

## **The Adventure Zone Balance: Lunar Interlude IV: The Calm Before The Storm**

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

You see a... strikingly handsome uh dark-haired man. He's wearing a fancy suit that is covered by a long black, flowing cowled robe.

**Travis:** Oh, it's Death.

**Kravitz:** I'm Kravitz. Charmed.

**Justin:** Lenny. [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Kravitz:** Still not good— Still not a good goof, but we'll roll with it.

**Travis:** [singing] "American woman!"

**Justin:** That's... It's like he's in the room with me.

**Kravitz:** You've added quite a bit to your death count, haven't you?

**Taako:** That one's on me.

**Clint:** He was in a loveless marriage.

**Griffin:** Oh, interesting!

**Clint:** Yeah...

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Clint:** We were beach dwarves. We lived, uh, on the beach.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Uh, we had a... We had a, you would call it a cottage, but to us it was home.

**Griffin:** Magnus, you pop it open and unfurl 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.

This figure in this red robe... is you.

**Announcer:** Hahaha! Bet you goobers didn't see that one coming! What other tasty twists and turns await you in... The Adventure Zone!

[theme music plays]

[pleasant relaxing music plays]

**Griffin:** So, Taako, that night in your dormitory... uh, that we kinda ended the last episode with. Uh, you had a nice long discussion with Kravitz, who... for those of you who maybe are skipping ahead or don't remember 'cause it's been like seven months since Kravitz was on the show, is a bounty hunter for the Raven Queen, who's the goddess of like the natural passage of... life and death.

Um, so you had this conversation with Kravitz in your dormitory, um... for a good long time, and he seemed much less aggressive than he did? When you sort of encountered him in Lucas' lab.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Where he, you know, was mostly trying to kill you.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Um, he sort of sat patiently while you explained the events of your time in Refuge, um... But— So you're having this conversation with him kind of explaining what happened in Refuge, um, and he sort of explained like, you're kind of uh... You, you guys are in trouble, obviously, because you've added to your death count, which he's not a fan of, but everybody in Refuge also died like, a lot, during those loops, and that somebody has to answer for that.

But your discussion was cut short when Kravitz was summoned to hunt another bounty for the Raven Queen. Um, but before leaving he attuned your Stone of Far Speech to his own, and told you that he would reach out again to continue your conversation about what should happen to you all, and to everybody in Refuge.

Um, but you, Taako, decide to take the initiative in setting up the next meeting with Kravitz, and you're kind of hoping to sway him to your way of thinking. To sort of save you guys and everybody in Refuge from getting your sort of your comeuppance. So, my question to you is what do you do with, with Kravitz? What sort of, uh, hang sesh do you set up with Kravitz, when you contact him?

**Justin:** Umm... See, I don't wanna seem too eager. [sighs]

**Griffin:** Right. That's important.

**Justin:** [muttering] Fishing is... probably out.

**Griffin:** Does Taako... Does Taako fish?

**Justin:** Yeah, Taako fishes.

**Griffin:** I mean, it's not— I didn't know that.

**Justin:** Well, you haven't really let us past any bodies of water.

**Griffin:** I never asked. That's true.

**Justin:** I'm not sure we've ever encountered a body of water.

**Griffin:** Water doesn't exist in this universe, so.

**Justin:** [chuckles] Um... Oh, did you hear what just opened, on... the um, the satellite? On the station?

**Griffin:** No.

**Justin:** It's so fun. It is a wine and pottery place. These are getting really hot right now.

**Griffin:** So there's one in the Bureau of Balance HQ?

**Justin:** They opened one in the Bureau of Balance HQ.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** As just sort of a way to like, stress relief for everybody. So you go there, you unpop a bottle of vino.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** And you just make a sculpture.

**Griffin:** Okay, so you've invited— you're— You call Kravitz up on the Stone of Far Speech.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** And invite him to a wine and pottery class. On the— In the Bureau of Balan— What's this place called?

**Justin:** Uh, this one?

**Griffin:** Yeah, this place. This specific place.

**Justin:** Uh, oh thi— This one that they opened?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** [chuckles] Uh... *Chug 'n' Squeeze*.

**Griffin:** *Chug 'n' Squ— Chug 'n' Squeeze?*

**Justin:** The *Chug 'n' Squeeze* is the name of it.

**Griffin:** Is this a franchise of a larger..

**Justin:** [uncomfortably] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Yeah, it's a franchise of a lot of these.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Where you chug the— 'Cause you chug the wine and you squeeze the pottery.

**Griffin:** Squeeze the pots, yeah.

**Justin:** So what they call it is the *Chug 'n' Squeeze*.

**Griffin:** Alright, so.

**Justin:** Is the name of it.

**Griffin:** A pretty unsophisticated name for what I would say is a pretty sophisticated business, but okay.

**Justin:** Well, they have to differentiate. This is the rowdy one. [laughs]

**Griffin:** So, you book—

**Justin:** This isn't the one that like, caters to like your pseudo-intellectuals, and your...

**Griffin:** Absolutely.

**Justin:** Yeah, this is like the fun one.

**Griffin:** You book two seats at a class, uh, an evening class at the *Chug 'n' Squeeze*, uh, on— during today. It's all cabernet and... vases. Um, it's their cab and vase class.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** It's very, very popular, and actually it's really hard to get seats, but you manage to get two seats together, uh, at the *Chug 'n' Squeeze* for the cab and vase, and uh... You get there early, sort of to prep your station, uh so there's some finger foods being handed out. And Kravitz doesn't show up for a little bit. You're actually worried that he's blowing you off.

But eventually he does, uh, come into the room and hang up his dark cloak and sit down, sort of uncomfortable next to you, uh... Sort of unsure why you brought him here. Also, as you look around, you realize that it's um... It's like everybody else here is in couples. Uh, Carey and Killian are actually here, taking a class together. And like, everybody here is like, more or less on a date.

**Justin:** Did you say discomfort or super comfort?

**Griffin:** Uh... For Kravitz, Kravitz seems a little like— Kravitz thought maybe you would go to a place where you could have a quiet conversation about this, but instead has been dropped into this... dropped into this place. And he says, uh...

**Kravitz:** Well, Taako, this is uh... Taako, this is a pretty unconventional place to have an argument about, sort of the fate of a whole... sort of small community, but, um, I, I do like wine.

[drops his fancy British accent] I'm sorry, do you mind if I drop the accent? It's like... It's really, really hard to keep it up, and when I'm not on the job, it just feels weird doing it. Is that okay?

**Taako:** Yeah, of course. [in a very deep voice] As long as I can drop my accent too.

**Griffin:** [laughs] He says, uh...

**Kravitz:** So, why did you... Why are we— [sighs] Why are we here, Taako? Why can't we just like, go back to the dorm and finish our conversation?

**Taako:** Well, ironically, 'cause I thought it would get weird, but— [chuckles] That is— I don't know why I thought this would be a better option. Um, also you're like very dangerous, so I didn't wanna necessarily like leave myself in private with you, necessarily.

**Kravitz:** I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna attack you, Taako. That's— Here's the thing, I don't actually have a contract out on you or Merle or Magnus or anybody in Refuge. I'm just trying to make sense of it, because like, I've never... I've been hunting for a good long time, and I've never known

anyone who's sort of bent the laws as much as you have. So I'm— like— I'm just trying to understand what makes you guys so special.

**Taako:** Hmm... Look at what I'm sculpting here.

**Griffin:** What are you, what are you sculpting?

**Justin:** The, the... it's a bowl.

**Griffin:** Okay. Well, it, I do wanna sta— A big burly sort of instructor comes by and says "Hey! It's vase day! It's cab and vase! No bowls!"

**Taako:** [chuckles] Let me reshape it.

**Justin:** As soon as he turns away, I fuckin' turn it back into a bowl, 'cause that's what I feel like making.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Today. That's where my muse— I don't fuckin' chain my muse up.

**Griffin:** Kravitz chuckles, he's like...

**Kravitz:** I like your renegade spirit there.

**Taako:** Well that's kinda what I want to talk to you about. Look at this bowl, right?

**Griffin:** He's looking at it.

**Taako:** Okay, so you see how it kind of curves up, on each side. And in the middle, there's like a whole big flat part, right? That's where most people fall into. A lot of people are in this area, right here. And really, people like you... Who are charged with sort of keeping the status quo, those are the people that you need to worry about. The people in the middle of the bowl. Me, the other guy— What?

**Kravitz:** This is a very confusing analogy.

**Taako:** It's not confusing at all!

**Kravitz:** Okay.

**Taako:** The people who are straight up, who are down the middle, who are, sort of, regular [chuckles] Joe Pastas, they're always gonna be here on the flat part. And as long as you keep them under control, and as long as you keep the herd thinned there, it'll be fine. There's always gonna be edge cases, if what I'm saying. There's always gonna be people on the fringe that don't necessarily adhere to whatever rules you set out for yourself, that's everywhere! In the universe! In every plane!

**Kravitz:** I mean— You explained to me last time we talked sort of what you all are doing here, and it sounds very... It sounds important. But the fact that I've visited you as much as I have means this line of work is just preposterously dangerous. So, why are you doing this, Taako? Why aren't you doing a safer career?

**Taako:** 'Cause I'm worried no-one else will have me.

**Kravitz:** Wow, that was a— that was a very honest answer. I'm a bit shocked.

**Taako:** Well, I mean, that's the truth. If I can't be honest at the *Chug 'n' Squeeze*, then I, frankly my man, I don't know where I can. What else am I gonna do? I, um, as far as anybody else knows, my career as a chef is over. Nobody wants an adventurer who's got as little experience as I have going in. I can't tell any— I can't put any of this on my resume, it'll look like scribbles.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Taako:** So that's out. I don't have a lot of job prospects on that front. So, here I am!

**Kravitz:** I— I can certainly understand that. I was given a pretty... pretty difficult choice when I was faced with being a— the career of being a bounty hunter for the goddess of death. It's— I didn't grow up wanting to be that, of course.

**Taako:** Who does?

**Kravitz:** At all.



**Taako:** Yeah.

**Kravitz:** I wanted to be a... I wanted to be a conductor, but unfortunately, you know, just life finds a way. Or death, I guess, the goddess of death.

**Taako:** In this case specifically, yeah, death.

**Kravitz:** Her, yeah. I, I appreciate you being so, uh... so open and honest with me, Taako. I feel like I, kind of— I feel like I understand where you're coming from. How much more dying do you think is gonna happen? Just so I know how to, um... sort of pitch your case to the Raven Queen.

**Taako:** Well, dang. Now we've reached something of an impasse, huh. [clicks his tongue, thinking] How much mo— Us dying? Or like other regular dying?

**Kravitz:** Just like, um... Any dying. At all.

**Taako:** Well...

**Kravitz:** What's the game plan there?

**Taako:** I mean there's gonna be some. The thing in Refuge was definitely an outlier. I don't plan to die that many times again. So that was probably— Here's what I'm, here's what I'm gonna say.

**Justin:** And I put my hand, uh, on his hand to help him shape the vase he's been working on.

**Griffin:** It's very, very— It's very cold. His hand is.

**Taako:** Oh, boy! Oh boy howdy. That is a clammy one. Listen. If we can overlook that unpleasantness, I think you're going to find a very acceptable level of death in the days and weeks ahead. That's what I'm gonna say to you. A very normal, sort of corporeal, just usual amount of death.

**Kravitz:** Okay. I think I can... I think I can close the case on this one. Um... The people of Refuge will be safe. Obviously... you all will— There

will be certain exceptions made where they need to be made for the three of you. The Raven Queen is actually good, good buds with, uh, Lady Istus.

**Taako:** Nice.

**Kravitz:** So, I understand you are now in her retinue, so... I think— I think I can close my investigation here. Um... I guess let's just enjoy the rest of the class?

**Taako:** Hell yeah! Let's open up another bottle and see where the evening takes us.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you have uh, you have a couple of bottles and you make a— How does your vase— His vase turns out, uh... pretty well. About a five out of 10. How's yours do?

**Justin:** Oh, cool! It's fucking perfect.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** There's never been a better vase than this. It's fucking tasteful and rad.

**Griffin:** Okay. You fire it and you all get to keep your vases at the end of the day. And while you're walking out, you're a bit drunk. A bit, um, just a little bit faded. And you're walking back and it's nighttime and you're walking back across the big grassy quad of the HQ. And uh, Kravitz turns and he asks...

**Kravitz:** Taako, I wanna know.

**Taako:** Yeah?

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

**Taako:** Yeah, I mean a little bit of both. I, uh, for sure didn't wanna be dragged to Hell, or whatever it is you do. Sorting the ghost house with Casper and the lot.

**Griffin:** [chuckles quietly]

**Taako:** Don't wanna do that. In the mirror? If I remember?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Taako:** I am not interested in that, but if like— But also, I love your style, not crazy about the sorta cold, clamminess of the skin. But like, uh yeah, you know, it's been a while out here.

**Griffin:** He, uh... He like steps backward with a start, and... extends his arm, and his scythe appears in his arm, and a black cloak just kind of unfurls itself over his head.

**Taako:** Love this.

**Griffin:** And sort of surrounding his whole body. And all of a sudden, his super handsome face is now, uh, a skull. Uh, and he starts looking around desperately. And he says...

**Kravitz:** There's, there's something here! There's something here, Taako! It was—

**Taako:** I feel it too.

**Kravitz:** It was— No, not— Not this. The— There's something here. It was in the Millers' lab too. I can feel it. It's, it's it's dead and it's powerful, and it's extremely close. Are you harboring a dark spirit, Taako? Do you have suspicions that you might be some sort of vessel?

**Griffin:** And he's kind of eyeing you over with the scythe in his hand.

**Taako:** Mayb— I mean, it's been like a few years. Was that a thing for a while? I eat old dead dudes with my umbrella. Is that a possibility, maybe?

**Kravitz:** I don't— No, I don't think it's that.

**Griffin:** He starts looking around and... Kravitz turns his back to you and starts to sort of walk toward the middle of the quad, still sort of looking around for whatever this powerful dead thing is. And, Taako... You actually, uh... feel the Umbra Staff in your hand start to raise itself up. Uh, it's not controlling you, it's controlling itself, as it sort of raises itself up,

and then your arm is outstretched, holding the Umbra Staff. And it is pointed at Kravitz's back. What do you do? It looks like it's, like, charging up a spell.

**Justin:** I... point it... skyward.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, you point the— You sort of wrestle with the umbrella for a second and you point it skyward, and you shoot a *Scorching Ray* into the sky. And it uh, it doesn't hit anybody, but it launches a flare up into the sky. And Kravitz turns immediately back towards you and he says...

**Kravitz:** What wa— What was that?!

**Taako:** The Umbra Staff's trying to kill you, man. It's not me!

**Kravitz:** What?

**Taako:** The Umbra Staff. Check it out, I used to think "Umbro", but it's actually "Umbra". Uh, it uh, it acted on its own.

**Kravitz:** I don't understand. That's not. Can I see it?

**Taako:** Okay.

**Griffin:** You hand it over, and he looks it over and he says...

**Kravitz:** This isn't like a— This isn't like a cursed item, maybe your umbrella's cursed and maybe you should get that checked out. This is a, this is an undead being. This is like a lich or something big and powerful, and it's— You're not a lich, are you Taako?

**Taako:** Not to my knowledge. Not a lich, no.

**Kravitz:** I mean, you're not. I would know if you were. Okay, well. I've had a lovely evening, but this...

**Taako:** I got a Arcane Trickster's Glove... I've got a saltshaker...

**Kravitz:** I mean you can just lay all your stuff out if you want, but I don't think it's—

**Taako:** Ring of Frost...

**Kravitz:** It's definitely not the saltshaker.

**Griffin:** Um, he says...

**Taako:** Mockingbird Gum...

**Griffin:** [chuckles] He says...

**Kravitz:** No, you don't have— The gum is not a lich.

**Taako:** Ring of Pointing...

**Kravitz:** I tell ya what, I've had a lovely evening, but I need to go, um—

**Taako:** Pocket spa...

**Kravitz:** I need to go think about it.

**Griffin:** While you're sort of like, unspooling—

**Taako:** Immovable Rod...

**Griffin:** Unpacking all your magic items and laying them out on the ground, you realize he's, uh, torn another little rift in space and time to travel back to the Astral Plane and he steps through. And he says...

**Kravitz:** Taako, it's— I've had a very— I've had a lovely evening. Do you think I'll be... hearing from you again any time soon?

**Taako:** Uh, yeah. I mean, as long as I don't... You know... Die. Again.

**Kravitz:** Well. Even so, we have ways of dealing with that.

**Taako:** Well, yeah, that's pretty much the best excuse I ever have, so I think you'll definitely be seeing me again. For sure. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Uh, he chuckles and says...

**Kravitz:** Well, hope— If that's the case, then hopefully not too soon. Goodbye, Taako.

**Taako:** Adios!

**Griffin:** And the rift closes.

[chill interlude music plays]

**Griffin:** Uh, so Merle. You are on an away mission for this Lunar Interlude. Um, and it's something that you've done pretty frequently between the, uh, the main story missions and deployments and scheduled Bureau of Balance events. And these little, um, away missions are something that you handle with the utmost secrecy.

And it's on one of these outings that you find yourself in Neverwinter. Um, specifically in the Sea of Gardens in Neverwinter's Blue Lake District. And it's your favorite place in the city. It's just this beautiful piece of landscaping, masterfully designed. Neverwinter is known as The City of Skilled Hands, and that shows here because this, uh, Sea of Gardens is just like a horticultural masterpiece.

**Clint:** Is the Blue Lake District anything like the Red-Light District?

**Griffin:** No, it's actually the exact opposite.

**Clint:** Okay, cool. Cool cool.

**Griffin:** It's a good way of thinking about it though.

**Clint:** Cool.

**Griffin:** So you're making your way through this area, which is essentially just this big beautiful public park. You get the impression that... someone is following you. Go ahead and make a, uh, make a perception check.

**Clint:** Alright.

[sounds of a die rolling]

**Clint:** Four.

**Griffin:** Oh, you have advantage, 'cause you have the—

**Clint:** Oh, I do have advantage! Yes.

**Griffin:** Yeah, those glasses.

**Clint:** Okay. Oh, 15.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, with that perception check, as you are walking through this park, you turn around really quickly and you see... a feathered cap duck behind a tree. Just like, a moment too late to keep you from seeing it. And it is the feathered hat of this person who has been following you.

**Clint:** Merle says, uh...

**Merle:** Okay! I see ya! Come on out.

**Griffin:** From out behind the tree, Angus McDonald, boy detective—

**Merle:** [disappointed] Oh, god...

**Griffin:** — walks out. Uh, and he has his hands up. And he says...

**Angus McDonald:** I'm sorry! I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I knew you were going out on secret missions, and I just got so panicked about it! And I tried to talk to you about it, but I got too nervous. So I thought I'd just do some detective work, and I'm really sorry!

**Clint:** I take the Adamantium Spanner and I walk over and I raise it up, and—

**Griffin:** While you're doing that, uh, walking over, with the Adamantium Spanner, you are tackled by... a little dwarven boy with dark, wild hair, uh, and several prominent missing teeth, and a face full of light freckles. And, uh, it's just a little dwarven boy. He's wearing a beanie, and on that beanie is a little cartoon illustration of a hamburger.

And this little boy runs up and tackles you, right as you're about to clobber Angus, uh... And he says, uh...

**Dwarven Boy:** What'd'ya get me! What'd'ya get me!

**Griffin:** And the... he's accompanied by a dwarven girl who looks a few years older than him. And she's got straight red hair and glasses that almost mirror your own, and she's wearing clean linen robes with a bookbag slung over her shoulder. And she says...

**Dwarven Girl:** God, how many times do I have to tell you, don't tackle him every time you see him.

**Griffin:** And... Angus says...

**Angus McDonald:** Sorry, sir. Who, who's this? Who are these people?

**Merle:** [sighs heavily] Okay. Look. Kid. Angus. Whatever. You gotta promise me, give me your word of honor, that you won't say anything to anybody back at the ol' base about this. Or! The Adamantium Spanner is gonna go splatsky.

**Griffin:** Uh... He, uh, he promises. He crosses his heart.

**Angus McDonald:** Okay, sir. Who— What is, what is this big secret you've been keeping?

**Merle:** [sighs] Angus. I want you to meet... my... kids. [sighs] This is Mavis.

**Griffin:** She, uh, she does a little curtsy, and says...

**Mavis:** Uh, hi. It's nice to meet you? Who, who's your new friend, Pops?

**Merle:** Eh... This is a, the child detective. He— I think he— I don't know. I think he looks for missing children, or something.

**Angus McDonald:** That's not— that's not actually true. I just—

**Merle:** Well, whatever the hell. It doesn't matter.

**Angus McDonald:** I'm more of a—



**Merle:** You're never gonna see him again, Mavie, so don't worry about it. This is the last you'll see of this guy. And this is, this is my little fireball. This is, this is Mookie.

**Griffin:** [amused] Mookie. Uh... Mookie doesn't even address Angus at all.

**Clint:** Good boy.

**Griffin:** Angus has taken off his feathered cap, by the way, and is being very polite now to your children. Mookie just says...

**Mookie:** What'd'ya get me! What'd'ya get me!

**Merle:** Well.

**Griffin:** He's like pinning you down on the ground. Demanding.

**Merle:** Alright! [chuckles] Rattle, rattle, rattle! Rattle, rattle, rattle, rattle. Okay. Here ya go, Fireball. I got you this delicious root beer barrel.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Mookie:** It's dirty! It's real dirty!

**Merle:** Well, now, that—

**Mookie:** Is it okay to eat still?!

**Merle:** Yeah! Listen, let daddy tell ya. That's called "roughage". And ya eat the root beer barrel, and it makes you regular.

**Griffin:** He throws the root beet barrel in his mouth and just is lovin' it. Lovin' it!

**Merle:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And Mavis says...

**Mavis:** Mookie, that's, that's really gro— Okay. Okay. You're sure that's okay for him to eat?

**Merle:** Oh yeah, honey, don't worry about it. Would Daddy give one of you kids something bad? [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Uh, Mavis walks over and starts talking to Angus and says...

**Mavis:** He didn't... tell you about us, did he? Okay, so, uh... I'm Mavis. I'm Merle's daughter by marriage. My mom is Hekuba Roughridge. Formerly Miss Hekuba Highchurch, during their shortly lived marital union. And that's Mookie. That's Merle's boy with Hekuba and my dear half-brother.

**Griffin:** Angus is just slack jawed at all this, by the way. Angus does not know how to respond. And uh, Mavis walks over to you and sort of picks Mookie up and dusts him off, and says like...

**Mavis:** Okay, so. Tell us about your adventures then. Out with it. What've you been up to?

**Merle:** [gives a low whistle] Well, just a bunch of stuff. I got— I died a bunch of times.

**Mavis:** You what?!

**Merle:** Yeeeah, it was really weird. There were these worms—

**Mookie:** Did ya go ta Heaven?!

**Merle:** Uh, no. Not much chance of that, Fireball. No, not much chance of that. Everything worked out, and we were actually heroes. This is one of the few times where we didn't kill a bunch of people and blow a bunch of towns up, so uh, it was kind of a blue-ribbon day for the Tres Horny Boys. Uh, I mean—

**Mavis:** The what?

**Merle:** Daddy and his associates. Daddy and his coworkers.

**Mavis:** What did you call yourselves before?

**Merle:** No, nothing. Nothing. It was— No, forg— It's like, it's another language. It's, uh, Phandalinian. So uh, yeah. Don't worry about that. Oh,

by the way, Mavis. I brought you a little something too. I don't want to you think that—

**Mavis:** It's not— It's not a gross root beer barrel, is it?

**Merle:** No no no. No no.

**Mavis:** Okay.

**Merle:** Um—

**Mavis:** 'Cause I'm allergic to... dirt.

**Merle:** I know we haven't really... You know, I haven't really been a very good correspondent, and I know I haven't spent a lot of time with you kids, you know, growing up. So, you know, you're getting to the age now— You're what, 150?

**Mavis:** No, I'm like 12.

**Merle:** You're, yeah, but in dwarf years that's like 150.

**Mavis:** Like 12 years. Yeah, 12 of them.

**Merle:** So, I wanna give you this so Daddy can stay in better touch with ya.

**Clint:** And I give her the Stone of Far Speech.

**Griffin:** Okay. You give her another Stone of Far Speech, I assume.

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Not you own. Okay. You give her a Stone—

**Merle:** That way—

**Griffin:** You give her a Stone of Far Speech, and she says...

**Mavis:** Oh man! I've actually been wanting one. All the kids in my class have a stone, and like Mom won't let me have one yet, so I'll just keep this one secret, I guess?

**Merle:** I still have to, you know, okay any apps that you put on your..

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Merle:** Stone of Far Speech. And you know there is a data limit, but, you know, I just— I think you're of the age now where you could, you know, use some sage advice. And, while you won't get that from me, at least maybe I can tell ya somebody to talk to.

**Griffin:** Uh, Mookie spits out his root beer barrel that he's been sucking intently on, and he says...

**Mookie:** Does mine have apps too?! Can mine get apps?!

**Merle:** It has app-e-tizing flavor!

**Mookie:** Gud enuff!

**Griffin:** And he pops it back in.

**Merle:** Good boy.

**Griffin:** So you have a nice day in the park with Angus and uh your children, Mavis and Mookie. Do you have any questions for them?

**Clint:** Yeah. So, um... I kinda pull Mavis off to the side.

**Griffin:** Uh, Mookie starts trying to wrestle with Angus, who is like, who's definitely never wrestled before.

**Clint:** Aw, he'll kill him.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Mookie—

**Clint:** He'll kill him.

**Griffin:** Mookie's just like, yeah, destroying.

**Merle:** Mookie! Go easy!

**Mookie:** Okay, Daddy!

**Merle:** He's a big weenie. So Mavis, honey. You know, not that I care, but um... How's um, how's your mom?

**Mavis:** Oh. Yeah, I mean, she's doing really well. Her pearl farm has been really, really productive this year, actually. She's got really the biggest beachside property of the whole Coralheart clan, so, yeah. She's doing well. She started dating again like, and I thought it was gonna be weird, but, um—

**Merle:** Wait, wait. She's da— um... She's dating again?

**Mavis:** Yeah. Yeah. Oh yeah, no, she's been doing that for a— Ooph! A while now. Uh, but yeah, she's seeing a, uh, nice dwarf. You know him. Glymeth? He was one of the... You know him. He's been a part of the Coralheart clan for... like decades now.

**Merle:** Oh, maybe. But, uh... You know, Daddy meets a lot of people, honey, and uh... Not sure if I remember— So she's dating again? No shit.

**Mavis:** Yeah, it's goin—

**Merle:** I mean, no kidding. No kidding. Wow.

**Griffin:** Uh, Mookie runs up to you and interrupts your guys' conversation, and says...

**Mookie:** Daddy, how much longer you think you're gonna be adventuring for?! I get— I'm gettin' bored on the beach. Hangin' out.

**Merle:** Well, you know, Fireball. That, uh, Daddy... really uh, you know kinda thought that, well, when he gets done with this bunch, maybe you would wanna go into the adventuring business with him. You know, it would be, you know, Highchurch & Son & Daughter! Or Highchurch & Daughter & Son, maybe.

**Griffin:** Simultaneously, Mookie says...

**Mookie:** That sounds like fun!

**Griffin:** And Mavis says...

**Mavis:** That sounds extremely dangerous.

**Merle:** Oh, honey. [chuckles] You got Dadsky here to take care of ya, you don't need to worry about any of it. You know, I don't like to brag, but in my little, my little group, I'm the go-to guy for any action.

**Griffin:** [claps]

**Merle:** Any fighting, any combat, any spellcasting, I'm kinda the guy.

**Griffin:** Angus is standing next to you now when you say that, and just gives like a biiiig, fake, shit-eating grin and gives a thumbs-up and nods. To like, agree with what you've been saying.

**Clint:** And I, I glare at him and put my hand on the Adamantium Spanner.

**Griffin:** [claps and laughs] Okay. So, so you all have like a nice day in the park and it's getting late now, um, and you're uh— The four of you cross the bridge out of the Blue Lake District to head to the docks, to get your kids back on the boat to the home beach of the Coralheart clan.

Um, and it's gotten, it's gotten fairly late. The docks have more or less cleared out at this point, most of the sailors having receded to the seedier parts of Neverwinter for the evening. And Mookie has run really, really far ahead, uh and is sort of investigating the display window of a port sweets shop that has been closed for a few hours now. And Mavis shrugs and runs up to kind of console him, because Mookie's very upset that this store is not open and in business.

So they're way far ahead of you and have finished crossing the bridge. You and Angus are sort of further back, and Angus says...

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

**Merle:** Um... Angus... I wa— was a really crappy dad, and... I was an even crappier husband. And, you know, one of my biggest shames is that, you know, I kinda left them in the lurch. And I've been... [sighs] Now that I've come into a little bit of dough, I've kinda, you know, been trying to rebuild my relationship with the kids. And uh, you know, it's— You know, I don't want everyone to think I was a complete and total shithead. Um— Oh, I'm sorry, poophead.

**Angus McDonald:** Oh, you can swear in front of me.

**Merle:** Oh shit, thank god. So, you know, I didn't want them to know what a turd I was, but I really, you know, [dramatically] Pan has really helped me turn my life around.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [wheezes]

**Griffin:** He says, uh—

**Merle:** I'm a new man. I'm a new man, in Pan.

**Griffin:** He says...

**Angus McDonald:** I— You know, just watching you all, all day, it's just— I don't think you have anything to worry about. I think you're... I think you're gonna be a good dad, from here on out.

**Merle:** [sighs] God, don't make me like you, you little turd bottle. Look, thank you. I appreciate it, but I still don't want anybody to know about this, okay?

**Griffin:** He says...

**Angus McDonald:** Okay. It'll be our secret.

**Merle:** Yeah, and, you know what? I trust you, 'cause I think you know that if you say anything—

**Angus McDonald:** Yes, I know, you'll beat me to death. Yes, I gotcha, I gotcha, I gotcha.

**Merle:** I'll kill ya. I'll murder ya. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** Um, about... 80 yards or so ahead of you, you hear, on the far end of the bridge, you hear... a commotion. And you see, uh, coming down the staircase from the shopping district of Neverwinter and barreling down towards the docks, is a huge wagon that is loaded with crates of trade goods that has come loose from its hitch, up in the trading quarters, and is barreling down this long staircase towards the dockyard.

Um... And Mavis is too busy trying to wrangle Mookie away from the, from the candy store to notice this wagon that is flying... directly at them. And they're so far away from you and Angus, too far away for you to do anything except sort of run towards them and watch what happens next. And what happens next is pretty incredible.

Because right when the wagon is ready to fall on your kids, it changes directions suddenly and violently, and it pitches just 90 degrees to the right instantly, sending the whole wagon and all of its contents crashing through the front wall of this candy shop. Um, sending the jars of sweets inside just scattering to the floor, and just destroying the front façade of this shop.

And Angus is sprinting towards your kids, but you look around, just for a moment. And to the left of this scene of destruction, several yards away, you see, obscured by a pile of shipping crates and downed sails, you see... the red robed figure that you've encountered half a dozen times now. And his arm is outstretched and crackling with energy.

And he lowers his arm, and he turns to face you, and nods. And then disappears.

[chill interlude music plays]

**Griffin:** So, Magnus.

**Travis:** Ye— Yes, Griffin? Wait, let me get—

**Magnus:** Yes, Griffin?



**Griffin:** After the events of the last episode... You were having kind of a rough time. Because, um, there are things that you saw on that scroll and there are things that you know, but there are things that you can't think? And there are things that you can't understand. And that divide is just like, it's just killing you, man.

**Travis:** Is it like fugue state? You know what I mean?

**Griffin:** No, it's more like the— What you saw on the scroll, you saw yourself wearing a red robe, right? So you have that information. You saw— You see yourself wearing a red robe, but there's a, like a next logical thought that would come from that observation, but when you try to think it, your mind just turns to static. So you saw it, but you can't understand it, but you know it, but you like can't... like figure it out. And it's just tearing you apart and keeping you up at night.

**Travis:** Is it safe to assume that it's the same kind of static as is usually associated with stuff that the Voidfish has blanked out?

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's, that's the only thing you can think is that it's a familiar sensation... of when information was sort of kept from you, before you were inoculated by the Voidfish, but that's now how the inoculation works, right? Like, after drinking the Voidfish's ichor, it shouldn't be able to suppress anything from you.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So, you decide, during one of your many sleepless nights after your discovery, to head to the Voidfish's chambers to get sort of a direct answer from it.

**Travis:** Well, as direct as you can from the Voidfish.

**Griffin:** Sure. Um, uh, it's really late. It's like 3am. There's a— just a small amount of— a small outfit of guards guarding the hallway into the Voidfish's chamber. Uh, and they allow you to pass through, um, undisturbed. I think you probably have like a certain amount of, um, like—

**Travis:** Swagger?

**Griffin:** Hero— Hero worship? Well also swagger, but like I think these guards also know your name and know what you've done at this point, and like, just think the world of you. So they let you pass through, no problem, um, and you enter the Voidfish's chamber. And you realize that Johann's already retired to bed. This is the first time you've been in the chamber alone with the Voidfish, um, ever. And the Voidfish is not asleep. And, in fact, as soon as you walk into the room, it twirls and fans out its tendrils in its tank, as you enter the room and approach it.

[Seven synth notes play the Voidfish's song]

**Griffin:** And it immediately sings a refrain of its little song. Uh, what do you do?

**Travis:** I... put my hand on the glass.

**Griffin:** It immediately puts its tendril up on its side of the glass, where your hand is.

**Magnus:** Hey, buddy.

**Griffin:** Um... It sort of, it twirls around again. Um, and sings another refrain of its song. And then it takes one of its tendrils and it kind of like motions upward? Like pointing at the top of the tank. And then with another tendril kind of like motions, like beckons you towards it.

**Travis:** Okay. In for a penny, in for a pound kind of thing, you know?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I came to talk to the Voidfish, I'm gonna talk to the Voidfish.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, so it's motioning like upwards. What are you...

**Travis:** Is there kind of like stairs? Or any kind of like—

**Griffin:** Uh, there's a ladder, uh, leading up to the top of the tank.

**Travis:** Okay, I climb the ladder. Do I need to do like an acrobatics, athletics check?

**Griffin:** No, it's just a ladder. You make your way up it, uh, and the tank has a—

[sound of a die rolling]

**Travis:** I rolled a 19.

**Griffin:** Oh, shit! Yeah, you climb it super cool and good. You do it one-handed. No legs, one hand. Totally sick. Um, and at the top of the ladder, you're on the heavy metal sort of lid to this tank, and there's a hatch with a long handle on it. Uh, and it pops open easily and below you is just... the tank and the liquid that the Voidfish is suspended in. Um, and it's sort of backed away from the side of the tank that the hatch is on. Sort of giving you... room to hop on in.

**Travis:** To get in?

**Griffin:** Yup.

**Travis:** Well you know, I said that thing about the penny and the pound. I will— [noise of disgust] I get in its... I get in.

**Griffin:** Okay. You take a deep breath and uh— Are you going in like full, full like with all your stuff, or what do you do?

**Travis:** No, no. No. I'm in my fantasy underpants.

**Griffin:** Okay. You strip down to your fantasy underpants. What are they? Are they fantasy MeUndies?

**Travis:** Oh yeah.

**Griffin:** Okay. So they're stylish and comfortable, made of a motile fabric that wicks away moisture.

**Travis:** Yeah. And they're, and can I just say, they look great.

**Griffin:** Oh they, of course they look great. Anyway, uh you strip down and hop into the tank. The water is like, surprisingly warm? Um, it's not like—

**Travis:** I do wanna paint a— I do wanna say like it's just occurred to me that if anybody walked into these chambers right now...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I would probably either like, never live it down, or get in the most trouble. Like this thing that I'm doing. I'm almost guaranteed there's probably rules like "Please don't get in the Voidfish's pool".

**Griffin:** Yeah, people— I mean, people have to drink this stuff, right? At the very least, you are hopping into... the beverage center of people, of like, the inoculation station. Um, so you think about that but you lower yourself into the water, and um... You're actually like, you're able to open your eyes in here and it doesn't like sting or anything like that. Everything is pretty cool and you lower yourself down to be on the level with the Voidfish.

And a single— It outstretches sort of a single tendril and it starts to reach towards you with this tendril.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Do you, well, are you cool with that?

**Travis:** Can I tell you something, Griffin?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I, Travis McElroy, would not be, but I think Magnus is totally down.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um—

**Travis:** I got all these damn questions!

**Griffin:** It reaches out and taps you on the forehead, and as soon as it does, your vision kind of... goes dark.

**Travis:** And Magnus is dead.

**Griffin:** And Magnus dies, and that's it. Thanks for listening everybody! Now it's on to the nex— Um, no. You actually... are shown a memory. And it's not your memory. You are seeing a memory and you know that you are seeing it from the perspective of the Voidfish. And you're in a dark place, filled with twinkling crystal, and— that are just sort of casting these dancing lights on the wall. And it's the wall of a cave. You're inside a cave, um, but it feels... Because you're feeling what the Voidfish is feeling in this memory, it feels like home. And you know that because there's other Voidfish here too.

**Travis:** [gasps]

**Griffin:** And they are of varying sizes, with sort of— You know how the Voidfish has like a spiral galaxy of lights inside of it. There are other Voidfish with different patterns of lights rotating inside of their gelatinous bodies, and you feel safe in this place. But, you know that the other Voidfish have been communicating stories of a coming storm, that will doom this home. That will doom this safe place.

And so the Voidfish work to build up their defenses, and shut the world out, and... Because they're sort of isolating themselves from this coming storm, they don't really have any interest in entertaining these visitors that arrive, who are ground walkers. And they're clad in these brilliant red robes.

And then suddenly the vision goes to static. [pause] And it sort of, it pulls away from you in shock.

**Travis:** Okay, I grab a quick gulp of air.

**Griffin:** You swim up to the top of the tank and get another breath and then swim back down. Uh, and the Voidfish seems like... kind of... kinda scared. It seems like kinda worried. But after a moment, it reaches out a tendril and touches you on the forehead again, and you're pulled into another vision.

And you are... the Voidfish again, and you are with a, uh, one of these Red Robes. And you are, you are sprinting towards a great silver ship, like a great silver boat, that is starting to lift upwards out of the water where it's docked.

And then suddenly the vision goes to static. And the Voidfish kind of retreats again. Um, scared that it can't show you this vision.

Do you have any questions for the Voidfish? I realize like the Voidfish is like revealing these things to you, but like does Magnus have any questions he wants the Voidfish to try to answer?

**Travis:** Um... I'm gonna try something. Magnus thinks...

**Magnus:** Can you hear me?

**Griffin:** Um... The Voidfish... uh spins around and sings out its song.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Magnus:** Why— Why me? I feel like we're connected in some way. Why?

**Griffin:** Um... hm. Okay. The Voidfish thinks about it. And then it touches you on the forehead again with one of those tendrils and it tries to show you that exact same scene of the... uh, of it being taken toward a big silver ship.

This time, in this memory, which again you can only see a few seconds of before it sort of statics out, you see the sky is just pitch black. There is nothing happening in the sky. And you also see something horrifying. It looks like there are these big black pillars of tar, sort of just falling out of the sky and smashing into... the world that you're on. Um, and you also realize that you're sprinting towards this... towards this ship. And then the vision goes to static again, and it pulls back, away from you.

**Magnus:** Is this the past? Is this happening in— Is this the future? What am I looking at?

**Griffin:** Um... It's... It doesn't know how to answer that.

**Magnus:** Let's— Okay. Let's simplify. Uh... Flash once for yes, twice for no.

**Griffin:** Um... Okay. It flashes once for yes.

**Magnus:** Is that a vision of the past?

**Griffin:** It flashes once for yes.

**Magnus:** Is that a vision of my past?

**Griffin:** It doesn't know how to answer that.

**Magnus:** Is it a vision of your past?

**Griffin:** Uh... It flashes once for yes.

**Magnus:** Were you separated from your family?

**Griffin:** It flashes once for yes. Um... It, it— By the way, you probably need another breath. Um, and, uh, when you come back down from taking this breath, it... uh, it sort of spins around like it's excited, like it has an idea. And then it reaches out and touches you on the forehead, and you see...

You see what looks like, um... You see what looks like a galaxy. You see this big scene, but like really quickly it statics out. And then it tries it again, but this time the galaxy, like this vision, looks like um... It looks more rudimentary? Like it looks like uh, like a 3D animation or something like that, but that statics out. And it keeps trying this and trying this, but every time it does, the vision becomes more and more and more abstract.

And finally it shows you a vision that you can see all of, without any static, uh that has been abstracted down to the point of looking like it's, like a child's drawing. And it's all just like crayons and abstract shapes, and these shapes seem to tell a story that you can see all of, without being interrupted by the static.

So! You see twelve circles. Uh, of all different colors. And they are arranged in a larger circle, and they're rotating in perfect harmony with each other. And they continue this orbit for a few seconds, and then you see a bright, white circle of light, that sort of flies in and lands in the middle of their dance. And for a moment, these twelve multi-colored circles rotate a bit faster with more complex rhythms, spiraling inward and outward in this beautiful choreography, all with that white light at the center of it.

And during that movement, that frenzied movement, another shape appears, and it's a huge black circle, that slowly encompasses everything you see. Um, and it grows larger with each circle that's consumed. And then it's just that big black circle, all menacing and stationary. But then the white light shoots out of its, out of its mass, out of its side, and flies away, and then the black circle moves slowly in pursuit.

And then you see the same cycle again, of the spinning circles and the light appearing, and then the big black circle coming to devour all of it. Um... And it plays about four or five times before you have to swim up to get a breath of air.

**Travis:** Okay, I have at least three questions.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Question one, and this is for Griffin, the DM.

**Griffin:** Yo.

**Travis:** Or, uh, no. I'll ask the fish.

**Griffin:** Yeah, please.

**Magnus:** Does this have anything to do with the planes that Lucas was working with?

**Griffin:** Um... It doesn't know how to answer that question.

**Magnus:** Are you a prisoner?

**Griffin:** Uh... It flashes twice for no.

**Magnus:** Would you like... to be free?

**Griffin:** Um... It sings its song. It sings a refrain of its song. Um, and then it looks, it looks like it's tired. It looks like it's actually extremely exhausted.

**Magnus:** I—



**Griffin:** And then it—

**Magnus:** I just have one more question.

**Griffin:** It looks up at you, one last time.

**Magnus:** Should I trust the Director?

**Griffin:** It doesn't answer you. It doesn't know how. Um, you climb out of the tank, sort of leaving this thing to recover. And as you start to walk out of the room and dress back up, you start to walk out of the room and the Voidfish slams against the wall of its tank. And it's kinda, it's kinda scary.

And it sings one more refrain of its song, and it sounds like... It sounds like panicked? It sounds like it wants something from you, desperately, as it's singing. And it motions uh towards a small desk in the back of the room with one of its tendrils.

**Magnus:** Are you hungry?

**Griffin:** It, it blinks twice for no. And it's pointing, pointing pointing pointing, towards the desk.

**Travis:** Okay, I check out the desk.

**Griffin:** Okay. This— It's just a small desk that Johann has set up in the back of the room that sure enough he does have a bunch of compositions on. And there's one that is, uh, almost on like a comically small scroll, that Johann has titled "The Voidfish's Lament". Um... Magnus plays an instrument, right? Like that's, that's something I vaguely remember from character creation.

**Travis:** Yeah. He definitely does. He loves music and dance.

**Griffin:** That's right, okay. Um, can I assume... I don't think you're like a master, you know, lutesman or anything like that, or else it certainly would've come up in your story. But I remember, when we were doing character development, that he has some sort of—

**Travis:** Yeah, he's got some musical abilities.

**Griffin:** Um, so you see this, uh, this sheet music for “The Voidfish’s Lament”, um, and it’s not an especially difficult song to play ‘cause it’s just seven notes, all arranged on a staff in two different phrases. And so you see this sheet music and you kinda play it out in your head, and it kinda echoes the tune that you’ve heard the Voidfish sing.

Only it’s been a while since you’ve, um, played any music, and so you read the sheet music like you used to when you were first learning music by reading it letter by letter. Um, instead of reading it as, you know, tablature on a, on a uh sheet of music. And so you read the composition like that, letter by letter, and when you read it like that, the notes read “E-G-G”, and then a rest. And then “B-A-B-E”.

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

**Griffin:** As soon as you have that realization, as soon as you say that out loud, in a room you’re not in, and in a room you’ve never been in, something reacts to you saying what you just said in the Voidfish’s chamber. And a quick bright light flashes, and a small quiet alarm bell rings.

[chill interlude music plays]

**Griffin:** Hey everybody, this is Griffin McElroy. Your dungeon master, your best friend, and your... sleepy-time boy. It is so late while I’m recording this. Thanks for listening to episode 50! The big 5-0! Of *The Adventure Zone*. Another lunar interlude episode before we move onto a very important arc in our campaign. Thanks for sticking with us, and I’m excited to get started with the new thing, and I hope you are too!

I have a few things to say here in this commercial block of the TV show. Oh man, it’s not a TV show, is it. It’s a podcast. You do a TV show for three weeks and you think you’re fuckin’ George Lopez or something.

[advertisements play]

**Griffin:** I have a Jumbotron message here for Jen and it’s from Brian, who says “Thank you for being my adventuring partner for the past 10 years. Here’s to 10 more years of dungeon crawls and excitement.” I wonder if thi— I— There’s so many different possibilities here. Either this is a sort of metaphor for like a relationship, or you played D&D together

for 10 years, or you are actual like, I dunno, spelunkers or something? That could be very cool too. Um, but congratulations on 10 years of whatever adventure stuff you guys are up to!

Uh, got another message here and it's for Shana from Richard, and preferably read by Clint! I'm so sorry, Shana! Dad doesn't know... how to use email, so he can't actually get these, these Jumbotron messages. "To my wife of 25 loving years. I love you more than words can say. You're my bestest friend, my life-long bedmate, my joyful noise, and my heart's one true desire. I'll gladly party with you on the next 25 years of adventure, as long as you'll stay by your champion's side, and cast heal, uh, cast heal, buff, and perception spells. Happy Anniversary from the McElroys and me."

Uh, congratulations! That is such a big anniversary, Shana and Richard! That's so beautiful, congratulations on that. And, uh, hey just keep on, keep on doing your, keep on doing you! For 25 more years! But then at 50, call it quits. No, just kidding. And then 75, and 100, and then 125! Who knows how far medical science is gonna take us! Medical science?! Good god, it's late.

[advertisements continue]

[chill interlude music plays]

**Griffin:** So, starting off with this, everybody's favorite section of the podcast. The le— The level up. Time.

**Travis:** Weeee!

**Griffin:** The level up shuffle. Um, we'll start out where we usually start out, I guess, which is with a trip to Leon the Artificer to put your tokens in the Fantasy Gashapon.

**Clint:** [gasps]

**Travis:** I put mine in myself and turn the handle myself.

**Griffin:** You fuckin' sprint into the room, and Leon is like...

**Leon:** Hello the—

**Griffin:** And you just hold up a hand like “No. Fuck you Leon.” And you just sprint up and slam dunk it into the coin slot and turn the handle. And he’s like, a tear wells up in his eye. He’s so proud and so relieved.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Uh, roll a d20 for me, my boy.

**Travis:** Oh, hold on, sorry, one second. [answering a phone call] Yes, hello? [distant] This is Travis.

**Griffin:** Oh.

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Hi, Luke.

**Griffin:** [quiet commentary] I think he’s getting a call from an apartment place.

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Oh, I’m doing great.

**Clint:** [gasps]

**Griffin:** Listen to how cordial he’s being.

**Clint:** [quiet commentary] Magnus rushes in, but Travis is very cautious about his domicile. We sound like we’re doing golf commentary, Griffin. I think he oughta go with a mashie niblick here.

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Clint:** Uh...

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Um, we could be there as early as Monday.

**Clint:** So, let’s see... That’ll be a— Maybe a wood. He might go with a wood here.

**Griffin:** I think he’s definitely, definitely got wood. Nobody can argue with that.

**Justin:** [giggles]

**Clint:** Oh, I know, 'cause he loves housing. And that gives him wood every single time. Now, you've seen Travis in this situation before, Griffin. Uh, what can we expect him to—

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Right.

**Clint:** How can we expect him to attack the hole?

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Travis:** [still on the phone] That sounds fine to me.

**Justin:** I could be... I could be playing Destiny right now.

**Griffin:** I could be— Actually, Juice, you wanna knock out a quick iron banner match?

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Great!

**Justin:** Yeah, let's just get a quick IBM.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** [still on the phone] So, yeah. Send me the lease and tell me the best way to get it signed and get it back to you.

**Griffin:** Listen to this businessman.

**Clint:** Ho!

**Griffin:** "I'll have the lease. On my desk."

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Okay good. I mean, it's really up to you guys and it's whatever you guys are comfortable with. We're fine not doing it."

**Clint:** Oh.

**Griffin:** Have it your way.

**Clint:** Well played. Well played, indeed.

**Justin:** Mmm.

**Griffin:** Sounds like we're about to have a, a fateful signing.

**Clint:** It sounds good.

**Griffin:** Of an important document.

**Clint:** Real estate.

**Griffin:** Gotta be, gotta be gettin' to the end of the phone call now, right?

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Clint:** Yeah, I know, 'cause we're almost done with the podcast.

**Justin:** [imitates businesslike muttering in a low voice] "We pay cable and water."

**Griffin:** [wheezes]

**Justin:** That's what it is! It's just like, he doesn't live there right now. Who gives a shit?

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Mm-hmm.

**Clint:** [imitates more businesslike muttering in a low voice]

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Yeah, I think that will be fine.

**Clint:** [in a low voice] "We have a water issue in the basement, uh..."

**Justin:** [giggles]

**Griffin:** [laughs quietly] "We just decided— It's a swimming pool now."

**Clint:** [low voice] "Yeah, that's a way to look at it."

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Clint:** [low voice] "And you don't have to have a washing machine, you just dunk your clothes in the basement."

**Griffin:** "Dunk 'em right in the basement."

**Clint:** [low voice] "Yeah, that keeps ya clean."

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Sounds great.

**Clint:** [low voice] "And the rat problem is almost completely under control."

**Travis:** [still on the phone] Cool. Yeah, I'll let ya know.

**Griffin:** "I mean, a good majority of 'em did drown."

**Justin:** [giggles]

**Clint:** [low voice] "Now, you're gonna have to scoop up the floating dead ones." And...

**Griffin:** And...

**Travis:** Sorry about that, folks.

**Griffin:** Bazinga! We have it.

**Clint:** [shouts] It's in the hole!

**Justin:** Yes!

**Clint:** It's in the hole.

**Travis:** Yeah. I've got an apartment.

**Griffin:** Alright, congrats Trav.

**Travis:** Thanks.

**Clint:** Way to go, bud.

**Griffin:** Alright, let's— We have to get back into it.

**Justin:** Yeah, please. My character sheet says I'm level 10, is that right?

**Griffin:** Uh, yeah, you are now, and we're gonna get to that.

**Travis:** No no no.

**Justin:** Yeah, but it already said—

**Travis:** We were level 10.

**Justin:** Yeah, we were already level 10.

**Griffin:** Oh, really? Oh shit, okay. We're going up to 12 then, boys.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, let's resolve this gashapon roll first.

**Travis:** I rolled 14.

**Griffin:** 'Kay. Uh, alright, so you put your token in and turn it, and a fairly small capsule pops out of the fantasy gashapon. Um, and when you uh pop it open, you see inside just... It's just a plain sort of bronze, or maybe even copper, ring. Uh, and it doesn't have any sort of etching or anything on it, it's just like a plain, uh, sort of brown metal ring.

And you bring it to Leon who cracks open his big book of magic items and is flipping through it. Like, he's going...

**Leon:** Let's see. Rings, rings, rings...

**Griffin:** And he's holding it up, 'cause there's a bunch of rings on this book. Uh, but he thinks he's finally found it, and he says...

**Leon:** Oh! This is a, this is kind of a neat one. This is the Ring of The Giant Slayer.

**Travis:** [imitates Leon] "It goes on your penis!"



**Leon:** It's meant—

**Clint:** [wheezes]

**Leon:** Uh, for your dingle-donger.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Leon:** No, it's a finger ring. Like a normal one, but you wear it and it grants you some extra proficiency when battling something much larger than yourself.

**Griffin:** Um, which means that while you're wearing the ring, you have plus one attack against, and plus one AC versus attacks done by, uh enemies who are of the size category "large", which means eight to 16 feet, or higher.

**Clint:** Ooo!

**Griffin:** So anything that's like, anything that's eight feet tall or taller is technically of large category, or giant, or like gargantuan or colossal.

**Travis:** I fight a lot of those things, so I think that that's probably useful.

**Griffin:** Yeah, so when you're fighting something basically much bigger than yourself, you get one extra AC and plus one to attack.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Clint:** So look out, Yao Ming.

**Travis:** Yeah, I put it on my non-wedding ring finger.

**Griffin:** Okay. You have nine of those, so.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I didn't think you would stack 'em up like a roll—

**Travis:** Let say I put it on the left pointer finger.

**Griffin:** Okay, cool. Uh, who's up next?

**Clint:** Okay, Merle.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Merle steps into the room.

**Griffin:** 'Kay.

**Clint:** And from about 10 feet away... takes his token...

**Griffin:** Oh god.

**Clint:** And bounces it on the floor like beer pong. And it goes right into the slot.

**Griffin:** Okay, well, no.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** You gotta roll for that.

**Griffin:** You're gonna roll if you're gonna do a trick stunt.

**Clint:** I'll do it! I'll roll! I have that much confidence.

**Griffin:** This'll be— This is just like, I guess, a... a ranged attack? With a coin?

**Clint:** Sure.

**Griffin:** Why do you guys do this every time? As soon as you— As soon as Leon sees you stop and not approach the machine with the token, he's like...

**Leon:** [shouts] God, no! Please, God! No!

**Travis:** I whisper to him...

**Magnus:** I was a good, good gashapon boy.

**Leon:** No, you're a good boy.

**Griffin:** He hands you a toffee.

**Travis:** Yeah! Nom nom nom nom nom.

**Clint:** Well now, this should be Wisdom because it's calculating the angles, and it's a lot trigonometry and stuff.

**Griffin:** Okay, sure, why not?

**Clint:** Okay. So. [sound of a die rolling] 15... plus three for Wisdom. 18.

**Griffin:** Uh, oh with an 18 it still doesn't go in. This would require a—

**Clint:** Oh, come on!

**Griffin:** —Basically the greatest roll of all time, and in fact it plinks off the glass of the machine and it hits Leon in the, in the face. And he like recoils and he's like...

**Leon:** [pained noise] God! Just pick it up, please! And put it in the machine. Please. I'm dying. I'm in Hell. I'm in Hell and you're Satan.

**Merle:** Okay...

**Clint:** So I pick it up and I walk over to the slot. I'm a bit chagrined.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Although I'm not really sure what a— a chagrin is.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** And I put it in the slot and... turn the crank, but I turn it in the wrong direction.

**Griffin:** It just doesn't do it like that. It doesn't turn like that. It won't turn like that.

**Clint:** Well, it should.

**Griffin:** It doesn't. It turns in one direction.

**Clint:** Which direction does it turn in?

**Griffin:** I think clockwise, but just do it—

**Clint:** You think? You think clockwise?

**Travis:** It's not real, Dad. He's making it up!

**Clint:** Ohhh...

**Griffin:** It turns clockwise and I know it.

**Clint:** Okay. So I start to turn it clockwise—

**Griffin:** And it goes. That coin falls in and it, you, it does the thing.

**Clint:** Okay. Alright.

**Griffin:** Roll a d20.

**Clint:** Uh, how 'bout a six?

**Griffin:** Oh no. Oh god.

**Clint:** Is that Griffin saying "Oh god"?

**Griffin:** Oh no— Oh no, it's fine. Oh no, this one's amazing! Okay. Uh, a, uh, a fairly large capsule about three feet long falls out of the machine, and you sort of effort to pop it open. I don't know— How tall is Merle?

**Travis:** Wow.

**Griffin:** This thing may be taller than him.

**Clint:** Probably... Well, not four feet. Maybe three and a half feet?

**Justin:** Three and a half feet.

**Clint:** Three and a half.

**Griffin:** That's a li— Okay. Uh, yeah this thing is about as big as you and you pop it open, and inside of this container is a broom.

**Clint:** [wheezes]

**Griffin:** And, uh, that's it. It's just a nice broom. You can sweep things— No. You take it over to Leon, who is like...

**Leon:** Oh, well I— I don't even really need the book for this, but I guess let's keep it official.

**Griffin:** And he opens up the tome to the only entry for "broom".

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Griffin:** Uh, and he says...

**Leon:** You lucky boy, this is a fun one. This is a Broom of Flying.

**Travis:** [gasps]

**Clint:** Ooo!

**Griffin:** And sure enough, this wooden broom, which weighs three pounds, functions like a mundane broom until you stand astride it and speak its command word. It then hovers beneath you and can be ridden in the air. It has a flying speed of 50 feet. It can carry up to 400 pounds. Uh... You can send the broom to travel alone to a destination within one mile of you if you speak the command word, name the location, and are familiar with that place. The broom comes back to you when you speak another command word, provided that the broom is still within one mile of you.

**Clint:** Awesome!

**Griffin:** You have a magic flying broom.

**Clint:** I can play Quidditch now!

**Travis:** Yup.

**Griffin:** You can definitely play Quidditch.

**Clint:** Awesome, that's cool!

**Griffin:** Yeah. That'll be a fun one.

**Clint:** Thank you, Gashapon Machine!

**Griffin:** That's good 'cause you also like doing dumb mounted attacks that never work.

**Clint:** Yeah, yeah! And I, and I apologize for being a prick.

**Griffin:** Uh, Leon just nods and shakes his head. Uh, and then Taako, Leon doesn't say anything to you. He just like fuckin' stares daggers at you.

**Justin:** [chuckles] Yeah. Well he sees—

**Griffin:** No reaction. Just stone-faced.

**Justin:** Leon sees Taako uh walk dutifully across the room. And uh, walk up to the machine and... uh, drop a coin in and turn it. And—

**Griffin:** He—

**Justin:** And he hears, but his back is— And he hears, he hears it, 'cause Taako's back is to him.

**Griffin:** He falls... to his knees. And thanks a god... that the name of which you've never heard before. And he is weeping and shuddering.

**Justin:** [chuckles] And just the— just then, uh, Taako's coin flies across the room and smacks Leon in the face, 'cause it had been a clone. I cast *Mislead* out in the hallway.

**Clint:** [cackles]

**Justin:** And Taako's just screaming with laughter. It's the funniest thing that's ever happened in Taako's entire life. It's literally the best.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** I don't even want anything! You can keep the— Literally, keep the coin! Nothing you could give me would be better than your expression right now.

**Griffin:** Uh, the coin bounced off his face and rolled off his desk, uh landing fairly close to you again. And he is just like... He's in shock? I think? He's stopped, he's stopped crying. He doesn't seem like sad or disturbed at you, he seems, um... like he's broken? Yeah, he— He is no longer functioning.

**Justin:** Great.

**Griffin:** You have, you have thoroughly broken this man.

**Taako:** I win!

**Justin:** Alright, and then I pick up my coin and I put it in the machine.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** And... it is... 16.

**Griffin:** 'Kay. Uh, okay. A, um... A capsule about the length of your hand falls out of the machine. And when you pop it open, there is what looks like a small, circular bracelet inside. And you are gonna have to look this one up. You like scoot, uh, Leon's book away from him, as he is frozen in place.

Uh, and start looking through the bracelet section. Um, and you finally find one with a picture of the bracelet that you have, and you find an entry for the Band of Projected Thought.

**Justin:** Hmm.

**Griffin:** And what this does, simply, is you can communicate telepathically with any creature you can see within 30 feet of you.

**Justin:** Hmm! Okay, cool.

**Travis:** Like, forever?

**Griffin:** While you're wearing it, yeah.

**Travis:** Wow, nice!

**Griffin:** That was a good batch of items, guys! Um, but you know where we can find an even better batch of items? Where's that?

**Travis:** [gasps]

[Fantasy Costco jingle plays]

**Griffin:** That's where the— The music just played there.

**Travis:** Griffin. I have a question for you.

**Griffin:** Yo.

**Travis:** Did you purposefully not tell Merle the command word for the broom? Does he have to—

**Clint:** I'm going to come up with my own.

**Griffin:** Oh, he's def— he's defo gonna come up with it himself.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Clint:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. I sent you all the batch of Fantasy Costco suggestions. I just wanna say, we got uh 1,300 emails.

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Clint:** [wheezes]



**Griffin:** With suggestions, and I went through... uh, it was a labor of love, but I went through pretty much all of them. Um, and gang, they got so good. We're getting like, fairly close to the end, this may or may not be the last Fantasy Costco trip. It probably won't be, there'll probably be one more, but like, y'all are getting so good at this! Um, and thank you all for sending in those suggestions.

Uh, so yeah, we got some new items, and I have also every item that y'all haven't purchased, so the store's catalogue is pretty enormous at this point. So... Oh, and you have 1,800 gold pieces, plus if you had any left over, I don't know if you've been tracking that from previous trips, money that you didn't spend.

**Clint:** I think we had 200 left.

**Griffin:** Are you making that up, or?

**Clint:** No, I re— I don't know why but I seem to remember 200. Maybe not. 'Cause we didn't spend everything, 'cause we put some in the pool.

**Griffin:** I don't, I, I— Let's just stick with 1,800 for now, and—

**Justin:** Why don't we just ask our listeners to tweet at us right now.

**Griffin:** Yeah, tweet at us right now. Oh, wait. That's... not how... time works. Damn.

**Clint:** Well now, the 1,800, was that our reward for bringing in the item?

**Griffin:** Yeah, that was your payment. Each of you got 1,800.

**Clint:** Each?!

**Griffin:** Yes, yes.

**Clint:** Sweet.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Uh, so we got some new stuff in here! Uh... I'll just start going down some of it, and if you all wanna purchase any of these new items, holler so we can, um, just read it that way.

**Clint:** Well, I already know what I'd like to buy.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** I want to buy the Ring of the Grammarian.

**Griffin:** Oh, that is such a fun one.

**Clint:** "You can use the Ring of the Grammarian to, once per day, alter one letter in a spell title, as they're casting it, for a different effect. For instance, the user could start casting *Cause Fear*, and activate the ring to instead cast *Cause Bear*." [laughs]

**Griffin:** God.

**Clint:** "The effect of these spells are determined by the DM, taking the wishes of the caster—"

**Justin:** Literally...

**Clint:** "— into account."

**Griffin:** Maybe one of the best item—

**Justin:** The best.

**Griffin:** Maybe one of the be— And, appropriately, it was sent in by Harry Best.

**Clint:** It was.

**Griffin:** Uh, fucking, fucking incredible.

**Clint:** The guy that started Best Buy.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that was him. So good. Alright, so you're buying that, that's 700 gold pieces, so you have 1,100 left.

**Clint:** And I am going to stash the 1,100, because I'm gonna start saving up so I can buy, uh, the, the butt-kicking, John Williams' eight-year-old son Colin "Flaming Poisoning Raging Sword of Doom".

**Travis:** You remember—

**Griffin:** Now that one— Now that one, that one does cost 60,000 gold pieces.

**Clint:** I know, that's wh—

**Travis:** And you remember Griffin saying that this may be our last arc, right?

**Clint:** I'm plannin' on making a looot of moolah moolah in the next arc.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And then buying a sword, for like the final scene?

**Clint:** And buying a giant sword. Yes. Yes, Travis.

**Griffin:** Okay. I'm in, I'm into— Hey, go for it dude. I'm totally into it.

**Travis:** Well, 'cause some of your teammates could totally use that money.

**Griffin:** No dog. No. You can't— This is good shit. That's good shit.

**Clint:** Now, think about it, Travis. I buy swords all the time that I don't use.

**Griffin:** That's capital G, capital S, Good Shit. We're moving on.

**Clint:** Alright!

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Clint:** Yay me!

**Griffin:** Garfield— Garfield the Deals Warlock goes uh...

**Garfield:** I love it! Chase that paper, son!

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Garfield:** Don't stop thinking about tomorrah!

**Justin:** [laughs, coughs]

**Travis:** I see two things I really want and I can't decide between them

**Griffin:** Uh, does it include things like the "Slicer of T'pire Weir Isles", sent in by Riku Sakanin? Which is an item that is "useless, but with a good enough sales pitch, you can convince anyone of its value, and get them to trade you their most valuable possession". That's a fun one.

**Travis:** That is good. Um...

**Griffin:** I do wanna point out, we got about 20 different vaping-based items.

**Clint:** [cackles]

**Griffin:** The one I went with is the "Billow Branch", from Jordan Reed. Uh, and it just is a cool vape that you can "use to gain advantage on the appropriate Persuasion and Intimidation checks". Or just use it as... for other purposes as well.

**Travis:** No...

**Clint:** Oh, that's funny.

**Travis:** It's neither of those.

**Griffin:** What're you thinking about?

**Travis:** I do like those. I'm looking at the Pocket Workshop, 'cause I'm pretty sure that was created for Magnus.

**Griffin:** Uh yeah, this one was sent in by Joshua Kelly. Do you wanna read the description?

**Travis:** Yes. "From the makers of the Pocket Spa comes the Pocket Workshop. Our top-of-the-line, master craftsman's workshop is concealed within a battered red toolbox. When opened, the toolbox reveals a descending staircase which leads to a pocket dimension containing your deluxe craftsman's workshop. Your workshop is well-lit, properly ventilated, and equipped with saws, planes, lathes, and dozens of hand tools. Everything you need to make your project a success! The workshop is always stocked with the highest quality wood from across the realms, as well as nutritious snacks and refreshment."

**Griffin:** So, it takes— It's kind of like the Pocket Spa, it's a pocket dimension where you can go and do some woodwork, and while you're inside of it, uh... I don't actually like the time distortion thing, 'cause I feel like you could use that to do some really fucked up shit

**Travis:** Oh, I so would, Griffin.

**Griffin:** Yeah. So there is no time distortion field inside of it.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** But it's just a little workshop that you can pop into whenever you need to.

**Justin:** Then you're gonna need to lower the price on that. If there's no time distortion, I think 8—

**Travis:** Yeah, I agree. I'll tell you what, I'll take the Pocket Workshop and the Grappling Hook for 1,800.

**Griffin:** Hmm...

**Clint:** Hmm... The Grappling Hook is close.

**Travis:** It can only be used once a day. I think that's a fair deal.

**Griffin:** Uh, it's— The Grappling Hook was sent in by Brett Tucker, and just, basically once a day, it is a hook shot you can use. I put the once-a-day restriction on it 'cause otherwise you could more or less nullify most... like Acrobatics, Athletics checks that you would ever need to do. Um... So yeah, you could use it for all kinds of different stuff. Um, Garfield approaches and says...

**Garfield:** Hmm! Angling to make a deallllllllllllaaaaaahhhhhhhh.

**Clint:** That was 42 "l" s.

**Garfield:** What, uh... What can you give me to sweeten the pot?

**Magnus:** I think that, since you removed the time distortion thing, that's a discount. That's a— It's clearly faulty. The description says that it distorts time, but I tried it out, I plugged it in, it didn't do it, so.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Magnus:** I feel like that's at least 25% off right there.

**Garfield:** If you can sweeten the pot with goods of your own, maybe we can... do a handshake thing.

**Magnus:** Uh, I've got a Frosty Mug.

**Garfield:** That's some bullshit!

**Magnus:** No no no, I don't have a Frosty Mug. I've got a mug that doubles the potency of, of the drink.

**Garfield:** Ooo! Still bullshit!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Magnus:** How is that bullshit?

**Griffin:** He, um... [chuckles] He goes...

**Garfield:** I know what I want! Your sideburns!

**Clint:** [gasps]

**Justin:** [sounds of shock]

**Magnus:** No!

**Garfield:** Give them to me, please!

**Clint:** Ooo!

**Magnus:** Well, the problem is, I would do that but I physically cannot. I drank a magic potion to keep my facial hair always looking the same. I can't change it.

**Griffin:** He pulls out another magic potion, he says...

**Garfield:** This magic potion cancels that one out!

**Griffin:** And he pulls out a razor.

**Garfield:** Come on! Let's get it goin'!

**Clint:** See if he'll take just one.

**Magnus:** I have to pass, because if I did this, there'd be a lot of fan artists who would be very mad.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** He comes in really close, he says...

**Garfield:** How 'bout just a little, just a tiny little scraping. And you can do it yourself, just a few hairs off those beautiful burns. What do you say, bud?

**Magnus:** [winces]

**Clint:** [whispers] Do it!

**Magnus:** How many hairs? Name it. Name it, na— Pick a number.

**Garfield:** For my needs...

**Clint:** [snorts]

**Travis:** [disgusted] Eugh...

**Taako:** Dark needs.

**Garfield:** Uh... Five hairs, thank you, will be good.

**Magnus:** Deal.

**Griffin:** Okay. You hand over 1,800 gold pieces and, uh, a few hairs off of your burns.

**Magnus:** It's gonna take a minute to pluck these babies, they're... heavy roots.

**Clint:** Ooo.

**Griffin:** Okay, how does that gonna work— I mean, are we talking two hands just on a big pair of tweezers, pulling as hard as you possibly can?

**Clint:** [winces loudly]

**Travis:** Yeah, but we'll let Taako shop, uh, while I work on it.

**Griffin:** While you just scream in the background, okay.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You— But you hand over these five hairs and 1,800 gold pieces and you get the Pocket Workshop and you get the Grappling Hook. Uh... Taako?

**Taako:** Uh, yeah. I would like to take the Slicer of T'pire Weir Isles.



**Griffin:** Okay. Not sure how that one's pronounced, but the description is very cool.

**Justin:** Yeah. And uh—

**Griffin:** That's the one that you can convince somebody of a magic item. Uh, uh, let's see.

**Justin:** And the— What's wrong?

**Griffin:** I was just gonna read some of the descriptions, 'cause it feel like we're wrapping up here. There's the "Rickle Axager's Pocket Guide to Adventuring, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition".

**Justin:** This is the other item I'm picking up.

**Griffin:** Oh, excellent. Well let me read one of the other ones then, 'cause another really good one was sent in by Sebastian Soman.

**Clint:** Oh, the Jar of Beezzzzz.

**Griffin:** It's a Jar of Bees, which is a literal jar of bees.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "Could probably throw it at enemies or through a window and cause a distraction, but they could also be dum-dums and drop it and get stung a whole bunch."

**Clint:** We would.

**Griffin:** That is how it would work out. But you're going with the, the Pocket Guide to Adventuring 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

**Justin:** Yeah. That'll be 2,000 total, so uh um, I'm hoping that we can strike up a deal.

**Garfield:** What're you sellin', stranger?

**Justin:** Uh... I will give you this very cool Ring of Pointing in addition.

**Garfield:** Um, didn't you buy that here?

**Justin:** Yeah, I—

**Garfield:** And then never, and then never used it, huh?

**Justin:** Yeah, it's still in its mint condition.

**Clint:** Yeah, it's still in the package.

**Garfield:** 'Cause you—

**Travis:** Maybe you could get a refund. Do you still have the receipt?

**Justin:** No. I ate the receipt.

**Garfield:** I could give, I could give you 200 in store credit for that, completing the transaction!

**Justin:** Perfect, great.

**Griffin:** Okay. Um, this uh— Did you explain what the Guide to Adventuring does?

**Justin:** Yeah, it, once per day, I can read a section on an associated skill check, and for the next 24 hours I can have advantage on it. And I can also read that aloud to give the advantage to another party member.

**Griffin:** Yip. Which is a pretty good item, but it's also, uh, very expensive. And also how often do we do like the same skill checks over and over again? Not that often, so.

**Clint:** Are you trying to talk him out of it?

**Griffin:** No, I'm saying like, I'm talking to our listeners who are going to— uh some of whom are going to note that that is a very powerful object. Alright, is everybody done shopping?

**Travis:** [from a distance] Yeah.

**Justin:** Yeah, I'm gonna read the section on uh... persuasion in there first, 'cause I figure there's no need to waste it. Just gonna go ahead and pop it—

**Griffin:** What're talking— Oh, okay. Yeah, cool.

**Justin:** Cool.

**Griffin:** Uh... Okay. Are y'all done here at the Fantasy Costco?

**Travis:** [distant] Yes.

**Taako:** I have one more transaction I'd like to conduct.

**Garfield:** Okay.

**Taako:** Garfield.

**Garfield:** Yes?

**Taako:** I have something that I think is really gonna interest you.

**Griffin:** [loudly, from a distance] Oh my god!

**Taako:** This is the Slicer of T'pire Weir Isles.

**Clint:** [wheezes]

**Taako:** And I notice that you have... a really cool sword. It's a "Flaming Poisoning Raging Sword of Doom", I believe it's called?

**Griffin:** [in shock] Oh my god.

**Taako:** And I'm looking at your entire stock and it does seem to me that's your most valuable possession. Would you say that's accurate?

**Griffin:** [laughs quietly]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Garfield:** Yes! It's absolutely the most valuable thing in the store!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Well, get ready to talk about that in the past tense, my man. Because I have got something really special for you. This is, number one, an exotic item. I know people are always looking for those, you can't buy this at any store around the block.

**Garfield:** Mmm...

**Taako:** In fact, as far as I'm—

**Garfield:** From a faraway land, it smells of exotic spices!

**Taako:** Oh, I imag— I'm very impressed. You know, not a lot of people have the sort of olfactory acuteness able to sense that. You, uh, must be very discerning smeller. Uh, so this is a very valuable item, uh and... trust me when I say it is going to pay big, big dividends for you. Uh uh uh uh, if we could just make this transaction. This is— As much as this pains me to say, I've come here, and I only have this to offer. I have no gold. And I say it pains me because you're getting such a good deal off of me, but I do need... the s—

**Garfield:** But my thing costs 60,000 gps, so, how many gps is yours?

**Taako:** Get ready for this, 61,000. Can you believe it? What a steal, eh?

**Garfield:** That's quite a profit!

**Taako:** Mm-hmm, I know that's what you're all about is profit, hmm?

**Griffin:** Okay... Well. Make a persuasion check that you have advantage on.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

[sound of a die rolling]

**Justin:** Two. That's probably not gonna get it done.

[die rolling]

**Justin:** And 18.

**Griffin:** Plus?

**Justin:** Zero. Just 18.

**Griffin:** Um... Shit.

**Clint:** [wheezes]

**Travis:** I will point out to you Griffin, 18 is the third best number he could roll.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That feels pretty good to me.

**Griffin:** Of all the numbers you could roll... Uh... [stunned silence]

**Travis:** I also wanna just say, I can't speak for Merle, but while this is going on, Magnus is just like darting his eyes back and forth, like kind of like...

**Magnus:** [mutters] Is this gonna work? Is this a thing? Oh shit!

**Griffin:** Uh, he says, uh...

**Garfield:** Let me smell it!

**Griffin:** And he takes the item and he smells it.

**Garfield:** Mmm! Those spices though.

**Griffin:** And he gives it a little taste and he says...

**Garfield:** Mm, all my senses are delighted by this bad boy. Yeah, okay, sounds fair to me!

**Clint:** [cackles loudly]

**Taako:** Nice!

**Griffin:** And he goes and... cracks open the case. And retrieves the... Flaming Poisoning Raging Sword of Doom. And hands it over. And puts the, and puts the Slicer in the case in exchange. And he comes back to you Taako and he says...

**Garfield:** Sucker! You have no idea what you've just done, do you?

**Taako:** No?

**Garfield:** You've just made a bad trade!

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Garfield:** This stone you said is worth 61,000 gp is worth easily double that! In the hands of a brilliant merchant like myself. Garfield!

**Travis:** I mean I do wanna point out, he did just sell it for 900.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Garfield:** What are you talking about?

**Travis:** Don't worry about it.

**Justin:** Don't worry about it.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That was OOC.

**Griffin:** Alright, well I guess we'll figure that out later.

**Justin:** I strap the Flaming Raging— The Flaming Poisoning Raging Sword of Doom to my back, where it shall remain.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** You're not gonna let your, your old fighter buddy use that sweet-ass sword?

**Justin:** No.

**Clint:** [cackles] I knew that was coming!

**Justin:** No, it's just a style play. It's like a spoiler up there.

**Travis:** It does plus 20 melee damage!

**Justin:** It's like my neon under-carriage. It's just, it's just tryin' to, to get a great look.

**Griffin:** Uh...

**Clint:** Well, I guess saving my money was a stupid ass mistake.

**Griffin:** Holy shit, that was funny. As soon as I realized what you were doing, like, I was sent into a panic spiral.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, let's go ahead and level up and then be done with it.

**Travis:** Uh, so I've written all mine down, so I'll start.

**Griffin:** Okay, you're bumping up to 12. Are you moving up the fighter tree, or the thief tree?

**Travis:** Yes, I'm moving up the fighter tree.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Um, so... I get, uh, to either add two to one ability, or one to two abilities. And also, this is another call out I'll put out to the listeners, 'cause I can't be bothered going back through 50 episodes. I can't remember if I've been doing that on every even numbered...?

**Griffin:** You have been.

**Travis:** Okay, great.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I've been making you do that. So, just remember, you are essentially now moving up to level 10 in the fighter tree.

**Travis:** Correct. That's what I levelled up.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Um, so, I'm going to bump up my Wisdom from 11 to 12, so I add one there. And Strength 18 to 19.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** So that doesn't add anything, but sure. Uh, proficiency bonus moves up to four, if it wasn't already.

**Griffin:** Yes. And also your, uh, at level 10, your superiority die turn into d10s.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Griffin:** So, now you have that advantage as well.

**Travis:** Um, and I also get a new, uh, a new...

**Griffin:** Maneuver.

**Travis:** Maneuver. I'm gonna go with Precision Strike. Um, which allows me to add my superiority dice roll to attack rolls.

**Griffin:** Oh, that's a cool one.

**Travis:** Um, and I also get Indomitable, which is a skill that lets me do a second chance on a save roll. Um... And my hit points increased from 92 to 107.

**Griffin:** Jesus. Alright, uh, so Precision Attack, just wanna make sure that you know that you do add the superiority dice to a roll, and you can use it before or after the attack roll.



**Travis:** Yes. So if I miss, then you—

**Griffin:** You can add it, yeah. That's a really cool one. Okay. Alright, that's a lot of next stuff.

**Travis:** Yip.

**Griffin:** And you can only use your Indomitable thing once per day.

**Travis:** Correct.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** I think that's right. I'll be up front with you, I'm away from home and I don't have my most updated character sheet.

**Griffin:** No, yeah it says you, it says you can't use it again until a long rest.

**Travis:** No no no, I'm saying I don't have my most updated character sheet, so I'm pretty sure my hit points were at 92 before this, but I have to double-check.

**Griffin:** Alright, we'll figure it out. Uh, who's next?

**Justin:** Uh, go ahead Dad. If you're ready.

**Clint:** Um, I'm going up to 11<sup>th</sup>, right?

**Griffin:** 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Clint:** 12?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Okay!

**Justin:** You do that twice, and then that's gonna give you hit points.

**Griffin:** You do that twice, and then someone checks what you get— uh, extra HP you get.

**Travis:** Oh, I forgot to do my... Constitution modifier. That's another six HP for me.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Okay, so... Alright there's first d8 and that's a, oh! That's a six, and I add my Constitution... to it, and that is a three. So that's—

**Griffin:** Okay, so that's nine extra HP. Then do it again.

**Clint:** Nine. And that's a five.

**Griffin:** Plus three is—

**Clint:** And I add three to that and that's eight, so I add 17.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Clint:** Which takes me up to 71.

**Griffin:** Yes. Uh... Starting at... level 11, you have access to high— Uh, you can cast level six spells now. Uh, at level 12 you get an ability score improvement. So you need to a—

**Clint:** Right, and I also, I get Destroy Undead...

**Griffin:** C/R 2. That just means whenever you cast Destroy Undead on like a group of things, now it kills like... a stronger set of enemies, right?

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** So before it might kill like the weakest skeleton or whatever. Now it can like wipe out a pretty big squad of pretty sturdy undead guys.

**Clint:** Awesome! Okay.

**Griffin:** Uh, and then...

**Clint:** Level six spells, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah, you can cast level six spells. You have to add, uh, either one point to two different ability scores or two points to one ability score. Um, so if there's something you wanna bump up. That's your Charisma, uh... Intelligence, Wisdom, Strength, Constitution, Dexterity.

**Clint:** We— It seems like Dexterity throws me off a lot, so I'm gonna add both to Dexterity.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** What's that bring you to on Dexterity, Dad?

**Clint:** Two. [chuckles] Well, it brings me to 12, but the modifier's two.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Modifier'd be one.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Oh.

**Griffin:** At 12 it would bring you up to plus one.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Uh... And then I think that's it.

**Justin:** Uh, my hit points are up to 64, whatever. I have 12d6 hit die. Um, I get the extra ability points are really the only cool things for me here. Keep that at 12 then, and... So if my Charisma's 10 and I make it at 11, that's not gonna change anything, right?

**Travis:** No.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Justin:** Well...

**Griffin:** But, if you put both of them into it and bumped it up to 12, then you would get plus one modifier.

**Justin:** Um, okay, I'm just gonna put one into Intelligence to make that 18.

**Griffin:** Great.

**Justin:** And then I'll put the other one into... Charisma to make that 11.

**Griffin:** Okay. So now you have plus four, so your spellcasting modifier goes up even one more.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, alright!

**Travis:** And you also get a sixth-le— You get sixth-level spells.

**Griffin:** Yeah, he ge—

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

**Griffin:** You have one sixth-level spell slot. Uh, okay. That's everybody, right?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Let's end with an epilogue, just to give it, give it something hot here at the end. Something spicy. I love me a good epilogue now. I wish it hadn't taken me 40 some odd episodes to discover the power of a good epilogue.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** This is the epilogue.

**Justin:** Hmm.

**Travis:** We're in it!

**Griffin:** Are you ready, are you ready for— okay.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Griffin:** So, you all aren't seeing this. Taako, Merle, and Magnus aren't seeing this. This is just sort of a, uh, a shot in the movie that the audience is seeing. Uh, and what we're seeing is a disheveled study of somebody who's preparing for something big. It's somewhere underground. There's a chill in the air, permeating, permeating these wet stone walls, and the room is lit by several dozen candles, which are all arranged around a desk, which are piled high with magical tomes and piles of maps.

Uh, behind that desk is a large wooden board that is displaying a map of the whole of Faerûn, the continent that this story takes place on. Uh, and there are strings connecting images and diagrams at certain points on the map, like, uh, Phandalin and Armos and Greenhold and Rockport and Goldcliff and Neverwinter. Uh, and all these different cities are connected by this sort of web of strings and pictures and diagrams. And it's the board of somebody who's been tracking the Relics and the Bureau intently.

Other than the candles, there's another source of light in this room, which is a six-foot tall glowing pod that stands on the opposite end of the room from the desk. And it's full of a swirling green liquid and inside we can see something growing, um, or rather someone growing. There's... there's a body being created inside of this pod but the liquid inside is too opaque for us to see who it is.

And the last thing we see is the desk again. And there's a scroll that is unfurled and held in place by uh, four candles, one at each corner. And this scroll is an incredibly detailed map with a route drawn through it in red, and it is a map depicting, with perfect accuracy, the headquarters of the Bureau of Balance.

[outro music plays]

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