

The Adventure Zone: Steeplechase - Episode 34

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Krystal: Okay, gang! This one is a little sad... Sources speaking exclusively with Steeple Watch say that the recent closure of Poppy's Place is unplanned and apparently indefinite. I know, heartbreaking, right? While it's true that none of us here at Steeple Watch have ever actually been to the arcade, it's an essential part of Ustaben. And if it ever permanently closes, we will literally die. Unless something way better takes its place or they turn it into a really nice bathroom.

Ugh, the silence is too much! If you think that you can guess what this corporation has up its sleeve, we hope you never know when to stop dreaming.

[Steeplechase theme song plays]

Justin: Welcome once again to the adventure of Steeplechase.

Travis: Ooh?

Justin: I'm so excited to have you back. If I remember correctly, it wasn't going great.

Clint: No.

Travis: Now, that's subjective.

Griffin: It was our worst series of rolls in... definitely, this season.

Clint: After our best series of rolls!

Griffin: Yeah, we were hot shit in the beginning of the episode, when it didn't fuckin' matter. And then we were dog shit when it definitely did matter, and we were trying not to die while crossing a river.

Travis: Here's the problem with tabletop games, right, when you do something like—

Griffin: Go off, king. Go off.

Travis: Like try to skimboard across a river with chihuawls in it, right. A thing that should just work, sometimes, the dice do not reflect the ease that should naturally have been built into that action. Right?

Justin: Isn't that interesting?

Clint: And I have an anecdote in the fact that I was really off my game because I was remembering the time Carol and I went up the four flights of stairs to ride the two-person waterslide at the beach. And when we got up to the top, the guy said we were too heavy, and we couldn't ride. So, then he took the two-person raft and just flung it. And we had to—

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: He did! He flung it off and Carol and I had to trudge all the way down those four flights of stairs. So, all those people were going, "Look at the fatties." It was awful.

Travis: Hey, Dad? Dad? Dad? Did you get that guy's name?

Justin: Yeah, because I'm gonna bring him down.

Travis: I'll fuckin' beat his ass!

Justin: Nobody tells me I'm too fat for fun. I don't want to hear it.

Travis: Yeah!

Justin: I don't want to hear it anymore. Safety be damned!

Clint: Well, that's why I was off my game.

Travis: I'm gonna find that man. Hey, guy, guy who did that to my daddy, if you're listening—

Justin: It was at the beach, dad?

Clint: It was at the beach water park, yeah.

Justin: Well, good news for him, it's a fucking parking lot now.

Travis: Yeah!

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: So, fuck that guy.

Travis: That's what you get!

Justin: That's what you get. I shut it down myself. I had all my wealthy industrialist friends shut it down.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Travis: Hey, Justin, could you get them to work on some other stuff now? No, that was my one.

Justin: No, that was my one—

Griffin: He got one wish.

Travis: Ah, damn it.

Justin: [chuckles] I know. Everybody gets one from wealthy industrialists.

Travis: Fuck.

Griffin: He saved all their nieces from a big fight.

Justin: I pushed my luck, because a few weeks later, I had them save a pirate radio station that was gonna be bought. [chuckles]

Travis: Oh, yeah.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: By big money. So...

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: I hate big money.

Justin: I spent my one. You guys are in a bad situation, currently, where you are, all three of you in a... the Crazy River. Which is a lazy river for kids. [chuckles] Or at least that's what it was designed to be. It's filled with detritus. You are currently staring up at Orwell, a pterodactyl/gorilla hybrid. Who is unimpressed so far by your efforts.

Travis: Hey, you know what? I'm unimpressed by him. And I want to make that clear.

Justin: What are you making clear?

Travis: I'm unimpressed by this flying gorilla.

Justin: Gorilla Dactyl.

Griffin: That's crazy, what you just said. It's very impressive.

Travis: I know...

Justin: Yeah, it's so wild.

Travis: I know, but like—

Clint: He was trying to intimidate him.

Travis: It's hard to be intimidating, having done what we just did.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: All of it. And then be like, "So you better watch yourself." [chuckles]

Clint: Are we floating down—are we floating down at great speed?

Justin: Yes, yes. And the more you talk the, farther you—it's not great speed, it's a lazy river.

Clint: Oh.

Justin: So, you are being swept, but it is not at a great speed. And Orwell is watching you with sort of a cocked head and sort of content to gradually like float along and watch you. And he says:

Orwell: This will be fascinating. I have never watched a man drown.

Travis: All right. I swim to the side because it's like two feet away, I think.

Justin: You think that, but you're actually—

Travis: Well, because—

Justin: What?

Travis: So, Montrose, you said, made it three quarters of the way across. And you said it was 15 feet wide. So, that means that he made it 12 feet, and it was 3 feet. So then, I angled the rope so that he was closer, and then I skimboarded across. And you said I got to him, but I didn't make it all the way. So, if we're closer than three feet, we're at least no more than two feet away.

Justin: How are you swimming in a way that also accounts for the chihuawls, that are closing in on you?

Travis: I'm pushing off the detritus that's in the thing, just trying to get to the side. Because my arm is at least three feet long. So, I'm just reaching out for the side and trying to grab it.

Justin: Okay, your arm is at least three feet long? Yeah, I guess.

Travis: Yeah, Beef is tall, man.

Justin: Yeah. Okay. So, you're just trying to like pull yourself onto the edge?

Travis: Yeah, trying to get up out of the water where the chihuaowls are.

Justin: Okay. This is probably...

Griffin: Probably prowl.

Justin: I guess it's prowl. I guess, yeah.

Travis: Okay. How are we that it's prowl?

Griffin: Swim is literally one of the words in prowl.

Travis: Yeah, that's true. That's a good point. That's a good point. What's my posish? Is it Husky, standard?

Clint: Husky. [chuckles]

Justin: No, it's risky... standard, yeah. Risky, standard.

Travis: Eh, oy-oy-oy-oy... eh, I'm not gonna push myself. Am I gonna push myself? I'm gonna push myself.

Emerich: [cheers] Beef! Beef! Beef! Beef! Beef! Beef!

Travis: Unless, Montrose, do you want to help? Since like I'm helping you over there? Do you want to kick your little legs or something?

Griffin: We're both in the shit right now. I don't know why I would—I can help you?

Travis: Because I'm with you! I have you.

Griffin: Sure, I push his butt. I push his butt from behind.

Travis: You're holding my like shirtsleeve or whatever, kick your little legs?

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Justin: It sounds like—the way you've described it, it sounds like an impediment, Travis. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, I don't think I could help.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Well, if you want him to try to help, I guess you guys could swim together?

Griffin: Yeah, I'll push your butt. Take one bonus.

Travis: You push my butt? Thank you.

Griffin: Yeah, I push it.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Son of a gun...

Travis: Four, two. So, a mixed success.

Clint: You didn't push it real good.

Griffin: I guess not.

Travis: No, hey, he pushed my butt just fine. Maybe it tickled a little bit and it threw me off.

Justin: Travis, you make it to the edge, but you notice that—as you've made it to the side, you notice that several chihuaowls have clamped onto your legs and arms.

Griffin: Wow.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Montrose?

Griffin: Am I holding on to Beef? I guess I just—

Justin: I mean, that's the way we described it. I guess you could, Beef, you could take another action to try to get Montrose up if you wanted to. Or Montrose, you could try to pull yourself up with a Beef ladder?

Griffin: Yeah, I'm going to use Beef like a ladder and I'm going to climb Beef.

Travis: Sure. Yeah.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: I'm going to prowl, I think?

Justin: Prowl? Yeah.

Travis: You're gonna prowl across the Mount Beef!

Griffin: Risky, standard?

Justin: Yeah.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: It's gonna be great. Six.

Justin: Six!

Griffin: I zoom up him like a spider monkey.

Travis: Well, a six, a two and a two. Don't just say the six.

Justin: A six, a two and a two. But the two and the two are lost to history, the six is—

Travis: Yeah, but give it context!

Griffin: Zoom right up in.

Justin: Okay. Montrose, with an actually pretty impressive little bit of dexterity, you use Beef's hand to sort of pull yourself forward and you do a cool roll on to the grass. Not sparing yourself any chihuaowls in the process.

Griffin: Yeah. I'm going to start unfucking the situation. Where's Emerich?

Justin: He's just floating.

Clint: [spoofs drowning sounds]

Justin: Yeah, he's just floating downstream.

Griffin: All right, I—

Travis: But wait, what happened—wait, hold on, where's Emerich—wait [chuckles] I thought he was still on the other side of the—oh, no.

Griffin: We all went into the drink.

Clint: [spoofs drowning sounds]

Griffin: I take my—I pull my rebar club slackline tether out of the ground and I'm gonna sort of swing it over my head and try to throw it to Emerich to grab.

Justin: Okay. Finesse.

Griffin: Sure.

Justin: I would guess, this sort of action?

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: I know you'd like.

Griffin: Risky, standard?

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. Boop, boop, boop, six.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Four, three, four, three. Not a six. Four, a mixed success.

Justin: Three four three, great for Halo, bad for you. [chuckles]

Griffin: Great, loving Halo!

Justin: Loving Halo, bad for you. Let's see, with a three four three, what is it you're using?

Griffin: I mean, so I had this—

Justin: Describe the object to me so I can visualize it.

Griffin: Yeah. So, originally, I shot my rebar club thing over here into the ground with the rope, the cable tied to it that I sort of slacklined. So, I just kind of pulled that out of the ground and then I threw it towards Emerich so that he could grab it and grab the cable and I could pull him out, fish him out of the water.

Justin: Okay, with a three, four, three, you chuck this little, I don't know, makeshift grappling hook, if you want to call it that, that you have fashioned. And with three, four, three, the rope sails perfectly through the air and lands right in front of Emerich. What does happen, though, is the knot that you used to affix the two together comes loose, and the rebar continues to sail through the air, unimpeded.

Travis: Aw...

Griffin: Aw!

Justin: And drifts down through the water.

Griffin: So, that's gone.

Justin: But the rope is right in front of you, Emerich. Let's say you go ahead and grab it, because that's wild. But what do you do now? You're holding on to this rope.

Clint: I'm holding on to the rope!

Justin: You're holding on to the rope.

Clint: Yeah. So, I let go of my two stilts.

Griffin: What an idea that was, though, Clint.

Travis: Oh, right. Oh, yeah.

Griffin: I salute the stilts as they float away. What a good idea.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Yeah, well, they were Hard Light, weren't they?

Clint: Yeah...

Justin: Yeah. All right. Well, they just kind of... [blows raspberry] just kind of dissipate into nothing. [chuckles]

Clint: And I tie the rope around my waist.

Justin: Oh, okay? All right.

Clint: And yell:

Emerich: Save me, friends!

Beef: Save yourself!

Emerich: Okay!

Beef: How noodley are your arms that you can't pull?

Justin: Hey, this is up to you all. Oh, I don't know how you're dealing with this.

Griffin: Beef, are you on the shore yet?

Beef: They should call us Noodles and Beef. Come on, man!

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: Is Beef on the shore yet? Has Beef gotten himself—

Travis: I'm gonna pull myself up, yeah. I pull myself up.

Griffin: Does he need to do anything for that? Or was he—

Justin: No, Beef... Beef made it to safety. He's fine.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: You're both fine.

Travis: Am I hurt by the chihuahua, or are they like just all on my pants?

Justin: They are clamped onto your arm and leg, you notice, since you checked. It's like disconcerting, but it doesn't hurt.

Travis: Oh.

Montrose: Hm, kind of cute. All right, you anchor from the back. We're gonna tug of war our friend right out of the water. Ready?

Beef: Okay, yeah.

Montrose: You could stop spinning, even, like a rotisserie. And then just sort of wrap the cable around yourself and I'll help sort of—

Beef: I can just use my arms to pull, like—

Montrose: Yeah, sure. Just go, just start pulling the cable. He is going to die.

Beef: Okay, great.

Montrose: Cool.

Beef: Yup.

Griffin: And we tug him up. We tug him.

Justin: Okay, that's—let's make that... let's make this a group action.

Griffin: Okay?

Justin: Because you're all three working towards the same thing. And I'll let Beef take the lead, and this is just pure strength. So, what do we do?

Clint: I was just looking at that.

Justin: I guess—

Clint: Skirmish?

Justin: Skirmish, no, it's more like... I don't know, what do you think, Trav?

Travis: I would say that if we're going off strength, then I would say roll the number of dice that you have, like dots in prowess.

Justin: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Travis: Like behind the line, you know what I mean? So like, I have four, because I have one in all four prowess, right. So, I could roll four dice, is what I mean.

Justin: All right, so, we'll make you the leader of the group action here. A rising Beef lifts all of you. So, let's see.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Oh my god.

Clint: Shit!

Justin: Wow.

Travis: Three, two, two, four.

Justin: Wow!

Travis: I got a mixed success.

Griffin: Jesus Christ, I got a two, three.

Justin: Well, the only one who matters is Travis, right? Isn't that how group actions work?

Griffin: No—

Travis: Well, but I think I have to take stress if he fucks up.

Justin: Let's see, lead a group. Lead a group action. "Roll for each character who participates in the group action. The best single role counts as the action result which applies to every character that rolled." Okay, dad—

Griffin: So, dad—

Justin: So, you have a chance here. [chuckles] You have a chance here. How many points do you have in prowess?

Clint: How many points? I have two.

Justin: In prowess, you have two points?

Clint: Mm-hm.

Justin: So, that will mean that you're going to roll two die.

Griffin: Just click prowl. Just click where it says the word prowess. It'll do it for you.

Justin: Click the word prowess. We'll see if dad can save your all's proverbial bacon.

Clint: No bonus die...

Griffin: Please get a six.

[dice rolling]

Griffin: Oh my god... So, four is gonna be it.

Clint: One and four!

Justin: Four is... four is gonna be—

Travis: So, I do take—I take one stress for each PC that rolled one to three as their best result. So, that includes Griffin.

Justin: So, you take one stress.

Griffin: Sorry.

Travis: Sorry. It's okay, I forgive you.

Justin: It's a mixed success, still, even at its best.

Travis: Correct.

Justin: Emerich, you... [chuckles] you manage to pull yourself up with the rope. And you realize, though, that in the action, during this action, you were holding on so tightly and the rope was... so vehemently pulled that it caused abrasions all over your hands. And they're stiff and there are burns on the inside from holding on to the rope so tightly. You find that you have trouble even moving them, let alone operating the Give a Ghost Projector. So, mark yourself for a level one harm on your hands. Rope burn. But you do manage to be pulled up to the edge.

Griffin: Great.

Clint: Rope burn, got it.

Orwell: Well, that was... very entertaining. Thank you for the diversion.

Montrose: Glad we could... help. Thank you, by the way, for your assistance in this matter.

Orwell: I did not assist.

Montrose: Okay.

Emerich: He was being sarcastic.

Montrose: Yes. I think we may have gotten off on the wrong foot, Orwell, was it?

Orwell: This is Orwell.

Montrose: Okay. Can you land so we can talk? It's weird yelling at a flying gorilla. Could you land so we can...

Orwell: I shall.

Justin: And then Orwell lands on the ground.

Montrose: Great.

Griffin: How big is Orwell? How imposing?

Travis: About gorilla sized.

Justin: He's like eight feet tall.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: What?

Justin: It's not realistic gorilla, it's an animatronic gorilla.

Travis: That's like one of them scary girls from Congo!

Justin: Yeah, man. It looks really scary.

Travis: Ah, messed up, man.

Montrose: My name is Montrose pretty. These are my associates, Beef and Emerich. And can I be straight with you, Mr. Flying Gorilla Orwell? We have been dispatched to try to steal some sort of chocolate powdered substance. I could give less of a shit about this.

Our sights are, I would say, on a loftier goal, a loftier target. And the sort of exploits of you here in the trash realm could not matter to me less. So, I don't... I'm not going to try and steal your chocolate. I want to get the hell out of New Kidadelphia. That's where I'm at as a person and I just want you to know sort of what kind of position I'm operating from.

Beef: And just to chime in to—backup what Montrose is saying here, the assistance of a flying creature such as yourself is probably more worthwhile to us than the assistance we are going to get from—

Montrose: From a bunch of children, yes.

Beef: Yeah.

Orwell: Yes, I understand. But...

Beef: Damn.

Orwell: What of Charles?

Beef: Sorry?

Orwell: Charles.

Beef: Charles?

Orwell: Yes. You may remember Charles. He was the giraffasaur you saw fit to dispatch upon your arrival.

Beef: Now, to be fair—

Orwell: His head is now being repurposed by other metamals.

Clint: Oh, that's good. That's good, right.

Orwell: His body is being scrapped for salvage. His mate weeps still.

Beef: Well, listen...

Orwell: He was a sculpture. He was an entertainment for you, for your people. And now, he has been dispatched. Like, many other metamals. Now, these are my jungles. You have one opportunity to take flight.

Beef: Oh, like leave?

Orwell: After that, it will be war.

Beef: Orwell, can I... Listen, respectfully, first of all, I sincerely apologize for Charles. We had no idea. We didn't know what the situation was, we didn't know. It seemed threatening and we reacted on impulse. And our... the fact that we didn't take time to figure out what's going on, I feel truly sorry for that. And I apologize profusely.

I would also like to say that since we have been here, in Old Kidadelphia, it seems like there's a lot going on, as far as like the younger kids versus like the older people. And then like the metamals here. That you all should be free from Old Kidadelphia, you've all been discarded here and forgotten, and you've had to fend for yourself. And it seems to me the best course of action would be for everybody to work together to get out of this hellhole and back into Steeplechase proper, and be able to live full lives and not be trapped down here anymore.

Orwell: [chortles]

Beef: Oh, boy. Oh, god.

Orwell: Beautiful words, human.

Beef: Thank you.

Orwell: Do you think that me, the other metamals, would ever be permitted to walk free there in the other layers?

Emerich: We can speak for one layer in particular and I think you would absolutely love it, in Ustaben. You could wander the streets freely. We have access to... I'm no slouch when it comes to working on mechanical items. I could help you with repairs. That sparky neck of yours? I could fix that in an instant. And I'm sure that causes you some discomfort. I think what Beef is saying, you would love it!

Beef: I will also say, Orwell, that while I agree, that if you went up there right now, as Steeplechase is being currently run, it would be difficult for the metamals and everybody to kind of assimilate into Steeplechase. But that is based on how it's currently being run. And frankly, I know quite a few people up there, ourselves included, who are not happy with the current administration of Steeplechase. And maybe it's time for things to change.

Orwell: Mm-hmm... Here is our arrangement; I...

Justin: I'm trying to keep him from going into the four ball.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Clint: [chuckles]

Orwell: Here is our arrangement, you have taken one of mine. I will take one of yours. Then we will move forward in a spirit of trust and cooperation.

Emerich: When you say take, do you mean like take on as a ward? Do you mean take their life?

Orwell: I mean dismantle.

Emerich: Dismantle.

Orwell: Fair is fair, you may repurpose the head.

Beef: All right, Orwell, here's the deal; I will make a bet with you. Just like when we fought Charles, we did not sneak up on Charles. We did not take advantage, there was no... we did not cheat, right. So, you and I will fight. And if you win, you can dismantle me. And if I win, then you help us return to the surface. We all work together to sow chaos until we're able to restructure Steeplechase to be more conducive for everybody.

Montrose: I think this is a wonderful idea.

Orwell: I... am not constructed for battle. I am a leader. I am not a warrior. We were built to entertain.

Beef: Well, how about this then; you help us first and then you can dismantle me?

Justin: Beef, I'm going to need a sway roll from you.

Travis: Oh, I'm not super good at that.

Justin: Yeah, and it's going to be controlled... limited effect.

Travis: Okay. I'm gonna push myself.

Justin: You may, as Griffin is always so quick to do, trade your position for effect, if you like.

Travis: I'm gonna keep the controlled. Because this is a big deal!

Clint: All right, and I'm gonna use my last foresight to help you.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: Flashback to me handing you a copy of Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People.

Griffin: How many times have we used that as the flashback for helping someone with a sway?

Justin: It seems like there must be a better flashback than that, dad. Try again.

Clint: Okay.

Justin: Do it again. Better.

Clint: Emerich shows you a video on debate. How to be a better debater. A debetter.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Sorry... sorry, how to be, would you say... a master...

Travis: Don't do it, Justin! No, don't do it! We're better than this! We're better than this, please!

Griffin: I'm so disappointed in you, Justin. I'm so disappointed in you.

Justin: You're the oldest brother!

Clint: [chuckles] I am proud of you, son!

Travis: Of course, you are! Of course, you are!

Griffin: Roll your dice.

Travis: You were raised by like old comics in the Catskills, or whatever the fuck. Justin should be better than this!

Justin: I should be better than this, you're right.

Travis: But you're not!

Justin: But I'm not! [chuckles]

Travis: Here we go.

Justin: Isn't that interesting.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Six, three, one!

Clint: Six!

Justin: Six, oh my god.

Clint: Ah...

Justin: Whew...

Clint: And who's to say that the one I gave you was the six, except for me?

Travis: Yeah, listen...

Clint: I would say that.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Orwell: It is agreed. I will take you to the chocca. And then you are mine.

Beef: But I said the thing about dismantling... like, okay.

Orwell: It is settled.

Beef: Well, that wasn't exactly—

Justin: He begins to walk towards the forest where you saw that weird, wooden animal.

Travis: All right.

[theme music plays]

[ad reads]

[theme music plays]

Justin: He is now taking you through this forest. He's walking through the forest. He is several paces ahead of you, he knows these jungles, these trees, all of it, better than you know your own name. He is easily navigating it. So, he's quite a few paces ahead of you while you are following.

Clint: Can we talk while we walk?

Justin: Yeah.

Emerich: Beef, I'm not comfortable with you sacrificing your head just for us to get some chocolate for some juvenile delinquents. I am dismayed at this.

Beef: Okay, hey, Emerich?

Emerich: Yes?

Beef: Do you think I'm comfortable with me losing my head? Did you think like... This is a what we call a later problem, right? Because it was either we needed to leave, right. Or get the chocca. And then get back up there, right. So—

Emerich: But you have no plan on honoring this, it's a ruse, right. You have a cunning plan, correct?

Beef: Aspects of what you just said are true. There are some aspects of it that maybe aren't... like the part where you said that I have a plan, maybe that's not so solid a thing. So much is it's just, okay, yeah, whatever. Let's keep moving forward and then figure that out as things go, moving forward. You know, that kind of thing, we'll see how it goes. Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Can I talk to Orwell, as they are talking?

Justin: Actually, yes, you can.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Oh, cool.

Griffin: I look at him and I say...

Montrose: I'm sorry this is... I'm probably way off base with this, but are you... you were in Knott's Berry Farm, weren't you? The Jungle Island? I remember seeing you before you were... hybridized with a flying lizard. I remember you. This is... this is wild.

Orwell: We prefer true born. I have always been Orwell, the gorilla dactyl. It is only now through circumstance that I am able to inhabit my true self.

Montrose: Right on. That is... that's incredible. It seems like... I don't know, I was disappointed when they shut Jungle Island down. I held it against Dentonic, it seems like a waste of an incredible attraction. But it seems like you have... I don't know, you are thriving here, in this jungle, sort of forgotten wasteland.

Orwell: We cannot thrive. We simply persist.

Justin: At that moment, you see an old man lying on the ground, to your right.

Travis: What?

Montrose: Excuse me, there's an old—

Justin: You see an old man lying on the ground, to your right.

Montrose: One moment, there's an old man over here to our right. Let's...

Justin: So, you go over to investigate?

Griffin: Can I scope him out first? See if this is a trap.

Justin: Yeah, it just looks like an old man lying on the ground. He's lying in a really unnatural fashion, you notice, I'll say that. From a distance, you can see that.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: He's maybe 20 yards away.

Montrose: Beef, go check that out.

Beef: What?

Justin: [chuckles]

Beef: Yeah, okay.

Griffin: Does Beef still have Torgus on his back?

Travis: I do!

Justin: Yeah. I should have made that last bit harder for him, but I'm a sweetie.

Travis: Yeah, I know.

Justin: I'm a sweetie. Okay, you get close to the man, and Beef, once—and he has been completely still. And Beef, once you close the gap to, call it 10

yards... I don't know why I'm using yards. It's not football thing. But you know, 10 yards.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: 30 feet, about. [chuckles]

Travis: Is that like 10 meters? I don't know.

Justin: Then you see that this man moves with a sort of jerky fashion and says:

Forrest: Yeah, well, pleasure. Nice to meet you. My name is Forrest Morrow. And these are my Woodimals.

Justin: And then he does a very sort of mechanical-like move around with his hand. And you can see, Beef, as you get closer, he's not shifting properly. His position, relative to you, remains constant, even as you close the gap. And you realize what you're seeing is actually a hologram that has fallen over, a display hologram. You see, actually, as you get a little closer, the beam of light emanating from a source that has toppled over. Some sort of pedestal, it's hard to tell with all the rust. And he says:

Forrest: Please take a moment to look around at my incredible creations. I used to be a fence post maker and I used to have cut offs. And I wouldn't know what to do with them, but I hated waste. So, I started painting some eyes on 'em. These little creatures, I decided to call them woodimals. And... I made 'em all myself. Please take a moment to enjoy my creations.

Justin: So, I've put on the board here, guys, you can see some woodimals.

Clint: [chuckles]

Travis: I'm loving this.

Clint: You've got to share this somewhere. [chuckles]

Justin: I don't know how you would describe this.

Travis: You can just probably Google woodimals.

Griffin: What on God's green Earth? These are terrible, Justin.

Travis: Yeah, this is nightmare fuel... sure...

Griffin: So, is it—

Forrest: Knott's Berry Farm used to charge you one quarter to go look at these beauties. But now, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Denton, you can see 'em all for free! And that's value!

Justin: You see these, I mean, ghastly wood animals that are carved—

Travis: And can I just say, at least this one on the top who's actively getting carved in the picture looks terrified!

Griffin: It looks scary. Why are they—

Justin: And there's Forrest himself. You can see Forrest in a couple of these different pictures.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: And you see them like in the trees. As you start to look around, they blended in before, but now, as you start to look, you start to notice more of them. These like sort of wood creatures. Some kind of look like real animals, some kind of don't. And they've all got these eyes, these creepy eyes painted right on the face.

Travis: Justin, it feels so dumb to ask this, but are they moving?

Justin: No, they are utterly still.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Unerringly still. Unfailingly, upsettingly still. [chuckles]

Griffin: Is Forrest a person or an animatronic?

Travis: Hologram.

Justin: He is a hologram.

Clint: He's a hologram.

Justin: I said he's a hologram. He's a hologram. Not Hard Light, mind you, he's a hologram.

Clint: Emerich, I'm gonna—I can't resist Emerich has to study him. Or, yeah, has to.

Justin: Okay... Okay, so, you're gonna go over to his little pedestal thing?

Clint: Mm-hm, and kind of squat down.

Justin: Here's what you can see from the outside, it is a black box with a single pinhole of light at the top.

Clint: Okay?

Justin: And it is affixed at the bottom with several screws.

Clint: Okay. Yeah, I think Emerich's curiosity about this is just going to be overwhelming.

Justin: Okay?

Clint: So, I think he's gonna study that device.

Justin: Great.

Clint: I'd say it's controlled, wouldn't you?

Justin: Oh, yeah, it's controlled.

Clint: And standard.

Justin: It's a standard, yeah. Controlled, standard.

Clint: Cool.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: A six and a two.

Justin: Okay. This is a hologram projector that was made to go along with the woodimals exhibit. And Forrest Morrow senior is the creator of woodimals. And it depicts him, who tells you about the woodimals. If you had to guess, and you're not sure, you would pick the technology as maybe... 50, 60 years out of date? This hologram is pretty old. It's, frankly, kind of impressive. You assume, intuit, it must be solar powered. Because you don't know how else it would still be functioning.

Travis: And is it, have we been able to determine if it's on a loop? Or is there some kind of AI...

Clint: Yeah, we haven't tried to interact with him?

Travis: Yeah, go for it.

Justin: Oh, yeah, try to interact with him. Is he still sideways, by the way, or did you fix—

Clint: No, I'm gonna fix—I—

Justin: Okay, great.

Clint: I think it's gonna set that up. Right?

Justin: Yeah. Okay, great. Set it up.

Travis: If anything, to avoid like neck cramps and stuff.

Justin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Clint: Yeah.

Justin: Much obliged.

Emerich: Hello. Forrest, you... Your work is amazing. As one artiste to another, you are to be commended.

Forrest: My name is Forrest Morrow Senior.

Emerich: Okay.

Forrest: And you're looking at my woodimals. I made these from fence posts that I carved myself. And now, Mr. Denton has been kind enough, since 1983, to move these from Knott's Berry Farm's Jungle Island to here. And I'm just so thrilled. I hope you're really enjoying looking at my amazing woodimals.

Beef: Hey, Torgus, just like answer quietly, as quiet as you can. Torgus?

Torgus: Abilene!

Beef: Okay, got it.

Torgus: I do not have volume modulation!

Beef: Sick. So, the woodimals are just wood, right? Like, they're not—like, we... are we gonna—

Torgus: And eyes!

Beef: Yeah, but we're not gonna like turn around and they sneak up on us, right?

Torgus: That would be ridiculous.

Justin: [chuckles]

Beef: Torgus, that wasn't a no.

Torgus: Well... no.

Justin: [chuckles]

Beef: Okay. Also, Torgus, what do you know about Orwell over here?

Torgus: Oh... I... I would be careful.

Justin: Are you sure you want to ask that right now? Let me ask—because I just told you, he has no volume modulation.

Travis: Oh.

Justin: Are you—is that—are you asking? Because to give me some idea of positioning, you assume that you're close enough to where Orwell would hear?

Travis: No, not right this second.

Justin: Okay.

Travis: But I will say; what I'd love to do, Juicer, is when we do start moving again, just assume I'm hanging back a little bit.

Justin: Okay, great. Great, you're hanging back. Actually, Orwell notices all this and he says:

Orwell: Your people have always been fascinated by our brothers, the woodimals. Take a moment, pay your respects.

Beef: Okay?

Justin: So, you're kind of free. He'll wander away a little bit, let you like check these fuckin' things out.

Travis: Yeah, I'm gonna move off deeper into the woodimals.

Justin: Which woodimal are you near, Trav? So, picture a woodimal that looks like a wacky, waving inflatable to man. Right? But—

Griffin: That's all of—you've just described every image of every woodimal I'm looking at.

Travis: Yeah. They have like four arms coming from various positions. And like one leg is way bigger than the other one. And just a horrified look on their faces, that they're having a hard time understanding their own existence. And that maybe existences is pain.

Justin: Okay, beautiful. Yeah. And what do you say to... so, what do you say to Torgus, once you're out of ear... ear sight, is what I almost said.
[chuckles]

Travis: Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, I get you. Man, I've used the corner of my ear a couple of times now, and it's—there's nothing better—like, "Yeah, I heard it out of the corner of my ear," makes so much sense that it—

Griffin: It does. It's good.

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: Anyways.

Beef: Torgus, what do you know about like the metamals and like Orwell and stuff?

Torgus: The metamals are refused creations that are composed of animatronic animals that were deposited on Jungle Island. In 1983, the entire Jungle Island collection was relocated to Steeplechase by the Denton family. Now, they are here. They are not maintained. So, as parts break down, the metamals, as they have chosen to call themselves, refuse to continue to propagate their species. These combinations get increasingly erratic as parts become more and more scarce.

Beef: Do you have any idea how many there are?

Torgus: I am not permitted to wonder, because of my lack of legs and arms and head.

Beef: Yeah.

Torgus: And eyes.

Beef: Sure.

Torgus: And I am a torso. So, unless it was within the 100 feet or so that you found me, my awareness of current situation is limited.

Emerich: Tor... Torgo? Torgo? [chuckles] Torgus, do you sense any of your other parts, like you did earlier? Do you sense any of your parts in this vicinity?

Torgus: Hold on, let me activate my extrasensory perception.

Montrose: I think that—

Torgus: This was a comedy.

Montrose: That was a joke, yes.

Torgus: I do not possess those sorts of facilities.

Emerich: Oh... Oh, okay. Fine.

Justin: You notice that you have lost sight of Orwell, actually. As you are talking to Torgus, you look around and realize that he is nowhere to be seen. What you do hear is a rustling in the trees. And then you roll a 100 sided die.

Griffin: Ah, fuck. Not again.

Clint: Somebody else do it.

Griffin: Yeah, I'll do it.

Travis: Okay, will do this.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Travis: Oh, are you gonna do it?

Griffin: You do it, Trav.

Justin: You're both gonna do it.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Travis got—

Travis: I got a 47. Griffin got an 81. I said the numbers out loud so people at home could check their charts.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: Okay. You... this is perfect. God, this is... this is wonderful.

Travis: I'm glad we could make you happy, Justin. That means a lot.

Justin: This is wonderful news. You look up into the trees where the rustling was, and you hear [mouths puma sound]. And you look up and you see a squat cat with wing-like appendages on its side, clawed feet and a jet black cat's head. It is an emperor puma.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Justin: [chuckles] And—

Travis: Mm-hmm?

Justin: It is an emperor puma.

Travis: Sure.

Justin: And it is watching you from the trees.

Montrose: Nobody make any sudden movements.

Justin: You start to notice more rustling in the branches, as more emperor pumas, each composed differently, but of the same parts, the same base components, begin to tattle out along the branches of the tree. Some perching from the tops of woodimals, some have made their nests inside the woodimals. And you realize that this is basically an infestation of emperor pumas.

Travis: Okay.

Montrose: I hate this fucking jungle so bad.

Justin: You say that, and the moment you say that, one leaps out of the tree towards you, Montrose.

Griffin: I fuckin' flip out of the way.

Travis: Whoa! What?

Justin: You flip out of the way. Beautiful.

Griffin: Yeah. I'm extremely light, I don't know why this is news to you?

Travis: No, I didn't know you could just say it, though. Can I do a flip too?

Griffin: I imagine it would be a—

Justin: It's not attacking you, but you could do just like a standing flip? [chuckles] Just to show off to the babes, I guess.

Travis: You know what? I'm just gonna prepare for a flip.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: [chuckles] Okay. You got advantage on a flip. Prepare a flip...

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Just so you have one in the chamber. And Griffin, stop stalling.
[chuckles]

Griffin: What am I rolling?

Justin: Give me a risky... you know what, it's... it's desperate, because you have barely any time to react. But it is standard.

Griffin: Tumble, so, it's prow!

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. Desperate, standard. I'm going to use daredevil to take a bonus die. Hm... Please be good...

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Fuckin' holy shit. Four, one, four, four.

Travis: Wow.

Justin: Wow.

Travis: You are destined to get a four.

Griffin: Yeah, I really—I've rolled so many fours this episode.

Justin: Okay, with a 4 as your best... let's see, four on a desperate...

Griffin: Not good.

Justin: Not good! Okay, you... what's your harm looking like, Griff?

Griffin: I have one level one harm.

Justin: Okay, you try to tumble out of the way. But as this emperor puma is leaping at you, it is extremely heavy. When it collides with your right arm, you feel a sort of sickening break.

Griffin: Ah, man.

Justin: As your arm sort of snaps.

Griffin: Fuck!

Justin: Right at the—yeah.

Travis: Justin?

Justin: It's fucked up. Yeah?

Travis: I'm gonna step in. I'm gonna—

Griffin: Well, hold on. Hold on. Hold on.

Justin: Wait, now hold on, Griffin does have the opportunity to resist this—

Travis: Yes, but I have a special ability called bodyguard.

Justin: Oh, okay. Okay?

Travis: That okay helps me resist better.

Justin: I normally wouldn't allow it because it doesn't make any sense, but you did say that you were preparing a flip.

Travis: I was prepared, right?

Justin: Griffin, do you want this assistance?

Griffin: Fuck yeah! I want this. I don't want my arm to break! Are you out of your fuckin' gourd? No way.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: All right, Trav.

Travis: So, I'm going to bump him out of the way and take the hit.

Justin: Okay.

Travis: So, would it just be a skirmish protection roll?

Justin: Sure. Yeah.

Travis: Is that how that works?

Justin: You'd like that, wouldn't you?

Travis: You roll...

Griffin: Well, what's your—what's it say?

Travis: So, "When you protect a teammate, take plus one D to your resistance roll." And this will be a skirmish roll, right?

Justin: "Face danger for a teammate. Step in to suffer consequences in their place. You may roll the resistance normally if you—"

Griffin: No, so, it's not a skirmish roll, Travis. It would be a prowess roll. A prowess resistance.

Justin: No, no, no, no, no. There is no roll, you're suffering the con—are you talking about resisting, Trav?

Travis: Yes, yes, yes.

Justin: Okay... Okay, Trav, you're going to do one D for each attribute rating.

Travis: In prowess, right?

Justin: And we're gonna call... So, I think it is a... ah...

Travis: Because it's a physical thing, right?

Justin: Yeah, I think it's a... it's a prowess roll. Yeah. So—

Travis: Okay. And I get plus one bonus dice. So...

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Five, five, four, five, two.

Justin: Damn, that's a lot.

Travis: Yeah. So—

Justin: So, you're gonna suffer six stress minus the highest die result.

Travis: Yes. So, one stress.

Justin: So, one stress to resist this.

Montrose: Thank you, Beef.

Justin: That's great, Trav. Great roll, great action. I think what happens is you... you see this happening and—well, okay, you tell me, actually. How do you protect him?

Travis: So, I'm gonna bump him out of the way, right. So, I see this happening, I'm prepared, I move in. And I'm going to like redirect to like—he did a flip, right. But I had my hands up and I'm like just trying to push the emperor puma away. Right?

Justin: Okay.

Travis: Like, and redirect the jump.

Justin: Okay. Great. You do that, you protect him. The puma kind of lands on the ground and it's so loud. It's so loud. And you can see one of the plate wings that this puma had, one of the metallic wings, just sort of like snap off as it lands on the ground.

Beef: Okay, wait, hold on. You're a metamal, we don't want to hurt you any more than that. And we have a guy here who might be able to fix that for you. Please just chill out. We don't want to hurt you.

Justin: The emperor puma that was on the ground like rights itself and then starts toddling at you, Beef. And then he starts picking you.

Travis: I'm gonna pet him. Wait, pecking me in a hard way?

Justin: I mean, it's not pleasant.

Travis: I'm gonna use my—like, where I have the guards—

Justin: But he does have a puma's head. So, it's just kind of weird.

Travis: Yeah. I'm gonna stay calm. And just say like:

Beef: Okay, yeah, I understand. This is probably a lot to deal with. But we don't want to hurt you.

Justin: Okay, as you're talk—okay, here's what I want you to do, Trav. I want you to do... I think this would be... I think this would be command.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Or what are you trying to do? You tell me.

Travis: I'm trying to get it to stand down.

Justin: Okay. That's probably sway, right?

Travis: I don't know because I'm not—

Justin: Are you trying to bring it to heel, or are you trying to sway it that you are okay?

Travis: I'm trying to bring it to heel.

Justin: Okay, so that would be command.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: Risky, standard.

Travis: Risky, standard. Here we go.

Justin: It's risky because it's still biting at you wildly.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Okay, a mixed success. Five and a two.

Justin: Perfect. Okay, here's the deal, Beef. You kneel down to this emperor puma, whose wing has broken off. And it is now realizing that its pecking has had no effect because it has no beak. It is now biting at you, and it sinks its teeth. And it's not like the worst pain you've ever experienced. It does scratch you pretty bad and there's a little bit of blood. But you can tell that like as it bites you, it's just sort of testing you. It doesn't have an intent, it's just biting. And it seems to, you can tell, it's starting to quiet down. The movements are less frantic. And the other emperor pumas, rather than continue the assault, are now watching.

Clint: Emerich's going to fix its wing.

Justin: Okay. Emerich, I want you to give me a tinker roll.

Clint: Right.

Justin: As you make your way over.

Clint: I have my hands in the air and I'm moving very slowly. And I'm speaking in low, calm terms. I'm also going to push myself.

Justin: Okay.

Clint: So...

Justin: A very chill kind of push.

Clint: Yes. Is this risky, desperate?

Justin: It is risky because it is still trying to attack you.

Clint: Risky... and standard...

Emerich: Nice emperor puma. Nice puma...

Clint: Please...

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: A five, a three, a two and a one.

Justin: Okay, Emerich, you, with a five, you get—have your tools. What sucks is it's really hard to use your hands. So the repair isn't perfect. And you managed to take a few more bites on your forearm as you're trying to repair it. Normally, you'd be able to do this quickly. But with the pain in your hands, it's just simply not working. But you manage to get this wing reattached. And as you do, the emperor puma sort of just stares at you. And then—

Emerich: That's nice. Doesn't that feel better? Isn't that nice? Beef, back me up on this and tell him how good it looks.

Beef: Yeah, it looks great. It looks great. Please stop biting my arm.

Justin: You see it now, it's stopped biting. Now, it's... it flaps the wings, sort of testing 'em out. And then it sort of scampers away. And then you hear a louder, more authoritative rustling. And you notice—

Griffin: What does that sound like, Juice?

Clint: Yeah?

Griffin: Authoritative rustling?

Justin: [mouths authoritative rustling sounds] Ka-bfff! Ka-bfff! K-bfff!

Montrose: Okay, that's—

Beef: Mm-hm, I respect that. Yes.

Justin: It's Orwell.

Orwell: Do try to keep up.

Montrose: You told us to stop and admire the woodimals?

Justin: As he turns on heel and walks away.

Emerich: He is not a good host.

Travis: We got to attacked, but—yeah, okay. Because I got gnawed on—okay, you don't care.

Griffin: Let's fuckin' go. Let's get—I hate—I don't want to be in this jungle anymore.

Justin: Okay, you make your way through the jungles. And you eventually find yourself in something of a clearing. Where if the Old Kidadelphia settlement was ramshackle full of boxes, this is somehow even more foreign. But there is an elegance to it. This is like scraps of wood and metal and trees that have been felled and then laid to make a sort of—I mean, it looks like a—it is a giant jungle gym that has been repurposed.

You could tell this was some sort of play area at some point, but it has been completely covered and adapted. As you get closer, you see movement that was very prevalent at a distance starts to subside. And when you're—to a point where you could really get to see everything inside, you notice the

motion has basically stopped. You assume that you're being watched, to see what in fact is happening. Orwell waves a hand, and out of the playground comes a—give me two rolls.

Clint: Of 100?

Justin: Yup.

Clint: I'll do one.

Justin: Okay.

Travis: I rolled a 92.

Justin: Okay, dad, you do one.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: 12.

Justin: 12 is... oh, man, it's... [chortles] Okay. You see you see flight, and what you see is sort of a weaselly type creature with wings on its back. And this is a bulbul goose.

Travis: A what?

Clint: What?

Justin: A bulbul goose. It's a bubble goose!

Griffin: A bubble goose?

Justin: A bulbul is a songbird that is called a bulbul, and a mongoose is a mongoose. And it is a hybrid of a mongoose and a bulbul.

Griffin: Oh, so the goose isn't the flying part of that word.

Justin: Isn't that interesting?

Travis: Yeah. Oh, that is interesting. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Justin: Isn't that interesting?

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: You now know it's a bulbul goose.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: And he lands on Orwell's shoulder.

Harold: Hello, sir. What seems to be happening with these humans?

Travis: [chuckles] All right.

Orwell: We are going to distribute the chocca.

Harold: But sir, you gave us strict—

Orwell: I know what I said, Harlord. They are.... we have an arrangement.

Harold: Right this why.

Justin: And then Harold leaps off of Orwell's shoulder and begins to walk into or, you know, hop... [chuckles] into the playground. Across a sort of makeshift bridge. And the bridge is spanning what kind of looks like a moat. But as you look through and deeper into the moat, you notice that it's not filled with water, it's filled with parts. Eyes, scraps of fur, beaks. And of course, you know, some water. Because you know, it rains everything.

Travis: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Justin: You know, water.

Griffin: Water, yeah.

Justin: But it is filled with animal parts. And he goes across the bridge into the play place.

Griffin: Are we still near Orwell?

Justin: He is watching you.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: He is not heading in after Harold.

Griffin: Okay. Then I'll call out to Harold.

Montrose: Harold, was it?

Harold: Yes.

Montrose: I'm just curious, what is it that the metamals even want with a chocolate powdered drink substitute like chocca?

Harold: We don't know.

Montrose: All right. So, it's just sort of... an arbitrary prize of yours? Or...

Harold: No, we have seen how the humans prize it.

Montrose: Oh, I understand. Okay.

Beef: What was your plan?

Harold: We cannot consume this chocca.

Beef: Then what were you going to trade it for?

Harold: We weren't going to trade it. We want to deprive them.

Beef: Oh, okay...

Emerich: Why?

Harold: Why?

Emerich: Yes, who—

Harold: You ask?

Emerich: Who is your hatred aimed at?

Harold: You look around. Look at what we have been reduced to. We used to be entertainment, we were built to delight. And we were cast away by the humans. We cannot retaliate with strength. So, we retaliate with cruelty! And so, we keep this powder to deprive the humans! And we would have to deprive them of all the powder in all their world before we were 1/10th repaid. Right this way.

Justin: And you make your way deeper into the playground. And you see the chocca. These are yellow tins with yellow plastic lids. You can see just sort of like printed on the front, it just says 'hot chocolate powder.' It is not in any way branded for retail sale.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Justin: So, you can tell this is something that was like, in bulk, tossed out. But it has been made—the cans have been made into something of a throne. And Orwell passes by you and goes and takes his seat on the throne. Around you, there are torches that are lining the edges of this sort of like makeshift arena. And you hear... it sounds like if you've ever been to like a petting zoo, where you hear sort of like animal noises surrounding you, but no specific one sort of jumps out. And Orwell takes a seat on the throne and Harold perches on his shoulder. And Orwell says:

Orwell: Our arrangement has changed. We are entitled, through my negotiation, to the life of this human.

Justin: And then he points at you, Beef.

Orwell: But during our journey I witnessed kindness towards a metamal. Unprompted and unrequested. So, you, large human, will not be disassembled.

Beef: Awesome.

Orwell: Until you stand trial.

Beef: Oh?

[Steeplechase theme song plays]

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