

## **The Adventure Zone: Balance – The Suffering Game: Chapter One**

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

**Merle:** Uh-oh...

**Taako:** What happened to Robbie?

**The Director:** Robbie has been thrown into the brig. We're gonna be keeping an eye on him for a while.

**Magnus:** Pringles?

**Taako:** Does he love Pringles too much?

**Kravitz:** Was this call for business or pleasure?

**Taako:** Yeah, I mean a little bit of both. I for sure didn't wanna be dragged to hell, or whatever it is you do.

**Angus:** Sir, I know it's none of my business, but I'm curious why you haven't told anybody about... about your kids?

**Merle:** I was a really crappy dad, and I was an even crappier husband.

**Griffin:** You see yourself wearing a red robe, but there's like a next logical thought that would come from that observation. But when you try to think it, your mind just turns to static. It's just tearing you apart and keeping you up at night. And the Void Fish slams against the wall of its tank, and it's kind of... it's kind of scary.

**Magnus:** You had a baby? You have an egg...

**Griffin:** A quick, bright light flashes, and a small, quiet alarm bell rings.

**Announcer:** Mm, what a devilish twist! What other mysteries await us down the winding path toward The Adventure Zone!

[“Déjà Vu” by Mort Garson plays]

**Griffin:** Let it begin... let the—

**Clint:** What?

**Griffin:** Let it—let it start. It is started.

**Travis:** Wait, can I just—Wait, can I just before we start-start-start, I wanna say—

**Griffin:** Mm it has started!

**Travis:** But just—But I went back and listened—Can I just say, going back and listening to old episodes... I listened to the last Lunar Interlude, before we did The Eleventh Hour, I had a lot of cool items I forgot to use during The Eleventh Hour! [chuckles]

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Oh, everybody had lots of cool items that they forgot to use. I was really hoping for that Immoveable Rod you have, Taako, to pop up during that purple worm chase. That would have been neat, but...

**Travis:** I had a magnetic spear—

**Justin:** Don't fucking kibbitz, don't like...

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** I'm just saying, it's a lot of stuff.

**Clint:** Backseat dungeoneer!

**Justin:** Especially like Taako. Taako uses more of his garbage than anybody.

**Griffin:** That's a good point, I shouldn't harp on Justin. All right let's—

**Clint:** Yeah, but you did unhaul a lot of stuff that you hadn't mentioned for a long time, when you were talking to Kravitz.

**Griffin:** Everyone lived, we're good. We'll see if you fare as well in this next arc. Which has begun!

**Travis:** Oh, okay.

**Justin:** Ah, dammit.

**Griffin:** So, things have been quiet—

**Clint:** So, now?

**Griffin:** Oh?

**Clint:** Now it's begun?

**Justin:** Now? Is this it?

**Griffin:** It started when I said, "Things have been quiet," that was the start of it.

**Travis:** Well actually, Griffin's an hour behind, he's on central time. So, actually it hasn't started—or maybe it started for us an hour ago?

**Griffin:** It begun an hour ago and you didn't even realize it.

**Travis:** Ah, shit.

**Justin:** Do you want us to catch you up, Griffin?

**Griffin:** Hey, let me start weaving the story?

**Justin:** We'll catch you up. [chuckles]

**Clint:** Weave! Weave away, weave master!

**Griffin:** So, things have been quiet at the Bureau of Balance since the conclusion of your last adventure. Which was probably a couple of months ago, because it is midsummer. And it's actually a couple of days from the Midsummer Harvest Festival. Which was, if you'll remember, that sick carnival that you went to in that first lunar interlude, where you—

**Travis:** Where we saw the eyes in the skies?

**Griffin:** Yeah! It's been almost a year since then. And... So, the Midsummer Harvest Festival is two days away. But there's actually, weirdly enough, there's no trappings of that festival going up. Like, last year around this time, there were bureau employees coming and going, and putting up tents, and erecting booths, and preparing decorations, and setting up little game tents. But today, just two days out, preparation efforts have been meager at best.

**Justin:** Budget cutbacks?

**Clint:** Cutbacks, yeah.

**Travis:** Oh no, wait, were we supposed to do it?

**Griffin:** Well, the three of you actually haven't been helping—

**Travis:** Oh shit.

**Griffin:** The three of you haven't been helping very much because the director has had the three of you doing really intensive training. Like eight hours a day, every day.

**Clint:** Boo.

**Travis:** Wait, like physical training, or just like corporate training?

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Physical training. A lot of it taking place in that dojo that the regulators have set up. You've been working with Carey and Killian and Noelle, and some of the other regulators to just like get better. And that's I think the justification for you all jumping up to level 12 in your training.

**Justin:** Right.

**Griffin:** She's been preparing you rigorously for your next mission, the particulars of which she hasn't shared. She's just kind of leaned on you in your training. And at this point, I mean, it's been a year now, you have like a pretty deep, personal like relationship, even like friendship, with the Director. But in the past month, she's been kind of cold to you. She's been a bit more—

**Travis:** Like temperature-wise or...

**Griffin:** Like relationship-wise,. She's been really reserved.

**Travis:** Oh no!

**Griffin:** During training the friendship that you've... the friendliness that you've seen from her, it just isn't there. She's extremely critical when you're in training. And she also seems extremely worried. And this morning, while you're on your way to one of these intensive training sessions, you receive a message from The Director. It's time for your next mission to begin and she wants to see you in her office.

**Clint:** Uh-oh.

**Griffin:** And as you enter, she is sitting there with one hand on her staff, and her face in her other hand. And she looks up as you enter her office, and she says:

**Director:** Come in. How are—

**Travis:** I want you to know, Griffin, I really misunderstood what you just said. And I thought she was holding her staff in one hand and her face in the other, and she was just sitting there.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, she took her face off.

**Clint:** Oh, Westworld!

**Griffin:** No, she was... No, she was just—she looks tired, man. And as you come in, she says:

**Director:** How are you boys... how are you boys feeling today?

**Magnus:** Fine... I mean, I drank my protein—my pre-workout protein shake. And now it's for nothing, I've got a lot of built-up protein energy now.

**Director:** Whey protein or beef?

**Magnus:** Both.

**Director:** That is a lot.

**Magnus:** I call it wheef.

**Clint:** I've been binging—

**Justin:** Who is this?

**Clint:** ... Oranges and...

**Montrose:** I've been binging...

**Clint:** It's right there.

**Justin:** Just a new character, sounds like Dad.

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Merle:** I've been binging Orange Is the New Black.

**Director:** Oh, how is it this season? I feel like it got lost in the weeds a bit?

**Merle:** Maybe a few too many characters... But you know, all in all, not bad.

**Director:** Taako, are you well?

**Taako:** Yeah, I'm fine! You're not my mom!

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Taako:** I don't have to tell you everything that going on—

**Merle:** She keeps calling us boys?

**Taako:** I don't have tell you everything in my life. I'm fine! What do you want?

**Director:** I'm... I wanna apologize—

**Taako:** I'm very busy! I will say that.

**Merle:** We've been dojoing the hell out of this place!

**Director:** I know, and I'm... I'm sorry for leaning on you as hard as I have been lately. I just... I know what's waiting for you on your next mission, and I just want you to be at peak performance.

**Magnus:** Is it one of those things where it's like either super bad or super good?

**Merle:** It ain't super good.

**Magnus:** Well, you don't know? Shut up.

**Director:** No, Merle's right.

**Magnus:** Damn.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** She reaches into a drawer in her desk, and she pulls out a blue envelope with a fairly ornate gold trim. And she says:

**Director:** It's time I tell you boys a story I haven't told you before. Before you enlisted in the Bureau of Balance, before the Bureau was even formed, I foolishly aspired to recover and destroy the Grand Relics on my own.

**Magnus:** Ooh...

**Director:** I searched for months to locate these relics, but I came up empty. And that's when I received this.

**Griffin:** And she holds up that envelope and opens it up. And inside, she pulls out a flyer. And it's really gaudy, it's really colorful. And it is advertising in big, colorful block letters, a place called Wonderland.

**Travis:** Ooh?

**Griffin:** And behind that word Wonderland, is a colorful map showing a large, circular clearing, in a forest called the Felicity Wilds. And on the reverse side of this flyer is a picture of a small copper bell. And it is inlaid with a diamond pattern across its body. And in a bunch of different fonts actually, all equally gaudy and ugly, this side with the bell on it read, "The Grand Relic you've been looking for, the Animus Bell." And she hands that flyer to you all to inspect. And she says:

**Director:** On this flyer is an image. And it is, in fact, a grand relic. As the flyer says, it's the Animus Bell. When I was doing my investigations, I learned its name, but not its capabilities or whereabouts. But here it was, on paper, with a map included.

**Taako:** This feels trap-like, right?

**Magnus:** Yeah, a little on the nose, isn't it?

**Director:** I mean, I of course researched Wonderland before I made my attempt on it. It is a place where, for those lucky enough to be invited or to otherwise be lured into its walls, it promised the fulfillment of any material wish. The rewarding of any prize that its visitors sought out. Hence my personalized flyer here. It is of course a death trap.

**Magnus:** Ah...

**Director:** But it was not without its fair share of victors. I heard stories, mostly secondhand, of survivors who made their way out of Wonderland, claiming to have found the prizes that they sought within. But their accounts of what is inside Wonderland never matched up. Meaning that the contents are somehow different for each person who enters it. One person told of a maze full of undead killers, another told of a tomb of horrors. I was... I was overly ambitious.

**Griffin:** She turns... She's in like a rotating office chair. She sort of turns her back on you and she says:

**Director:** My journey through Wonderland was hell, boys. I faced foes the likes of which I've never seen outside of those walls, and psychological terrors, that to this day leave me shaken. I abandoned my delve into Wonderland, but only after losing a wager that cost me dearly.

**Griffin:** With her back to you, she is facing that portrait in the back of the room. The one that I guess I think it was Taako, who thought it had some kind of arcane energy around it. And with a wave of her white oak staff, that image in the portrait changes. And the Lucretia that you see, she's about a 50-year-old woman, disappears. And there is a young woman in the portrait, with the same light hair and dark skin that the Director has. But she looks a couple of decades younger than the Director that you know today. And the Director rotates her chair to face you and says:

**Director:** That was me not that long ago. I wagered 20 years of my life in a game of chess in Wonderland... and I lost. I'm not a vain woman. I don't care about losing the beauty of my youth. But 20 years is lot of life to have pulled out from under you.

**Taako:** Why'd you wager that much? Seems like a lot.

**Merle:** Yeah?

**Director:** It was what was necessary to progress through Wonderland. I've known about this place since before you joined the organization. But to tell you the truth, I am terrified of it. 'Cause if I lose you boys in Wonderland, we lose everything. But I think the time has come. I... I know that you're ready.

**Travis:** Okay, this is Travis OOC here.

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Travis:** I'm having this moment that I have every time that I watch any kind of like... like movie or TV show, and like things have happened that some characters know about that others characters don't. Where I'm just like screaming at them like, "Just tell—Just be open in communication, and everybody tell everybody exactly what happened." And I'm sitting here like as Travis, wanting to tell the Director everything that we know. But at the same time, just not knowing if I can trust her. I just wanted to share that moment with the audience and with you guys that I have no idea... what to do.

**Griffin:** Yeah, so Magnus is remaining tight-lipped about what he saw on that piece of paper?

**Travis:** Yeah, but it's fuckin' hard to do that! 'Cause like...

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Travis:** Magnus is pretty forthright, and I don't even know if I've told Taako and Merle about it?

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Yeah, I think that's an important point. I think we need to establish, have we shared our stories with each other or not?

**Griffin:** Well I mean, there was a difference between what you guys did on your most recent Lunar Interludes. You can talk about that whether or not you want. I actually don't know if all of you listened to that Lunar Interlude, so there... you... This may not even be a dramatic irony situation. You may literally not know what happened in the other boys' stories. So, that's up to you. And we can establish that before we go forward. What have you told each other?

**Clint:** Well, now that I think about it, I really... I'm impressed upon dork boy not to say anything to anybody. So, I guess I still wanna keep Moxie and Mavis a secret. So...

**Griffin:** Okay. Not their names, but—

**Clint:** Merle wouldn't have shared that then.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** I would say that... [sighs] I don't know! Has Magnus told them about the Voidfish conversation? I'm gonna say no, because I feel like him being a Red Robe, because—or in a picture, not understanding it... He's probably a little bit nervous to tell Taako and Merle about it, because he doesn't want to incriminate himself.

**Griffin:** Sure. Yeah. Taako, did you tell everybody about your hot date?

**Justin:** No...

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** Probably not. I think that... not for any other reason than like Taako doesn't seem like somebody who shares a lot of that stuff necessarily

anyway. Like I don't think... Just because like Taako went on a date, like— [chuckles] Taako went on a date with Death, and that sounds like so cool, actually. But now that I say it out loud, he may not be able to resist. [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** But like, I just don't think—

**Griffin:** It is also worth keeping in mind, Kravitz tried to kill Merle for a while there. And it's probably—is definitely responsible for what happened to his hand. I mean, I guess Magnus shares responsibility in that.

**Justin:** I just don't want... I don't want anybody to misconstrue it as Taako being like cautious about talking about his sexuality. It's literally just he doesn't think it's anybody's fucking business.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Justin:** Especially not these three fucking clowns.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [chuckles] That have fixed onto him, barnacle-like, as he tries to save the Earth.

**Griffin:** Well okay, that's good to know, let's hop back into this scene then. The Director... the Director is like warning you, she says:

**Director:** Wonderland will try to break you. You will face dangers the likes of which you've never seen. You will face mental and emotional torment. But if you stay together, and you trust each other, you can keep yourself from losing yourself in there.

**Magnus:** Listen, I know that you went through some real hell in there, and it sounds like you had a really rough time. This sounds awesome.

**Taako:** It does sound awesome...

**Magnus:** I cannot wait to get in there and—

**Merle:** On the other hand... [chuckles] Sounds a little dangerous?

**Magnus:** Nom but like, there are challenges—

**Merle:** I bet Killian would... Killian could knock the shit out of this job, I bet!

**Director:** Killian... The Grand Relic, the Animus Bell, is still in Wonderland somewhere. I cannot trust Killian to go in and recover it without taking it for herself.

**Magnus:** Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha. Is there some like buddy? Some kind of person or thing that's like in charge of Wonderland, that we're gonna get to fight, like another big battle kind of thing?

**Director:** I only—

**Magnus:** It's just... it's been a really long time and we didn't really get to have like a big fight in The Eleventh Hour...

**Director:** Oh, you will have good fights in there, I guarantee it. I... I only heard voices. There were... there were voices that would give me directions.

**Magnus:** Cool.

**Director:** But I never saw anybody in Wonderland. There were, I believe, other participants in Wonderland while I was going through it, but I never saw them either.

**Magnus:** Cool!

**Director:** I'm less worried about the fights that you will have, and more worried about your emotional state being compromised while you're in there.

**Griffin:** And then you hear a voice, from like immediately from like behind her chair. And I guess Angus has been hiding back there like the whole time, and he says:

**Angus:** Don't worry, sirs! I'll be on the radio the whole time and I can help you monitor your emotional state and help keep you calm while you're in there! So, don't worry about a thing! You're gonna be cool as cucumbers when you go through Wonderland and the tortures inside!

**Magnus:** And you are?

**Angus:** I'm Angus McDonald, boy detective and your very good friend!

**Magnus:** Mm, this sounds familiar...

**Clint:** Shouldn't there be some kind of little musical sting there when he says that? You know, like Leave it to Beaver theme or something?

**Angus:** Nope!

**Clint:** Okay!

**Travis:** I tousle Ango's hair and I go:

**Magnus:** Of course I remember Ango.

**Taako:** Let me see what you got, kid. How's it coming? Let's see it!

**Angus:** Oh, yeah. Of course, sir!

**Griffin:** He casts Prestidigitation. And a—

**Justin:** He casts a fucking level zero cantrip? How long has it been?

**Griffin:** Okay, he casts—

**Justin:** This is the smartest kid on Earth and he casts a cantrip?

**Griffin:** He casts a level one spell, he casts Disguise Self on himself. And he looks like you as a little boy. Well, he doesn't know what you looked like as a little boy, he just looks like a smaller Taako. And he says:

**Angus:** [spoofing Taako] What do you think, sir?

**Travis:** Griffin, Griffin, a taquito?

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** He says:

**Angus:** [spoofing Taako] What do you think, sir? How am I doing?

**Taako:** You're still Angus, I wasn't fooled for a second.

**Griffin:** He transforms back into Angus.

**Angus:** Oh, okay... I'll keep it up...

**Taako:** That was very good, though. You're coming along nicely!

**Griffin:** The Director says:

**Director:** Are you boys ready to go, or do you have any more business before you blast off?

**Merle:** Wait, we're just like, jumping right in?

**Director:** Would you rather spend like 20 minutes buying shorts again? Or...

**Merle:** I really like those shorts...

**Magnus:** So... They were great shorts. You can't tell us anything about the bell? You don't know what it does or... what its deal is?

**Director:** No, it was... When these grand relics were sort of circulating throughout the general population, there were no accounts of the Animus Bell being used for any dark purposes. Whoever had it squirreled it away nicely, and it never really circulated. So, we don't have much information on the Animus Bell.

**Magnus:** I... I need to ask... I've been thinking about it, it's been a while since I've been able to talk to you. I feel like if there are other participants in the maze, we run the risk of running into more Red Robes.

**Director:** I find that unlikely. The Red Robes, obviously, to my surprise, are still in operation. But there cannot be that many of them.

**Magnus:** But if we do run into one, is there anything the Bureau knows about them? Anything you can tell us?

**Director:** They are extremely dangerous. They cannot be trusted. If you see one, report it to me over your Stone of Far Speech immediately. And just run away, you are not ready. Don't listen to a word they say, they will lie to you to get you to do whatever... whatever they want. But their purposes are evil, Magnus. They are beings of pure, concentrated evil.

**Magnus:** But how do you know?

**Director:** I... I've had my fair share of run-ins with the Red Robes.

**Magnus:** And they've all been evil?

**Director:** Invariably. Any other questions?

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Taako:** I've got a quick errand to run before I can leave.

**Director:** Okay, let's get those going then.

**Magnus:** Oh wait, I do have a question!

**Director:** Okay, pop it off, Magnus.

**Magnus:** What's the—why isn't there a festival in prep?

**Merle:** Yeah?

**Director:** It would be a smaller—

**Magnus:** I was looking forward to having some fried unicorn dick!

**Director:** It will be a smaller—Yuck. It'll be a smaller affair this year. I'm sorry boys, but there are slightly more pressing matters at hand.

**Taako:** Okay... I thought there'd be a better explanation...

**Magnus:** Balls.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** It was a little underwhelming... There just aren't, got it.

**Justin:** Okay, I jog back—Taako jogs back to his room and he gets underneath his bed and he moves some laundry aside, annnd he moves the half-eaten Reese's P-Cup he left and...

**Travis:** Wait, he couldn't finish a whole Reese's Cup?!

**Justin:** No, he's watching his figure. And underneath that—Oh, there it is. [chuckles] He picks up the Flaming Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs] He gets and grabs a washcloth real quick and wipes off some of the dust, and he puts it on his back.

**Griffin:** Okay! Are you guys ready to go?

**Travis:** Well Griffin, is there any chance that Magnus could find where Pringles has been locked up?

**Griffin:** Ooh, shit... I mean he's in... There is a... Not a prison, what's the word for like a military—

**Travis:** Brig?

**Griffin:** Yeah, he's in the brig. And he's been locked up there for a long time. And I think you've probably like tried to go visit him once, if only to like... maybe you wanted like a dank potion recipe or something like that? But the brig is like heavy lockdown, Director's access only or with express permission. And you have not secured that. So, you have not been able to visit Pringles. He is on full-blown lockdown.

**Clint:** I'd ask for permission.

**Travis:** Yeah, can we ask the Director for permission?

**Clint:** We're being sent into hell? We probably won't come back...

**Magnus:** I'd like to say goodbye to my Pringles, please.

**Griffin:** She says:

**Director:** I'm sorry, no. Pringles is... Pringles is dangerous, he is affiliated with the Red Robes. He cannot be trusted. There is no time. Also, we really need to get this Wonderland mission going. So, I'm sorry, but no.

**Magnus:** You got it. Okay, I just need to go grab something from my room.

**Director:** Okay.

**Travis:** I 100% wanna break into the brig.

**Griffin:** Fuck! Okay. Do you tell the other boys what you're doing?

**Travis:** No.

**Griffin:** Okay. There are... the brig is in a... We're gonna take a quick offshoot then. There's a dome, probably opposite of the dome that the Director's office and like big kind of throne room area is in. It is a fairly small dome and when you go inside there is an elevator shaft going down. It's kind of reminiscent of the dome that the Voidfish is in, because there's just a single small elevator shaft in the middle and it is guarded by two guards and they say:

**Guards:** Stop right there! What are you doing here?

**Magnus:** Oh, I have permission from the Director to come, I just need to talk to the prisoner for one moment.

**Guards:** We don't accept verbal permission or written permission, she needs to be here in person in order for you to get a trip down to visit our prisoner.

**Magnus:** Oh, yes, of course, just one sec.

**Travis:** And I attack them.

**Griffin:** Fuck!

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Okay...

**Justin:** What the hell?

**Travis:** I'm attempting to attack them non-fatally.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Okay, how about instead of... doing a full fight here, 'cause I think it'll take a while and it'll be something the other two boys don't get to be part of, let's... I mean, let's roll a strength contest.

**Travis:** Okay!

**Griffin:** Two different ones, but I'm gonna warn you, Trav, if this goes bad, it's gonna go fuckin' bad.

**Travis:** I gotcha.

**Justin:** Is this a solo mish? Am I... are we seeing this?

**Griffin:** No, I mean, Travis... it sounds like you were going to get your sword and Merle was going to do something else. It's up to you, I mean you can tell me now, in fiction, if you can justify it. Would you have any reason to follow Magnus around as you guys do your last prep before you go on this mission?

**Clint:** Merle was just gonna go clear his browsing data. So, no.

**Griffin:** Okay. [chuckles] Gross.

**Travis:** Gross. [chuckles]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** So, I rolled—

**Griffin:** And Taako, what about you?

**Clint:** I mean, I think it would help if he had magic-users with him. But you go ahead and do what you think.

**Justin:** No! I'm not gonna make a run at the Bureau of Balance? You're asking a character—

**Clint:** No! I'm just saying he would be better off with us! If he—He's not gonna do this without us...

**Justin:** He didn't ask for help?

**Clint:** I know...

**Justin:** He didn't even consult us? This should be a group decision.

**Clint:** I know. Well, we may be going on this mission by ourselves...

**Justin:** Enjoy! Taako's good out here.

**Clint:** Yeah!

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** So, with my bonuses and everything, I ended up with a 19 and a 20.

**Griffin:** Okay, I rolled a 15 on the first one... [sound of dice rolling] and a two on the second one. All right! Yeah, let's just say you subdue them, using like the butt of the Chance Lance. So, no stabbing was involved, but you knock these two guys out cold.

**Travis:** I put 'em in the pocket workshop.

**Griffin:** Okay... Yeah, all right, we're gonna have to come up with names for these boys earlier—later. Because now you have... captives?

**Justin:** Two boys?

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Now you just have Pokemon'd these two boys.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** So, I guess later we're gonna figure out who these boys are, because now they live in your pocket. I'm going to say the pocket workshop can only sustain two boys at once, though. Because I don't want you to have an infinite bag of boys.

**Travis:** [chuckles] Fair enough.

**Griffin:** That you can just put boys inside. But these two boys you do have inside, and you just have them now. Okay, so now you've got these two boys, and the elevator's unguarded. You go down, the elevator's basically identical to the Voidfish one.

And when you go down, there is just a small brig, there are six cells in here, but only one of them is occupied by your old friend Robbie, AKA Pringles, who runs up to the cell when you walk in. And he says—Oh fuck, what did he even sound like? What did... I wasn't expecting Pringleplay?!

**Clint:** [spoofing Pringle] Wasn't he kind of like a laid back, almost like a Shaggy kind of guy?

**Griffin:** If not, then the months he spent in prison have turned him into that. He's like:

**Pringles:** Magnus, is that you? Oh shit, I didn't think I'd ever see you again, dude! Did you bring me my stuff? My Pringies? You know how much I need those... to live?

**Magnus:** Pringles, I can't be here very long. Why are you in here?

**Clint:** [laughs] "I have two boys in my workshop!"

**Magnus:** I got two boys in my workshop!

**Pringles:** What are you... Why am I in the brig, they didn't tell you?

**Magnus:** No!

**Pringles:** It was like treason, I guess, dude. I... I'll be honest, nobody—the Director didn't believe me, nobody believes me. But like, somebody had me go all through the Bureau of Balance, even the places I wasn't authorized to be. And then I just kind of woke up and I was in a place I wasn't supposed to be. And then the Director arrested me, summarily, and I've been down here ever since.

**Magnus:** What was the place that you woke up in?

**Pringles:** It was a dark room, and I was right by this big heavy vault door and... I just, I know I was in the Director's personal space, there was some of her stuff back there... And yeah, that's where they found me, man. Hey, can you... can you break me out of here?

**Magnus:** No, I can't. I'm sorry.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Magnus:** I mean, maybe I can physically. But the question of can I and may I, I may not.

**Pringles:** Can you do me a bigger favor

**Magnus:** What's that?

**Pringles:** Can you get me those sweet crisps I crave so much?

**Magnus:** I will get you... I promise, I'll stop at the fantasy Go-Mart and get you some on my way back.

**Pringles:** My body has a deficiency that—

**Magnus:** [chuckles] I know you need vitamin Pringles, I got it.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Magnus:** Can you tell me anything you remember from before your body was taken over and you moved without your control?

**Pringles:** I was in our bunk, you remember?

**Magnus:** Yes.

**Pringles:** You remember the good times?

**Magnus:** I do. Focus up, please.

**Pringles:** We played cornhole?

**Magnus:** I know, yes, I remember the cornhole. I've only got like three minutes.

**Pringles:** I was just in our bunk, and you guys were out on a mission, and I was real lonely. And then my vision just kind of went red. And then the next thing I know, I woke up.

**Magnus:** And that's it?

**Pringles:** That's it. I hadn't had any Pringles that day, so I thought I was in maybe some sort of fugue state.

**Magnus:** Okay... If anybody asks, I most definitely totally wasn't here.

**Pringles:** Okay, what happened to those guards upstairs?

**Magnus:** Oh, they're still up there, totally fine, don't even worry about it.

**Pringles:** Oh, okay—

**Magnus:** Gotta go!

**Pringles:** All right, I miss... I miss us!

**Magnus:** Yup!

**Travis:** And I get in the elevator.

[theme music plays]

[ad read]

**Griffin:** Here's a message for Derek, and it's from Dav, Bert, Johnny and Clacks. Who say, "Hey, idiot. Happy B-day from your buds. One day, we'll all

do some magical adventuring. But for now, we'll have to settle for real life shit like rafting, light up guitars and general drunken gangle sticking." Gotta google what that is to make sure it's not offensive. The only thing I could find was a weird blog about dream interpretation, and something about League of Legends. So, I'm gonna assume it's the latter.

The rest of the message reads, "We miss you, you lanky goof ball. But we'll be together again before Doctor Steven Fox is one-part actual licensed physician." That part wasn't as challenging for me. I do just—Happy birthday, Derek, first off. And just to the rest of your friends, just... maybe tone it down next time, so I'm not worried that I'm saying some sort of hate speech in my messages.

Got a message here for Jake King Nuggets Lays... Or perhaps Lace, or Lice? I don't know, sorry. It's from Mort Jadzia, Shinanana, Amberly, Theodosia and Peanut. Who says, "Happy B-day to the best DM." Yeah, I thought maybe most of those were names from Dungeons and Dragons.

"Though we can't meet regularly, we do love ruining your glorious D&D vision. Thanks for putting up with the fiery poops, the in-game drunkenness, the real-life drunkenness, questions about who's killable, and the crits on really stupid actions that aren't even a thing. We love you, Jake! Let's get drunk. Peanut commands it!" Most of that could literally just go on the box for D&D, the tabletop game. It could be like the tagline. "Crits on things that shouldn't be crits, and trying to kill every character, and ruining somebody's story. All this and more inside this wonderful book."

And another message here, I want you to visit Floraverse. That's [floraverse.com](http://floraverse.com). "It's a colorful, open-world multimedia web comic/visual novel/animated fantasy story experience with fairies, flowers and cats." All the—basically all the things. "Floraverse is a colorful, open fantasy-world setting/web comic, chock full of resources and reference, all under Creative Commons, for free user participation. If you're into fairy birds on adventures, toy cat demons, living painting, demons waring against angels, strange music, video James... [chuckles] videos James and animations, or surreal adventures of the mindscape, then Floraverse is probably for you."

Who's not into those things? "If you like looking at ref-sheets of critters, or making characters, then Floraverse is definitely for you." That sounds neat. I'm also into fairy bird fighters and strange music and videos James. I'm gonna go sign up for whatever service you're providing right now.

[ad read]

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** There's going to be consequences to what happened at some point, I think. Unless you can figure a way out of it. But if you guys are ready to go, then I guess it's time to go. Magnus, are you freeing your two Pokémon that you've got?

**Magnus:** Taako or Merle, do either one of you have any—just out of curiosity, any kind of like mind-erasing magic?

**Griffin:** This conversation is happening at the hangar as you guys are about to—as you guys have sort of regrouped.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Merle:** Why do you ask?

**Magnus:** Just... Hmm... I...

**Justin:** So, we don't know that he did this?

**Griffin:** He hasn't—did you tell 'em?

**Travis:** Nope.

**Griffin:** And did you guys follow him?

**Justin:** No.

**Griffin:** Then no.

**Magnus:** I may need a couple boys' minds erased and reprogrammed, if you've got that?

**Merle:** Ah, spell slots, man...

**Taako:** Yeah, spell slots.

**Magnus:** Yeah, it could... Hm... Okay... hypothetically—

**Taako:** We can't do that. I mean like, we don't have to... neither one of us know how to do that, as far as I know.

**Magnus:** Okay, cool, cool. Never mind, not important. [chuckles] It might come up later.

**Taako:** You could give him the same mind erasure tonic we gave Jerry and some of those goblins working on the car? Remember that? Remember that special brew?

**Magnus:** Hm... no, what?

**Taako:** [laughs] It was a special tonic we gave 'em, where we killed 'em! The end.

**Magnus:** That's true...

**Merle:** Can we kill these guys?

**Taako:** We'll kill 'em?

**Magnus:** No, no... probably not...

**Merle:** Or maybe you hit 'em so hard, if you hit them, they have amnesia.

**Travis:** Did I, Griffin? [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Oh, no.

**Travis:** Okay...

**Griffin:** You are—Avi walks into the hangar and realizes, maybe this conversation should wait. And he says:

**Avi:** Oh, hey guys, I haven't... I haven't seen you in a while. How've you been?

**Magnus:** Good!

**Taako:** Good, yeah.

**Avi:** I've invited you guys to poker night a couple of times, but you never responded, what's the deal?

**Taako:** I don't know how to play.

**Griffin:** He gets a ball ready for you all to hop into, and preps the direction of the cannon, and he says:

**Avi:** Oh, god. Okay... the Felicity Wilds actually aren't that far away, so... just get ready to hit the brakes pretty quickly, okay?

**Taako:** Okay!

**Avi:** Are you guys ready to go?

**Beef:** Yeah!

**Justin:** Yeah, Taako rests his hand on the brakes, so he's ready.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** A lot more confident than we used to be.

**Griffin:** Yeah, this is not your first blast-off. Okay, you all load up into the ball, Avi seals it up, and it drops down into the cannon chamber. And you

hear him count down, and you rest your heads against the back of your seats and prepare for launch.

**Merle:** Ah...

**Griffin:** And as you fly out of the cannon, you go on not a long trip, but on the way, you see some familiar sights. You coast over the black glass circle that used to be Phandalin, and actually over the road from Neverwinter to Phandalin, where your very first journey began... The Bureau is almost right over that area. And just past that road, there is a vast expanse of pine trees, and as soon as you start sailing over them, your sphere begins to decline pretty quickly. You are dropping pretty fast into this ocean of trees.

**Justin:** I pull the brake.

**Griffin:** Okay, you pull the brakes. And very soon, your sphere starts to slow way down. And it's lowering very, very slowly, almost like an airplane coming in for landing. And it's being brushed by the high boughs of these pine trees. But you're descending slowly enough that it doesn't really present any danger. And then really suddenly, you come to a stop. But you are not on the ground of this forest.

Your ball took a tumble and has gotten sort of stuck up in a thick bundle of branches in the boughs of these trees. And you are about 40 feet up, and the hatch is actually facing downwards when it opens up. Although, you're strapped in, so it's not like you have fallen out. But you are kind of in a precarious position of being in this glass ball 40 feet up, and the sphere that you came down in is sort of suspended in these boughs. And yeah, what do you... what do you do to sort of extract yourself from this situation?

**Travis:** Griffin, what happens to these spheres when we are... like when exit them? Do they like get sucked back up?

**Griffin:** Yeah, automatically the balloon on top activates and they fly back up to the base.

**Travis:** Got it.

**Clint:** How high up are we?

**Griffin:** About 40 feet.

**Justin:** I just jump out.

**Clint:** Sounds like no problem for... the Vroom Broom!

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah, okay. Merle, you retrieve the... is that what it's called? I think it's just called—

**Clint:** That's what I called it?

**Griffin:** Okay, what's the command word that you say to get it going?

**Clint:** 'Hang 10!'

**Griffin:** Fuck, yes, yes, yes!

**Clint:** 'Cause I'm gonna surf on it, I'm not gonna ride it sidesaddle—

**Griffin:** Say no more!

**Clint:** I'm gonna stand on it and surf on down to the ground.

**Griffin:** You are living Merle's truth right now! Yeah, you hang 10 on the broom—

**Merle:** Hang 10!

**Griffin:** And you effortlessly make your way down to the ground. Make a Perception check for me?

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Since you're the first person out.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** There's a big fat two.

**Griffin:** Okay. You don't perceive anything.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Taako—Do you shout 'Hang 10' when you go down?

**Clint:** Oh yeah, I gotta shout the word.

**Griffin:** Excellent, excellent, good.

**Merle:** Hang 10!

**Justin:** I leap out of the bubble, and I throw the Umbra staff to Magnus as I go. And I—

**Clint:** [chuckles] We have gotten close, haven't we?

**Justin:** Yeah. And I say:

**Taako:** It's got feather-fall, homie!

**Justin:** And then as I fall, I take advantage of a power that, as a transmutation wizard, I've had since level 10, and I have not taken advantage of it.

**Griffin:** Oh man.

**Justin:** And that's free polymorph. So, I just spread my wings.

**Griffin:** Holy shit.

**Justin:** And turn into just like the most beautiful soaring dove, as strains of Nelly Furtado's "I'm Like a Bird" caress my wings as I fly.

**Griffin:** Jesus...

**Taako:** [sings] I'm like a bird, wanna fly away. I don't know where my home—"

**Justin:** And it's just like so graceful.

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Justin:** And dew, I'm like flicking dew off the branches as I fly.

**Clint:** Oh, man!

**Justin:** And I blithely float down. I'm gonna do a perception check, long as I'm out here.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** That's a big 11.

**Clint:** It is a big 11.

**Griffin:** With an 11, you... I imagine these events happen fairly simultaneously. When Merle shouts 'hang 10,' you hear what sounds like a few animals roar.

**Justin:** Uh-oh. Okay, cool.

**Griffin:** Magnus... So, he threw the Umbra staff to you.

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** As you catch it from him throwing it to you, it jerks out of your hand, like it doesn't want to be held by you,. And it actually flies down and lands at Taako's feet. It didn't want you to use it, it wanted to stay with Taako. So, now you are still up in this tree.

**Travis:** Cool. I'm going to use my grappling hook.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Travis:** And I'm going to attempt to grapple a branch—basically, I wanna like anchor the pod so I can right it, so I'm not just gonna drop out if I unhook myself.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I don't think this is gonna require anything, because you're using this grappling hook. Which you can only use once per day, you're fine with that, right?

**Travis:** Yeah, I'll forget to use it later on anyways.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I think you just kind of like connect the grappling hook hook to like a branch, and then you just lower down slowly, like Inspector Gadget style.

**Travis:** Well, I do—Before I go, though—

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Travis:** I do—since I'm anchored, I wanna strap my two boys into the sphere before I drop out.

**Griffin:** Interesting, okay. So, you're taking the—Are you just leaving the pocket workshop in the sphere, or are you just taking them out?

**Travis:** Yeah, I'm taking them out. I wanna keep the workshop.

**Griffin:** Okay, you then really quickly as the boys can't really see—Merle and Taako can't really see you anymore, you make quick work as you pull these two still unconscious men out of the pocket workshop, and tie them up inside of the sphere.

**Travis:** I wanna leave a note inside one of the knocked-out boys' pockets that says, "Lucretia, if I make it out of this, we have a lot of discussing to do. Magnus."

**Griffin:** Okay. Let's say that you maybe had that note pre-prepared, because that's a lot of business for you to be doing up in this tree.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Okay, so yeah, you get rid of your two boys and tie them up inside the bubble. And as you drop down, you hear the balloon deploy and you look up. And you can sort of see through the boughs of the trees as the sphere floats away, back up into the... back up into the sky.

**Travis:** Should I roll a perception check? Everybody else did.

**Griffin:** Yeah, roll a perception check.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** It's a one!

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You don't even hear the roaring.

**Travis:** I don't see the ground. [chuckles] "Where are we, who am I?"

**Griffin:** You realize the roars are actually coming from above you, and there's a clearing in the boughs. And you can see up, and you see that bubble, you see this sphere floating away in the balloon. And you look up, and you see in the sky... a huge beast. And it kind of flies between the sun and you, just sort of casting a shadow. And it makes it kind of hard to see, but it's gigantic, and it's got these two gigantic wings. And it roars as it flies directly into the balloon.

**Travis:** Oh no!

**Griffin:** And attacks it. And the balloon pops, and that sphere just falls out of the sky—

**Travis:** My boys!

**Griffin:** ... From about 80 feet up. And it falls somewhere else into the forest, and you hear a pretty gnarly crash. And then this huge beast kind of does a lap up in the sky, and then it comes diving down directly at the three of you.

**Travis:** Oh no, I feel—Can I just say, I feel just terrible about this.

**Clint:** I feel pretty good about it.

**Griffin:** This thing comes to a sudden halt directly in front of the three of you. And you see it is in fact a gigantic beast and it has two large scaly wings. And it has a large scaly head. And it has some fire sort of spouting from the corners of its draconic mouth. But it also has two other heads. One of them is a lion, who is also roaring, and he's got razor sharp teeth in his mouth. And the other is a goat with two large horns on its head and it's bleating at you violently. It is a chimera. And let's roll some Initiative.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** Land of Goshen. I rolled a 16.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** two.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** 12. Oh wait, I get a second roll.

**Travis:** Oh sorry, 16 plus two, 18.

**Griffin:** Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** Oh, I'd say give it to Travis, that's a six.

**Griffin:** The chimera's up first!

**Travis:** Oh, and can I just as a free action, switch my dial to fire on my Defender's Belt?

**Griffin:** Yeah, I like the concept of you doing that as like a, 'Oh shit!' So yeah.

**Travis:** I feel bad about accidentally killing my boys.

**Griffin:** I mean, the chimera killed them.

**Travis:** If I had kept them in my pocket workshop, they wouldn't be dead.

**Griffin:** They may be okay.

**Clint:** Listen, with a chimera hovering in front of us, I'd be glad to go check on them if you want? I mean, just to make sure they're okay.

**Travis:** No, no, I just feel bad.

**Griffin:** The chimera goes first. And it has, again, a dragon head, a lion head and a goat head. The first thing you all need to do is make a Dexterity saving throw. All three of you.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** That wasn't good. But—

**Justin:** 14 for the kid.

**Clint:** Nine.

**Travis:** Mine was a seven, but I'm gonna go ahead and use Indomitable to roll it again.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** Yeah, okay. That's a 10... plus two, 12.

**Griffin:** Okay, all three of you get caught up in this plume of flame.

**Travis:** Dang.

**Justin:** Dag.

**Griffin:** You try to dodge out of the way, but it is a huge 15-foot cone, so you have a hard time sort of diving. And as you are consumed with flame you take, each, you take 28 points of fire damage.

**Justin:** Son of a...

**Travis:** But I get half damage.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you're good. Then it runs up to Taako, and with its goat head, it is going to try to ram you. And you know what, it's probably a ram's head then, isn't it? If it has ram's horns...

**Justin:** I mean, by definition, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah... That is—

**Justin:** If it's ramming things, it's a ram.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's a ram, then. 16 versus AC?

**Justin:** That's gonna do it...

**Griffin:** It rams you for 11 points of bludgeoning damage.

**Travis:** [giggles]

**Griffin:** And then, Merle, the lion head is kind of facing you, it's gonna reach down and try to take a bite out of you.

**Clint:** Okay...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** That is a crit.

**Clint:** Great.

**Griffin:** It hits you, it bites into you for 22 points of piercing damage.

**Clint:** Great, all right...

**Justin:** Excellent.

**Clint:** Feels great.

**Griffin:** That was a lot of damage. Good work, Chimera!

**Clint:** Yeah, sure was!

**Travis:** Do these count as individual monsters, or as one monster?

**Griffin:** Yes. Magnus, you're up next.

**Travis:** Wait, what?

**Clint:** Huh?

**Griffin:** It's one monster made up of different parts.

**Travis:** Cool. I'm going to attack it.

**Griffin:** Okay. Where are you attacking it?

**Travis:** I'm gonna attack it at the base of the dragon neck.

**Griffin:** Okay, so you're gonna—with what?

**Travis:** With my two-handed Railsplitter.

**Griffin:** Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** Nope, that's not gonna do it.

**Griffin:** Well, let me know?

**Travis:** Well, it's a four.

**Griffin:** No...

**Travis:** Yeah...

**Justin:** No...

**Travis:** I'm gonna try my second attack now, try it again.

**Griffin:** Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** Okay yeah, that's probably gonna do it. So, 17 plus seven... 24?

**Griffin:** Yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes.

**Travis:** Okay. And then I'm gonna use Goading Strike.

**Clint:** Goating Strike! [chuckles]

**Griffin:** On the goat?

**Travis:** No, you guys...

**Griffin:** Well, if you use it on the goat, it dies instantly, 'cause that's its weakness.

**Clint:** So, it has a goat and a ram. So, it has four heads.

**Griffin:** It has a secret fourth head. On its butt.

**Travis:** So, 11 damage...

**Griffin:** Plus Superiority?

**Travis:** And then 11 plus five. So, it needs to do a Wisdom saving throw to beat 16.

**Griffin:** It has a minus four to wisdom, so...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** It's a negative two.

**Justin:** What?

**Travis:** So yeah. Now, it has disadvantage on attacks not against me, and it takes 11 points of damage.

**Griffin:** Okay!

**Travis:** And now, I'm going to use Action Surge to attack again.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Travis:** And I'm gonna throw the Chance Lance at the lion's head.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** So, that's 13 plus seven, is a 20.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Oh sorry, 21, because of my Giant Slayer's Ring.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah, this thing is definitely bigger than you.

**Travis:** Definitely bigger than me, so that's... nine points of damage.

**Griffin:** All right. Next in the order is Merle.

**Clint:** I'm gonna cast Mass Cure Wounds.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay?

**Clint:** On us three buddies.

**Justin:** Nice. Nice.

**Clint:** And it is... three D8, plus my spellcasting modifier.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** So, that's a six. And my spellcasting modifier I believe is a three. So that makes it nine, correct?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Justin:** No... Well, three D8 is three of those.

**Clint:** Okay, so 18 for each of us.

**Griffin:** Roll it three times.

**Justin:** You gotta roll it three times.

**Clint:** Oh...

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** Silly Merle...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** Another six...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** And another six.

**Justin:** I'll be damned, geez...

**Clint:** So, I was right!

**Justin:** He knew...

**Clint:** six, six, six!

**Justin:** It was accurate!

**Clint:** 18 plus three, so we each get 21 points back.

**Griffin:** One second, wait! You said 21?

**Clint:** Yeah?

**Griffin:** You actually only heal for 19. For some reason like... just feels a bit off, Merle.

**Clint:** Well, shit...

**Griffin:** Your divine like... connection that sort of fuels all your power? It feels a bit... just feels a little bit off, just a little bit weird. So, that's 19 points, still a lot, but... [in silly voice] It's just a little bit off.

**Clint:** [spoofing silly voice] Well, okay!

**Justin:** That's weird.

**Clint:** [laughs] Right, So, 19 points up, correct?

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Justin:** Thank you very much. I needed that very much.

**Clint:** Me too.

**Griffin:** Taako, you're up next.

**Justin:** Okay, good. Shall I kill it?

**Griffin:** Sure!

**Travis:** Sure!

**Justin:** Great. [chuckles]

**Clint:** Awesome.

**Justin:** Great. Well, I don't know if I'll be able to kill it or not, but you know, we'll give it the old college try. 'Cause bad news for this son of a bitch is I can cast level six spells now. So, what's it doing right now?

**Griffin:** I do wanna point out, you can cast a level six spell, 'cause you've only got the one spell slot. And I told dad this while you were in the bathroom, but I am gonna be tracking that stuff, unlike the last arc.

**Justin:** Well then, Jesus, Griffin!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's episode one, dog, we got a lot of arc left to go.

**Justin:** Yeah, but I like... you know that our show up to this point has functioned on the 'assumed rest'. By which I mean, it is assumed that we have rested any time that the numbers don't add up sort of.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Clint:** I mean, we go two weeks?

**Justin:** Okay, here! Fine.

**Griffin:** Shit's gonna get real down in Wonderland, so I don't know about that.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** Here, I got this... I'll try this one. How about an ice storm?

**Griffin:** Oh shit?

**Justin:** "A hail of rock hard—" [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Come on, really?

**Justin:** Nice! "40-foot-high cylinders, centered on a point within range." So, it's basically just like a big-ass ice storm, and you gotta succeed in a Dexterity saving throw.

**Travis:** I probably also have to succeed at that saving throw, don't I?

**Justin:** Are you a creature? [chuckles]

**Clint:** No?

**Griffin:** Yeah, he's a creature. I mean, he... And we got to like—

**Justin:** Yeah, but I got spell shaping. So—

**Griffin:** You don't got spellshaping anymore. I cannot stress this enough. You gave that up when you switched to transmutation.

**Justin:** I never... I wouldn't say switched. But okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** All right. Well, I don't spell shape anymore.

**Clint:** He's turned into a hard ass?

**Justin:** Yeah, I love it, though.

**Griffin:** 13? Doesn't do it.

**Justin:** No...

**Griffin:** Magnus, how'd you do?

**Justin:** Trav?

**Travis:** Is it Dexterity?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** So, it's 14, plus two, 16.

**Justin:** Yes, that does succeed.

**Travis:** Perfect.

**Justin:** 15 is what we were looking for.

**Griffin:** All right. Then what do I do?

**Justin:** So, you're going to take two D8 bludgeoning damage, and four D6 cold damage.

**Clint:** Man!

**Griffin:** All right.

**Justin:** So, let me do the cold damage first—

**Travis:** Really glad I dodged!

**Justin:** Me too.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Four...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Six...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Six...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Four. Wow. Devastating.

**Griffin:** 20.

**Justin:** 20 cold damage. And then let me grab that D8 right quick.

**Clint:** Justin is reaching for the metallic bag, within which he keeps his die. Let's see what happens!

**Justin:** I'll do a good job, that's what happens. Every time.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Six.

**Griffin:** Jesus!

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** And four. So, 10...

**Clint:** 30.

**Justin:** Yeah, 30 altogether.

**Griffin:** That was a big hit. With that hit, the dragon head looks pretty bad off.

**Justin:** Now Magnus, my dude, you do have to take half that damage, and I am very, very sorry about that.

**Griffin:** Oh no!

**Travis:** That's fine. That's fine, you know what? I get it.

**Justin:** I think it's what you would've wanted.

**Griffin:** So, that's 15 damage to you, Magnus.

**Travis:** Yeah, down to 96...

**Clint:** The Merle giveth and the Taako taketh away.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** I mean, listen, I'm still at 96 hit points, so I'm doing okay.

**Clint:** Geez!

**Travis:** Yeah, I'm a tank!

**Griffin:** The dragon head looks pretty bad off after that hit, the other two heads look... pretty hurt, but not as bad off as this dragon head. 'Cause the dragon head—the chimera's up next. The dragon head tries to barf up a

spout of flame, but nothing really comes out. So instead, it is going to snap at you, Magnus, since you goaded it.

**Travis:** Good luck!

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** 19 versus AC?

**Travis:** What if I'm at 19?

**Griffin:** No, on attack rolls, the attacker hits.

**Travis:** Oh, okay. Well then, I got hit.

**Griffin:** Okay. He bites into you for 13 points of damage.

**Travis:** That's fine.

**Griffin:** The ram's head is going to charge at you, Magnus. Well, it's not charging, it's just like standing still trying to butt you.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** That's just 15 though, so that's a miss.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Griffin:** And then the lion head is gonna take disadvantage and try to attack Merle.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** Okay...

**Griffin:** That was a 19 versus AC, which I imagine hits, but...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** It hits.

**Griffin:** 17 versus AC?

**Clint:** No, my AC is 18.

**Griffin:** Okay. It gets like its mouth on you, but its teeth do not get through your armor. And it retracts. Next up is Magnus.

**Travis:** Because I want the extra AC, I'm now gonna switch to one-handed Rail-splitter, and get my shield out.

**Griffin:** Okay!

**Travis:** That will give me a plus two to AC. Then I'm going to... I'm gonna try to get on its back.

**Griffin:** Oh? Okay, we're Dragon's Dogma-ing this shit now, then?

**Travis:** Yeah, yeah. What would that be? Is that acrobatics or athletics?

**Griffin:** It's gonna try to buck you off. So, I think it's gonna be, for you, probably Athletics versus my... Dexterity? Or... Yeah, probably Dexterity.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** I rolled a 21.

**Travis:** I got 16 plus seven, so 23.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, you are on this thing's back and you're grabbed on.

**Travis:** I guess that's probably one of my actions, right? Or is that the move?

**Griffin:** That is... We'll say that is... I mean, that's one of your actions, yes.

**Travis:** Okay, and then I will attack the base of the dragon neck.

**Griffin:** Okay, we'll say you have advantage, since you kind of have a good position on it now.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** Okay good, 'cause that was a one. [chuckles]

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** Okay. So, 15 plus seven, 22—23.

**Griffin:** Yup, that is a hit.

**Travis:** Eight plus six, 14 points of damage.

**Griffin:** Okay, the dragon head looks like unconscious now. The dragon head is just kind of hanging limp.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Griffin:** That's it, right? 'Cause you did two actions.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Okay. Merle, you are up.

**Clint:** I am going to cast... a brand new one!

**Justin:** Mm-hm?

**Clint:** Insect Plague!

**Griffin:** Holy shit, Okay.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Okay. [chuckles] Yes?

**Clint:** "Swarming biting locusts fill a 20-foot radius sphere, centered on a point—"

**Griffin:** Excellent.

**Clint:** ... "You choose within range. A creature takes four D10 piercing damage, but it has to make a Constitution saving throw."

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Oh, you guys!

**Griffin:** Are you just gonna aim that right at Magnus? Or like, you're gonna just sort of put that one—

**Clint:** No. I'm going to... I'm gonna aim the sphere at the feet of the chimera.

**Griffin:** I don't think that dog's gonna hunt, 'cause that would mean you're aiming it into the ground. The conceit for area of effect attacks is that they have collateral damage, and the only way to like abate that is to... plan around it.

**Clint:** Okay, I hit him with the sphere.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** You got 96 points, right Magnus?

**Justin:** [chuckles] He's fine!

**Travis:** Sure! What do I—Is it—

**Justin:** We're just here with all the points you had.

**Griffin:** Constitution.

**Travis:** Constitution, you say?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Close to 20.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** What's up now?

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Travis:** It's a crit 20! The bugs swarm around me!

**Justin:** You're dodging 'em like fuckin Neo.

**Clint:** All right. So, I need to roll four D10?

**Griffin:** Well no, I rolled a 19. I think this thing saves, but it has to move, right? Or else...

**Clint:** "Creature takes four D10 piercing damage on a failed save."

**Griffin:** Right.

**Clint:** "Or half as much damage on a successful one."

**Griffin:** Okay, so there's the half damage. So, you still roll damage.

**Travis:** Oh, cool!

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** Wait, is that the 10? All right, seven...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** Five...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** Zero—Oh, that's 10!

**Justin:** 10, yeah.

**Clint:** So, what is it up to so far?

**Travis:** 22.

**Clint:** seven—22.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** 19—A seven, 21!

**Justin:** Wow.

**Griffin:** But half that, right?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** No, half of 31.

**Clint:** 31. Okay, so 15½ points.

**Griffin:** Just 15.

**Clint:** Aw...

**Travis:** Even though I critted, Griffin?

**Griffin:** Okay, you round up to 16.

**Travis:** No wait, now hold on—

**Griffin:** Yeah, even though you critted.

**Travis:** Okay...

**Justin:** That seems unlikely. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** As it takes that—

**Justin:** He was so Constitute, though.

**Griffin:** It takes that damage, and the lion head now droops down, and is unconscious. And with that, the goat head like bleats loudly, and it rears back on its back legs. And Magnus, you... Magnus, I guess make a Dex save.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** I mean... eh. It's an eight.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah, you get thrown off its back to the ground. But you don't take any damage. And the goat head, the only sort of remaining head, and the rest of its body, extends those wings. And it starts to flap them to fly off. And it gets a few feet off the ground, and then an arrow comes in and hits that goat head right in the dome. And with that, the chimera just instantly falls to the ground, dead. And when you look behind you...

**Clint:** Oh please be Hawkeye, please be Hawkeye!

**Griffin:** It's the Guy himself. The Hawk—

**Clint:** Hawkeye!

**Griffin:** The Hawk Guy.

**Clint:** Ah...

**Griffin:** You see a few people. You see a half-elf man, who is kind of gruff and dressed mostly in pelts. And he's holding this big ass longbow, in like

attack position. So he was the one who shot that arrow. He's got a short, shaggy beard and dark red hair. With him, you see a wood elf who has dark purple hair and nearly identical leather armor to the half-elf with the bow. And she's holding this knotted, natural wooden staff. And these two are standing in like combat poses.

And from out behind a tree, sort of cautiously poking his head outward, you see a kind of scrawny human man, who is no older than like 20 years old, probably. But he's dressed in like this finery that is white and gold. He is the cleanest thing in a 10-mile radius. Is there a roll, is there a skill that would like let you know who people are? Like in 4<sup>th</sup> edition, there was Streetwise? Is there anything like that in this game? What would you roll to like know who...

**Travis:** History?

**Justin:** History or Insight?

**Clint:** I have Legend Lore, a spell?

**Travis:** Insight, I would say.

**Clint:** If I describe a person, it—if I describe a person—

**Griffin:** No, insight is... Make a... How about just make a straight-up Intelligence roll?

**Travis:** Oh...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** I got an 18!

**Justin:** 20.

**Clint:** I got a natural four.

**Griffin:** Magnus and Taako, you recognize this guy. He is Lord Artemis Sterling. The Ruler of Neverwinter, and the most powerful man in the world.

**Clint:** But I get the credit on the kill, right?

**Griffin:** Oh, def.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

[“Déjà Vu” by Mort Garson plays]

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