

## **The Adventure Zone: Balance — The Suffering Game: Chapter Four**

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

Your decision, 'trust.' Their decision, and in bright red letters, the word 'forsake' appears.

**Merle:** Son of a—

**Taako:** Nice.

**Griffin:** One of these giant pieces of—like a washing machine-sized piece of industrial machinery falls from the ring on the ceiling and lands on you.

**Justin:** You're gonna kill America's favorite wizard.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** You see a severed human head, and then its eyes open and it goes, "Blah!"

**Travis:** Magnus does not react.

**Cam:** My name's Cam, sorry I can't greet you with a formal handshake, but I seem to have misplaced my... my everything.

**Travis:** [laughs] That's good!

**Cam:** But somehow the two liches that run this place are empowering themselves, not with their own emotion, but with the emotions of people who came into Wonderland. Specifically, suffering.

**Announcer:** I don't think our boys are having much fun playing The Suffering Game, maybe their luck will improve in round two? But probably not. It's the Adventure Zone!

["Déjà Vu" by Mort Garson plays]

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** How do you dungeons and dragons? I wish we could have somebody on the call who made the game that could be like, "Oh, it's been like a month and a half, let me—" Show me how to dungeons, and how to dragons.

**Travis:** Teach me how to dungeons.

**Griffin:** You can't just do one of them.

**Justin:** I've got these dice in front of me, is that part of it?

**Griffin:** You think we just roll those and like dragons come out of 'em? Damn—

**Travis:** Let's see, hold on.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** There's that popper ball in the middle, and we push down on it?

**Griffin:** It's a Pop-o-Matic situation.

**Clint:** Pop-o-Matic!

**Justin:** That's why they call it D&D, dice and dragons.

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Hm... Let's get back into it, you guys are in—

**Justin:** My daughter calls `em dreidels.

**Griffin:** Aw, that's—

**Clint:** She does! [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That's simply inaccurate.

**Justin:** Daddy's dreidels.

**Griffin:** That's a thing already. So, you boys are in a bit of a pickle after the last round in Wonderland didn't go so great. I mean you won, you're alive, whatever. You got a new head friend, that lives in Travis' backpack, I guess.

**Justin:** What was his name?

**Travis:** Remind me what was his name?

**Clint:** Cam.

**Griffin:** Cam. Dad gets the memory award, which is the first—

**Clint:** That's the first time.

**Griffin:** ... The first time. Pin that on his vest, so congrats. And you are back in the wonder wheel room. The theme song to that is, of course, a fun parody of the song Wonderwall by Oasis, that I've written, and I'll sing for you right now.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** So, let's go ahead and get moving. You, you are back—

**Justin:** [sings] It is time, was gonna be a time, when you and I were gonna get it straight. We were gonna do our best together, but now we're not gonna get it together. Wonderwall! This isn't how parodies work.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's also not how the song—

**Travis:** No! The music and words were different, and you didn't even say wonder wheel!

**Justin:** It's a thematic re-imagining.

**Clint:** I thought we were doing the Fred Savage thing?

**Justin:** It's a meditation on Wonderwall.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Wonderwall deconstructed.

**Griffin:** This is not your Daddy's Wonderwall.

**Justin:** You guys like Westworld, right? Just like Westworld.

**Griffin:** More or less. So, you're back in the wheel room. And if you will remember, the elves sensed a fourth presence in the room. And so, there are four lights above the door across this big circular room. It's about the same shape and size as all of the other rooms that you've been in since you've been in Wonderland. And you have the wheel in the middle, and it's time to roll your ball! There's no ball. Spin the wheel.

**Travis:** Just a reminder, Ditto, because it has been six years since we played, what happens if we refuse to do whatever comes up on the wheel?

**Griffin:** A penalty.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** That's all you know.

**Clint:** Could you be more vague?

**Griffin:** I don't know, Chandler. [laughs] I love him!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** God, I love that.

**Griffin:** I love his humor.

**Justin:** Very '90s show.

**Griffin:** Super South Park humor, very random. Who is going first? And, also, someone is gonna have to go two times.

**Magnus:** I'll go—

**Merle:** I think I have the most hit points? Believe it or not.

**Magnus:** Okay. Fine, yeah, fuck it. You go.

**Clint:** I'll go twice.

**Griffin:** Oh, wow? Big bold—

**Clint:** To spin the Wheel of... Torture!

**Magnus:** Hey, Merle, I just wanna say, I really appreciate you taking the hit and doing both times.

**Justin:** Just click the button dad, just click the—

**Merle:** Well, thank you.

**Magnus:** All right. It means a lot to me that you would step up and do that, thank you so much.

**Griffin:** While you're saying this, he literally can't figure out how to spin the wheel. He's like grabbing it by the spokes and like moving it one direction,

but then like twisting it back the other direction. And he's just having some trouble clicking the image on the website.

**Magnus:** Yeah, you just spin it buddy, come on.

**Clint:** Yeah I did! I mean—

**Merle:** I did! I got the same thing, eye.

**Griffin:** Oh, shit... Let me do a judgment call with Justin and Travis, real quick, sidebar. Is it more interesting if we do other stuff? Or should I just really just keep blasting dad's eyes. [chuckles]

**Justin:** Let's just go with the eye, I guess.

**Travis:** Yeah, go with the eye, my man.

**Merle:** Oh, let me guess, I'm colorblind?

**Griffin:** You hear the male elf say:

**Male Elf:** No, it's going to be a bit more severe than that. Usually, we don't have so many repeat landings like that. So, I feel really sorry for your peepers.

**Magnus:** Wait that one was for Cam, he's got eyes.

**Male Elf:** Or should I—Well, who? For who?

**Magnus:** For the fourth presence that you have detected—this isn't like a surprise, come on, you know about him.

**Merle:** No, I'll take the lumps, give me the lumps, bring it! Give me your best shot, you son of a lich.

**Griffin:** The arrangement that you made with Cam was that you would take his sacrifices, because he doesn't have anything else to sacrifice really.

**Travis:** I mean he's got eyes.

**Griffin:** That's fair.

**Justin:** He's got eyes though.

**Griffin:** You can hear Cam from your bag say like:

**Cam:** Well, that wasn't our arrangement, you said you would take my lumps for me?

**Magnus:** All right, shut up, Chompy.

**Merle:** I'm taking the lumps! Give it to me!

**Griffin:** All right!

**Male Elf:** Unfortunately, this is gonna be a pretty tough game for your peepers it sounds like, Merle. Or should I say, your peeper. Because the penalty for this round, landing on eye, is... is one of 'em.

**Merle:** What?

**Male Elf:** It's not gonna be grisly or anything like that, we're not gonna send in a flock of birds to come, you know, peck it out or anything.

**Griffin:** And you hear the other elf, the female elf say:

**Female Elf:** Yeah, we don't really roll that grisly anymore, it gets a little too intense too fast. It's just gonna not be there!

**Merle:** Huh... Can I have like a cool Odin patch thing?

**Female Elf:** That's a fair trade off. We could hook you up with a sick-looking eye patch, I think we have something like that in our closet.

**Merle:** Do I get to choose which eye?

**Male Elf:** I think that's only fair.

**Clint:** Do I have a third eye?

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** [laughs] No, but you do have a third nipple.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** But that's not—

**Travis:** That's nothing, not germane.

**Griffin:** That ain't on the table.

**Clint:** That's off the table. All right.

**Griffin:** You can't see through it. And you can say no.

**Clint:** Which arm is the tree arm?

**Griffin:** Your non-dominant arm. Or no, no, no, I'm sorry. Your dominant arm, remember? 'Cause you reached out and grabbed it with your dominant arm. And the bracer is on your non-dominant arm, and you still have your bracer. So, I'm gonna guess your right arm, right? 'Cause you're right handed? Or are you a southpaw?

**Clint:** No, no, right arm.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Merle:** Okay, take my left eye.

**Travis:** Whoa.

**Griffin:** Okay. Just as soon as you say that, Merle, your depth perception just like shifts. And it's a little—it's like—it's fucking... it's fuckin' weird. And—



**Justin:** Well, is it like that, Griff? Or is it like he closed one eye?

**Griffin:** I mean, it's—yeah, it's like that, but also—

**Justin:** It's like the world is spinning around? I mean he just closed an eye!

**Merle:** Everything is 2D!

**Griffin:** It's not—But I mean it's like gone. Like, that eye is—your left eye is now gone. It's just like... It's just skin, kind of, there now. But a white ball in front of you appears, and an eye patch is sort of floating in the middle of that ball. And you hear the female elf say...

**Female Elf:** Normally, we don't sort of give prizes out like this, but I just think you'll be sort of more pleasant to look at, if you're wearing this.

**Justin:** And draw.

**Clint:** And what are the magic properties of this eye patch?

**Griffin:** So, you—There are no magic properties to the eye patch, for your— If you make any ranged attack rolls, though, you are going to take a minus two penalty to those from now on.

**Justin:** Magic!

**Griffin:** But, if you make Intimidation rolls, because you have this sort of more haggard appearance now, you get a plus two to those. So, mark that down. And I'm also gonna leave—what does this eye patch look like? I don't wanna decide this sort of character trait for you.

**Clint:** I want it to look like Scorpius on Far Reach.

**Justin:** What are you—

**Griffin:** You fucking know I don't know what you're talking about.

**Travis:** One, Farscape. And two, sick pull. Thats a great pull, dad. Big fan. Seen every episode.

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Okay, he doesn't have—Okay, this dude's not wearing an eye patch. He's wearing like a fuckin' jockstrap on his fucking face, and that cannot be your steez. I refuse to let this be your steez. This man is not wearing an eye patch, he's wearing a facial thong, and it's not pleasant to see.

**Clint:** All right, here's the deal. It is like in the shape of Superman's emblem on his chest. And the cord, instead of going straight around, goes from the corner above my nose and goes around, and connects with the bottom. It's not around the head. It's—

**Griffin:** So, sort of a diamond shaped crest. And what's on it? 'Cause I don't think the Superman logo should be it, 'cause that's... now we're getting into trademarked territories.

**Clint:** An owl?

**Griffin:** All right, sort of a badass owl emblem.

**Travis:** Sick!

**Clint:** Kind of a stylized looking owl.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I fucking feel it, cool. Yeah, that was your animal for the race, right?

**Clint:** Right, and Wise potato chips have a winking owl, so...

**Griffin:** Of course, it's the potato chips is why you made the decision. Taako and Merle, do you guys wanna go next?

**Magnus:** Hey, Merle, I just wanna say, that's a sick looking eye patch, my man. You look great.

**Merle:** I know, right?

**Magnus:** I will go next.

**Griffin:** Okay. Magnus, you step up to the wheel.

**Travis:** I got clock.

**Griffin:** Clock? Oh man. You hear the voice of the female elf, and she says:

**Female Elf:** This one is kind of a tough pill for most participants to swallow. Because what you're going to have to sacrifice is time, Magnus. And as a human, unfortunately, that's in somewhat short supply for you. For this round of the wheel, we're gonna need 10 years.

**Clint:** Argh!

**Travis:** Huh...

**Griffin:** If you choose this, and you go through with it, Magnus will instantly age 10 years.

**Travis:** I mean, this doesn't really bother me?

**Griffin:** How old is Magnus? And don't try to say like you're 12.

**Travis:** No, no, no, I was thinking like early 30s, like—

**Griffin:** All right.

**Travis:** Like 32, 33? I mean, my age, is how I've been picturing him.

**Griffin:** All right?

**Clint:** Why don't you give him your elementary school, middle school days? That would be about 10 years.

**Travis:** That's not how that works.

**Griffin:** No, no, that ain't how it works.

**Clint:** Oh...

**Griffin:** "I was born 10!"

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** I mean, honestly, here's the thing, are we assuming like that I would have lived this 10 years? Like, this 10 years is like, just you were—

**Griffin:** That is a fucking great point. Magnus do rush in. So, the chances of him making it to 42, this might be a pleasant surprise for him.

**Travis:** Right? So like—

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [chuckles] Whoa-wee!

**Magnus:** If I—If we assume that 10 years, I've totally kept up my physique and stayed healthy? Yeah, 42, 43? Fine. Yeah, fuck it. Whatever, doesn't... doesn't bother me.

**Griffin:** All right.

**Magnus:** I'm way past the young man days where I care about suddenly being 32 instead of 22. I mean, yeah, fuck it, 42, 32, who cares?

**Griffin:** As he's like saying this, as Magnus is talking about—Like, as he's rationalizing this, Merle and Taako, you see like his sideburns start getting these little like grey hairs. What color hair does Magnus have? Like brownish?

**Travis:** I don't know? Yeah, brownish, auburn, whatever.

**Griffin:** Well, now it's like... it's starting to grow like pretty grey, pretty fast. And it's not like—You're not full-blown silver fox right now, but there is a lot of silver poking the... poking through the auburn.

**Travis:** Tell me about my laugh lines, Griffin.

**Griffin:** I mean you're also—

**Travis:** What about my crow's feet?

**Griffin:** Your eyes are the only things that are getting like especially... especially wrinkled. 'Cause you know, Magnus has been through some... Magnus has been through some shit. Do you have any other sort of suggestion for how this would sort of change, Magnus?

**Travis:** Well so, this is my question, is it like we replacing 32 year—like in the timeline with the 42—'cause then I'd probably have a couple like facial scars, a couple Harrison Ford-esque nicks.

**Griffin:** No, it wouldn't be like that. It's just... it's just like your body just goes through—just ages 10 years in a second, very like 'Last Crusade' style.

**Travis:** I see, I would say the muscles probably become a little bit leaner and sinewyer rather than bulky.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] All right, okay. And you—

**Travis:** And my pubes go totally grey.

**Griffin:** Oh no, that's no good.

**Clint:** No, trust me it's not.

**Travis:** But my butt—

**Griffin:** That's too much! Come on! I'm in hell!

**Justin:** I'm gonna die, I'm dead, I'm dead, I'm dead.

**Griffin:** I'm dead and in hell now.

**Clint:** You opened the door?

**Justin:** I'm in hell and I'm shutting—

**Griffin:** You opened the door?! You built the fuckin' door out of wood! Shit wood! Shame on you and shame on us.

**Clint:** [chuckles] Travis started it.

**Travis:** I appreciated it. Good joke, dad.

**Justin:** I will take any penalty, just let me spin. Travis is old now. Moving on.

**Griffin:** Magnus, there's no like—there's no mechanical penalty for this but you do feel like—I mean, dude, you feel like a fucking bus just hit you. You just aged 10 years. And like your body... it's like your body is different and you don't know... you don't know how like to deal with it, I guess? So, yeah. Magnus is now 42 years old. And Taako?

**Justin:** Yeah?

**Griffin:** You hear the male elf say...

**Male Elf:** I gotta say, you guys are really taking this in stride!

**Griffin:** Because you have not emitted any of that bad stuff up into the air.

**Magnus:** You know, I'm just happy to be here.

**Taako:** Just make the best of a bad situation. Okay, I got body.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Ah fuckin' shit, okay. All right... You hear the male elf say:

**Male Elf:** I have to say, body is not our most elegant selection on the wheel... But all we're going to do for body is sort of take away some of your... vitality. Some of your living essence, if that makes sense. We're not gonna hurt you, Taako, 'cause I don't honestly think we can do that much more without you being dead. And well, that's no fun. But we are going to make you less alive.

**Griffin:** If you choose this, Taako, you are going to have 15 subtracted from your max HP.

**Travis:** Oof.

**Taako:** Hmm... okay.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Taako:** Good, yeah.

**Griffin:** Just like that, while you—As soon as you say that, you feel yourself kind of like dry up a little bit, like you get a dry mouth all of a sudden, and your stomach feels kind of sour.

**Travis:** No, this is a good question, Griffin, how does it translate to like real life? Does he have 15% less blood or like what does that mean? [chuckles]

**Justin:** I mean, it's a very calculated thing on my part. Because the very worst-case scenario is, okay, take all the hit points you want. Worst case scenario is Taako dies and I get my Tuesday afternoons back.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Do I have to—I mean, I have to listen to Dad recording with you chucklefucks like next to me, while I'm doing cool shit that's way better than this.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** But I think it's a fuckin' good trade off.

**Griffin:** Okay. So, subtract 15 from your max HP.

**Justin:** I did it already. Like, you can't affect—you can't hurt me, it's done! It's already done. What's next? I'll take the other one. Give me stupids.

**Clint:** No!

**Griffin:** You hear the two elves talking now and they're like...

**Male Elf:** I don't know, maybe we should go harder on them? They don't seem to be that upset about all this...

**Taako:** Come on! Do it!

**Griffin:** Are you gonna—

**Magnus:** We're having a great time! It's real fun, I like the challenge, you know?

**Taako:** This is good!

**Magnus:** Thank you so much for this!

**Clint:** And they haven't had as good a job prospect as Taako in a long time, maybe they'll back off of him?

**Griffin:** So, Taako, are you really taking the next roll?

**Clint:** No!

**Taako:** [chuckles] Okay, we're gonna fight over who gets—

**Magnus:** I'm Spartacus!

**Merle:** I still have the most hit points!



**Taako:** That's fine. Okay, yea—

**Merle:** Give me the wheel!

**Griffin:** All right, Merle, you go in for a roll. Before we get to that—

**Justin:** Stop it! Stop playing with the mouse!

**Griffin:** What is going on?

**Justin:** Dad was moving the mouse while I was using the trackpad, it was all very confusing.

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** While Taako is taking his turn, and while Merle is taking his turn, Magnus, you... you feel something. And it almost feels like something—

**Justin:** It's incontinence.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [chuckles] Surprise!

**Griffin:** No, you feel something poke the palm of your hand. And as you reflexively kind of like pull your hand away, you feel it... again, only some sort of force is like pressing down into your hand and moving in sort of deliberate strokes. What do you do?

**Clint:** Get a boner.

**Travis:** Like, it's making shapes on my hand?

**Griffin:** Yeah, like it's tracing something in your hand.

**Travis:** Is it letters?

**Griffin:** So, if you don't like—Yeah, you sit there and you try to like figure out what this thing is doing. Are you like panicking, are you saying anything?

**Travis:** No, now in my old age, I've grown a lot calmer, and I just sit there and calmly experience this sensation. I'm practicing mindfulness now in my 40s.

**Griffin:** Okay, you sit here and you just try to like—you focus on the shapes without like panicking, or making a big scene about it. And you feel this same pattern over, and over again, more, and more forcefully being pushed into your hand. And after like a dozen or so repetitions, you realize something is familiar about the pattern, because it's something that you'd been studying very recently back at the headquarters with Carey.

This force is making the shape of Thieves' Cant into your hand, which is the secret written language of symbols that thieves use to sort of communicate with each other. And right now, it's making two shapes in your hand, and the first one is a shape that means silence. Which sort of like warns potential burglars of nearby listening marks. And then the next shape is confirm, which thieves use to sort of ensure that other thieves have seen their message. So, it's saying silence, and then asking you to confirm.

**Travis:** Okay, with my left hand—

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Travis:** I start just—kind of without looking at my hand or drawing attention to it, just moving my finger in the shape of confirm.

**Griffin:** Okay. It makes another set of symbols, and it says secret, which thieves use to sort of like—Well, I mean it's a very thief-like symbol that they are trying to remain, you know, incognito.

**Justin:** We know what secrets are, Griffin, thank you so much for this.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] And then it also—And then it marks confirm a second time, So, it's saying, 'Secret, confirm?'

**Travis:** I make the shape.

**Griffin:** Okay, and you're having this secret Thieves' Cant conversation with this unseen force, and it goes through a few symbols. It does one, the number one, that's not really a Thieves' Cant symbol, it's just like one. And then the shape for room. So, it says one room. And then a symbol that lets you know that magic forces are afoot, and then the symbol for room again, and then the symbol for transformation.

So, it's telling you 'magic room transformation,' and then it sends one last message to you. And the first one is a symbol that thieves use to sort of let each other know that they should wait for some sort of signal before they proceed with whatever job they're about to do, and then confirm. So, 'Wait for signal, confirm.'

**Travis:** I confirm.

**Griffin:** Okay. Merle, let's spin that wheel.

**Clint:** Chance?

**Griffin:** Oh, this is good, okay. I was hoping this might show up this round. You hear the female elf say:

**Female Elf:** Chance is... chance kind of a tricky one, and it sort of measures your judgment as a participant here in Wonderland. All you have to do for chance is lay something down on the wheel, and it can be physical, or not physical, and it can be more than one item, if you wish, that you think is a sufficient sacrifice on par with the other things that have been sacrificed this round.

And if you are correct, and you do give a sufficient sacrifice, then you get to move on, and it counts as a point. But if you do not give up enough then you lose the items that you put forward, and it doesn't count, and you have to

go again. And keep on giving, and giving, until you have satisfied the chance.

**Griffin:** So, you can sacrifice anything, physical, metaphysical, whatever, that you think is equivalent to like the value of the things that have also been sacrificed this round. And if you pass the bar, then you get to move on. Otherwise, you still lose the things, and still have to go again until you have given up enough. Does that make sense?

**Clint:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** So, it's kind of a roll of the dice, if you give something shitty, you'll lose the shitty thing, and it won't count and you'll still have to do it.

**Magnus:** What do you have that's worth 10 years?

**Merle:** Well... I've had my trusty warhammer since I was just a little sprout. So, that's over 50 years?

**Justin:** You cannot retcon a story into an item to make—[chuckles]

**Clint:** It's my warhammer?!

**Justin:** "My dad's dad gave me this thing and it's really great, and I really love—Did I tell you I had a name for it? This whole time I've really—"

**Griffin:** He does have a name for it, it's Lil Smusher.

**Justin:** Fair enough.

**Clint:** All right.

**Justin:** I just don't want you to lose your warhammer and something else, I'm trying to look out for you.

**Travis:** I would say putting down one of your main weapons is pretty scary.

**Griffin:** Well, you also have the Arclight Spanner and—

**Justin:** And he hasn't hit anything in roughly 30 hours. [laughs]

**Travis:** This is true, you also have spells that also make angels appear, so you can probably sacrifice a couple of the old weapons.

**Justin:** I know what you should put in there. [sings] The B-I-B-L-E.

**Griffin:** Oh my gosh!

**Justin:** [sings] 'Cause that's the book for me! I stand alone on the word of Pan, the B-I-B-L-E. Bible!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Now, I will say that is your holy symbol, if you get rid of that, then you cannot use your holy magicks. Although, they've been pretty faulty lately, so...

**Travis:** So maybe not that.

**Griffin:** Although, I dig the symbolism there. I'm just warning you, if you do that, you will not be able to cast spells.

**Justin:** Well, that's not good. I mean, it's not like he's been a real spell factory thus far. [chuckles] But you know what? I can't keep penalizing dad for these actions.

**Clint:** I will lay down on this whatchamacallit.

**Griffin:** It's a wheel.

**Clint:** The wheel. My Adamant Spanner.

**Travis:** What, the spanner?

**Clint:** Which has been the only thing that has worked for me for the last four, five arcs. I've had it since Petals to the Metal, I have posed for a lot of pictures with it. I'll give it my Adamant Spanner.

**Griffin:** Okay. And that's it?

**Clint:** And...

**Griffin:** [laughs] So, think... You can think outside the box. I mean, that might be enough, I don't know? But it's not just physical items, it can be memories, it can be... You could sacrifice a language that you speak, like literally, you could sacrifice *anything*, to add to the value.

**Clint:** You know, I've had my wedding ring on a chain around my neck this whole time...

**Justin:** [laughs] It's always been super important to him!

**Clint:** Well, if you really look at some of the art that—you know, you can see a faint outline in my armor.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm...

**Clint:** And it's the symbol.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Clint:** It's the symbol. I'll put my wedding ring—

**Justin:** [chuckles] That you've had the whole time, I just wanna clarify—

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Isn't Merle divorced?

**Griffin:** Yeah, and Merle, you ran out on your family. You are a deadbeat!

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Well, yeah! This has been—

**Travis:** I'm confused about the symbolism you're giving up here, Merle!

**Clint:** I am giving up the sense of loss, of losing my family.

**Justin:** Wait, no wait—

**Travis:** You fuckin' ran out on them?!

**Griffin:** You fucking ran off!

**Justin:** You can't give up bad emotions?! [chuckles]

**Travis:** [chuckles] "I'm giving up the guilt I feel at the shitty thing I did."

**Justin:** It's—yeah!

**Clint:** These liches feed on negative emotions!

**Justin:** You're turning this into a fuckin' Oprah special!

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [chuckles] You can't like, "That's it."

**Griffin:** But it's an Oprah special that's like feel—

**Justin:** "I sacrifice beating myself up-for bad choices."

**Griffin:** Right, "I'm a Shithead, Feel Bad For Me: The Oprah Special." You get a car.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** All right. All right, funny guys—

**Justin:** Yeah?

**Clint:** I give up my wood arm.

**Griffin:** Oh whoa, whoa, whoa.

**Justin:** Whoa, whoa, whoa.

**Travis:** That's too much, Clinton.

**Justin:** No, you—We've got—You've got live appearances to think about!

**Clint:** [laughs] Oh yeah. Okay, I'll give up the Adamant Spanner, the very important—

**Travis:** This bundle of rope.

**Griffin:** This is like the end of The Jerk.

**Clint:** No, this wedding ring that was my only happy memories, from when my little family was still intact.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Before *someone* ripped it apart.

**Griffin:** Before *someone* did a bad thing. [laughter]

**Justin:** [laughs] I want like the guy from Amazing Discoveries, in his dumbass sweater, to be standing at a pedestal like, "That's not enough, you know how we do it on Amazing Discoveries. We need more, throw in a shammy."

**Clint:** [laughs] And my battle axe.

**Justin:** You could give up five years of your life 'cause like you're already—What's the difference, you know what I mean?



**Clint:** I give up my Adamant Spanner—

**Griffin:** The wedding ring...

**Clint:** The wedding ring, and my battle axe.

**Justin:** Does that leave you with any weapons?

**Griffin:** Your hand axe? You have a hand axe, I don't—I'm almost certain you don't have a battle axe. I can't believe how many times we've had this argument. But you can sacrifice the hand axe, sure.

**Justin:** Okay, it says battle axe, hand axe—no, no, no. Those are just proficiencies, those aren't items that you have. You could give up your battle axe proficiency. [laughter] It solves you giving up the battle axe.

**Griffin:** Yeah! [chuckles]

**Clint:** I will give up the battle axe... [chuckles]

**Justin:** Hey, can I give up my proficiency with bows?

**Clint:** The battle axe proficiency—

**Justin:** My bow staff proficiency? [laughter]

**Travis:** That's gotta be enough now, right?

**Justin:** My nunchucks—

**Clint:** And my wedding ring!

**Justin:** [chuckles] My nunchuck proficiency?

**Clint:** Which is worth—By the way, the wedding ring's worth about five,000 gold because—

**Justin:** This whole time?

**Clint:** This whole time.

**Travis:** [laughs] “This whole time, cannot stress enough, this has been so true the whole time.”

**Justin:** Griffin also would like to apologize for editing out dad’s frequent and blatant references to the wedding ring that has been on his neck this whole time.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Yeah, sorry guys.

**Clint:** And I’ll agree to be colorblind.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Clint:** No, no, I’m holding onto color.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you’ve got—Yeah, okay, so, to summarize, the Adamant Spanner, the wedding ring, your battle axe proficiency and that... that’s what you’re doing? Okay? Right, yes? Confirm?

**Clint:** And...

**Griffin:** Oh my god!

**Justin:** No, I think you’ve given enough, I think you’ve given enough!

**Griffin:** Or have you?

**Clint:** I don’t think I have!

**Griffin:** No, that sorry—That ‘and’ was in universe. That was the—One of the—The male elf says...

**Male Elf:** And that’s... that’s it, huh? That’s all you’re... That’s all you’re gonna give up?

**Clint:** See?

**Griffin:** And this—Like, clearly just fucking with you.

**Justin:** Oh, he's fucking with you, dad, don't let him push you around.

**Male Elf:** If that's what you wanna give up, that's fine, that *might* be enough. I... Hm...

**Clint:** Final answer.

**Griffin:** All right. You lay down your axe and wedding ring on the wheel, and they both—Or no, sorry, the Adamant Spanner and the wedding ring, you lay them down on the wheel. And they both kind of sink in. And then you... you sort of like fade to white. And you remember being in the wooded enclave that you and your druidic, Pan-worshipping family lived in. This sort of commune, that you lived in as a child. And you're maybe a teen or something like that, and one of the members of the enclave was attacked by a bear, and just barely survived. And it sent a real scare through the community and sort of made you struggle with your own mortality.

And so, you went to a woodsman in the woods, who's not a part of the enclave. And he taught you how to wield an axe to protect yourself, and you trained with him for years and years. And he was sort of one of the first sort of figures that sort of showed you what life was like outside of this sheltered enclave. And while you're thinking of this, you are having a hard time remembering what his face looked like. And then you can't remember anything about him. And then you don't remember any of that part of your life at all, and it's just gone.

**Clint:** I really hate this arc, I just wanted to pass along to you, Griffin.

[“The Wheel” by Griffin McElroy plays]

[ad read]

**Griffin:** Got a few Jumbotron messages here for you. Thank you to everybody who bought a Jumbotron spot in 2017. I'm pretty sure we are

sold out of spots for the entire year, which is amazing. Thank you all for supporting us so much.

I wanna tell you to visit [justapuzzlegame.com](http://justapuzzlegame.com). Just a Puzzle Game is a fun and challenging mobile game. It was definitely not created by an evil megacorporation to reverse engineer and experimental AI that went rogue. It's not that. Solving the more than one,000 unique levels will not reveal cryptic, hidden messages, tantalizing clues, or mysterious cyphers. You won't learn a terrifying secret, it's just a puzzle game.

Go to [justapuzzlegame.com](http://justapuzzlegame.com) to learn more. I'm pretty sure I just violated like 12 FCC things. 'Cause I think this is one of those goof-'em-ups, where all those things are true.

I got a message here for Cal and it's from Julia, who says, "Happy 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Here's a shoutout for the best Pathfinder playmate ever, to thank you for all the campaigns—" Oh, no. Did a wrong emphasis there. "Here's a shoutout for the best Pathfinder playmate ever, to thank you for all the campaigns you've invited me to, and all the characters you've min/max'ed with your damn cheater skills. You're the greatest friend ever, and I hope to adventure with you for many years to come, in game and out. You're the best and I love you THIS much."

And 'this' is in all caps. So, that's like the only sort of metric... Like, all the letters are super-duper big. So, that is how much Julia loves you, Cal. So, that is very, very special. This message was also supposed to go up in July! That was half a year ago, oopsa-doopsa.

[ad read]

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** With that, the fourth green light above the door lights up, and the big, heavy stone door opens. And again, it is just kind of pitch black through the door, you cannot see through it at all. And the wheel lowers down into the ground.

**Taako:** So, I guess that answers what happened to The Director, huh?

**Magnus:** Yeah.

**Justin:** That was probably obvious, but I wanted to say it out loud so I didn't have people fucking tweeting at me like, "Hey, do you think that—" Yes. Yeah, I get it. Yeah, I know, I know. We're all adults here, I got you.

**Griffin:** Cam comments from your bag—Well, you can't hear him, he's in like a secret pocket dimension, inside of a pocket of an actual bag. But he's trying to—He's yelling—

**Cam:** [muffled] Hey! Hey!

**Justin:** Okay, I'm going to tie him to my shoulder, like fucking Zaphod Beeblebrox, just to get Griffin off of my nuts.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay, I like it. He says:

**Cam:** Boy, that was a real tough round! I sure appreciate y'all taking my sacrifice on for me. I guess I could have lost an eye, but it's like one of like four things I still have. And if I'm gonna make it out of here, I really... You know, I'm gonna need all the meat I've got, so...

**Taako:** You're gonna have to teach Merle how to use an axe.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Cam:** I might know a thing or two.

**Griffin:** He says. Actually, he sees you Magnus, and he says:

**Cam:** Whoa! What the hell happened to you?

**Magnus:** What do you mean?

**Cam:** You're... You're grey? You're all old. You're an old man now.

**Magnus:** This is how I looked before?

**Cam:** Oh, I guess... I guess I just wasn't paying attention.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Magnus:** Yeah. Dick.

**Clint:** Let me preemptively interrupt all the tweets that I will be sending. 42 is not old. Okay, go on.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Griffin?

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Travis:** Before we move on, I wanna make the Thieves' Cant sign for room, trap, confirm.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it confirms, this thing pushes into your hand and confirms.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Griffin:** Taako and Merle, make a Perception check.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** [chuckles] Double 4s, we didn't see shit.

**Griffin:** All right. Yeah, then nothing happens, okay. You moving on?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Yup.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** On we go!

**Griffin:** You step forward, and as you're walking towards the door, you hear the elves, you hear the male elf say:

**Male Elf:** Ooh, that was a pretty tough round! We lost a lot of years and a good eye. But this next challenge, it's gonna be a breeze, I promise.

**Griffin:** And as you walk through that pitch black door, you step into a new—another like huge, circular chamber, about the same dimensions as the one you just left. Only this one, you also know, because there is a single pedestal in the middle of it with two buttons on it, and a screen sort of wrapped around the outside of it, with sort of digitized like cartoon versions of your faces on it. And you hear that male elf say:

**Male Elf:** I mean, it's gonna be a breeze if you make the right decision here. It's time for another round of Trust or Forsake! You know the deal, step up to the plate and you'll be matched up against an opponent, and then you pick the button that seems right for you.

**Justin:** I cast Mage Hand.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Justin:** And smack 'forsake.'

**Griffin:** [laughs] It doesn't activate because the buttons aren't lit up and going yet.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And you hear the female elf say:

**Female Elf:** Oh, just a minute, sweetheart. We haven't begun the game yet, we have to see who is gonna be our player this time!

**Taako:** Okay.

**Magnus:** Can I ask you elves a question?

**Female Elf:** Sure, shoot, we can't promise that we'll answer.

**Magnus:** Fair, fair. Is this—So what we're looking at is like a loop of like spin the wheel, choose a 'forsake' or whatever, fight some monsters, spin a wheel, 'forsake—' Blah, blah, blah, right? That's the loop?

**Female Elf:** Mm-hmm, yeah.

**Magnus:** And that's—That's good for you? That doesn't get tiresome?

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Female Elf:** No, we've programmed a lot of variety into Wonderland. Loop isn't the right word either, loop intimates that there's no finish line. There is a finish line, and your prize is waiting at the end of it!

**Taako:** How many—How many rotations do we have to go through?

**Female Elf:** Hm, it's subjective. How many roads must a man walk down before you can call him a man?

**Travis:** Six.

**Clint:** [sings] How many roads—

**Magnus:** I think it's six.

**Taako:** Six, it's roughly six.

**Merle:** It's four.

**Magnus:** Is it four? Look, average, five.



**Female Elf:** In order for you to earn your prize here in Wonderland, you have to do exactly that, you have to earn it. And once you've earned it, there it'll be!

**Taako:** How many have you—How many prizes have you passed out this year?

**Female Elf:** This year alone? I mean, we're only about halfway through the year, it's about midsummer. But probably a good 30 prizes or so.

**Taako:** Wow.

**Magnus:** Bullshit.

**Taako:** I don't believe you.

**Merle:** Lying lychee.

**Griffin:** You can roll insight if you wanna see?

**Justin:** I'm gonna roll an insight.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** It's a 19.

**Clint:** 19!

**Griffin:** Yeah, that wasn't entirely accurate.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Plus four, by the way, so 23.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's a fuckin'—They are not telling the truth.

**Taako:** How many people have died?

**Male Elf:** Oh! More than 30!

**Taako:** Give me a percentage.

**Female Elf:** If we're being—I don't want to dishearten you is the problem, because you guys are doing so good! But about—

**Clint:** I cast Zone of Truth!

**Justin:** Hell yeah. Hell yeah.

**Griffin:** They are nowhere near you. You cannot see them, they are not in your vicinity.

**Clint:** I can't see 'em anyway, I have no depth perception.

**Justin:** Cast it on me and then ask me what percentage of people have died.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** That way we'll get the answers.

**Griffin:** The screen that like wraps around the pedestal in front of you starts to spin. And the person who is going to play this round of Trust or Forsake is...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** It is Taako! You step up to the plate, Taako, and as you do, Cam from your shoulder says...

**Cam:** You know you have to pick 'forsake,' right? Like that's just—

**Taako:** Yeah! Yeah...

**Cam:** That's basic sort of... the game here. If you—

**Taako:** You know, I appreciate the heads up, but yeah, I'm gonna go ahead and choose 'forsake.'

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Magnus:** But that'll end up fucking over the other people?

**Taako:** Yeah—

**Merle:** Or maybe they just want us to think that?

**Taako:** Oh, no, no. I don't give a shit.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Magnus:** But I don't wanna fuck over the other people?

**Taako:** Then maybe next time you should get chosen as the player!

**Magnus:** But think about it this way, hold on, think about it this way—  
Staying posi, right?

**Taako:** For sure, yeah.

**Magnus:** Staying posi, we fought the last battle and did relatively fine.

**Merle:** Except Taako's almost dead.

**Taako:** Yeah, I'm almost dead, and it's our podcast!

**Travis:** Well, an air conditioner fell on him!

**Griffin:** Cam chimes and he's like...

**Cam:** Magnus, Taako's right, he's on death's door, he can't fight another fight like the fight he just fought, or else he's a dead man. So, you pick 'forsake,' and we're on easy street.

**Magnus:** This goes against everything I believe.

**Taako:** Well, luckily, it's not your decision, 'forsake.'

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** All right... You hit 'forsake' and a—the far wall across from you shows you chose 'forsake.'

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** And they chose 'trust.'

**Taako:** Hell yeah!

**Griffin:** Which means you—And a little bit of confetti falls from the ceiling when that happens.

**Justin:** Short episode this week, kids!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Remind me, Griffin, what would have happened if we had both hit trust?

**Griffin:** So, there's four outcomes to this game, and I realized listening back when I was editing it, you guys didn't quite understand the rules. There's four outcomes, okay? If you choose 'forsake' and they pick 'trust,' that's the best outcome for you. That means you don't have to do this killer challenge at all.

If you both—The next outcome is both pick 'trust,' that means you play it at its standard difficulty. If you both pick 'forsake,' that's the third worst outcome, I guess. And that means you both face a slightly harder version. And if you pick 'forsake' and they pick 'trust,' they don't have to do the challenge, and you have to do like the really, really difficult version, which is what happened to you last time.

**Travis:** Oh no, you mean if we pick 'trust' and they pick 'forsake.'

**Griffin:** Right. If you get forsaken, then you get fucked.

**Travis:** Got it.

**Griffin:** But you did the forsaking this time, which is good. Kind of.

**Travis:** I mean, not morally.

**Griffin:** And Cam is celebrating, he's like...

**Cam:** Yes! Nice! You don't realize how brutal those challenges are. You're gonna—

**Taako:** Yeah, you're right, I don't. [mouths far sound] I got an air conditioner dropped on me, homie.

**Cam:** Yeah, that's fair, okay. Taako, you understand how difficult it is.

**Griffin:** And with that, the display that showed the results disappears. And a large, black door appears in front of you, that you just can't see through, another pitch-black door.

**Magnus:** Onward, I guess.

**Merle:** Yeah, here we go.

**Griffin:** All right, you step forward into the next chamber. And as you enter the doorway, you step foot onto a five foot square of white light. And the word 'start' is on this square. And as soon as you step onto it, the door is just gone behind you. And you hear a loud click as a blue square, the same size, illuminates right in front of you. And then another, and then a green square that has some sort of word written on it. And then this pattern continues with all these multicolored squares just sort of appearing, forming a winding path around you.

**Travis:** It's Candy Land.

**Griffin:** You're standing in a board game. And as you look down, you realize this platform is slightly elevated in the air, and the floor is covered in a bubbling green liquid. And from above you, you realize that the ceiling is just clouded with this swarm of bats that are all squealing. And some of the bats start to fly down in your direction, but then everything sort of freezes. And you hear one of the elves say...

**Elf:** Oh dear, this shouldn't have—this shouldn't have manifested this way, you won the last round. Pardon our mess!

**Griffin:** Suddenly, you see a cloud of the black smog, that sort of you emit every time you have complained in this environment. It quickly sort of lowers from the ceiling like a curtain, and the board game is gone. This room has sort of been re-outfitted. And instead of standing on the start square of a board game, you're standing behind podiums.

And you have these bright lights in your face, and you can hear coming in the direction in these lights that are kind of blinding you a bit, you hear thunderous applause from a large studio audience. And as you look around, you realize you're standing on the sort of garishly decorated set of a game show. And you hear one of the elves say:

[game show music plays]

**Male Elf:** Live from the inescapable depths of Wonderland, it's time for another round of Heart Attack! The heroic dating show. And here's your hosts, Lydia and Edward!

[crowd cheers]

**Griffin:** And you see those two elves appear in front of you, and they're holding those weird small skinny microphones, as they host you in a dating show called Heart Attack. And there's a lot of applause, and there's a lot of vogueing from these two. And the audience is just fucking eating it up and they look—They're wearing different outfits now, they're wearing crimson, and silver, and gold pantsuits. And they look fucking excellent. And they have big sunglasses on.

**Travis:** I don't know, Griffin, with them showing off like this, I'm just afraid they're not here for the right reasons.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And the female elf, who you now know—God, I'm so glad I can say their names now and not say male elf and female elf like I'm some sort of scientist... elf scientist.

**Travis:** You could have just... you could have just said Felf and Melf.

**Griffin:** No, those have other meanings in the fantasy world, and they're extremely lewd. Lydia says:

**Lydia:** Welcome to Heart Attack! Are you three brave heroes ready for your only chance at love?

**Magnus:** Pass.

**Lydia:** [laughs] That's not an option, unfortunately. You don't have to play the deadly round, but we're still gonna have a little bit of fun. Doesn't that sound good?

**Taako:** Yeah, sure.

**Merle:** Yeah...

**Magnus:** I mean, I cannot stress enough how uninterested I am in this.

**Griffin:** Okay—

**Taako:** We're not gonna have a good time with it, but we're pretty much prisoners, I guess. By the way, you did just say inescapable. So, like, how are things going? Pretty bad, it seems?

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** A little bit of black smog comes out of your mouth, Taako, as you say that.

**Taako:** Fuck.

**Griffin:** And it lifts up into the ceiling. Those elves have their back turned to you as you were saying that, and they're sort of like still sort of performing for the crowd. And you—all three of you actually see this. The black smog—previously, whenever you've sort of expressed your suffering, just sort of raises up into the ceiling and disappears. This time, like a little portion of it kind of jerks in like a 90° angle, and follows a different path, as if it's being siphoned off by something. And it disappears, which did not happen before.

Next to you, a screen, not like a TV screen, but like a sheet of fabric, raises up. And from behind it a light illuminates. And you see a kind of like human or elf shaped silhouette, but it is so clearly not the silhouette of a living person. You can actually tell, it actually looks like a mannequin, 'cause it has these segmented arms. And it's moving basically like that fuckin' scene from Home Alone, where Kevin's trying to convince the Wet Bandits that there's a big party happening in his house.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** So, it's moving around like a mannequin or a marionette, sort of being moved by a puppet. And it's sort of waving at you, all flirty—all flirty like. Edward says:

**Edward:** We're going to ask a series of questions to measure your compatibility with our hot contestant. Whoever charts with the highest lovability quotient will get a hot date out of it. Are you three ready?

**Magnus:** Sure, yeah.

**Merle:** Whoo!

**Magnus:** Yeah, let's do it.

**Griffin:** The silhouette blows a kiss.



**Magnus:** No! You know what? Fuck this.

**Edward:** What do you mean?

**Magnus:** I don't wanna play.

**Edward:** You have to play or you can't move on.

**Magnus:** Well, I mean I'm gonna stand here, but I'm not gonna—I hate this.

**Griffin:** As you're saying that, so much of that black smog is coming out of your face.

**Travis:** And I'm watching where it's going.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's getting peeled off a little bit. It's getting—It's definitely—You're siphoning off like a bunch of this stuff. And actually at this point, Lydia and Edward are looking at you. And as soon as they turn around to look at you as you're complaining, that siphoning stops and you feel that force in your hand. And you feel a Thieves' Cant symbol that means like the time isn't right. Like, you would put this on a house that you thought was empty, but it's not yet. And so, the marks are home, and so you would put this on there. And then you feel the symbol for confirm.

**Travis:** I make the shape of confirm.

**Magnus:** All right, fine, fine. Let's play.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** All right! Edward says:

**Edward:** Question one—We'll go ahead and read for our contestant, because they're very shy.

**Griffin:** And they—The silhouette shrugs, 'oh well.' Edward says:

**Edward:** Question one. Magnus, what is your ideal first date?

**Magnus:** Oh, gosh... let's see... I would say, I pick them up, you know, roundabout sundown. And then we catch fireflies. And then I take them home, and we don't see each other again, 'cause I'm really not interested in dating.

**Griffin:** The studio audience from behind these bright lights, you hear them go:

**Audience:** Ooh! [cheers]

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And the silhouette is like fanning itself. And Lydia says:

**Lydia:** Playing hard to get, huh? It seems like our contestant is into that. Merle, same question. What's your ideal first date?

**Merle:** All right, I let her pick me up. I mention to her that I— "Ah, gosh, I forgot my wallet at home," even though we're in like the front yard.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] And that's the audience! The audience gets a good chuckle out of that. And they are fucking loving Merle.

**Merle:** I volunteer to drive her vehicle, and tell her it's filthy. And so, we go through the drive through vehicle wash, and she pays for that too. And then I take her to have dinner with my family. And—

**Travis:** Wait, like your wife and stuff?

**Merle:** She meets my ex-wife.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Merle:** It does not—it really kind of sucks. And then... she's having a miserable time and she's really mad, she can't wait to get out of there. I take her back to her house. And so, I lean up against the door jam and say, "Sure you don't want me to come in for a few minutes?" And she slams the door in my face.

**Audience:** Ooh!

**Travis:** That's your ideal first date? Wait, hold on—[laughs]

**Griffin:** Yes, big round of applause from the audience at that one. And Edward says:

**Edward:** I love your honesty! Taako, another question. Say that you and our contestant are on a date, and one of your fans recognizes you on the street. How do you respond to that situation?

**Taako:** Well you know, I really—My fans come first. So, I would definitely sign whatever, pose for fantasy pictures, not fantasy pictures but fantasy—you know, 'cause there's not cameras? I don't mean like fantastical pictures, I just mean like whatever passes for a camera in this reality.

**Clint:** I think it's drawing, isn't it?

**Taako:** Drawing, yeah. If they wanna draw me like their French girls, that's fine. And... you know, I would just make sure the fan got what they were looking for, 'cause they come first. I need everyone I can get at this point, honestly.

**Griffin:** It's absolutely silent in the studio. [chuckles] And you see the silhouette cross its shadowy arms and kind of tap its foot from behind the sheet. And Edward says:

**Edward:** Kind of an air ball there, kind of a brick. That's okay, we'll get 'em on the next round.

**Taako:** Great.

**Edward:** Magnus.

**Magnus:** Yeah?

**Edward:** Same question, say you and the contestant are on a date, and one of your fans recognizes you on the street. How do you respond to that situation?

**Magnus:** I have fans?

**Edward:** One of your heroic fans, sure!

**Magnus:** I mean, I guess... are they—What do they want—What does the fan want? Do they just recognize—Are they just like, “Hey Magnus!”

**Edward:** Yeah—Yeah, I don’t—The question seemed pretty clear.

**Magnus:** Well, but I mean, the interaction varies, ‘cause if they just want like a wave and, “Ah, hey!” I keep going. If they want me to stop and like sign a chair or something, whittle them a small duck, that might be inconvenient based on my schedule. Do we have dinner reservations, are we trying to get somewhere in a certain amount of time? I need more—There’s a lot of parameters in every social interaction?

**Griffin:** The audience seems—the audience is actually booing you now, Magnus.

**Magnus:** Oh, okay... I guess what I mean to say is... Since I was with my date first, they would take priority.

**Griffin:** The audience is now whistling and clapping and laughing for you.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Griffin:** They’re overjoyed. And the silhouette is fanning itself again, the silhouette is feeling Magnus.

**Travis:** I want you guys to know, I am both weirded out, but my competitive streak is kind of taking over. And now I sort of wanna win.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Lydia:** Merle, new question. Why shouldn't the contestant choose your two competitors?

**Merle:** Well, because... I mean, look at Magnus. I mean, even though he's in his 40s, he's kept himself up. He's in magnificent shape, and would—Ah, he would not be a gentle lover.

**Travis:** Whoa?! [laughter]

**Griffin:** Geezy-creezy.

**Travis:** Whoa?! [chuckles]

**Justin:** I regret this entire podcast.

**Merle:** Yeah, don't go with him—

**Griffin:** This whole podcast has been a mistake because of this.

**Merle:** Taako is... Taako is... he's too much into his work. Always chopping, always salt, always making sauces. And you know, when he's not cooking, he's studying about cooking. So, there wouldn't be any time left for you. Whereas I am so old, and I only got one arm. And I—

**Griffin:** [spoofing Merle] "I don't have a lot going on right now." [chuckles]

**Merle:** I don't have a lot going on. I'll do nothing but pay attention to you.

**Lydia:** Taako... Taako, same question, why shouldn't the contestant choose either of your competitors?

**Taako:** It's *me*.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Taako:** Hi, I'm Taako? You know, from TV?

**Griffin:** There is such thunderous applause, and a chair actually comes fuckin' flying out from the audience and like slides across the set. The audience is losing their mind, the silhouette does not seem as impressed.

**Justin:** I cast Tasha's Hideous Laughter on the silhouette.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Fuckin' shit, okay? What's that do?

**Justin:** "Creature of your choice that you can see within in range perceives everything as hilariously funny and falls into fits of laughter if the spell affects it. Must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or fall prone, becoming incapacitated and unable to stand up for the duration. A creature with an intelligence score of four or less isn't affected."

**Griffin:** Okay. So, I roll Wisdom save?

**Justin:** Yeah, Wisdom save.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** That's a nine.

**Justin:** Nope!

**Griffin:** Okay. So, yeah, then this... Whew, this is gonna get bad! This shape from behind the curtain falls out of its chair. And as it does, you see its head pop off. And it picks up its head and laughs at that, and now it's like doubled over laughing at that. And now this shape behind the curtain is just sort of flailing around in laughter, in like weird, inscrutable ways. And the audience sees this and is also laughing at this. And gang, the scene's getting maybe a little bit spooky.

**Travis:** Magnus is suitably horrified.

**Griffin:** And actually, the lights have started to lower a little bit. And the two elves turn to you, Magnus, and say...

**Elves:** Magnus, what makes a good hero?

**Justin:** I cast True Seeing on Magnus.

**Griffin:** What does that do?

**Justin:** He can see things as they actually are. For the duration, he has true sight, he sees the secret doors hidden by magic, and can see into the Ethereal Plane, all out to a range of a 120ft.

**Griffin:** Okay. Magnus, you... You don't warn him then, right Taako?

**Justin:** No, I can't. I can't take the risk.

**Griffin:** All right. Fuckin' Magnus, [chuckles] suddenly and without explanation, you... your vision changes, and you can see the audience now through the lights. And it is just a bunch of these fairly intricately put together wooden marionettes. They are faceless, but otherwise they are detailed. Complete with like fingers and joints on those fingers. And they are the ones sort of moving around and reacting to all of these scenes. You see—

**Justin:** As he's looking around, I say...

**Taako:** You know what? Fuck all of this. This fuckin' sucks! I'm done playing.

**Griffin:** Okay, then you see—Taako, you see a black cloud come out of your mouth as you say this.

**Griffin:** Magnus, back to you. One other thing that you see is these two elves in their fancy jumpsuits—pantsuits rather. They don't look like elves, actually, with your current sight.

They are both wearing black robes and they—you cannot really see their faces inside of this robe, you just sort of see a faint, red light coming from within their hoods. And they have like semi-skeletal arms and a body underneath. And you recognize that they are liches. And you also see, standing just sort of slightly in front of you, Magnus, you see that Red Robe. And it's the one that you've seen so many times now.

The one that confronted you after the big race in Petals to the Metal, the one that confronted you in the Cosmoscope in Lucas' lab. And he is standing there, and you see him sort of siphoning off that black cloud, as Taako is sort of projecting it into the atmosphere. And the other two liches don't seem to see him. It seems like you are the only one that can see him with your true sight. And he looks over and realizes that he can see you, and that you can see each other. And you just see this Red Robe put a single, skeletal finger to its non-existent lips.

["Déjà Vu" by Mort Garson plays]

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