

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

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

This doorway opens in the wall and three names appear above it; Antonia, Rowan and Lord Artemis Sterling.

**Rowan:** Well guys, I guess I'll see you on the other side.

**Cam:** Hey guys, my name's Cam!

**Cam:** Oh, I mean I've been here for a long time, but I got screwed over. But that's not important.

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

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

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** All right... and they chose trust!

**Taako:** Hell yeah!

**Edward:** Live from the inescapable depths of Wonderland, it's time for another round of Heart Attack! The heroic dating show.

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

**Griffin:** You see that Red Robe, and you just see this Red Robe put a single skeletal finger to its nonexistent lips.

**Announcer:** Fret not, dear listener! It's always darkest before the dawn. Unless of course you're locked in some sort of pain dungeon. It's The Adventure Zone!

[“Déjà Vu” by Mort Garson plays]

**Edward:** Madness, what does it mean to be a hero?

**Travis:** He did just call me ‘Madness.’

**Griffin:** Did I?

**Justin:** It sounded like ‘madness’ to me—

**Travis:** You definitely said ‘madness.’

**Griffin:** Oh, no.

**Clint:** Was that a clue? That was a clue, wasn’t it? It was a clue! I bet it was a clue.

**Griffin:** Start over, second take, put that one in the bloopers reel.

**Clint:** Madness, got it.

**Edward:** Magnus! What does it mean to be a hero?

**Griffin:** The two liches in front of you—who you can see in their true form—are still giving you the same prompt, Magnus. And you don’t really know where this sight came from, right? ‘Cause Taako didn’t give you a heads up. But you blink a couple of times and the True Sight fades and—

**Justin:** I don’t wanna be a rules guy, but he does have True Sight for an hour. So, I do not know why that vision would be fading so quickly. When I cast, I cast correct!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Woo-ha, woo-ha. I’ve got you all in check.

**Clint:** I’m gonna retweet that.

**Griffin:** Okay but this is just gonna be a lot of kind of—yeah, sure, fuck it, why not. Yeah, all right, you still got the True Sight and it's...it's still on you, and you have it for a whole hour. And you just see this Red Robe, and now he's just kind of floating uncomfortably in front of you—

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** He's his main planned interaction—

**Justin:** We don't know what dope shit we're gonna be doing in the next hour? I'm not gonna burn a level six spell for your narrative! I'm sorry!

**Griffin:** That's fair, that's fair.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah! You can still see this Red Robe then and he's just kind of floating expectantly in front of you. And the two elves who you still see as liches—thank you, Justin, for the clarification—

**Justin:** Mm-hmm!

**Griffin:** ... Don't seem to take notice of the Red Robe. Your answer, Magnus?

**Magnus:** You know, if you'd asked me in my younger days, back 10 years ago—

**Clint:** Or 15 seconds ago.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Yes, that was the joke, thank you fad for filling in the punch line.

**Clint:** You're welcome!

**Magnus:** I would've told you that what makes a hero is someone who acts, someone who leaps into the fray without thinking. But you know, I've had some time to think now, and I would say that I've grown a little wiser, and I

would say that a hero is someone who acts when it counts. Acts at the right moment, acts when it's needed.

**Griffin:** With that, you hear a little bell ring. Signaling the end of this game of Heart Attack. And the audience applauds your answer, Magnus. And there's a little music stinger playing you out. And the two liches say:

**Edward:** Well, it sounds like our suitor has made their decision! Let's see who they chose for their hot date.

**Griffin:** And that—

**Clint:** This is exciting!

**Griffin:** And that screen beside all of you drops to the ground, and you can see the figure casting the silhouette. It is another one of those marionettes, and because of Taako's spell, it's still kind of shuddering and making kind of weird... pseudo-laughing noises? And really, it's just kind of like collapsed onto the ground, and one of its legs is just like repeatedly lifting up and thumping down into the ground.

**Clint:** Okay, let me—I have a question, I'm serious. What do... I mean, what do Taako and I see? 'Cause he only cast True Sight on Magnus?

**Griffin:** Yeah, you see the same thing. The True Sight just kind of made it so that Magnus could see through the blinding lights.

**Clint:** Oh, okay.

**Griffin:** And see like who was in the studio audience. But you see—you all see this kind of creepy display. And it's just not stopping, its leg is just thump-thump-thump, down into the ground. And Edward says:

**Edward:** Well, hm... Well, we learned everything we need to know, so... I guess let's... call it a draw? Let's move on. This has gotten, frankly, a little too weird, even for us.

**Griffin:** And they—

**Merle:** But I would've won, right?

**Edward:** Oh, let's not... It's like Whose Line, baby. The points don't matter.

**Merle:** [laughs] But I would've.

**Griffin:** And they turn to like go, but before they do, they say:

**Edward:** Oh, wait, we need to find out how your opponents in the last round of Trust or Forsake fared!

**Taako:** Probably pretty fuckin' bad, huh?

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And a screen appears behind the two of them, and it lights up. And you see three figures standing on a glowing square labeled 'finish,' and you recognize that they are on that board game that loaded into this room previously. It's all sprawled out behind them. And it takes you a second to recognize them because all of the sacrifices they've gone through here in Wonderland have changed them pretty dramatically.

But it's the three adventurers that you met in the Felicity Wilds. It's Rowan and Antonia and Lord Artemis Sterling. And they look rough. Sterling is the worst off. First of all, he's no longer like a young boy-man. He's aged probably it looks like into like his late thirties and his hair's gone an early bright silver, and he's also like—

**Travis:** That's a good look though, Griffin.

**Griffin:** It's a good look, but—

**Travis:** Like, I know that you were trying to make him sound haggard, but like—

**Griffin:** No, he's—

**Travis:** That young, silver fox...

**Griffin:** He's on some Malfoy shit, for sure. But he's also severely injured.

**Travis:** Oh. That's a good look, you know?

**Griffin:** [chuckles] He's laying in Antonia's lap and she's trying to comfort him, but she's not looking at him, like she's not looking down at him while she's doing so. And you realize she's wearing a bandage wrapped around her head that's just covering her eyes. And Rowan is standing and facing the screen and he looks just withered up. He looks so worn down. You can see big patches missing from his big, red beard.

**Travis:** No!

**Griffin:** And you can't hear anyone on the other side, but you can tell that Sterling is just like wailing. And this column of black smoke is just pouring out of him. And as Rowan recognizes you guys on the other side of the screen, you see him mouth the word, clear as day, "Why?"

**Travis:** I point at Taako.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] And then the screen shuts off. And how are y'all doing? I haven't asked you that this arc. And I feel like that was a good thing to know in the last one. Just like a quick check, a quick emoji check-in with the boys.

**Justin:** I don't physically feel great. I've had better days, physically. Emotionally, I'm about over it.

**Travis:** [chuckles] Yeah...

**Justin:** From just like an emotional perspective, I think I'm pretty well... done with these people, with these creatures.

**Travis:** Yeah, I would say Magnus is kind of in a like... Physical, taking a lot of like physical damage is like Magnus—you know, he's a tank, that's his MO. But like just... like, he's just being worn down psychologically by this shit.

**Clint:** And Merle's saying, "Ah, I'm okay. How are you?"

**Travis:** You lost an eyeball!

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Clint:** Yeah, I know, but—

**Justin:** Except for continuing to run into doorframes, Merle's doing great.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** The two elf liches, they seem to like notice that you guys aren't like having a great time. And Lydia says:

**Lydia:** You all seem pretty down in the dumps. How would you like a bonus round?

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Taako:** I'm good, actually.

**Magnus:** That sounds... Yeah, sure.

**Merle:** I'd like that about as much as a poke in the eye.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Cam looks over at you, Taako, and he says:

**Cam:** The bonus round is how I ended getting trapped here in the first place. I wouldn't recommend it.

**Taako:** Yeah, like no shit, head!

**Magnus:** Yeah, dog.

**Taako:** No kidding!

**Magnus:** You're not like telling us, "Oh, what? It might be bad?" Ugh.

**Taako:** So, it's the first part of this game to be unpleasant? Excellent.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Edward is kind of like awkwardly tapping his fingers together, he's like:

**Edward:** It's kind of not optional, though...

**Magnus:** Yeah, I also figured that! Okay.

**Taako:** Obviously.

**Griffin:** And another pitch-black door opens up behind them as they disappear, and it leads you into the next chamber. Which I'm assuming you're popping into? Unless you wanna hang out and—

**Travis:** Sure.

**Griffin:** I mean you can look around this room more, if you want. There's— Like I said, there's just a bunch of these marionettes just now all inactive. Actually, they're just sitting completely stationary in these risers facing the stage, just not moving. And they're intricately made with all these different points of articulation, these marionettes, but they have no face.

**Travis:** I take one of their arms.

**Merle:** Hey, Magnus—Yeah, I was gonna say, take an arm, baby!

**Griffin:** All right—

**Magnus:** Yeah, I need to rebuild my collection.



**Griffin:** Sure, you pop off one of their arms and now you have a wooden arm. Cool.

**Travis:** And then I slap the laughing marionette with the arm and I say:

**Magnus:** Pull yourself together!

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** As you hit the laughing marionette, it stops. It finally stops moving.

**Merle:** Let's go, guys!

**Justin:** Yeah. We're following.

**Griffin:** Okay. In the next chamber, you're in another large circular room about the same dimensions as the one you just left. And in front of you are three large platforms, just not very high up, about a foot and a half off the ground. And each one has a huge, multicolored neon sign hanging above it. And one says, "Escape Game," one says, "Healing Game," and one says, "Recovery Game." And as you walk in you hear Lydia say:

**Lydia:** Oh! Wait a moment! One of you has already played the Escape Game!

**Griffin:** And that pedestal dissolves into black smoke and wafts up into the ceiling. And so, you're just left with two platforms that say, "Healing Game," and "Recovering Game." And you hear Edward say:

**Edward:** For the bonus round, you get to decide what game you want to play! Both are terrific little diversions, but this time you only get to pick one!

**Clint:** So, we have to assume that 'Heal' means we get healed, and 'Recover' means we get to take something back that we gave up, I would assume?

**Justin:** Maybe our... But maybe just spell slots and stuff. Recover those, I don't know.

**Griffin:** Cam still looks like kind of uncomfortable just being in this bonus room decision chamber.

**Taako:** Cam, which one did you choose? What happened?

**Cam:** I ended up... I ended up playing the Escape Game.

**Taako:** Oh good!

**Cam:** And I... Well, I... I lost. And that's why I'm here, and a head.

**Magnus:** How do you lose a bonus round? Wait, hold on, hold on, hold on. I'm no games master, but a bonus round should just be winning.

**Cam:** Well, it was a bonus round for the person who won. It was kind of like the Decision Game. I came in here, I was hired to guide someone in here, and we were doing... well, we weren't doing very well. We made it through a couple rounds and then we played the Escape Game. And they made us an offer where if one of us betrayed the other, we could escape, but we'd leave the other one to be stuck in Wonderland to suffer eternally. And I told her it was a trap, I told her anybody who left this place alone wouldn't survive 10 minutes in the Felicity Wilds. But she took the offer and... well, here I am.

**Magnus:** This person you were guiding, older lady?

**Cam:** Yeah, but I mean, she got older while we were here, yeah.

**Magnus:** Yeah, yeah, okay. Mm-hm.

**Taako:** Right. Right. Okay.

**Cam:** Wait, do you know—

**Magnus:** What?

**Cam:** Do you know Lucretia?

**Magnus:** Just a guess.

**Taako:** Yeah, we do. We're kind of working for her, basically.

**Cam:** So, she trapped you in here too?

**Magnus:** She sent us in to save you. [chuckles]

**Cam:** Wait, she sent you in to save me?

**Taako:** Yeah, we're here to...

**Cam:** She sent you in to save me?

**Magnus:** Sure!

**Taako:** Totally, man. Rescue mish.

**Merle:** Yeah!

**Taako:** Yeah, die-hard rescue mish. We're here for you.

**Griffin:** You see like a tear start to well up in his eyes.

**Magnus:** You should probably stay hydrated, because I don't think you can drink water.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** He's kind of speechless. He says:

**Cam:** Maybe I was wrong about her. I... I don't know that I can escape anymore. I'm pretty sure the only reason—

**Magnus:** Well, no, they took the pedestal away.

**Cam:** Well, no, it's not just that. I mean, I'm just... I'm just a head. I'm pretty sure it's this place that's keeping me alive in the first place, but that means a lot. Thanks guys.

**Griffin:** You just hear Edward just go like:

**Edward:** [clears throat]

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Merle:** Let me be a coach for a second. Look, we're not gonna escape, but I say we go for heal, right? The stuff we've given up, we gave up of our own free will—

**Magnus:** Well, okay—

**Merle:** Let's get healed up! We're not gonna get healed any other way!

**Magnus:** But hold on, if I might counterpoint for a second. Cam makes it sound—and Cam, please correct me if I'm wrong—makes it sound like only one of us will get and the other will lose.

**Edward:** Maybe!

**Griffin:** You hear Edward say.

**Magnus:** So, it sounds like in the heal chamber, maybe like one of us gets healed but the other two lose hit points.

**Taako:** That would be fine.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** Taako's down to like a decimal point something.

**Taako:** We could make that work.

**Merle:** I say we do it anyway.

**Magnus:** Yeah, now that you mention it, I'm still doing pretty good, so like, sure, let's do it. Heal.

**Taako:** Yeah, let's go to the healing room.

**Griffin:** Okay! You all step up onto the 'Healing' platform, and as you do, a ripple of light emits from the platform and everything else in the room disappears.

**Justin:** As the light comes down, Taako is hit by the realization that there's a possibility that this room could test the healing abilities of our party, and he's hit with a deep existential dread.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Just like a mortal panic. He basically like, tries to get off the pedestal and just can't in time.

**Clint:** Talking about me, aren't you?

**Travis:** I guess I should also ask, Ditto—

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Travis:** Do I see anything before—like, let's retcon a second. Before we step on this platform, does the True Sight reveal anything?

**Griffin:** Huh... I'll tell you what, that's a really good question. Yeah, your True Sight showed you when you walked into this chamber, Magnus, and it's something the other boys didn't see, is that for like a split second, everything in this chamber was just black smoke, like the same black smoke that you've seen that pours out of you when you have a bad time.

It was just black smoke, and then it kind of like firms up. Almost like... you know how pop-in in works in video games? When you're too far away from a thing and then it just like boop. It's kind of like that. And you were the only

one that kind of saw it. It was like the contents of this room like had to load in for a second.

**Travis:** Gotcha.

**Griffin:** How's that? So, this light ripples throughout the room, and all of a sudden, the three of you are all standing in front of a little pedestal with two buttons on it. And the buttons are labeled with the other names of the people in your party. So, Taako, you're standing in front of one that says Magnus and Merle, and so on. And you hear Lydia explain—Oh, and there's like bright neon trim lights running all around the room and the words 'Healing Game' are floating in a big sign between all of your pedestals. And Lydia says:

**Lydia:** We know some of you are faring a little bit worse than others, so we thought we'd give you the chance to balance out some of your current states of physical well-being. So, in the Healing Game, we'll allow you to transfer some of your vitality over to a friend. But in doing so, you will experience a bit of energy degradation during the transfer. So, they'll only receive half the vitality that you send in their direction.

**Griffin:** So, in the Healing Game, you can give another person on your team some hit points at the cost of two to one.

**Travis:** And how many hit points does Cam have to give to Taako?

**Griffin:** This is a great point. Okay, Cam also has a little pedestal, and it has all your guys' names on it. And you all have a pedestal that has Cam's name on it, and he's like:

**Cam:** I'm gonna be honest, I'm just a head. So, I don't really have a lot to give or receive. So, I'm probably gonna abstain from this challenge. I'm actually good to go, I'm full of hit points, there's just like four of them.

**Clint:** [laughs] All right!

**Travis:** What are you down to, Taako?

**Justin:** 14.

**Travis:** Oh, I'm at like 75.

**Clint:** Okay, even though there's some internet discrepancy, I maintain that I'm at 71. So, I'm gonna give... do I hit the button of who I wanna give it to?

**Griffin:** Uh-huh.

**Clint:** All right. I hit Taako, and I give 40.

**Griffin:** That would kill you.

**Clint:** No, no...

**Griffin:** Oh, you're giving—so, he's getting 20.

**Clint:** Right.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay, I thought you were saying you were giving him 40 so you were subtracting 80. That would be a fun way for Merle to go, just by pressing a button.

**Travis:** The ultimate heal!

**Clint:** Fun for you!

**Travis:** He made the ultimate heal!

**Griffin:** Yeah. [spoofing Merle] "Now, who can't heal?" Dead.

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** All right, Taako, heal 20, and Merle, take 40 points of damage.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Travis:** That was bold and brassy.

**Griffin:** Magnus, you doing anything?

**Travis:** Taako, what's your max?

**Griffin:** It recently went down.

**Justin:** Yeah , I am currently at 34. And my max is 49. I don't see—

**Griffin:** Holy shit.

**Justin:** What?

**Griffin:** That's just real low.

**Justin:** Is it? Is it, Griffin? Is it?

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Is it real low? Is it almost like some fucking liches of your imagination sucked my hit points away from me, a wizard? Is that what happened? Is that what may account for the lowness?

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's real weird. It's really—it's like real low.

**Justin:** It's like so crazy low, huh? It's just super wicked low, it's all I can think about.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Uh-huh.

**Travis:** I kind of feel like... So, I feel like I wanna do like that guy in The Office, that when everyone like starts collecting for charity, you don't really wanna give but you also don't wanna be the only one who doesn't. So, I'll give like 10 of my hit points to give Taako five. That's also like 10% of Taako's health, though. So...



**Griffin:** [laughs] All right. You just lightly tap the Taako button. Boop.

**Travis:** I mean, I need—Okay, like on—

**Taako:** Guys! I don't know what just happened, but I had a skinned knee and it healed over!

**Travis:** But like my job is to get hit!

**Taako:** Not all the way!

**Travis:** Taako's job is to stand in the back!

**Taako:** It's still red. It's not healed up completely, but like it's definitely somewhat healed. A little bit.

**Griffin:** There's still like a little raspberry there.

**Taako:** Thank you for whoever was so kind to donate that.

**Travis:** You know, it averages out that like we gave you 12 and a half points each.

**Clint:** No, no, it doesn't really! As someone who has taken a lot of shit over being a bad healer, I don't think it averages out at all.

**Travis:** I just healed and I'm the tank, so who's the best healer, really? You know, you're supposed to heal.

**Clint:** How much did you heal? You did a knee...

**Travis:** Yeah! A very important knee!

**Griffin:** I'm gonna say that while all of this is taking place, just a little bit of that smoke is coming out of you guys as you have this argument.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** All right, yeah, yeah. All right, fine.

**Travis:** Yeah, yeah, that's fine. That's fair.

**Taako:** Thank you to everyone who gave an average of 12 and a half hit points, I really appreciate it.

**Magnus:** Least we could do, buddy!

**Griffin:** And Magnus, you actually see that Red Robe, who has sort of been shadowing you from behind. He floats into the middle of the three of you, and he sucks up a little bit of that black smoke. [smacks lips] Tasty, tasty.

**Travis:** [laughs] What a dirty bird.

**Griffin:** And joking aside, Taako, you looked fuckin' pretty bad, because—still, from that washing machine that fell on you. But you're actually looking a lot better, like your wounds really have closed up a bit. Merle, on the other hand, you... you actually have started to look a little bit bad now. And Magnus, you also have a skinned knee. And you feel it.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And can I say something? It stings. Doesn't feel good.

**Clint:** He should have—Shouldn't he have two skinned knees?

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's a great point. You have two skinned knees because of the two to one. [chuckles]

**Travis:** Well, wouldn't it just be that one of the skinnings is twice as big?

**Griffin:** Nope. You got two skinned knees. It's a really good look. And with that, the lights in this room kind of shut off and another door opens up in the back of the room, another pitch-black door.

**Taako:** Let's do it.

**Travis:** Griffin, am I safe to assume that I'm seeing a lot of like 'and the black smoke starts to fade in this room and form a new room' kind of thing?

**Griffin:** Yeah, actually, you see the inverse as you leave this room, you see it like start to unload a little bit. And then as soon as you walk into the next room, you see it sort of fade in, just like a second too late. And it is another room with—I mean, it's not another room, it's the same room with that big ol' Wheel of Sacrifice in the middle of it. The Wheel—I wanted to call it the Wheel of Misfortune, but I think that was an old Animaniacs goof.

**Travis:** No, that was Wheel of Morality.

**Griffin:** Wheel of Morality! Damn it, you're right. But yeah, the three of you, with Cam, walk into the Wheel room. And you see the same big stone door on the far side with four dots over it that are sort of a dim red. And it's the same old wheel and you hear Edward say:

**Edward:** [rushed] It's the Wheel of Sacrifice! You guys know the score. Just spin it around, fill up the dots.

**Clint:** [laughs] It's like one of those disclaimers on the auto ads.

**Griffin:** And you hear Lydia say:

**Lydia:** Edward, can you take this seriously, please? This round, as you might expect, the sacrifices will be a little bit more intense than they have been. But I know that the three—well, the four of you, have it in you!

**Merle:** I didn't expect it to get worse?

**Taako:** Ugh! I kind of did.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Magnus:** Yeah...

**Clint:** [spoofing Droopy] Glass half empty, oh my.

**Griffin:** A little bit of smoke came out of Taako with that.

**Justin:** All right. All right. Fine.

**Clint:** You gotta stop going Eeyore on us, man!

**Justin:** I know. So, who's gonna go first?

**Travis:** I'll do it!

**Clint:** Are we doing it four times again?

**Griffin:** Yup!

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Clint:** Shit...

**Travis:** Magnus spins! Swords.

**Griffin:** Awesome. Excellent. Excellent. Yes. Phenomenal. Magnus, you hear Edward say:

**Edward:** Mm, perfect. Magnus, if you choose to accept this sacrifice, you will lose a fight.

**Magnus:** [gasps]

**Edward:** Literally, you will lose a fight, you will have a fight taken from you.

**Merle:** Hm...

**Edward:** What do you say?

**Magnus:** Huh... Well, you know, this is one of those circumstances, I'm gonna say this one's not gonna be up to me. Taako, Merle, Cam, this sounds like it's more you guys having to fight a fight without me.

**Edward:** Oh, no. I'm sorry—

**Merle:** I think he's talking about a past fight that you've fought?

**Edward:** No, no, no, you misunderstand. You won't have to leave your friends in the lurch and have them fight the fight themselves. The fight itself will be lost. It will be just gone, it will never exist. You will have the glory of an important battle just stripped away, as that battle simply won't exist.

**Magnus:** And remind me what happens if I say no?

**Edward:** [in silly voice] Penalty. Sorry, I had a mouthful of coffee.

**Clint:** [laughs] Lich coffee!

**Magnus:** 'Cause you sounded very Eastwood there for a second.

**Edward:** Yes.

**Magnus:** You know what? Bite my butt, I'm taking the penalty.

**Griffin:** Wow, okay. [chuckles] As you say that, you hear Lydia say:

**Lydia:** Wow, I'm... I have to admit, I'm pretty disappointed. I had a pretty good one lined up for you there.

**Magnus:** Yeah, that's what I figured. You seemed very excited about it. And so you know, I just wanted to have a moment where I felt in control for a second.

**Lydia:** Okay, well, you're in control!

**Griffin:** And you see a fifth dot appear over the door in front of you.

**Magnus:** Well, dump.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Little bit of smoke comes out.

**Taako:** That's a real—Ah... Hey, you know, not so bad.

**Merle:** Hell, it's good!

**Magnus:** Actually, you know, now that I think about it—

**Taako:** But I will say this, you love fighting, huh? You just love it!

**Magnus:** I do love fighting. Well, here, okay, listen though. What if that was a fight, like that was a boss battle to like save someone's life that they took away from us, you know what I mean?

**Taako:** Yeah.

**Magnus:** If they... Say it was a similar fight to us fighting the Raven, like you know what I mean? Like, that could've destroyed a whole town, could've ended the world.

**Merle:** And you wouldn't've gotten credit for it.

**Griffin:** You hear Edward say:

**Edward:** Lucky you! You get to participate—you get to be in Wonderland even longer! You get to play the Wheel Game even more! This is a—I said penalty, I should've said super prize!

**Merle:** That is great. Yahoo! Here we go! I'm spinning the wheel! And it's stopping on... Mind.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Oh man...

**Edward:** Merle, mind is a tough one. You've already lost some important memories to the wheel in this game, and for this third round of the Wheel Game, we're gonna take some doozies from you, if you accept it. So, whew, if you accept this sacrifice, Merle, you will lose the memories of the birth of your children!

**Merle:** Take the penalty.

**Magnus:** Merle's got kids?

**Taako:** Imagine my shock, Merle's a dead-beat dad!

**Travis:** [laugh]

**Taako:** Agag! Agog! I'm aghast!

**Merle:** I'll take the penalty!

**Taako:** As nurturing as he is, you know, as—Well, I guess I can't talk yay about him anymore, he gave me a bunch of hit points. Yeah, it's real bad. Can't believe it.

**Griffin:** And with that, a sixth dot appears above the door, and you hear Lydia say:

**Lydia:** Oh, this is... You boys may wanna get comfortable in there because it seems like you might be in it for a while.

**Taako:** I'm spinning the wheel. Hand.

**Lydia:** Hand. Let's see. With hand, we will take away some of your... mm... capabilities. Taako, you are an accomplished wizard, but you also have a certain other special knack that few wizards can claim. You can do sick flips and sweet tricks. And I think we're gonna take some of that away.

**Griffin:** And if you accept this sacrifice, you're gonna take a hit to your dexterity modifier, as you become less skillful, less acrobatic of a wizard.

**Justin:** Damn, I mean, the hard one for me about this is I've made such good use of my acrobatics skill at this point.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** It practically defines the character, yeah...

**Taako:** Yeah, fine.

**Griffin:** All right. You step forward to like touch the Wheel, and as you do, you kind of trip a little bit, as—

**Clint:** [mouths sad trombone]

**Griffin:** So, what's your dex modifier, Taako?

**Justin:** Three.

**Griffin:** Ah, no.

**Justin:** Well, it's 16, then plus three.

**Griffin:** No, it's a plus one.

**Clint:** [whistles]

**Justin:** Okay...

**Griffin:** That's gonna hit your—that's gonna hit a lot of stuff, probably. AC, initiative.

**Justin:** You need to—Are you changing—You're not changing my modifier, you're changing my—

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah, whatever the score bumps it down to a plus one. I think that's a 12 maybe?

**Justin:** I just made it 126. That's not accurate.

**Griffin:** 126 is not—That would be a crazy sacrifice to make.

**Travis:** All right. Magnus is gonna spin.



**Griffin:** All right.

**Travis:** [sings] Do-do-do... Body.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Oh, man.

**Edward:** Body we've seen before in past rounds, although I'll admit, it's gonna hit you, the party's main defender, much, much harder than it did your accomplice. By choosing body, you will have a significant amount of your vitality drained from you, Magnus.

**Magnus:** I accept.

**Griffin:** Okay! It's gonna take 20 off your max HP. You're good?

**Travis:** Yup.

**Clint:** Hm!

**Griffin:** All right.

**Clint:** Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait! Off the max HP?

**Griffin:** Yup.

**Travis:** I mean, listen, my max HP is 111. So, that drops me down to 91. I'm still doing fine.

**Griffin:** All right, you walk up to the wheel and just how you saw it happen to Magnus earlier—or happened to Taako earlier, you just feel some of your vitality like drain from you. And you get kind of like a sour feeling in your stomach, and you feel like a really harsh, like cold chill kind of go through you.

**Travis:** I'll do some crunches later and get it back.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Now we have two lights up—

**Travis:** I spin again.

**Griffin:** Two lights up over the—Oh, okay?

**Travis:** Skull.

**Edward:** With skull, you're gonna have a spot of bad luck in the future, if you accept skull.

**Magnus:** Well, I'm having plenty of bad luck now. I accept. Spin again.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** All right, Magnus is just going beast mode, hold on.

**Merle:** And I'm next!

**Magnus:** Mind. I spin Mind.

**Griffin:** Oh, man... Oh, Trav, I could hurt you so bad with Mind though, bud!

**Travis:** I know.

**Griffin:** How do I wanna getcha? I have two ways to fuck you right now, Trav, and I'm trying to decide which one's the best one! One's hard... One's real bad. I'm not gonna do that one. I'll do the next one.

**Edward:** Magnus...

**Magnus:** Uh-huh?

**Edward:** You have someone that you... loved once, right? And they were taken from you by someone who you now hate. I wonder which one would be worse to take from you, the person that you loved or the person that you... hate. I think we'll go with... the latter. If you accept this sacrifice, you'll forget Governor Kalen. You'll forget all about him. You won't be able to track

him down. You just won't know anything about Governor Kalen. You'll forget what—You'll remember what he did to you, but you will not remember who did it.

**Justin:** I whisper in Magnus's ear:

**Taako:** I don't know who that is but that sounds chill as hell!

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Magnus:** I mean, right? Like...

**Taako:** Just let go and let go, my man. Finally, you can get your mind— That's what... that's what this person—whatever the person is, that I'm sure that's what they'd want, right?

**Merle:** Yeah! Get on with your life!

**Taako:** Get on with your life! What a gift!

**Magnus:** You know, here's the thing—

**Taako:** Wait a minute! So, those are the terms?

**Griffin:** Yup!

**Taako:** Magnus?

**Magnus:** Uh-huh?

**Taako:** Tell me what happened?

**Edward:** I'm sorry, I see what you all are doing here, and we've been running Wonderland for long enough. He won't be able to remember no matter what.

**Merle:** [under breath] I hate these liches...

**Edward:** You can tell him the story or whatever, but it's—that would be a shitty sacrifice, don't you think?

**Taako:** It's all right, I saw Memento.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Magnus:** You know what? Here's what I'm going to say... Merle, Taako?

**Taako:** Yeah?

**Magnus:** Don't try to remind me of it. But if in your journeys, you ever meet a slimy asshole named Governor Kalen, kill him on sight. Don't talk to him. Don't let him talk to you. Kill him. And tell him it's for Julia. That's the one thing I want you to say to his face before you kill him. This is for Julia, then you end him then and there. Understood?

**Taako:** And then loot—And then loot him for Julia!

**Magnus:** You do whatever the fuck you want after that.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Merle:** Yeah, well, listen. We kill most of the people we come in contact anyway? [chuckles]

**Taako:** Yeah yeah! Statistically speaking, we were probably gonna kill him eventually. So—

**Merle:** Deal made!

**Taako:** Yeah, deal confirmed.

**Magnus:** Accepted.

**Griffin:** And just like that, like Magnus's quest for vengeance just... ends.

**Clint:** And ours begin! [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] You're at four out of six lights.

**Merle:** I'm spinning. I'm spinning.

**Griffin:** Go for it.

**Merle:** All right, let's see.

**Justin:** Oh, sorry. Let me bring it up.

**Griffin:** That was real cool, Magnus.

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Magnus:** Hey, thanks. What was?

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Clint:** Merle spins Swords.

**Griffin:** Hm...

**Clint:** Come on. Come on. Give it to me!

**Edward:** The problem with swords for you, Merle, is you're just not a very—

**Merle:** [laughs] I haven't won any fights!

**Edward:** Yeah, you're not a very combative person...

**Merle:** One moment, please. Who killed the spider in our very first adventure? The big hairy spider.

**Edward:** You know, I wasn't there for that, so I'm not sure.

**Merle:** Well... Yeah...

**Edward:** Instead I'll change it, because I don't know that you have any big, glorious battles in the future—

**Merle:** Oh, bite me!

**Edward:** That I can take away from you...

**Griffin:** A little bit of smoke comes out of you when you say that.

**Edward:** But how about this? In your next battle here in Wonderland, you're gonna be a real dunce.

**Griffin:** And if you accept this—

**Travis:** No, but what's his punishment?

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Yeah, but then what happens after, yeah?

**Griffin:** If you accept this one, everything you do in the next battle, here in Wonderland, you will have disadvantage.

**Merle:** Accepted.

**Griffin:** All right! Five out of six.

**Edward:** You boys—You three are—

**Merle:** Wait! Accepted, you pricks!

**Griffin:** A little bit of that—

**Justin:** Oh, that's good. Make more black smoke. All right.

**Griffin:** Little bit of that smoke. And again, you see some of it get peeled off. And Magnus, you see, you see that Red Robe just eating it all up.

**Travis:** [slurping sounds]

**Justin:** I'm gonna spin the wheel now. Clock.

**Griffin:** Oh Taako... My sweet Taako.

**Taako:** What's up?

**Griffin:** How do elven ages work?

**Taako:** I thought you been running Wonderland for a long time? [laughs]

**Merle:** And you're elves!

**Griffin:** This is, this is Griffin, this is Griffin asking.

**Merle:** Or aren't they?!

**Griffin:** How about this? How about this? How about this? How about this? We'll leave it abstract. I'll take it from the—I'll take it—I got another thing.

**Edward:** Taako, you are... you are of the elven people and a good looking one, at that. And so, taking time from you is a tricky prospect, because elves can live a long, long time. And we don't want to establish a discrepancy in the sacrifices that we demand from our participants. So, instead of taking your age from you...

**Taako:** Mm-hm?

**Edward:** What if we sort of take away something that diminishes over time? Which is to say... some of your beauty, Taako!

**Clint:** [chuckles] Oh-ho-ho-ho!

**Edward:** I wonder if you would accept a sacrifice that deals a hit to your vanity like that? If you take this, Taako, you'll just become... slightly less of just a beautiful, young elf man.

**Merle:** Can he choose what part of him is not as attractive?

**Taako:** Will it... will it make—Okay...

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** So like, I'll go from sort of... Feminine, ethereal beauty, to more like a sort of craggy Richard Burton kind of...

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Taako:** Handsome kind of thing.

**Edward:** More of a Richard Karn-esque beauty is what we're talking about.

**Travis:** That's way too beautiful, Griffin. Choose again.

**Edward:** More of a Richard Linklater—

**Griffin:** No, he looks good, damn it.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** He looks good, he looks fuckin' good.

**Griffin:** [laughs] I love that you were just like, "Oh, yeah! My fuckin' agility in battle? Fuck that, no way. But my beauty? Hm..."

**Justin:** Well, you have to understand that like, for Taako, it's not just vanity. I mean it's like the way he sees himself is as a television personality that has been disgraced, but will eventually come back—not like television, but you know what I mean. Who will reclaim his rightful place...

**Griffin:** Right.

**Justin:** And that... This is counter to that.

**Merle:** Hey, I'll take another spin?



**Taako:** No!

**Griffin:** If you do that, you'd have two spins, 'cause you would lose one. That's how the penalty works.

**Taako:** How—like how bad?

**Clint:** [laughs] How ugly?

**Lydia:** I'll put it this way, Taako, for the first time in your life, you will simply look... normal. You will be... plain.

**Griffin:** And you hear Edward say:

**Edward:** Well, that's a fate worse than death if you ask me, but Taako, it's your sacrifice to make, bud.

**Taako:** I just don't—I know I need to make a decision, here.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Taako:** It's just... you know. It's a tough one, right?

**Griffin:** You say, to one-eyed Merle and Magnus who just forgot the killer of his—

**Travis:** No, listen, listen, listen. Everybody's battles are their own and—

**Justin:** Yeah, but like—

**Travis:** I'm not gonna sit there and tell Taako that his struggle is worse or less than mine. I realize how hard it—

**Justin:** Taako is also not a good person! Like, Taako's not a good person. Like, this would be very hard!

**Travis:** Yeah, I know Taako well enough at this point to understand how hard this must be for him.

**Magnus:** I understand if this is too much, and I'll take two spins if you need to say no.

**Taako:** Listen. I've thought about it a lot. And as near as I can figure, normal Taako is still head and shoulders above 90% of the population on this stupid planet.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Taako:** So, let's go ahead and go normal!

**Griffin:** You instantly are changed, and you don't feel it. And Merle and Magnus, like—

**Merle:** Ugh!

**Griffin:** No, he still looks—like, he's not unrecognizable, right, he still looks like Taako. But like, there are differences that you—just because you've travelled with him for so long, you can kind of pick out. Just like you know, his lips aren't as full, and his eyes aren't as soft.

**Travis:** What's the opposite of je ne sais quoi?

**Griffin:** He's got the je ne sais—[flat noise]

**Justin:** I cast Disguise Self on Taako.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** To make myself look like old Taako.

**Griffin:** And instantly—[laughs]

**Travis:** Except I still see normal Taako.

**Griffin:** Except he still sees normal Taako with his True Sight.

**Clint:** Oh dear god, this is getting confusing.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it sure is! Okay, Taako, you're beautiful again, but you're gonna have to keep burning that spell in order to keep yourself—That's great, you have fucking arcane cosmetics now! This is the best game ever made!

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** With that, the sixth dot opens up—the sixth dot turns green and the big stone door opens up into the next chamber.

**Clint:** Shit...

**Travis:** Griffin, where's the Red Robe right now?

**Griffin:** The Red Robe is floating towards the door and motioning you towards it.

**Magnus:** All right. Let's go, boys!

**Griffin:** They step through the doors, and as they do, the Red Robe leans down, and you can like see the Red Robe doing this now. And it extends a skeletal finger and prods it into your palm, and makes a mark in it, of Thieves Cant. And it's a symbol that thieves use to let others know that it's gonna pop off soon.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Justin:** That's fun.

**Griffin:** You move into the next room, and it's another big circular chamber, and it's the Trust or Forsake Room. And you step in, and you don't even get a rules explanation this time, I think that Edward and Lydia just assume that you know what the deal is. But these rings of light are emanating from the platform in the middle of the room, and the screen on it spins, and the face

that pops up on it—I'm just gonna say it, because I rolled for the other two, but I just want everybody to get a turn on it. Magnus, your face, your pixelated character of your face appears on the pedestal, and you hear Edward say:

**Edward:** You know what's up, right? If things work in your favor, you can breeze right through the next challenge, or you could face your doom. It's up to you, Magnus. Have at it!

**Travis:** And as I stare at the buttons, the sad face of Rowan appears before me, saying the word 'why?'

**Clint:** [dramatic humming]

**Travis:** And I look at Taako. And what is Taako doing, Justin?

**Justin:** Taako, you see before her, the sad face of Taako—Stop it! And Taako mouths:

**Taako:** Because I would've died.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** And I look over at Merle. What's Merle doing?

**Clint:** Picking his nose.

**Merle:** [sighs]

**Justin:** With his tree arm.

**Travis:** And I look back at the button... and I see the face of Julia! No, I hit 'Trust.'

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Taako:** Son of a bitch.

**Merle:** Stupid...

**Griffin:** You hit 'Trust' and the same sort of display appears in front of you again, and it says you chose 'Trust', and then it says they chose...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** Do you have a two sided die?

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** No.

**Travis:** It's called a quarter.

**Griffin:** They also chose Trust!

**Justin:** Hey!

**Clint:** Yay!

**Griffin:** Both parties chose 'Trust' and you hear Edward say:

**Edward:** Aw... Okay. Sorry, this just like never happens.

**Griffin:** And the door on the other side of the room slides open.

**Magnus:** Let's go!

**Justin:** Well, let's go!

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, because you both chose 'Trust,' you play the easiest version of the challenge ahead of you. I mean, it's still gonna be tough, but you know...

**Clint:** Can we win something this arc?

**Griffin:** Boy, let's see! You move into the next chamber and it's another huge circular room. And you realize as you walk in, that the walls and floors and ceiling of this room are all made out of this really detailed screen, almost like an LED screen. And it's showing like these scenic vistas, almost like it's like screensaver mode.

So, as you walk in, this screen makes it look like you're standing in a big tropical beach. And then it looks like you're standing in this smoky, forested mountain, and then it looks like you're standing next to a babbling brook.

And at the far end of this room is a pile of bodies. But as you approach them you realize that they're not dead folks, they are more of those wooden marionettes. And they're the same types, they're intricately carved with all the different points of articulation and no faces. And as you enter the room, the screen around you goes dark, and you hear Lydia say:

**Lydia:** This challenge is gonna be fun to watch. Say, are any of you feeling particularly nostalgic?

**Taako:** Yeah...

**Merle:** Yeah, I long for the time when we weren't in this place.

**Griffin:** And Merle, as you say that a bit of black smog comes out of you—

**Clint:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** And it joins a big cloud of black smog that lowers down from the ceiling. And this cloud like sucks up some of the mannequins from the pile. And then all of a sudden, this cloud takes the form of a massive red dragon. And the screens around you are displaying what looks like a dragon's hoard, like a dragon's cave. And you can see some of the mannequin shapes like floating in its semi-translucent skin, but it looks and sounds so real.

But then it changes shape and some of the mannequins fall out of the cloud, and it transforms into a hill giant holding a massive club. And all of a sudden, you're standing in the ruins of a castle on a hill, that the screen is showing you.

And then the shape dissipates, and then it reforms, sucking up more of those mannequins from the back of the room. And all of a sudden, it's a floating beholder, with all of its different eyestalks glowing with different colors.

And two mannequins raise up from the floor and all of a sudden, they're surrounded by black smoke and they transform into mind flayers. And all the while, while you're seeing these different scenes and this shape is transforming into different monsters, a word is circling the room on that screen that says 'Calibrating'.

And after a few more of these transformations all the mannequins fall to the floor, and the screen surrounding you lights up, and it makes it look like you're standing in some sort of cavern. Only, the walls of the cavern are giving off a faint glow, and then a bunch of mannequins are picked up off the ground, and absorbed by the smog and it starts to take shape. And you see eight long black legs with a thick body, and two sharp pincers, and a long stinger appear out of that smog. And one of the mannequins just stands up from the pile and is encircled with smog. And suddenly that one is holding a smooth staff, and it's wearing a fantastic robe, emblazoned with a spider.

**Travis:** Oh, I see.

**Clint:** Brians!

**Griffin:** And then those two figures come to life and start to march towards you, as three words appear on the ceiling on the screen, and they say 'Boss Rush: Begin.'

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [chuckles]

[theme music plays]

[ad read]

**Griffin:** Got a few jumbotron messages to read for you too. This one's for Joel Gin, and it's from Maggie the Maggot... that's a fun nickname for Maggie. Augustus and Lysander who say, "Dear Joel, congratulations on being the kind of DM and friend that warrants well wishes from the brothers McElroy. Thanks for the great adventures, and happy questing for your doctorate in psychology. You'll always have a spot at our table!"

A person with a doctorate in psychology, and I don't wanna like cast dispersions here, would have some pretty nasty like tricks up their sleeve when it came to DM'ing. Like, if this person was running The Suffer Game, I feel like they could really get deep down in that... deep down in that super ego and do some wild stuff.

I have another message here for Universal, and is from Blaze, Vapperoo, Blood Ted, Quin and Keyann, and Scoo. And I'm gonna go and think—I'm gonna guess this is a D&D group. But they say, "To a truly great storyteller. We really enjoyed season one of The Crate and Cobalt campaign, and it's very lit for the next one. Thanks for all the fun times, and thank you in advance for gifting Blaze the magical sword Elf Licker, which turns into a dog for one D6 turn, if you attack an elf with it."

I don't know, it sounds a little OP to me, but... Balde gon' get what Blaze wants.

[ad read]

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** All right, initiative.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** I got a seven, total.

**Justin:** 16 for me.

**Clint:** I have a 13.



**Griffin:** All right.

**Clint:** Do you remember the voice? [laughs]

**Griffin:** This doesn't have a voice, these two things, weirdly enough, they look kind of like Magic Brian and Bryan, but they don't—they aren't making any sound. They aren't like speaking to you, and they look like—Magic Brian also doesn't have a face. Yeah.

**Clint:** Aw...

**Griffin:** First up is Taako, and I will warn you guys that this battle that I've devised here is kind of a special case, in which like it's gonna move and change in ways that like battles typically don't in this game. So, just a head's up. I don't want a bunch of people telling me rule stuff, because this is gonna be a different kind of battle. But Taako, you are up first.

**Justin:** I'll just cast Magic Missile, as a second level spell on Magic Brian.

**Griffin:** Okay, what is that—those automatically hit, right?

**Justin:** It just gives it—Yeah, it's one D4 plus one force damage. As a second level spell, it's an additional dart. So...

**Griffin:** Okay. You hit him with four—

**Justin:** four darts.

**Griffin:** Okay, go ahead and roll it.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** One—no sorry, four, two, three, two.

**Travis:** 11.

**Justin:** 11, yeah.

**Griffin:** Okay! You hit Magic Brian for 11 points of damage, and with that, the facade that was sort of composing this Magic Brian, you like knock it off of him as the fourth bolt hits. And you see that just turned into black smoke, that lifts up into the ceiling. And the mannequin—the marionette falls down and is sort of sucked back into the pile in the back of the room.

**Travis:** [mouths tune of "Final Fantasy Victory"]

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Well, kind of. Merle, you're up next.

**Justin:** Inspiring.

**Griffin:** Merle, you're up next. You have Bryan the Spider in front of you.

**Clint:** I cast Sanctuary on Magnus.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Clint:** That wards Magnus, any creature who targets Magnus, with an attack or harmful spell, must make a wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** It doesn't protect the warded creature from area effects.

**Griffin:** Got it. All right, you cast a buff on Magnus. Next up is the Boss, the big spider Bryan, seeing that its accomplice was just killed, is gonna make an attack on Taako. And it's just gonna—

**Clint:** I meant I cast it on Taako!

**Griffin:** Nope. And it just jumps forward and tries to grab you with its pincers, and bite into you.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** 19, versus AC.

**Travis:** I'm gonna do protection. I jump in front with the shield.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** That's disadvantage.

**Griffin:** Got it.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** 15, versus AC.

**Justin:** That I do have to check. 19 was a defo hit. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's gonna hit too.

**Griffin:** All right.

**Travis:** We need to get you some new pants, Taako.

**Griffin:** Some thick armored pants.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** You get bit for 14 points of damage, Taako.

**Justin:** Mm, delicious.

**Griffin:** Next in the order is Magnus.

**Travis:** I'm gonna attack with my two handed axe. Well, yeah, I'll attack one handed with the axe and keep my shield out.

**Griffin:** Okay!

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** 18?

**Griffin:** That is just enough!

**Travis:** Nice, cool, I'm also gonna turn it into a goading attack. When attack lands, superiority dice plus damage, and you have to make a wisdom saving throw. So damage is... eight...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** Plus five, so that's 13.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** And then my superiority dice I rolled a seven. So, you'll need to roll a 20 or better as a saving throw.

**Griffin:** Plus—Yeah, okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** I rolled a 14, I don't think there's anything I can add to that that's gonna get me there, so okay!

**Travis:** Cool. So, 13 points of damage—

**Griffin:** So, now I have to attack you, but then—

**Travis:** Yup!

**Griffin:** ... I have to roll a wisdom save to even get the attack off.

**Travis:** Yup!

**Griffin:** Okay, that's cool. Whoa you guys are really using your heads on this fight.

**Travis:** Well, you know, in my old age now...

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, okay. Well, how much damage did you do?

**Travis:** 13 points of damage.

**Griffin:** Okay, with that, Bryan, the spider, just collapses. And a bunch of those marionettes fall out of him and get pulled back into the shape in the back of the room. And the cloud dissipates and floats up into the ceiling. And then the room changes. And all of a sudden, the room actually looks like—and this may be kind of a bummer for you guys, but it looks like Phandalin. And that smoke comes down and absorbs some of those marionettes and it's taking on kind of a humanoid shape. And all of a sudden, standing in front of you is a giant flaming dwarf.

**Clint:** Are we talking pre-us, or post-us?

**Griffin:** It looks like—just based in the scene, and the big flaming dwarf in the middle, it looks like it's gonna be during-us.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Okay and...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** Ditto, this whole time, True Sight giving me any insight?

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's a good question. Your True Sight actually lets you see the red robe. And the red robe is like behind all of this. Like behind the pile of bodies. And seems to be like working on something on the far side of the room. Kind of close to the exit door from this room. It looks like he's trying to channel some sort of spell, or something? But yeah, the red robe's doing something, on the far side of this room, that's what you're seeing. Taako, you're up.

**Travis:** Hold on. Magnus wants to say out loud:

**Magnus:** Hey, hey, fellas? Should I circle around, do you think?

**Travis:** And I keep an eye on the red robe to see how he reacts.

**Griffin:** He just extends a single finger, as if to say like, "Wait a minute."

**Justin:** I'm gonna cast... First off, I'm gonna roll an arcana check.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Justin:** To see, if I have any idea what's going on here.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** 17.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I mean, this is just like really, really advanced like animation magic. The black smoke—

**Travis:** Like Pixar?

**Griffin:** Yeah. The black smoke, you have like—you've never seen anything quite like it. It seems to be like instantiating, like creating stuff? In a way that you've like never seen magic behave before. So, it's like some combination of those things. But yeah, you understand that these things are being animated and brought to life.

There's also some sort of—you can feel now that you've rolled this check, there's something sort of like scanning you? Like you feel... you feel some sort of presence in your own mind, Taako, that is scanning you. And you intuit that it is like feeding it the information that is showing it like how to transform into these battles that you fought before.

**Justin:** When Magic Brian—when the Brians disappeared and the dwarf reappeared, were they in basically the same area?

**Griffin:** Yeah, more or less, like in the center of the room.

**Justin:** Okay. I'm going to cast the Hunger of Hadar.

**Griffin:** Holy shit.

**Travis:** What?

**Justin:** I'm opening a gateway to the Dark Between the Stars, it's a region infested with unknown horrors.

**Clint:** Yeah, you know.

**Justin:** You know.

**Clint:** Well, you don't know.

**Justin:** A 20-foot-radius sphere of blackness and bitter cold appears centered on a point, that is basically the dwarf's nards. And it's gonna last for a minute. The void is a cacophony of soft whispers and slurping noises, it can be heard from 30 feet away. There's no light that can illuminate the area, and it creates a warp in the fabric of space, and the area is difficult terrain. Any creature that starts its turn in the area takes two D6 cold damage. If you end your turn in the area, you have to take a dexterity saving throw or take two D6 acid damage, as otherworldly tentacles rub against you.

**Travis:** Is that level one? Or...

**Griffin:** The explanation I'm reading says 'milky' otherworldly tentacles rub against you. And I'm wondering why you didn't read that particular adjective.

**Justin:** It was just a little too grody.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And that's the hunger of Hodor?

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** That's the hunger of... it's the hunger of Hagar.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [chuckles] It's pretty horrible, I'll tell you guys what.

**Clint:** A little fat barbarian comes down.

**Griffin:** All right, this weird black, starry field appears on the ground. But they don't have to roll anything 'til its turn, right?

**Justin:** Right.

**Griffin:** Okay. Merle, you're up.

**Travis:** We're just staring at a big like orb, with milky tentacles coming out of it. [chuckles] And it's like, "Okay, now we have to do something."

**Justin:** I would recommend no one be near that at the beginning of their turn. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah, you can still definitely see—

**Travis:** That's just Battle Tips 101.

**Griffin:** You can still definitely see the flaming dwarf inside of it.

**Clint:** I'm going to cast... I'm gonna cast Guardian of Faith and bring forth Angelic Della Reese.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Travis:** [sighs]



**Clint:** And any creature hostile, to the three of us, that moves into a space within 10 feet of the guardian, on the first time must succeed on a dexterity throw... the creature takes 20 radiant damage on a failed save. Or half as much on a successful one.

**Travis:** I can't wait 'til it's my turn to cast Axe.

**Griffin:** Okay. [chuckles]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** 'Cause everybody's... He's summoning Della Reese, he's summoning spheres of milky tentacles, and I swing a piece of metal on a stick!  
[chuckles]

**Griffin:** All right. So, Della Reese, your guardian angel, appears in the same space. You guys are just kind of stacking up these bombs for this horrible figure. [chuckles] And she appears in the field. One weird thing happens where you've cast this spell a few times on your adventure now. This time, when you summon your angel it takes her like a while to show up. Not too long, but like five seconds longer than usual. Also, some milky black tentacles come out of the orb —

**Clint:** No. No. No, no, no, no, no, no. Guardian of Faith—

**Griffin:** But she fights them off.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Clint:** All right... Cheater.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Next up is the giant, flaming dwarf, who takes two D6 cold damage, so go ahead and roll that.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** four...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Five. Nine.

**Griffin:** Okay. And then has to roll to escape, right?

**Justin:** No, it's at the end—if it's still in there at the end of its turn.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** It has to do that.

**Griffin:** Oh, it has to roll a save, right? For the guardian angel? A dexterity saving throw. This is the dex save for the angel.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** 22.

**Clint:** What? You have a 22 sided die?

**Griffin:** No. Sometimes you add numbers to the numbers in Dungeons and Dragons.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** So, it takes half damage. So, it takes 10.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And it is still not down. And it is going to... Step forward to try to get away from this horrible death trap in the middle of the room. And it fires off a fireball, targeted at sort of the middle of all of you, including Cam. And—

**Magnus:** No!

**Griffin:** All of you make a dexterity saving throw.

**Magnus:** No!

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** I got a 15?

**Griffin:** That is not gonna do it.

**Justin:** Did you say a dexterity saving throw?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Should be no problem for me! I'll just—Oh, wait.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [laughs]

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** 13.

**Griffin:** Nope.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** [sighs] five.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** All right. So, Cam got a nat 20 and I'm not sure how this is even gonna work out.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Roll!

**Clint:** You wanted to be the dungeon master!

**Griffin:** Cam's—[chuckles] Yeah, Cam, I guess, gets—just sort of like tugs away and falls off your shoulder, Taako. And rolls out of the blast.

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** What did you get, Merle?

**Clint:** Five.

**Griffin:** Okay. And the three of you are surrounded by a wave of flame, that hits you...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** Oh, oh, oh!

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** For... 11 damage each. With that, the shape dissipates. And the flaming dwarf is gone. And appearing in the middle of the room, you see three of the marionettes pick themselves up from the pile and start walking towards you. And they are surrounded by black smoke.

And all of a sudden, you see in front of you two of them turn into these like grisly, meaty shapes. And the one in the middle, you see transform into a tuxedo with a very bright—Not a tuxedo, but like a nice red suit, with a bright, shimmering bow tie. And you recognize them as Jenkins and the two meat monsters. Cam, after being knocked off Taako's shoulder, he looks up at you, Taako, and he says:

**Cam:** I'm gettin' pretty sick of this! Taako, you got a spare wand?

**Clint:** [chuckles] Does he even have a wand?

**Taako:** Yes, I have a spare wand.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's 'cause you're using your brella, but you still have your starter wand.

**Justin:** Yeah, right.

**Taako:** Here you go.

**Cam:** Toss it down to me.

**Griffin:** He catches it. He catches it in his mouth and he moves it, he moves it around a little bit. And all of a sudden, Cam is now levitating.

**Taako:** Hell yeah!

**Magnus:** What? You could have done that this whole time? We've been carrying your head!

**Griffin:** He looks over at you, Magnus, and he says:

**Cam:** [muffled] Spell slots!

**Griffin:** And then he points his wand at Jenkins and the two meat monsters, and he says:

**Cam:** Heads up!

[“Déjà Vu” by Mort Garson plays]

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