flying down this ramp. You're about halfway down it, this ski jump ramp out to the end of the bubble. Roswell is free floating behind you, basically perfectly in between you and the worm. Um, and Roswell has drawn their halberd in, like, striking position. The worm is immediately behind Roswell with a big mouth full of fire, and you cast Bigby's Hand, and a big hand reaches out and grabs Roswell. And Roswell says, uh...

Roswell: Okay, you all have done some great work here. I need you to trust me right now! Trust me! Taako, tell me that I made Refuge safe! Just do it! Tell me that I made Refuge safe!

Taako: Roswell, you made Refuge safe.

Griffin: As you say that, Roswell starts to kind of expand, like they did in the bank. And Roswell says...

Roswell: Thanks a lot, fellas.

Griffin: And a fireball shoots out of the purple worm's mouth, and right as it leaves its mouth you watch Roswell just kind of spasm and send its clay outward in a giant red sheet. Uh, and as it does, the glow, like the yellow glow that was sustaining it just disappears from the clay as this giant red sheet catches the fireball and keeps it from destroying all of your carts.

And as it does, as Roswell does this, you see that yellow light just kind of leave that clay and just enter into the Vermilion Flycatcher that was on Roswell's shoulder the whole time, as this red bird flies upward and away from the fiery explosion. And the purple worm kind of gets caught up in the clay net as well, and gets slowed down. Um, and the three of you are safe and free as you fly down the ramp and launch upward off the end of the ramp all in one cart.

Travis: Magnus braces the chance lance like a lance. Like in his shoulder forward.

Griffin: Okay, you are— the three of you are a dart that has been thrown off the end of the ramp, and jab into the side of the bubble, and the extremely loud room that you were just in kind of just falls silent and you are in a white space. And in a cart, in a mine cart, going 100 miles an hour, but just sort of sailing through the white space.

Uh, and then all of a sudden you see a hole in front of you in the white space as you see daylight and red clay, and you emerge out of the bubble where you entered into the town of Refuge, and you flip over— the cart you're in flips end over end and dumps you on the ground as the cart keeps going just past you, and you are back in the Woven Gulch, and you are lying just in front of Avi and his big, big Jager cannon. And Avi turns and looks at you and he's really startled, and he says...

Avi: You guys just scared the shit outta—

Griffin: And before he can finish, the hole that you just came through in the barrier expands, and the purple worm sails through it. The purple worm sails through the side of the bubble.

Travis: I pull Avi down.

Griffin: You grab Avi and pull him down, and this— it's like a train going over you. Like, it casts a shadow over all of you, and sails over you for probably a good 15 seconds before it skids to a halt just past you. And without missing a beat it whips its head around and readies another fireball in your direction. But just as it's about to incinerate you, you feel a rumble beneath your feet, and from all around it, from all around the purple worm, three smaller purple worms burrow up from the ground, and it's the ones that you fought at the beginning of the adventure.

Travis: And spared, might I add!

Griffin: And spared at the beginning.

Travis: Fought and spared.

Griffin: And these three purple worms and all whining, this sound that is— they sound overjoyed, but it's a horrible noise. Uh, and the momma worm looks at these three little worms and then back at you, and then back at the baby worms, and then it roars. But not the, like, anguished scream that you've heard, you know, a dozen times or so now right before Refuge was destroyed. It's a roar of joy, and it wraps itself around its three children and pulls its head high up into the sky and then slams down into the ground, burrowing away with its family.

Clint: [singing] It's a mother and child reunion! [speaking] You guys have heard that song before, right?

Travis: No, but I get the point of it. It was pretty straightforward.

Griffin: You literally said the thing that happened. You said the thing that happened.

Travis: You did, to music.

Clint: Well, Paul Simon did originally. I was just quoting.

[music plays]

Griffin: Hey, everybody! It's Griffin McElroy, your dungeon master, your best friend, and your other thing. Thanks for listening to episode 49 of *The Adventure Zone*. It's the last episode of the Eleventh Hours arc! It feels like we just started that a couple weeks ago, but really it's been, like, five months. Thanks for listening to this whole arc. The feedback we've gotten on it has been so great, and I'm really happy with how it turns out here at the end of this episode, which I'm gonna let you get to, but first I'm gonna do some commercials to you.

[ad break]

Griffin: Got a bunch of Jumbotron messages to read to you. If you want to get a message on the show just go to Maximumfun.org/jumbotron and you can find out how to do that there. First message here is for Carl the Man-Boy-Wizard, and it's from Fluffles the Brave.

These are fake names, aren't you? This is— you're pranking me, aren't you? Unless that's your real name, in which case oh my God, I'm terrible sorry. Fluffles says to Carl:

"Happy anniversary to the most magical man in my life. The past 365 days have been fantasy and fun-filled, and there is no other person I would rather have spent the last year adventuring with. From mountain climbing to playing D&D, I'm glad to have you by my side through everything. I love you forever and always."

This was supposed to go up on July 30th, so this is an anniversary plus change. [laughs quietly] you're already on your way to the next anniversary, and I'm so happy for you, congratulations on all the love, and keep— keep— keep it going! Hang in there! Hang in there sounds like something— anyway, great job on the love, and well done.

Got another message here for Helgar. Sorry, this message is actually for Heglar, but if you're Helgar and you want this message to be about you, you can just make believe. Anyway, it's from Johnson, who says to Heglar:

"What up, buddy? Congratulations on finishing your masters and getting married in a few weeks, both of which have probably already happened."

Definitely.

"Sucks about your parenting critical miss a while back, and remember not to do anything awful with your biotech degree or you'll have a fingerling potato coming your way. Miss you, dude!"

I'm hoping this is just sort of a fun innocuous in just and, you know... this person's invented a potato bomb and that was the most threatening thing I've ever read on the show. But yeah, congratulations Heglar on both the nuptials and the masters, both of which have almost certainly happened, like, six months ago, 'cause we're really bad at doing these things on time.

Got one more message here. This one's for Katie and Dan and it's from Your Brother, You Brother, and Me, who say:

"Congratulations on leveling up as grownups and getting hitched. When we tried to come up with something that would adequately symbolize your love, we came up with lizardperson and kobold slash fic. We'll be sure to fill you in on the anatomical details in our wedding speeches. Love your brothers Will, Mark, and Jacob."

Um, that is probably... that's gonna be just a buck wild wedding speech. That's gonna be one of the wettest and wildest wedding speeches probably in the history of the whole exercise. But congratulations Katie and Dan on getting married! It's fun stuff and I bet you're really gonna dig it.

Thanks everybody who's been tweeting about the show using the #TheZoneCast hashtag. We don't play to advertise the show at all, so word of mouth is literally the only way that we get new listeners, and we have a really great following now, and that's entirely because of you! So if you can tweet about the show using the #TheZoneCast hashtag, man we sure do appreciate it.

I think the next episode is probably gonna be a Lunar Interlude before we get started on the next arc, so we'll probably have some new characters coming up in the next few episodes, so if you wanna end up as a character on the show just tweet about the show using the #TheZoneCast hashtag and it could happen to you.

A few thank yous. Thanks to the Max Fun Network for having us. You can go to Maximumfun.org and find out all about the different shows on the network. They're all so great and we're so happy to be a part of the network. They have shows like Throwing Shade and Stop Podcasting Yourself and Jordan Jesse Go and Judge John Hodgman and The Beef and Dairy Network and The Greatest Generation. So many amazing shows, all for free on Maximumfun.org. If you want to find the other shows that we do and other ways to sort of get in touch with us, like our PO Boxes and all that stuff, you can go to mcelroyshows.com, and we got a full list of all of our projects there. So, that is it for this episode. The next one will be up on, let me do some quick math— oh shit, let me get my calendar. Hold on, wait! The next episode is gonna be up on October 6th, and so we will talk to you then. See you soon, bye!

[music plays]

Griffin: Avi is just white as a sheet. He is paralyzed in fear.

Magnus: How's it goin'? [laughs]

Griffin: He doesn't— he doesn't respond. He's just, like—

Travis: I slap him.

Taako: Hey, I've got a fun question. How long we've been gone you think, Avi?

Magnus: Yeah, that's a real good one.

Griffin: He doesn't respond to you. He's just paralyzed.

Travis: I slap him again.

Griffin: He doesn't move or respond to that, 'cause he's— he's paralyzed.

Clint: I slap him.

Griffin: Okay. You take turns slapping Avi.

Travis: Anybody want a free shot on Avi?

Griffin: He doesn't move because he's literally paralyzed, and you realize he's outlined in red light. And from behind him you actually see sort of apparate behind him the red robed figure that you've encountered a few times now. And it really quickly holds a finger to its lips and then waves its hand in a circle, and your Stones of Farspeech, they go dim. They go dark. And the red robed figure says, um...

Red Robed Figure: [hissing] Did you retrieve the cup?

Magnus: Yes?

Red Robed Figure: What did you change?

Magnus: Nothing? We didn't do anything with it.

Red Robed Figure: You didn't use the cup?

Merle: Hmm...

Magnus: Nope. No.

Taako: No, no.

Magnus: We all three said no, right?

Taako: Yeah, we didn't use it.

Red Robed Figure: I'm really proud of you. I thought there was a chance that maybe this would be the one to end your adventure.

Magnus: Wait, you're proud? Aren't we— hold on. You're the red robe, right? You're one of the bad guys!

Red Robed Figure: Who's told you that?

Merle: Everybody?

Taako: Everybody.

Magnus: Everybody. The Bureau and what's-her-face, the Director, and...

Merle: TMZ...

Red Robed Figure: I need to know, do you trust me?

Clint: [wheezes]

Magnus: Wait, no!

Taako: No?

Merle: No! No!

Taako: No!

Merle: Hell no! Not just no, hell no!

Taako: You're, like— you're fucking popping up in a red robe like Satan, you're speaking Parseltongue and you're, like, doing— no we don't trust you! What kind of question is that?

Griffin: Um, as you say that you don't trust him, this apparition, this red robed ghost— or it's a lich— floating in front of you, it starts to lose its composure, and

I mean that literally. Like, the spectral form starts to jerk violently, and a bolt of energy kind of, like, whips off of it. And actually, Merle, make dex save.

[dice roll]

Griffin: That's a crit 20.

Clint: Nat 20.

Griffin: You dodge out of the way, actually, as a bolt of red energy kind of whips off this red robe and sort of moves past you. And this red robed figure falls to its knees, and he's muttering to himself like he's trying to calm himself down, and it doesn't sound like it's sounds every other time that he's spoken to you. Like, it sounds like a guy's voice. And he says to himself...

Red Robed Figure: Lup. They don't trust me. I can't do it anymore, Lup. I'm sorry.

Griffin: And he calms down, and the sort of distortion that was happening to him kind of fades, and he stands back up and says...

Red Robed Figure: The next time we meet, I will need you to trust me, completely and absolutely. Otherwise, all of this will have been for nothing. The Hunger is almost here. And when it arrives, this world will be lost.

Griffin: And he disappears. And immediately Avi says...

Avi: Was that a purple worm?

Griffin: And is unparalyzed.

Taako: Oh! Uh, yeah, it totally was! Hey, Avi, quick question. How long have we been gone, from your perspective?

Avi: Uh... like 45 minutes?

Taako: Hell yeah!

Magnus: Yeah, this is alright!

Merle: [laughs]

Taako: That's so good. Do you wanna know what football teams are gonna win?

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You all notice that the bubble is still up in front of you. Like, the bubble did not come down. In fact, the hole that the three of you and the worm all came through has closed back up. Refuge is still surrounded by this enormous magical opaque barrier. But you see Istus's reflection inside of the barrier, and she talks to you and says...

Istus: I'm really proud of you all for not taking the Chalice's offer. I can't imagine how difficult that must've been to resist.

Taako: Thank you.

Magnus: Yeah, that means a lot. It was not easy.

Griffin: She says, um...

Istus: You're probably wondering why the bubble didn't come down after you came through it.

Magnus: Yeah, I stabbed it.

Istus: You made an exit for yourself, but I... Refuge is out of step with the rest of time, and I'm gonna get them back on schedule now, but time passed a bit differently in there than it did with the rest of the world. June using the cup on the day that the worm attacked, she looped a single day 2517 times. Well... they're about to catch up. Um... you should really watch.

Griffin: She says. And Istus disappears, and the bubble goes transparent, and you see Refuge and its citizens on the other side, and they're moving extremely quickly, because time is moving really fast in the bubble. You see almost a light strobe light effect, and it's because the sun is rising and setting a few times per second. And the whole town is gathered near the edge of the bubble near where you're standing, and you watch in time lapse as they quickly erect a big wooden

sign which they decorate and ornately paint with a single word. And the sign just reads:

"Thanks!"

And under the sign there are three clay figures that some kids are crafting up, and they do it in time lapse really quickly, and it's modeled after you. There's these three little clay statues that kids are making. And as you move, as you watch this fast forward scene in front of you, every time you move, the kids, like, instantly reshape these clay statues to kind of, like, mimic you like they're playing a game with you, even though time is passing at wildly different speeds. And nearly seven years pass in ten minutes, and you see it all.

You see Midsummer harvest festivals and Candelights celebrations. You see a few weddings. You see a couple of funeral processions. You see good days and you see bad days. But the whole town and its inhabitants seem happy, like, the events of all those loops brought them together in a strange way. And after ten minutes or so, time inside the bubble slows down until it's nearly at real time. And the town gathers around the sign they erected in your honor, and without a sound, the bubble pops.

And Refuge and everybody living and Refuge is there, and they're cheering. And they quickly sort of envelop all four of you. There's a lot of folks who want to know more about Avi who they haven't met. He's just this mystery man who they've watched through the bubble for seven years. They pull him in and just start asking Avi all these questions, like "Oh, we had bets! We had a theory that you were their boss and you're the one that really helped bring the bubble down!"

And Avi's just, like, sort of graciously handing out with them, and they whisk all of you away to a big feast they've prepared in your honor. And I guess before heading out of Refuge, who in town do you wanna say goodbye to? Who do you wanna check in on, seven years later in their time?

Travis: I wanna check on Paloma?

Griffin: Okay, yeah. Like, Paloma's right there. Paloma's ready. She is much, much— she looks much older. She's an older woman now, and she hands all of you just a giant basket of baked goods.

Justin: Hell yeah.

Griffin: Just a ridiculously large basket of baked goods. Which yeah, you, Taako, you appreciate the craftsmanship that went into these. And she says, um...

Paloma: You all did very good. I saw many different results that could've been in the crystals. Many of them were quite shitty. But it seems like you found the best one of all. So well done!

Clint: I wanna check on Cassidy.

Travis: I have a question for Paloma.

Paloma: Yes, what is it?

Magnus: Did— did I make the right choice?

Paloma: Hmm. That's hard to say. Um... we're all here, and I think it was the right choice because things could have gone very, very badly for all of us if you had made a different choice. So it was maybe not the best choice for you, but it was the best choice for us. Does that make sense?

Magnus: Thank you.

Griffin: She starts to walk back into the crowd. Before she does, she grabs you, Taako. She says...

Paloma: Taako, can I talk to you for a moment?

Taako: Sure!

Griffin: She pulls you away from the group. She reaches out her hand and she hands you a crystal, and it has a prophecy in it, and you see it, and her eyes kind of roll back and she says...

Paloma: [echoing] I have one last prophecy for you, Taako. Something you will need to know. In your hour of greatest need, you will find the power that you seek from the man wreathed in flames.

Taako: Jesus. Like, couldn't you...

Merle: [wheezes] Just—

Taako: I have, like, now three prophecies I have to keep in my head simultaneously. Thank you for this. Like a fuckin' walking story bible over here. And Paloma, is that all?

Paloma: Uh yes, that is it.

Taako: Well, my lady, I have one request for you.

Paloma: Yes, what is it?

Taako: Will you find the kids in town who spent all that time to make those beautiful statues of us, and tell them to make my dick bigger?

Clint: [wheezes]

Justin: And then I reach my hand up for a high five. And she's like—

Griffin: She instantly goes up and high fives you. And she's like... she is rolling laughing.

Justin: I knew she was down!

Paloma: You got me good that time, son!

Magnus: Oh, where's Junebug?

Griffin: You run after Junebug?

Magnus: Yeah.

Griffin: We'll do that. Let's do Dad and Cassidy first.

Magnus: Okay, yeah.

Griffin: And then we'll do you and Junebug. Okay, yeah. You find Cassidy. She has been exonerated of all guilt for the crime of blowing up the Temple of Istus.

Travis: Hopefully, after seven years, yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, she's been a good member of town. And in fact when you find Cassidy... yes. She's wearing, like, a nice suit. She's wearing, like, a nice suit and she has a top hat on, and you find her in the elder's manor, because she has been made the elder of Refuge. And she says, uh...

Cassidy: It's my little gerblin friend! I remember you!

Merle: Well, I knew you would made of sterner stuff. And, you know people love that folksy shit. If you're a candidate, I can see why you've done so well in politics.

Cassidy: It's like I told you! Cassidy's just chock full of good ideas, from my toes to my tips!

Merle: [laughs]

Cassidy: My— my frosted tips! It's a new fashion style I'm trying out the last seven years! It's all the rage here in this bubble.

Merle: Well, I'm very proud of you, Cassidy.

Cassidy: You think you'll ever come back to visit?

Merle: No. No, no.

Cassidy: Well... alright then.

Merle: Don't you wanna give me something? Taako got something.

Cassidy: I think I've got just the thing for you.

Griffin: She reaches into her pocket and she says...

Cassidy: In your hour of greatest need, these will supply you with just the saving grace that you require, young man.

Merle: And what are they?

Griffin: You stretch out your hands and she drops a couple root beer barrels into your hand, but they're all sticky, and they're covered in lint and stuff 'cause they were in her loose pocket just kind of floating around.

Merle: Thanks?

Cassidy: They're my favorites, you know this.

Merle: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Cassidy: We've been trapped in a bubble, it's a closed environment, for seven years, and I've held on to these root beer barrels— I fought off the temptation to eat these things— where you goin'?

Merle: Typical, typical, typical. Fine, thanks a lot!

Griffin: Okay.

Magnus: Where's Junebug?

Griffin: You find Junebug in the Davy Lamp. And she says... she's like— she'd be about 15 now.

Clint: 15.

Griffin: Yeah. So she's a young woman now, and she's working at the Davy Lamp, and she's working with Ren, who also greets you happily as you make your way into town. And June thanks you effusively. She seems wise beyond her years now, because she went through something, you know, magical and sort of inexplicable. And she thanks you. And Magnus, she says...

June: Hold on one second.

Griffin: And runs up to her room in the Davy Lamp. And when she comes back down, she hands you a tube. Um, and it's like the type of tube that scholars might store scrolls inside. And she says...

June: I think you should have this.

Griffin: And tube has your name scrawled on the outside of it, like a gift tag or something like that. And she says...

June: I gotta get back to work, but it's really good to see you.

Magnus: It's good to see you too, Junebug. Should I open it?

June: Good luck!

Griffin: And she runs back up the stairs in into her room. And Magnus you actually hear in your head, you hear the voice of the red robe that you've seen a few times now. And he says...

Red Robed Figure: Magnus. If you open that tube, Magnus, it's going to be harder for me to protect you.

Magnus: Yeah, bite my ass!

Travis: I open the tube.

Griffin: Okay. Um, you open the tube and see what's inside of it, and we're gonna resolve that a bit later. Is that okay?

Travis: Yeah?

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: I need to find somebody before we go.

Griffin: Okay, who do you look up?

Justin: I wanna find Ren.

Griffin: Okay. You hop into the Davy Lamp and you see Ren. Um, and she is polishing some glasses behind the bar. And she says, uh...

Ren: Oh my God, Taako!

Travis: [laughs]

Ren: I'm just kidding. I remember you coming up and seeing me a couple times. How about that magic lesson, boss?

Taako: Actually, that's what I wanted to talk to you about.

Justin: And before I'd stepped to the side, I'd cast Fabricate on some blank paper that I brought with me. And I unfurl for her a diploma, and it says top her class, this scroll bestows upon you, Ren, the high honor of being the first and only graduate of Taako's amazing school of magic.

Griffin: Her hands clasp over her mouth and her eyes go wide when she sees this diploma. And she says...

Ren: Aren't I supposed to, like, take lessons and stuff? Aren't I supposed to, like, learn from you first before...

Taako: Ren?

Ren: Yeah?

Taako: I've been watching the whole time.

Travis: Oh, that's really good.

Griffin: She takes the diploma and she says...

Ren: I'll never forget this.

Griffin: And jumps up and gives you a big hug.

Taako: And here's one other thing.

Justin: And I give her the Gustmaster. And I say...

Taako: I don't need this, because I know how to cast this spell. And it's heavy.

Griffin: [laughs] She takes the fan from you, the Gustmaster 5000, and...

Ren: Aw, thank you, thank you, thank you! I'll use it every day.

Taako: In my head I thought this is an incredibly special treasure to me. I should've flipped those, so I'm sorry. Let me try again. This is an incredible treasure, and I want you to have it.

Ren: Thank you, Taako. I'll never forget this. Will I ever see you again?

Taako: Ren... it's hard to say. I'm not the DM on this one, buddy!

Griffin: [laughs]

Taako: So here's hoping. I don't know.

Travis: I actually have one more thing I wanna find out.

Griffin: Yeah, please.

Travis: I wanna go to the temple. The temple's there, right?

Griffin: Yeah, Temple of Istus is there, but it is rebuilt— it's not the temple that you magically rebuilt. The two brothers have sort of rebuilt it. And in fact— ooh, this is good. You see Redmond, and you've seen Redmond before. He's seven years older. And you see— and you see Luca, and Luca's not a skeleton anymore. Whatever magical effect that was done to Luca while inside the bubble has been reversed, and now he just kind of looks like a shorter kind of pudgier Redmond. And they have their robes on, and you find them at the Temple of Istus, which was not, like, magically reconstructed. It's just been rebuilt by hand.

Magnus: Uh, hello, brothers. Um—

Luca: Magnus!

Magnus: Yeah. Hey! [laughs] Hey, nice voice!

Luca: Thank you, it's the one I've always had!

Magnus: I've so glad to see you've got skin and stuff again, and that the temple's rebuilt. Can I have a moment inside for a second? Just me?

Luca: Sure! Give him the room, Redmond!

Griffin: And Redmond nods, 'cause I don't remember what his voice sounds like, and they walk outside of the temple. Are you doing a two cathedrals thing?

Travis: No, no, no, no.

Griffin: Alright.

Magnus: Istus! Is it— can you hear me? Is this a thing? You're probably not on call but if I could get you for, like, a second, I just have one question.

Merle: Let me help you, let me help you. Testing, one, two three! Istus!

Griffin: Uh, two candles that are sitting on the pulpit light themselves.

Magnus: Um, I didn't get a chance to ask 'cause it happened after we met, but when we were with June/the cup, it was running back through our history. There were these long periods of static. Do you have any idea what that is?

Griffin: Nothing happens.

Magnus: Is it anything we need to be concerned about?

Griffin: Um... one of the candles falls over, and the flame on it goes out, and the candle rolls off the pulpit and falls down the stairs.

Clint: I walk up to the pulpit.

Griffin: [holding back laughter] Okay.

Clint: To make an offering to the mighty Istus. I reach into my pocket and I go and put there and I say...

Merle: Mighty Istus! An offering to you to show our love and gratitude.

Clint: And I put those two nasty root beer barrels on it.

Griffin: [snorts] Okay. You hear a voice on the wind go...

Istus: Yuck...

Justin: [wheeze-laughs]

Merle: Aw, I'll take 'em back then.

Istus: No, leave 'em.

Justin: [wheeze-laughs]

Istus: Maybe I can clean them off...

Justin: [giggles]

Griffin: One last thing you do in Refuge before you take off. As you make your way back from the temple, you walk by the elder's manor. And by the statue of Jack, June, and the red robe, the bigger, burlier red robe than the one that you just saw, standing between them. And the kids have also made a little statue of Roswell there. And you sort of stop for a moment and look at the statue and admire the kids' handiwork, I guess. And you hear a voice go...

Roswell: Boo!

Griffin: And you look, and it's the Vermilion Flycatcher, the red bird that is now sitting on the statue of Roswell and says, uh...

Roswell: I don't remember being nearly this, uh, rotund when I was more full bodied, but I guess they did a good enough job.

Magnus: Well, you lost a lot of weight when your legs fell off there at the end. That one was on us.

Merle: Clay adds ten pounds to you, really.

Griffin: Roswell says— who's now just completely inside of the bird body— says...

Roswell: It's really good to see you guys. I'm glad you stuck around.

Magnus: It's really good to see you not dead!

Roswell: Um, I don't know what magic animated me and made me, you know, commandable. But whatever it was, I feel like I'm not bound to service here anymore, so I'm gonna fly around and see the world and, you know, find out what I'm doing here.

Magnus: Well, if you get bored there's this, like, half moon thing up in the sky. You can come check in on us and hang out.

Taako: [sarcastically] Yeah, most birds can fly to the moon, right?

Magnus: It's not really the moon though, Taako! Like, we can get to it in a bubble.

Roswell: Well, that's exactly the kind of stuff I want to give a shot. So maybe one day I'll try to fly to the moon, and I'll see you there.

Merle: And I'd like to point out that even though we controlled you, when you were left to your own devices you sacrificed your life for us.

Roswell: No, I'm still alive. It's all good.

Magnus: And also, like, we were all there for that too, Merle. That's not, like, a big reveal.

Merle: Yeah, true. Well, I'm just happy— I'm just happy you did.

Magnus: Oh, okay.

Merle: So we didn't die.

Magnus: Just kind of recapping the whole experience?

Merle: Yeah, I'm glad we didn't die.

Roswell: Uh, yeah, I'm glad you didn't die either. Okay. I'll see you guys around!

Griffin: And Roswell flitters and flies off. I have a quick epilogue I wanna get to, so Avi summons a bubble for you guys, an extraction bubble, and your return to the moon base is fairly without consequence. I'm assuming you hand over the cup to be destroyed.

Justin: Yep..

Griffin: It's sort of the same— okay?

Travis: I would like to know what was on the paper before I do. Can I know that?

Griffin: That's the epilogue.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: We'll get to it. You hand over the cup to Davenport in the Director's chambers. I know we're kind of moving past this, but we've gotta wrap it and there's one other thing we need to get to. Uh, you put it inside one of those big heavy lead balls with the little circular window in it. He shuts it inside, wheels it into the big white chamber. It gets put up on a pedestal. Big spears of light pierce through it, and when it opens up again it is empty.

And the Director says, um...

Director: Avi reported everything in already. I guess I'm sorry for making such a big deal out of everything. Apparently this relic wasn't as difficult to reclaim as I thought it was going to be, so well done, boys.

Merle: Ha!

Magnus: Nah, it was super tough!

Taako: No, get bent!

Justin: And I tell her the whole story.

Director: Well, okay, I take it back. That sounds fucking awful.

[crosstalk]

Magnus: It was real rough, and we died a bunch.

Taako: A bunch!

Magnus: And so I think we could probably get our life insurance a couple times over, right? Some kind of payout from the Bureau?

Director: Uh, I don't know about the life insurance stuff, but how about this?

Griffin: And she forks over a bag with 5400 gold pieces inside of it.

Taako: Kaboom.

Griffin: Uh, which you split three ways. I think that's 18— is that 18, 18, 18? Did I do the math right?

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Okay. Each of you get 1800 gold pieces and a token for the fantasy gashapon. Uh, alright. Let's get to this epilogue real quick. It's later that night. Merle, you are laying out in the lawn of the Bureau of Balance quad and it's pretty late. Most folks have retired to their bunks for the evening. That's a nice cool breeze that's made cooler by the elevation of the Bureau HQ. And you're laying on the grass, and there's a small bed of flowers actually growing up where your soulwood arm is laying on the grass. And you're looking up at the stars, which you're known to do sometimes, and the elevation of the HQ gives you a sort of unparalleled view of.

So, you often look up at the stars. But tonight as you're laying out and looking upward, you feel like there are fewer stars in the sky than there usually are when you do your stargazing. And as you just sort of intently watch the sky to try to confirm that, to try to count them, you see it, undeniably. A star winks out right in front of your eyes.

Clint: Am I drunk?

Griffin: Not tonight.

Merle: That's weird.

Griffin: Taako? You take the central elevator of the residential dome downward that same night, down to the bottom floor, which houses your guys' private dormitory. And as you open your door and you drop your keys at the small table by the front door and hang up your cloak of the manta ray on the cloak rack, I

imagine you're pretty exhausted. This has been a pretty exhausting sort of loop. I don't wanna speak for you. Maybe you're good to go.

Justin: I pat the cloak of the manta ray and say...

Taako: Some day you'll be useful, old friend.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You hang up your cloak and you turn, and you realize you have a visitor in this room. He's sitting on the couch in the living quarters that you all share. He's wearing a fancy black suit, he's got a super handsome face...

Travis: And it's Travis McElroy.

Clint: [snorts]

Griffin: It's Kravitz. Who stands up and says, uh...

Kravitz: Well, we need to talk, don't we? 'Cause you boys... you've added quite a bit to your death count, haven't you?

Taako: That one's on me.

Griffin: Magnus, you are in a little corner of the dining hall, which is a big massive communal space for the Bureau. Late as it is, there's nobody else here. That gives you the privacy that you need to look at what's inside this tube one more time. And you pop it open and unfurl it. And there's something strange about the parchment inside of this tube, which is that you can see it. You can see what's on it. But when you try to draw conclusions based on what you see, when you try to understand what it is you're seeing, your mind turns to static. And it's an incredibly uncomfortable sensation. So what you see inside the tube are two sheets of paper. And the first one is a design for the statue that stands in the middle of Refuge depicting Jack, June, and the broad shouldered red robe standing between them. Uh, and it has a date etched in the corner of it.

The other piece of parchment... when you look at the date you can tell this was an older draft of this statue, an older design of the same statue. And in this sketch, in this earlier sketch, Jack and June look exactly the same. But the red

robe's hood is pulled down, and you can see his face. And it's an incredibly familiar face, Magnus. Because it's your face. This figure in this red robe is you.

[music plays]

[chord]

Maximumfun.org.

Comedy and Culture.

Artist Owned.

Listener Supported.