

The Adventure Zone: Balance — Story and Song — Finale, Part Three

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Griffin: Hey! So, I'm Griffin McElroy, your dungeon master, your best friend, and your very... your very grateful and very relieved cohost of the Adventure Zone podcast. This is... This is it! This is the last episode of our first campaign. We are wrapping up the story that we have been telling together for the last three years, in this episode 69. Which is great, 'cause that is the sex number!

I am popping in here at the top of the episode to do our usual stuff, play in a promo and read some ad stuff. Because frankly, when I was editing the episode, there just really isn't a good place to like add in a break for this stuff. So, I'm gonna now. And then I'm gonna go and let you listen to the rest of the episode. It is a very, very long one, I'll warn you that right now. It is... It's gonna end up being about 2 hours and 45 minutes, if my calculations are correct. So, stay hydrated, keep an eye on each other, use the buddy system if you have to. And I'm gonna just start doing some stuff.

[ad read]

[ad read]

Griffin: Got a couple of Jumbotrons real quick. This one was for James Nicholas. And it was sent in by Katy-bot, Simmons and Jax, who say, "Nick! Nickadimus! Nickorette! Nickelback." Oh, god, sorry, scratch that last one. "Congrats on that brave thing you did. You know, coming out? That thing. Your big sisters are proud of you. We promise to fight any hate gerblins that come at you. Though, you could probs take them out yourself. We love, you... you..." Oh, "You Lotad." Sorry, that is a Pokemon. My mistake. "P.S. Spiders Gregory and the ghost approve." And this is very exciting, congratulations, Nick. We're all very, very proud of you too. The world, that is.

One more Jumbotron here, I want you to visit youtube.com/compellingcompile. That's compellingcompile, to check out our videos and subscribe. Well, their videos, and subscribe. You can also follow

them on Twitter at @compellingcomp. "Compelling Compiling is an association of individuals who have banded together through the powers of the internet in hopes of having fun, sorting out a backlog of videogames, and hopefully making something in which others can enjoy. We're a group of friends who've taken the fun and joking the experience daily playing games together and lovingly stuffed it into a video format so that you too can join our adventure." That's Compelling Compiling. One more time, it's [youtube.com/compellingcompile](https://www.youtube.com/compellingcompile), go check 'em out.

[ad read]

Griffin: We see a close-up of Davenport's face, his teeth gritted, his knuckles tight across the spokes of the Starblaster's wheel. Next to him in the helm is Lucretia, still channeling the last bits of light out of the orb, holding the Animus Bell into her staff. Preparing the spell that will, she hopes, contain the Hunger once and for all. And through the viewport of the Starblaster's helm, we see Taako, Merle and Magnus on the deck of the ship, bracing themselves on a railing as their vessel picks up speed.

And over the bow of the ship, we see the Hunger. And it's never looked so imposing, so invincible. Its scale is so incredible that as you fly ever closer toward it, it looks like it's wrapping around you. Its edges growing concave, threatening to swallow the horizon whole. And from that black opal mass, hundreds of points of multicolored lights flash. And from those points, ribbons of darkness shoot out of the plane with wild, chaotic trajectories, and then fly to intercept your ship.

And we see Davenport again, and he slowly lowers one of his hands to the throttle and holds it there. And he lowers his stance, like a cat ready to pounce. And he waits. And this circus of tendrils comes closer, flying at supersonic speed, and he waits. And the three of you see these tendrils just seconds away now, roaring towards you, and Davenport waits. And Lucretia looks up from her work and she says:

Lucretia: Davenport?

Griffin: And Davenport says:

Davenport: Not yet.

Griffin: And the tendrils are nearly on top of you, and Lucretia says:

Lucretia: Davenport? Davenport?!

Griffin: And Davenport smiles and he tightens his grip on the wheel and he says:

Davenport: All right, buddy. Dance for me.

Griffin: And Davenport throws the wheel to the right and rears back on the throttle. And the ship rolls once, twice, thrice around the tendrils, which stream overhead as the Starblaster weaves between them. Several dozen ribbons convene over the ship and soar downward, trying to ensnare it. And Davenport slams the wheel and throttle forward and the Starblaster dives, narrowly avoiding the tendrils as they crash into each other just overhead. Davenport grabs a spoke and spins the wheel left, then right, then left again, slaloming through thick columns of Hunger that sprout from beneath you.

And through the thick glass of the helm, the three of you hear Davenport, the greatest starship pilot who ever lived, just laughing. And then a second salvo of ribbons launch from the plane, only they're not moving erratically this time. They band together in a thick sheet, then swoop down and upward, forming a tidal wave dozens of miles high. And it's right on top of you and Davenport shouts:

Davenport: Hold on!

Griffin: And he pushes the throttle to full speed, as Davenport flies your ship right through the heart of it, attempting to punch through. And you're inside the wave, and for a moment, your faces are illuminated by splashes of red, blue, green, yellow light. And then you're through, with all the tendrils well behind you. Only on the deck of the ship in front of you, several puddles of the Hunger's black opal material have splashed down onto the ship. And they lay inert for a moment, then vibrate and come together to form one larger puddle. And from that mass, a figure takes shape.

It's a humanoid figure, one with far more definition than the other shadows you've faced. He's wearing a sharp suit, with well-manicured hair. And though his body's entirely made up of this black opal plasma, you can see his face. Merle, it's John. But at the same time, it's not John. His usual composure is gone. This monster in front of you is panting with rage. But for the moment, he's simply standing at the ready, pulsating with heat and power. He's ready to fight.

Magnus: This is it? It's just a guy?

Taako: Yeah, it's just one guy, it shouldn't be an issue.

Magnus: No, we killed like a giant spider, and there was like that plant lady. This is just a dude?

Merle: It's a nice suit though.

Magnus: Oh, it's a great suit! Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Merle: Oh, the suit, yeah.

Taako: Merle, I wanted to take this moment to tell you something, I... I stole your cousin's shoes. And that seems cruel now in retrospect, but I did like them very much. And I stole them, and I then I lied to you about stealing them in Wave Echo Cave. And I just wanted to let you know that I'm sorry for that. If you're angry, I would like you to direct it at that gentleman over there.

Magnus: As long as we're making confessions, I should also say, Merle, I am currently wearing those shoes.

Taako: He is wearing the shoes. I gave him the shoes, Merle. I didn't even steal them for me, I just stole them for kicks.

Griffin: This figure in front of you roars.

Magnus: Could you give us a second please? We're talking about shoes.

Taako: Yeah, when we're ready, dipshit.

Merle: Hang on!

Magnus: Jesus Christ...

Marle: God almighty...

Taako: He's gonna kill us anyway.

Merle: Go on, got anything else to confess?

Magnus: Let's see...

Taako: No, I'm good.

Griffin: John throws one of his arms, kind of to the side. And that arm, the sort of shadowy material that made up that arm, turns into just a long, sharp blade.

[“Tarot” by Mort Garson plays]

Clint: I look at John and I say:

Merle: John, I've died 68 times. 68! Been there, done that. Do your worst, pal.

Magnus: Hey, you know what? Why the fuck not. Let's do this.

Griffin: The three of you, as one, share a moment that few people in their lives ever experience. A moment of complete understanding of your life's design. A calculation of the days you've lived and the hardships you've conquered and the joys you've received. All of which have brought you to your destiny on the deck of this ship. All of which made you ready for this, your final battle.

[music swells]

Griffin: Let's roll initiative.

[music plays]

Justin: 3. [laughs] Let's get it on with 3.

Travis: [laughs] 16.

Clint: 19.

Justin: Nice. Good, leading the charge. This is how I wanted it to go.

Clint: Wait, and I have advantage, so I roll again.

Justin: [chuckles] Pff.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: Wow, two 19s in a row.

Clint: Two 19s in a row. So, a 38!

Griffin: [laughing] With a commanding 38, Merle goes first.

Clint: All right, I am... I am casting mass heal.

Griffin: A good start, 'cause all of you are almost dead.

Travis: Yup.

Clint: "A flood of healing energy flows from you into injured creatures around you. You restore up to 700 hit points."

Griffin: Bullshit! What?

Justin: Let me see, hold on...

Clint: Divided evenly.

Justin: Ha-cha-cha, that's— Well, okay. Hold on.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Justin: I don't— [chuckles] I don't think you have any 9th level spell slots. It's a ninth level spell.

Griffin: You super don't.

Clint: Oh, how about this. I use Matthias the Living Grimoire to use one spell I don't know.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Eat it! Eat it!

Griffin: Okay, I'm gonna— Okay, you hold up your robot owl. And as—

Clint: Matthias, I hold him up, I say:

Merle: Do your duty!

Clint: But, I mean, D-U-T-Y not D-O-O-D-Y. "700 points dispelled evenly." So, that's like, how— how many of us are there?

Justin: I mean, we can only go up to our max.

Griffin: Yeah, you're only gonna go up to your max HP.

Clint: Everybody maxes out.

Griffin: This— okay. I will let— Yeah, this totally— Yeah. The owl shines with a beautiful, brilliant light as you hold it up and sings its beautiful owl song. And all of you are healed. And with that, Matthias the Living Grimoire, the mechanisms inside of it stop stirring.

Travis: Oh, no.

Justin: Ugh.

Travis: Not Matthias, we're already losing them!

Justin: The first death. Who knew that this would be so painful.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: All right everybody, heal up to— heal up to full.

Travis: That's a shame, 'cause there's already so much fanart of Matthias and merch for Matthias.

Clint: There will be now!

Griffin: Next in the order is Magnus. Trav, the only thing I will ask is if you think you're going to do multiple attacks, just like in the interest of time, uh, try to— try and roll 'em together?

Travis: Okay. Well, I'm going to do that.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: So, I'm going to first attack by hurling the Chance Lance.

Griffin: Okay?

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: 13 plus 10, 23.

Griffin: Yep, absolutely.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: That is 5 plus 5. That's 10 damage.

Griffin: All right. You throw the Chance Lance and it sticks into this thing's stomach as you— as it moves towards you menacingly. Do you recall it?

Travis: Of course I recall it.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And as I catch it awesomely in my right hand, I attack with the Raging Flaming Poisoning Sword of Doom for 21?

Griffin: Yeah, that's a hit! Roll that beautiful B-footage.

Travis: Oh, that's not as good, 'cause I only rolled a 1 on damage. So, that's only 25 points.

Griffin: All right.

Travis: Well, I can't summon angels. I can't send out waves—

Griffin: No, all you can do is cut things very good with a very big, cool sword. As it reaches striking distance from you, you recall the Chance Lance. And without missing a beat, you slash it across the chest, leaving a sort of burning mark across it.

Travis: And I'm going to use Goad, Goad Strike when that lands. So, you need to make a wisdom saving throw.

Griffin: Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: That's a 21.

Travis: Didn't beat 30, sorry.

Griffin: Wait, wait, wait. No, there's no way that 30 is the saving throw on that.

Travis: My damage— My damage with the Flaming Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom was 25, plus 5.

Griffin: Oh my god. Okay, yeah. Jesus, this thing's broken in so many ways. All right, yeah.

Travis: So, now it has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets that aren't me until the end of my next turn.

Griffin: All right, expend a superiority dice.

Travis: Yes. Yes, I will.

Griffin: All right, anything else?

Travis: I'm going to move backwards to be with my boys again. And then I'm done.

Griffin: Okay. All right. John is up next. Shadow John, as I have him saved in my document. For the first attack, he takes his non-sword arm and just kind of like, swipes it in all three of your direction. Everybody make a Dexterity save.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: 19.

Travis: 16.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: 3!

Griffin: Magnus and Merle, you both take 22 points of fire damage, as a streak of fire tears across the ground, catching all of you in its line. Taako, you get out of the way. But the heat from this fire is so tremendous that you take half damage from this attack, you take 11 points of damage. For his

second attack, John walks through the fire, untouched, and brings up that blade arm at you Magnus, and swipes it downward.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: It's 25 versus AC.

Travis: Ooh, that does hit.

Griffin: 27 points of damage.

Travis: I am going to use Parry to reduce that.

Griffin: Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: 9. So, what was it?

Griffin: 27. So that is—

Travis: 18.

Griffin: Yeah, 18 points of damage.

Travis: God, I'm glad— Hey, Merle, I know I give you shit. Thanks for healing!

Merle: Oh, it's good to be appreciated.

Griffin: All right, next in the order is Taako. John is like right up with the three of you now on the deck of the Starblaster. And as you all are fighting, most of these like tendrils that shot out from the Hunger have sort of turned on a dime and are flying and like chasing the lot of you right now. And Davenport is kind of like speeding away from all of them, as Lucretia continues to channel her spell.

Justin: You know what? I'm just gonna start out— I'm just going to start out classic.

Griffin: Okay?

Justin: I'm going to cast Storm Sphere, centered on John.

Griffin: I literally don't think you've ever cast this spell before, so I don't know how classic it is.

Justin: Well, classic in the terms of just hurty.

Griffin: Hurty. Hurty damage. Yeah, sure.

Justin: Bad, hurty damage.

Travis: Oh, I see. Okay, hurty boy.

Justin: "Each creature in the sphere when it appears, or that ends its turn there must succeed on a strength saving throw or take two D6 bludgeoning damage. The sphere's space is difficult terrain."

Griffin: So, I do that now? Since it appears on him?

Justin: Yes.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: That's a 2.

Justin: So, that's not—

Griffin: That's not gonna do it this time.

Justin: Not this time.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: So, that is 9 damage.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: And if there's any— It's a 20-foot sphere, so if any of those tendrils are up in there, I'm gonna need them to roll too.

Griffin: Yeah, I think— I think one of the tendrils just started to catch up to you. And Davenport was just a little bit too slow getting out of the way. And just as it's about to slam down, it hits that sphere and it is like cast off of the ship and it goes flying away.

Justin: Okay, I'm gonna go ahead and... I'm gonna use a bonus action now, as part of Storm Sphere. To throw a bolt of lightning at John.

Griffin: All right, Storm Sphere!

Justin: Yeah, Storm Sphere is dope.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: So, that's 21.

Griffin: Yeah, that's a hit with this lightning bolt. So, Storm Sphere puts them in this shitty sphere that hurts to be in, but also you can put lightning at them?

Justin: Well, I can throw lightning from the sphere or inwards towards the sphere, like whatever. It's just a rad Storm Sphere.

Griffin: That's hot shit.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: Yeah, so that's—

Travis: Well, he's a wizard.

Justin: I am a wizard... 15 damage from that.

Griffin: Wow, fuck. All right. Trucking right along. Next in the order, back up to the top, Merle.

Clint: I am going to cast... Blade Barrier.

Griffin: Okay?

Clint: It, "Creates a vertical wall of whirling, razor-sharp blades made of magical energy. It appears within range and lasts for the duration. You can make a straight wall up to 100 feet long, 20 feet high, 5 feet thick, or a ringed wall up to 60 feet in diameter, 20 feet high, and 5 feet thick. When a creature enters the wall's area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in there, the creature must make a Dexterity saving throw. And on a failed throw the creature takes six d10—"

Griffin: Fuck.

Clint: ... "Slashing damage."

Griffin: So, what do I need to do right now?

Clint: I'm gonna cast it in a circular cylinder around John, and you have to make a Dexterity-saving throw.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: That is a 12. Probably not gonna cut it.

Clint: Nope.

Griffin: Okay. Go ahead and roll six d10 slashing damage. Jesus Christ.

Justin: Dad, I got an app up for that. Let me just do it for you real quick, make our lives easier.

Clint: Okay?

Justin: 44.

Griffin: Fuck, wow! John... Let me do some quick math, okay... All right, these blades fly inward into the storm sphere and lightning crackles between the metal, as some of these blades in this wall move in and jab into John. I will say you guys are maybe making things a little bit difficult for Magnus, because you now have two sort of bad zones stacked on top of each other. So, if Magnus does move into those zones to do a melee attack on John—

Clint: But mine's open at— mine's open at the top.

Travis: Cool.

Griffin: Okay. All right. Well, next in the order is Magnus.

Travis: Okay—

Justin: Also, if John stays in those bubbles, he is bad at this game that we call Dungeons and Dragons, my man. [chuckles]

Clint: [chuckles]

Travis: So, if I move into those, what do I have to do, and what's gonna hurt me, and how bad is it?

Griffin: You'll have to make two Dexterity saving throws.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: Why don't you leap in from the top, then you only have to make one?

Travis: Because I am not a magic flying fighter.

Clint: Well, you stole the damn shoes? That ought to make you able to jump.

Travis: That's true.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Travis: How tall is the zone you have made, father?

Clint: Let's say—

Griffin: No, the fuck'n rules say a 20 feet high... A ringed wall 60 feet in diameter, 20 feet high, and 5 feet thick. 20 feet high!

Clint: Ah, he's done that easy. You could do it!

Travis: I do not have a vertical leap of 21 feet, dad, but thank you.
[chuckles]

Griffin: I'll give you this, I'll give you this. You're on a fucking ship, there's probably a mast or something you could swing down off of, to avoid some of this.

Travis: All right, then I will use my grappling hook to do that.

Griffin: All right. I will make you make an athletics check on the swing to avoid the blade wall.

Travis: Well, you didn't say that... All right. Oh, no, I'm great at athletics. Okay cool. I've got plus nine to athletics.

Griffin: All right.

Travis: That's a nat 20.

Griffin: On the swing?

Justin: Woah.

Travis: On the swing.

Griffin: Okay, you grapple-hook up to the mast on the ship. I think we're playing it a little bit of Calvinball of this Starblaster's design.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: And you swing down off of a rope, and you easily avoid the blade wall that you— I think it's cooler if you just fuck'n swing through it, but avoid all of the blades.

Travis: Yeah, I do that. I enter 'leaf on the wind' or whatever.

Griffin: Yeah, sure, sure. Give me a dex save for the storm cloud or whatever it's called.

Travis: Dex save...

[sound if dice thrown]

Travis: That is a 16, plus 2, 18.

Griffin: Taako, does that save?

Travis: 18?

Justin: 18 against my—

Griffin: Isn't it 20 now?

Justin: Hold on, I have it— I have it written down. Yeah, sorry, Trav. I'm so good at magic.

Travis: That's fine. I'm gonna use Indomitable to roll that again.

[sound if dice thrown]

Travis: That's 16— Oh, it's an 18 again. Okay, what do I take?

Justin: 10.

Griffin: Okay. Magnus, the scene is you swing down off the mast and you make it through all the blades. But as soon as you enter the Storm Sphere, it's kind of like one of those plasma balls that you might find at a Spencer's Gifts? You are just kind of like— A couple of bolts connect onto you and sizzle. And it hurts, but it probably looks very fucking cool.

Travis: So, I've done the math as I've sat here. I can do an attack and a bonus attack with my sword and offhand sword. So, Chance Lance and Flaming Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom.

Griffin: You do have that ability.

Travis: And then I have two other attacks from extra attack twice, and then a third time because I've reached level 11. And then I can Action Surge to do a regular action and bonus action. So, I can attack six times.

Griffin: All right...

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Can you... Why don't you just roll six D20?

Travis: Well, I have four. So, I'm gonna start with that.

Griffin: All right.

Travis: So, four Flaming Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom attacks.

Griffin: Jesus Christ.

[sound if dice thrown]

Travis: Okay, 11, plus 10, 21. 19, plus 10, 29. 14, plus 10, 24. 6, plus 10, 16.

Griffin: Three of those hit.

Travis: Okay, and then two from the Chance Lance.

[sound if dice thrown]

Travis: 3 and 10. So, a 20 and a 13.

Griffin: One of those hits.

Travis: Okay!

Griffin: So, three Flaming Sword hits and one Chance Lance hit.

Travis: [sound if dice thrown] 8... 14... 21... plus 71...

Griffin: You only do one bonus action per fight, right? I'm just trying to work this all out in my head, trying to create danger.

Travis: You get bonus action on your Action Surge. So, I get two bonus actions, two regular attacks—

Griffin: Your action— You only get one Action Surge a day, right?

Travis: Correct.

Griffin: Okay. That's what I wanted to know.

Travis: So, where was I at? 92...

Griffin: Fuck off.

Travis: And then for the Chance Lance...

[sound if dice thrown]

Travis: 6. So, 98 points of damage.

Griffin: All right, here's— [laughs] Can I paint it like this? You swing down off the mast, avoid the blades and are hit by electricity, as you sort of come down onto the top of this bubble. And you just like fuck'n dragoon jump with the Chance Lance and jab that into him. And then you immediately like pull that out and do three— two quick slashes with the Flaming Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom. And then one final stab, right into John's chest. And when you do that, he just screams reflexively. And there is a burst of energy that comes out of John. And when that burst of energy hits... Taako and Merle, make a Dexterity save.

[sound if dice thrown]

Justin: 2.

Clint: 13.

Griffin: Both of you take 18 points of damage. As he shouts, the wall of blades just kind of explodes outwards, and the two of you are caught up in the... in the wave of blades, as they're sent out. The Storm Sphere also pops like a bubble, as he sends out this wave of energy. And Magnus, you are knocked backwards off of your feet next to your friends. And when you all stand up, you see John. And he's got the Raging Flaming Poisoning Sword of Doom buried in his chest. And he loses his footing, and he scrambles backwards away from your party. And he looks panicked and hurt, and desperate. And he's on his knees. And then John pops to his feet. And he cocks his head playfully. And then you see John smile.

[music plays]

And then another pulse of energy shoots out of him, knocking the three of you backward. And suddenly, John is surrounded by these tendrils of darkness emerging from his body, encircling him and the sword in his chest. And soon, he is simply a swirling column of darkness standing 15 feet tall. And inside that mass you hear a deep and monstrous laugh. And the column explodes. And where it once stood, you now see a nightmarish creature looming over you on the bow of the ship.

It's emerging from a black opal pool where it's buried up to its thick, jagged torso. Two long arms ending in razor-sharp, three-fingered claws connect to this mass, its shoulders housing skeletal wings made of multicolored light. And that same light makes up a crown sitting on top of a head. And his face is now featureless. You now just see pulses of light from behind its pitch-black countenance. And it lowers that face down toward the three of you, and screams.

And this monster pulls away from you calmly now. And the colorful streams of light inside of its body start flashing erratically. And then suddenly, they weave out of its body to form shapes in the air. And you see four orbs, one red, one blue, one yellow and one green, hovering several feet off the ground, rotating around this monster in a slow orbit. And having finished its transformation, John springs to attack.

[music fades out]

Magnus: Well, shit.

Taako: Yeah. I thought we were doing very well, honestly.

Magnus: Yeah! I hit him really good...

Clint: We're not really as good at this game as we thought, maybe.

Travis: Yeah...

Griffin: John is actually up first.

Justin: Shit.

Clint: He's still John? There isn't a cool name for him, like demi-John or—

Travis: Ultimate John. Final John!

Griffin: Sephi-John.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Kefka-John. Sorry, I just had to move a bunch of stuff over as we started the final form. You knew—You all knew there was gonna be a fuck'n Final Fantasy final format—

Travis: Yeah, I've played Final Fantasy.

Griffin: Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay.

Travis: Yeah, it's fine, it's fine, it's fine.

Griffin: First up, this giant shadow is going to swipe at you, Magnus, with one of its long razor-sharp claws.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: It's 29 versus AC, that's gonna do it.

Travis: Yeah, yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Griffin: That is 21 points of damage.

Travis: Whew manzie...

Griffin: And you are knocked prone, as this claw swipes into you. Next up is—

Travis: Did you say 21?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah. Merle, it points a finger at you. And you see this black cloud sort of surround its claw. And then all of a sudden, that black cloud is surrounding you also. Make a Constitution saving throw.

Clint: Hm...

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: 13, plus 3, is 16.

Griffin: That is not successful. You feel a horrible pain as a black fire burns inside of you, as you are caught up in this cloud of corruption. You take... 33 points of necrotic damage from this corruption.

Clint: I'm dead.

Griffin: Are you really?

Travis: You're not dead.

Clint: Yeah.

Travis: How many hit points did you have?

Clint: 31.

Travis: Okay, you're not dead.

Griffin: No, but you are unconscious, and we're gonna have to make some death saves for that. Okay, after taking those two actions, the yellow orb flashes. And then John goes a third time. And with this, it looks to you, Taako. And it... it screams at you. And I need you to make a Wisdom saving throw.

Justin: Not my strong suit...

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: That is a 4.

Griffin: Okay, you take—

Travis: Ooh, boys.

Griffin: You take 28 points of psychic damage.

Travis: Oh, my boys.

Griffin: And you are Frightened.

Travis: Oh, wait, guys, guys. I've played— I've played Final Fantasy before. This is one of those fights we're supposed to lose.

Justin: Supposed to lose. Yeah, okay, all right.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: No, this is— this is one of those fights that you think you're supposed to lose. And then you lose it, and you get a game over screen. And you're like, "Oh."

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: You are Frightened. "A Frightened creature has disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls while the source of its Fear is within line of sight. The creature can't willingly move closer to the source of its Fear." This is a very cool condition that we have never dabbled in before.

Justin: Attack rolls are not spell attacks, right? Spell... Attack rolls are combat, correct?

Griffin: No, a spell attack is an attack. If you do things where they have to make a save, that will be unaffected. Finally, the—

Travis: Just to clarify, Taako, how's your health looking?

Justin: Not good.

Travis: Cool. But you're still on your feet? Or... hypothetically?

Justin: Yeah. Yeah, I'm on my feet.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Okay. Two more things happen real quick. The green orb flashes, and a wave of green energy comes out of it, and spreads across John and the rest of the orbs, and nothing seems to happen there. And finally, the red orb flashes. and everybody except for Merle, make a Dexterity saving throw. [sound of dice thrown]

Travis: That's a nat 20.

Justin: That is a... 20 for me.

Griffin: Okay. A cloud of red flares shoots out of the orb and launches at the two of you. And it looks really fucking bad, but you two both dance around the flares as they crash and sort of skid off the deck of the Starblaster, and you are untouched.

Justin: Nice.

Griffin: Taako, you're up.

Travis: Nice, nice, nice.

Griffin: You are Frightened. You're very afraid.

Clint: Oh, I can hear that.

Travis: Even though— I will say that even though Magnus has not been technically struck by a similar condition, I would say that there is some fear present there as well.

Griffin: A normal amount of fear, sure.

Travis: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Justin: Just a regular, non-magical amount of fear. [chuckles]

Travis: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: You can save for this for the end of your turn, you can roll to save. But for this turn, if you try to do an attack roll, you will be at disadvantage.

Justin: But not— but not if I cast a spell that does not require— that requires him to save, that is not affected.

Griffin: Yeah. That'll be fine, yeah.

Taako: [stammers] My name is-is Taako, f-f-from TV. And I'm really scared right now. But I wanted to tell you some good news, you're really super lucky. I know what you're thinking, "Why? Am I lucky because I'm about to—" No. You're really lucky because this face in front of you is the last one you're ever going to see. Drink it in, John! D-d-drink it in! Abraca-fuck you!

Justin: I cast Sunburst, right on his fuck'n head.

Griffin: Okay? What's that mean?

Justin: He's gotta do a... a Constitution saving throw.

Griffin: Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: That is a 15.

Justin: That's not gonna do it.

Griffin: No, I didn't think it would do it.

Justin: So, I'm gonna need him to take 12 D6 radiant damage.

Griffin: Woah, damn.

Justin: Let me cook that up. Let me cook that up for you real quick, hold on. That is... 46.

Griffin: Wow, okay.

Travis: Hot damn!

Griffin: He's good still.

Justin: He's also blinded for the next minute.

Griffin: Okay. Does he get to save against that? I guess not.

Justin: Let's do it— Nope, he already had his chance to save and it done passed.

Griffin: Okay, "Attack rolls against a creature have advantage and the creature's attack rolls have disadvantage." Got it. Help me remember that, please. I already forgot to do your scared disadvantage against the flare save, but that's fine, it's in the past. And the attack hits the orbs also, right Everything within 60 feet?

Justin: Right. Right.

Griffin: Okay, and I roll a... what was it again, Dex save?

Justin: Constitution.

Griffin: Constitution.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: I'll just roll one for all of them. As you cast the spell, the blue orb flashes, and the other three orbs are surrounded by this like... You see like a magical barrier sort of strengthening them a little bit. And it's not enough to protect them from this Sunburst. And it was a hit, 46 damage, you said?

Justin: Yeah, and they're all blinded.

Griffin: Well, okay.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Take that, orbs!

Griffin: They are magic orbs. Okay, next in the order is Merle. Roll a D20 for a death save!

Clint: And what have I got to do?

Griffin: Roll a D20 straight up and down. If it is a... a 1 to 10, then it's a failure and you get one strike. If it's 11 to 19, you get one success. Three successes and you're stable, three strikes and you're out. If you roll 20, you are awake.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: It's a 2.

Griffin: [in baseball voice] Strike one! Go ahead and mark that down.

Clint: Yeah, sure.

Griffin: Next in the order is Magnus.

Travis: Okay. So, all the bubbles are still there?

Griffin: Yes, they took some damage, but they are all still there.

Travis: And we saw... like the blue one did something, right? So, that's... Like, I think—

Griffin: The blue one flashed and the others and John were surrounded by this barrier, but it was not enough to protect them.

Travis: Cool. I am going to hurl my Chance Lance.

Griffin: Okay?

Travis: At the blue boy.

Griffin: Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: That's a 21.

Griffin: Yeah, that's a hit.

Travis: And roll this guy...

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: That's 8 damage.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And I pop it.

Griffin: No.

Travis: Okay. I—

Griffin: It does— it looks pretty bad off. The blue orb looks pretty bad off. But it is still up.

Travis: I recall the Chance Lance, I done hurl it again.

Griffin: All right!

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: That's a 19, plus 10, 29.

Griffin: That one misses, it's weird...

Travis: Weird? All right..

Griffin: No, it hits.

Travis: And that's 8, plus 5, 18 damage— Oh, sorry, 13 damage. [chuckles]

Griffin: The orb is like... It was— it did look— it did look like a smooth orb before. And now it's like... it's rippling a lot. There's things sort of peeling off of it and it looks like it is losing its structure a little bit.

Travis: Okay, cool. I'm gonna hurl that done Chance Lance one more time at that blue boy.

Griffin: Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: 5, plus 10, 25.

Griffin: That's a hit!

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: That's 7, plus 5, 12 damage.

Griffin: As you throw the Chance Lance this time, it sticks deep into this like plasmic substance that makes up the blue orb. And the distortion inside of it just goes wild. And jagged edges shoot out of it and then retract back in, and the blue orb implodes, and is gone.

Travis: And so, with my dual-wielding bonus action, I am going to attack with— attack John.

Griffin: Okay?

Travis: With Railsplitter.

Griffin: All right.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: 16, plus 10, 26.

Griffin: Mm-hm?

Travis: Okay. And then... That's D8.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Okay. So, 7... I haven't used Railsplitter. 7, plus 5, 12. Then I'll use Goading Attack.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: With my superiority dice.

Griffin: What do I have to beat? What was your damage?

Travis: I'll tell you in a second.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Oh, that's a 10, plus 12... Was that what it was?

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: 22.

Griffin: And it's wisdom?

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: That was a 19, plus 5, 24.

Travis: Oh! You did it. You solved my Goding puzzle.

Griffin: All right, you done?

Travis: I think so.

Griffin: All right.

Travis: I can't think of anything else to do.

Griffin: John is up next. And first thing that John does is... From that sort of like faintly glowing light inside of its face, a prismatic beam shoots out at you, Magnus.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: That's a crit.

Travis: Ooh...

Griffin: Yeah, this is gonna be really shitty.

Travis: Cool, cool. Cool, cool, cool.

Griffin: That is 48 damage, as this beam of light strikes you. Next, he is going to swipe at Taako.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: All righty...

Griffin: That was only a 5, so...

Justin: Hey, my armor finally works.

Griffin: A 14? Does that hit?

Justin: What? Yes, it does... [chuckles]

Griffin: Oh, really?

Travis: Wait, Griffin, isn't he still blinded?

Griffin: Oh, yeah! He is blinded, thank you. Let me roll disadvantage against your crit, Magnus. Thank you for reminding me.

Travis: Thank you.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Okay, that was just a 25, but not a crit.

Travis: I mean, that does hit.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But it'll be less.

Travis: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Undo that damage. And instead take... 27 points of damage.

Travis: Okay. Whew, now... now we're talking.

Griffin: Taako, let me roll disadvantage against—

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Oh, okay. That is a 12.

Justin: That doesn't do it.

Griffin: Okay. He takes a swipe at you, but you are able to avoid it. With that, the yellow orb flashes, and then John goes a third time. Both of you make a Dexterity saving throw.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Nope. 4, plus 2, 6.

Justin: 19 for me.

Griffin: All right, Taako gets out of the way. But Magnus, you are hit by this much, much larger streak of fire that stretches across the deck of the ship, as he sort of waves a hand in your direction. Taako you get out of the way, but you are hit a little bit by the sort of splash damage of these flames. That is... Taako— or Magnus, you take 24. Taako, you take 12.

Travis: Jesus Christ...

Justin: Oh no, I'm unconscious.

Griffin: Jesus. All right. Magnus, you see Taako go down. Let's see—

Justin: Welcome to Justin and dad's side podcast, where we—

Griffin: It's fuck'n--

Clint: Being unconscious is not as much fun as you might think.

Griffin: Go join Dave Foley at the loser's table.

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: Oh man...

Justin: Cruel.

Griffin: No, it was like the poker tour--

Travis: No, 'cause he hosts it! Not 'cause Dave Foley's a loser! Griffin would never say that.

Griffin: Yeah, come on?

Justin: I meant cruel to— I meant cruel to us! I don't care about Dave Foley—

Travis: Oh no, that's fine.

Justin: I care about—

Clint: I do care about Dave Foley.

Justin: I care very much about Dave Foley.

Clint: He's a good friend.

Griffin: Next up, the green orb flashes and... A wave of energy shoots out of the green orb, surrounding the remaining orbs and John. And they are all healed for 30 points of damage.

Travis: Okay.

Clint: Each?

Griffin: And finally— Each. And finally, the red orb flashes. Magnus, make a Dexterity saving throw.

Travis: Jesus Christ...

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Nope! 3, plus 2, 5! Goodbye, everybody!

Griffin: Magnus? You take... not 51 D10, that would be overkill... 35 points of damage.

Travis: Woo-hoo-hoo, and I'm unconscious!

Justin: How many—

Clint: Hi, Trav!

Justin: How many did you say, 35?

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: All right...

Travis: Nap time!

Griffin: Magnus. You go down, and the three of you are unconscious. And as you fall, you hear... you hear Lucretia from the helm. And she shouts, "Snake!" No.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You just— you just... You just hear her scream, as Magnus, you lose consciousness. And as the three of you sort of drift away, the... the cacophony of this battle and the steady roar of the Starblaster's flight, and the screaming energy that is just coming off of John's body and his constant amused laughter, it grows quieter, and quieter still. Until the three of you hear no sound at all.

And then in this place, in this... this dark place where you all are, you feel a warm and loving presence. Which one of you ended The Stolen Century with the most bond?

Travis: I think that would be... father.

Clint: I believe I did, I had 8.

Griffin: Roll a D10.

Clint: Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: 4.

Griffin: Okay. Merle, you... you don't know if you're awake or not, you don't know if you're dreaming or not, but you hear a sound break the silence. And you hear the Bond Engine, in the back of the Starblaster, that ring that propels the ship. You hear it spin slightly faster. And it's giving off a faint, almost musical hum. And threads of light weave around that spinning ring until its interior is just bathed in this joyous light. And you feel someone calling to you from within that portal, offering you help. Who is it?

[“Bonds” by Griffin McElroy plays]

Clint: [laughs] Anybody?

Griffin: Anybody.

Merle: Oh... Oh, holy Pan! Holy shit, I'm in trouble! Come do some holy shit, will you?

Travis: [chuckles]

Griffin: You see him spring from the bond engine in the back of the ship, and time seems to slow down. And the scene around you, like the unconscious bodies of your friends, and John's like, monstrous form and the orbs and the helm, everything is just gone as Pan leaps toward you with his faun legs, and he slides to a halt next to you. And he reaches down and lifts your face up off the ground and he says:

Pan: What did I tell you? I'm always gonna be there from now on, Merle.

Merle: Thanks! Can me and my buddies wake up now?

Griffin: He nods. And I think the like... I think the effect here— and we're gonna have to like work here to figure these out— but I think the effect here is based on your request, group healing. I want you to roll bond D10. So eight D10.

Justin: I got it, dad. I'll do it.

Clint: Okay.

Justin: Looks like it is 56.

Griffin: Okay. Magnus, Taako and Merle... This scene, Merle, this scene dissipates for you, as Pan smiles and drifts back toward the portal. And then the light dissipates, and you realize you're feeling all right. You're feeling pretty good. And Magnus, Taako and Merle, you are all healed for 56 points of damage.

Justin: Hell yeah.

Griffin: Merle's—

Travis: Does that go from 0? Or from—

Griffin: Yeah from 0.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Merle, you now have 7 bond.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: Next in the order is Magnus. Magnus, you kind of felt it too, in that unconscious place. But there is a presence inside of the Bond Engine that is calling out to you, almost as if like the world and everyone you've ever met is lending aid.

Travis: I... Yeah, I'm gonna summon.

Griffin: Roll D10.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: You wanna roll under your bond.

Travis: I rolled a 5.

Griffin: All right. That's under 7.

Travis: I'm going to summon the fighter who inspired Magnus to protect his friends, to protect the ones he cared about no matter what. Troth.

Griffin: Oh, shit!

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: You see the spirit of Troth leap forward. And you see this Tiefling monk, this badass Tiefling monk leap forward and you've— I guess you never saw her in this form, but there she is. And she looks badass, Magnus. She looks... she's a little bit beefier than you are even. And she helps you stand up from your place on the ground, and she points at John and she says... Well, what does she say, Justin?

Troth: Well, this is fuck'n weird.

Clint: [laughs]

Troth: Who should I hit?

Magnus: Protect my friends. Red orb!

Troth: Red?

Magnus: Red orb.

Troth: Red orb. Got it.

Griffin: Magnus, roll seven D10.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: 9... 10... 13...

Griffin: Do you know what, can I just roll it for you?

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Fuck me.

Travis: What'd you get?

Griffin: [chuckles] Shit. And you got 7? So, that's gonna be... okay. Troth leaps up and she— I think her spirit like this staff, like a bo staff. But she fuck'n like drops it as she springs through the air towards the red orb. And she unleashes a flurry of blows against it. And suddenly, the red orb, it looks the blue one did like right before it went. Like these jagged sort of edges are coming out of it as it's starting to kind of lose its composure. And then she, and this scene dissipate.

Taako, I'm going to put you up next, in front of John. As you sort of get this round of surprise. I think John is kind of shocked as the circle comes to life and things start springing out of the bond engine and beating the shit out of him. And so, you are going to go before he does.

Justin: Okay, I'm going to... Yeah, I'll do a bond attack. I don't have a lot of bond. I have four bond.

Griffin: You have four bond. So, roll good.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: 2!

Griffin: All right!

Justin: Hey, all right!

Griffin: Magnus, by the way, you're down to six bond now.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Okay, Taako, who comes out of the portal?

Taako: Hey, I want everyone to meet a new friend of mine. His name's Joaquin!

Griffin: Oh shit, yes, yes, yes, yes!

Clint: Hi, Joaquin!

Griffin: You see—

Taako: Light him the fuck up!

Griffin: Joaquin like comes through the portal and he's floating on this like electricity that he's shooting out of his palms downwards, as he floats down to you. He looks, if you'll forgive me, fucking like Super Saiyan at this point? And he's— he runs up to you and he hugs you, Taako. And he's like:

Joaquin: It's really cool to meet you. I didn't think that we'd ever actually get to say hey in person. Thanks for the fuck'n wizard powers, by the way. I've killed like 100 of these things.

Taako: Well, show me what you've got!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: What do want him to do?

Taako: See those orbs, Joaquin? Blast 'em!

Griffin: Oh, fuck yeah. And he—

Travis: Have him do the finger gun.

Griffin: Yeah, I had him do an Overwatch super in the last episode and I'm trying to think what another... Okay, I know what it is, I know what it is, I know what it is.

Travis: Yeah?

Griffin: He launches himself upward into the sky on those beams of electricity. And he... he throws his arms out, and from his fingers, 10 bolts of electricity shoot down and catch the three remaining orbs and John in their attack. Taako, roll two D10, plus 4.

Justin: Okay... 21.

Griffin: Wow, fuck'n good rolls. Okay, John takes that damage and kind of reels backwards as these bolts slam into him. The green and yellow orbs are looking not so great, but not completely like distorted, like they're just about to burst. And the red orb, again, just like you saw the blue orb do earlier, it flashes and those jagged edges shoot out of it. And it almost looks like it's about to like jab into you, but then they quickly retract and the red orb implodes. And Joaquin waves from his place up in the sky and he says:

Joaquin: I'm gonna go back to saving my world now! Good luck!

Taako: Hell yeah!

Griffin: And he drifts backwards through the portal. Now it is John's turn. First attack, he is going to... point at you, Magnus. And make a Constitution saving throw as you feel that black cloud surrounding you.

Travis: Oh, I'm okay at that!

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Hell yeah, that's a 20.

Griffin: That just saves!

Travis: Hell yeah.

Griffin: And you just sort of like... You feel this black cloud surround you, and you just kind of like fuck'n wave your arm like you're fighting off a mosquito. And the cloud dissipates and you are not burned. For the second attack, Merle, he is going to use his monstrous scream on you. You feel this

piercing, shrill scream come down from his featureless face. Make a Wisdom saving throw.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: 10 plus... plus 3, so 13.

Griffin: That is not gonna do it, you take twenty points of psychic damage and you are Frightened. Which means you have disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls while this thing is in your line of sight, and it cannot— you cannot move closer to it. Finally, the yellow orb flashes, and the— John takes a third action. I think with this one, it's going to shoot a beam out of its face at you, Taako...

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: 22, versus AC?

Justin: Yes.

Griffin: That is 19 points of damage, as you are hit by this beam of light.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: With that, the green orb flashes, and all three of them are healed for 22 points of damage.

Justin: We gotta get the green orb.

Clint: Yeah.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Griffin: We are back to the top of the order now. Actually, now that round is over, I'm gonna leave it how it was. So, this round will be Merle, Magnus, John, Taako again. Now that the, like, surprise round is over.

Travis: Griffin, if we wanna do— and you can cut this out— but when we wanna do Bond attacks, does that just count as an attack?

Griffin: No, that's like your action for the turn.

Travis: Okay. Cool. Cool, cool, cool.

Griffin: Merle, you are up. Taako, by the way, you are down to three Bond.

Justin: Right, yeah.

Clint: What am I down to?

Griffin: You are at seven.

Travis: You're now seven.

Griffin: So, you still have a very good chance to do this.

Clint: I... First of all, this is my turn, right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Okay, and if I use something, I can stil— that's not necessarily an action, is it?

Griffin: Tell me what you're thinking.

Clint: I wanna use the Phone-A-Friend Scrying Bones.

Griffin: [chuckles] Okay?

Clint: I reach into my bag, pull out the Phone-A-Friend Scrying Bones. And looking over them mystically, I pass the Extreme Teenage Bible over them, and they begin to glow.

Griffin: Okay?

Clint: And I'm allowed to— I'm allowed to ask the DM one question which he has to answer honestly.

Griffin: All right, go.

Clint: So, have you had fun doing the adventure?

Griffin: Yes, of course!

Clint: Great, okay. Now, I use my bond to summon—

Justin: You gotta roll first.

Clint: Oh, sorry.

Justin: D10, yeah.

Clint: D10...

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: 3.

Griffin: Yeah, that's good. That's under your... your count.

Clint: Okay. Garfield the Deals Warlock.

Griffin: Oof! I thought you were gonna summon me for a second, and I thought—

Travis: I thought so, too!

Griffin: ... I was gonna get pulled in like fuck'n Pagemaster—

Clint: Oh, let me do that!

Griffin: No. No fucking way, that's way outside— I mean—

Justin: You had— You know, you take— You— You could have, in canon, summoned Clint McElroy. That is actually canonical.

Griffin: No--

Justin: He was at the Tesseralla Losers peptalk, if you'll remember correctly. He was a janitor there, I believe.

Clint: That's right!

Griffin: But that's— this is— this is great. You see the incomprehensible shape, the indescribable sort of indecipherable shape of Garfield the Deals Warlock, spring forward from the portal. And he... Garfield looks how Garfield looks, as Garfield approaches you. And—

Clint: Let's describe him, It's Garfield the Deals Warlock.

Griffin: Garfield says:

Garfield: You know, it's not usually my business to hand out goods and services for free, but something tells me if that thing hits our world, then... I'm going to have to close up shop again. And I can't go through that, emotionally. So, what'll you have?

Griffin: What do you want Garfield the Deals Warlock to do?

Clint: Wow!

Travis: You didn't think that far ahead?

Clint: I hadn't thought that part out!

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: Everybody else summoned something and they did it themselves!

Travis: That is not true.

Merle: I'll tell you what, you got anything that might take out that green orb?

Garfield: Let me see what I can...

Griffin: He says:

Garfield: Let me—

Merle: Yeah, I mean like a store. Do you have something you can store... like a magic bowling ball bag that we could store the orb in?

Griffin: [chuckles]

Merla: And it won't be powerful? You got anything like that?

Griffin: He says:

Garfield: Let me see what I've got in here.

Griffin: And he reaches down into a bag of holding that he has on his back. And you see him like disappear up to his like thighs, as he dives down into this bag. And you hear him rummaging around a bunch of stuff. And he leans out and he's holding what looks like a grenade as he steps out of the bag. And he looks at you as if he's doing a quick like cost benefit analysis. And he looks down at the grenade, and then he looks over at the three remaining enemies. And he says:

Garfield: You boys know the best part of the Fantasy Costco?

Griffin: And he pulls the pin out of this grenade, and he says:

Garfield: Free samples!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And he flings it. And it hits John. Roll... what are you at, seven? So, we'll say roll... roll three D10 damage.

Justin: I got you, Dad.

Clint: Okay.

Justin: 21.

Griffin: Okay. All of them take 21 points of damage, those orbs are looking really bad now. And also, when the grenade hits the orbs... It doesn't seem to do anything extra when it hits John, but when it hits the orbs, they look like they turn grey for a moment. Like some of their power has temporarily left them. And he drifts backwards through the portal and says:

Garfield: I'll put it on your tab!

Justin: [chuckles]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And disappears. For this round, the orbs will not function. Who is next? After Merle is Magnus.

Travis: You know, I could attack, but I'm having a lot of fun with this Bond thing. So, I'm gonna do that.

Griffin: All right.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: 3!

Griffin: That is a success! Who comes out of the portal?

Travis: Well, Griffin, that would be our old elemental friend, Roswell.

Griffin: Fuck yeah!

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: And I make eye contact—

Griffin: What is— What are they— Are they in bird form? Or is there—

Travis: Oh, no. No, no, no. This is elemental clay person and bird together, as t'was meant to be.

Griffin: Okay, then I think the scene is that Roswell comes surfing in through the portal on this mudslide, that stops like just behind you. It like crashes over the helm and comes down into the deck. And Roswell like flits up into the air as an earthen golem forms beneath them. And Roswell says:

Roswell: Things are going pretty well back in the fight on earth, but I hear you could use a little bit of help?

Magnus: Junebug.

Roswell: No, you don't have to do that anymore.

Magnus: I know, but I was just going to say—

Roswell: No, no, no, tell me what to do. Let's fuck this thing up!

Magnus: Yeah, all right. Punch the shit out of John.

Roswell: You got it!

Griffin: Roll six D10.

Travis: How many? What?

Griffin: Six D10.

Justin: Here, let me— let me do it, Trav.

Travis: Thank you.

Justin: That is a... 46.

Griffin: Plus 6, 52? Ah, Jesus, okay. I think... I think that Roswell's like clay form sinks back down into that mudslide. And Roswell, the bird, just kind of flits over to your shoulder, Magnus. And then a huge fucking fist shoots out of the mudslide and moves towards John, and slams right into him. And I think even though you— it's just like lights inside of John's face, like you can't see a face. You get the sense that John's afraid for the first time. As this fist slams into them for a pretty enormous amount of damage. And then the clay sort of recedes and John is still standing. And Roswell says:

Roswell: That's the best I can do, I gotta get back to it! Good luck!

Magnus: You did great, I'm really proud of you!

Griffin: And the mud recedes back through the portal, and Roswell flies back through the portal, and is gone. Next up is John. First attack, Taako, they're gonna— he's gonna swipe at you.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: It's a 26 versus AC, but... disadvantage...

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: 19 versus AC.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Eighteen points of damage?

Justin: All right.

Griffin: And you are knocked prone. Second attack, he is going to... Magnus, he is going to shoot his beam of light out of his face at you now, with disadvantage.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: That's a 12, I don't— it doesn't matter what else I roll. That is a miss, as the beam of light—

Travis: It bounces off the shield of heroic memories, motherfucker.

Griffin: Okay, and it blasts upwards away from the deck. And then that's it! The yellow orb, you actually see it flash faintly, but nothing happens. And the same with the green orb, it tries to flash, but nothing happens. And we are on to Taako.

Justin: Prone means I have to use my movement to stand up, right?

Griffin: Right.

Justin: So, I can't move after that.

Griffin: Correct.

Justin: Okay. What's the layout, give me the layout of John and the orbs right now.

Griffin: The two orbs are sort of floating around him in like a lazy orbit. But they are— they are very... they're very close.

Justin: [chuckles] All right.

Taako: You're really in trouble now, mister. I am going to call upon someone who inspires me every day to be a better wizard and a better person. He's my hero, really. And... You're fucked. His name is Taako.

Justin: And I wait until the orbs and John are in perfect alignment, and I cast Sunbeam.

Griffin: Okay. Give me that descriptioné, my friend.

Justin: I raise my hand and a beam of brilliant light flashes from my hand in a 5 foot wide, 60 foot long line—

Griffin: God!

Justin: Everybody's going to make a Constitution saving throw.

Griffin: I'll roll once for the orbs.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: 15?

Justin: No, sir.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: 17 for John?

Justin: 17 John, that is also a miss, that's not gonna get it.

Griffin: All right, what do you do?

Justin: That's gonna be... 37 points of radiant damage, and much like the best science on Earth, you're all double-blind!

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay. The two orbs look really bad. The two orbs... the two orbs which came back to life, like the color returned to them after John's last turn, they are starting to lose their composure in a major way. And John... John still looks pretty sturdy.

Travis: So, the orbs are there, and they were grey, and now they're losing their composure in a major way.

Griffin: All right, next in the order is Merle.

Clint: I prepare the... the spell Mass Cure Wounds.

Griffin: Okay?

Clint: And, as I raise the Extreme Teen Bible, all of a sudden, out of nowhere, in front of me is this... this vision—

Griffin: [chuckles] Well, roll—

Clint: Wait a minute! Well, I'm not casting a Bond roll.

Justin: Well, what are you doing?

Clint: I was getting ready to cast the spell. And just as I'm getting ready to cast the spell, all of a sudden in front of me, I see this vision. And it sort of looks like me. And only I can hear the voice, and it's me, and I say:

Merle: Hey dumbass, you're about to fuck up! Don't cast what you were going to ca—

Clint: And it's gone.

Justin: [laughs]

Griffin: What?

Clint: Obviously a vision of myself from nine seconds in the future.

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: I used the Globe of Recall, the nine second thing that I got to go back in time in my mind nine seconds—

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: And instead of casting Mass Cure Wounds, I cast—

Griffin: Well, hold on, you have to— you have to fuck'n Bill and Ted this out!

Clint: Okay?

Griffin: You have to use it and do it, or else it's a fuck'n time paradox and you're gonna destroy the universe. I can't believe I've given you this! I can't believe I've given you this thing!

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: How else is it supposed to work?!

Griffin: No, do it!

Clint: If I don't use it to go back nine seconds and correct myself—

Justin: Now listen, technically speaking, dad is— we are living in the timeline that the listeners would hear, is the corrected timeline. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah, this is timeline B, this is the fixed timeline! They'll never hear timeline A, because it ceases to exist now.

Griffin: Do you know how much— -

Justin: Right, we should record both timelines, that's the paradox.

Griffin: That's fair. Do you know how much sleep I would have lost if you hadn't used this fucking ball? Suddenly, you look in your possessions and it's gone, you don't have the ball anymore. What the fuck's up now? It's been used! Okay, now we're back in, what, timestream C. And what do you do instead of this?

Clint: Now can I do— Can I do another Bond?

Justin: Yeah!

Clint: Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: A 1.

Travis: Perfect.

Griffin: That's good for the Bond. Man, you guys are crushing the Bond rolls. Okay. Who comes out of the portal, now that you have warned yourself from the future to not cast that spell and instead take this action?

Clint: I summon the Voidfish. Mm!

Travis: Fisher!

Clint: Yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Both of them come out. Fisher and Fisher Junior. And—

Travis: It's just Junior. I just want to make that clear. Canonically, it's Fisher and Junior.

Griffin: They drift slowly through the portal, toward the two of you. And Junior is sort of swimming through the air around you, Merle, kind of playfully. And Fisher moves over to you, Magnus, and puts a tendril on your shoulder, and sings a little song. And Fisher looks great. Like, Fisher was pretty badly injured the last time you saw the Voidfish before it disappeared. And now it looks— it looks healthy again.

Magnus: Oh, my— oh, buddy! You look great!

Griffin: And Fisher floats over to you, Merle, and its child. And it hums at you, also. What do these two Voidfish do?

Merle: Ah, man!

Travis: [laughs]

Merle: Can you make the remaining orbs not exist anymore?

Griffin: You hear a different song than one you've heard come out of Fisher. It's a furious like battle hymn. Yeah, you hear some fuck'n like death metal come out of Fisher's bell, as the two Voidfish, one to each orb, float over. And just start— Their tendrils grow like sharp, and they just start stabbing these orbs over and over and over again. Roll, I think, six D10? Is where we're at?

Magnus: I'm so proud!

Justin: 44.

Griffin: Jesus! Plus 6, is 50. They're just like stabbing them over and over again with their tendrils in unison to the music. And then both of them jab all their tendrils all at once into the two orbs. And there's no like, distortion this time. You just see them spread their tendrils out very quickly and just tear the two orbs apart. And they are gone. And they sing their song joyfully as they drift backwards through the portal. Magnus?

Travis: I am going to summon...

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: There's a 2. And I'm going to summon the Power Bear.

Griffin: Okay. You see it, you see the gigantic form, it almost has trouble fitting through the portal, as it launches forward out toward you. It's not the twisted form that you saw before, and he is uninjured. It is just this glowing, spiritual form. And the Power Bear looks at you and then—

Travis: I bow.

Griffin: He laughs, a sort of gruff laugh and he says:

Power Bear: I think we're well past that at this point, Magnus.

Griffin: And he looks at Taako and Merle, and then he looks back at you. And he says:

Power Bear: It seems like you've surrounded yourself with some pretty good people.

Magnus: Yeah, but I could use a little more help.

Griffin: He looks up at John and he says— and he starts to walk towards him. And he turns back towards you and he says:

Power Bear: I know what I told you about what the meaning of strength is, about asking for help when you need it. And... humbling yourself before your friends. And that's all well and good.

Griffin: And then he turns towards John and he says:

Power Bear: But sometimes, a big gnarly attack is pretty fucking strong, too.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And he leaps forward and smashes his claws into John. Roll six D10.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: I got you.

Travis: Thank you.

Griffin: I think it might be five D10? What did you—

Travis: Yeah, I had five left.

Griffin: Okay, five D10.

Travis: That is 38 points of damage.

Griffin: All right. John is knocked back a little bit from this like pool that he is standing in. And he reels and rights himself but is looking really bad off

now. As he regains his composure, and the Power Bear floats backwards and says—

Magnus: Wait, before you go! Did you see the mask I made that looks like a bear face?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: He looks at it and he says:

Power Bear: Is that— is that for me?

Magnus: Yeah! 'Cause like, you taught me about fighting and stuff! And so like, it's like a mentor/mentee... You know how Mr. Miyagi gave Daniel that headband? It's like that!

Griffin: He laughs, and he says:

Power Bear: That's really cool. Don't—

Magnus: Thank you!

Griffin: He says:

Power Bear: Don't forget what I taught you, you can win this. You can do this!

Griffin: And he floats backwards through the portal and is gone. Next is John's turn. Everybody make a Dexterity saving throw as a streak of black fire streams across the ground.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Nope, I get hit.

Clint: 18.

Travis: 9. No, sorry, 7.

Justin: 18.

Griffin: Okay! You, Magnus and— what did you roll, Merle?

Clint: 18.

Griffin: Okay. Merle and Taako, you both leap out of the way of the fire as it crosses the ground. And Magnus, you are caught up in the flames. And Magnus, you are hit for... 22 points of damage.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Merle and Taako, you are both hit for 11, as sort of the splash damage catches you.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: For his second attack, John looks at the three of you, and then looks at Davenport and Lucretia in the helm. And you see his face start to glow again. And a prismatic beam shoots out of his face, and it smashes into the Bond Engine in the back of the ship. And you see one of the panels that are sort of... that make up the ring around the Bond Engine, like pops open and a thick plume of smoke comes out, and there's a crash. And suddenly, the ship— you feel Davenport like have to jerk to keep it steady. And the light that was inside of it is gone. And you feel yourself cut off from that warm presence that was there before. That is it for John's turn. Taako?

Justin: Yeah?

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: All right, I step up to John, and I look him in the eye, and I say:

Taako: Well... Bye!

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: And I cast Whirlwind.

Griffin: Okay?

Justin: That's a 10 foot radius, 30 foot high cylinder. He's gotta make a Dexterity saving throw on it, and he's gonna take a little bit of damage if he fails.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Yeah, he has disadvantage too, 'cause he is blinded, and I rolled an 8.

Justin: Okay, well... I'm gonna need him to go ahead and just scoop up 45 points of damage.

Griffin: Holy shit. All right, here's the scene... Merle and Magnus, you see Taako step up and say, "Bye," and stick out the Krebstar in front of him. And from his glaive, a column of green wind launches outward and connects with John. And you see John screaming and you— it almost looks like he is being peeled out of that portal, as this wind is just kind of tearing him apart. But you also see Taako, and it looks like the power and fury of this attack is knocking him off of his feet.

["Arms Outstretched" by Griffin McElroy plays]

Travis: I put my hand on Taako's shoulder to help brace him.

Clint: I throw myself down to wrap my arms around his legs to hold him to the ground.

Justin: I reach into my fuck'n bag and grab my Immovable Rod. I'm not going fuck'n anywhere.

Griffin: This wind is blowing all three of you backwards, but you hold onto each other tight, as these green winds continue to just tear and tear away. As you sort of hold each other there, you see a single white thread appear and connect you, Taako and Magnus. And then another one appears

connecting Magnus and Merle, and then another forms between you, and another, and dozens more. And suddenly, thousands of bonds are threaded between the three of you, filling you with power, Taako, as this wind lifts this monstrous entity up off the deck.

And we see the three of you huddled together cloaked in the light of these bonds. And in that light, we see flashes of the past, of your orientation at the Institute of Planar Research and Exploration, of the year on the beach, and of the train and the lab and the time-sick town, and of Merle and Taako's desperate rescue of Magnus from the astral plane in Wonderland. And then the light pulses one last time and travels through Taako's attack up and into this monster who screams as the light fills them. And this light is shooting from its mouth and chest and fingers as it's lifted higher and higher off the deck. And then the light swells and consumes everything you see.

Merle, the white light starts to dissipate. And as it does you find yourself standing on a beach at sunset. And there's a cool, gentle breeze coming up the coast as the tide rolls out, and the last of the sun's light retreats past the horizon. And sitting on his suit jacket, with his shoes off and his pant legs rolled up, with his feet in the sand facing the ocean, is John. And he's human again. And he pats the ground next to him, and he says:

John: Merle... will you sit with me? Just... just for a moment?

Merle: You got it, buddy.

Griffin: You go and you move over to him and he says:

John: We don't have to talk. Let's just... let's just watch this together.

Griffin: And you sit there for a minute, watching the tide pull further and further away as the water rolls gently onto the shore, and the sun drops further and further behind the sea, and then the final sliver of sunlight is gone. And so is John. Merle, you return from that vision and you are back with everyone else aboard the Starblaster. Only, the ship's not moving. Because you've reached your destination. The bow of the Starblaster is half-buried in the ground below. Which the three of you discover is just this

ocean of shifting obsidian-black sand, that looks lit from below by these faint colorful splashes of light.

This is where Davenport expertly brought the ship down on the Hunger. And now you see him outside the helm, working to repair the damage done to the Bond Engine on the back of the ship. The ring that makes up that engine is spinning again, slowly picking up speed as Davenport continues his work. And in front of you, the three of you see Lucretia, standing over the heavy metal orb housing the Animus Bell. And from that orb you don't see any traces of the Light of Creation. All of it is inside of her white oak staff, which she is holding out in front of her with both hands. Her eyes are closed and you see that soft white light pulsating from her staff as she finishes casting the spell that will surround the Hunger with her barrier.

And she doesn't have that protective bubble around her anymore, and you realize that's because it's surrounding the entirety of the ship. It stretches outward a few dozen feet away from the vessel. And through the bubble, you can see shadows surrounding you on all sides, just pounding away at the barrier. They're climbing one another, forming these small hills of enemies who are growling and panicked and desperate. And it's taking a lot out of Lucretia to maintain this bubble. You see... you see beads of sweat dripping down her face as she attempts to finish casting this spell once and for all. And from behind you, you hear the Bond Engine hum back to life. And Davenport slams that hatch on the ring shut. And he shouts:

Davenport: Got it!

Griffin: And when you turn to face him, you see that sure enough the Bond Engine is back online. And you also see white threads stretching out from it once again. And Davenport says:

Davenport: Wait, what?

Griffin: As these threads encircle him and pull him into the ring, and then he's gone. And the threads weave together to show you something peculiar. You see a quiet forest with tall pine trees peppering the landscape. And overhead in this scene, you can see the Hunger filling the sky. And you

realize what this final gift is that the Starblaster has given you. It's a portal home. And Lucretia shouts:

Lucretia: Go, it's almost ready. I'll put up the barrier and I'll make a run for it, but this is your chance. I can hold them off, just go!

Magnus: I'm not going fuck'n anywhere.

Griffin: And then you hear a crash. And the muted screams of the shadows outside the bubble suddenly become much, much louder. And there's a flash of light, and as you look to the source, you realize that the bubble surrounding the ship has ruptured. And this wave of shadows is toppling toward the Starblaster, and they crash to the ground. And suddenly the forces of darkness are clambering as one toward the ship. And Lucretia, still casting the spell, turns toward you and she reaches out a hand. And then this entire scene, the shadows, Lucretia, and this world of darkness all around you, it instantly goes greyscale, and it freezes. And there's Istus.

[“The Temple of Istus” by Griffin McElroy plays]

Griffin: And she's drained of color too now, she's frozen in place in between the three of you. And she's looking in your direction. Her arms are down at her sides, her palms are turned up toward the heavens. And you realize she's delivering on a promise she made you months ago. She is giving you time to decide what to do.

Travis: Well, if I may, there's not even a decision for Magnus.

Magnus: I'm not going anywhere. There's no question.

Merle: Well, I'm gonna stay, because who would fail to heal him if he needed to be healed? I'm staying here.

Taako: I'm... I'm sorry, guys, but I have to help Lup. If there's anything I can do for her, I... I gotta be with her.

Magnus: Absolutely.

Justin: And I leap through the portal.

Griffin: As Taako passes through the portal, for the rest of you, the scene in the portal, it changes. And you see Barry and Lup, just like back to back, and they're just fuck'n the Hunger up. And the camera pans upward and we see scenes of just everyone fighting this fight. And you see Angus like launch a beam of fire that shoots through four shadows and burns them up. And you see... You see Hurley and Sloane's battle wagon driving around, just like brake-sliding into Hunger that explode into ash as they crash through them. And you see Klaarg and his family like run up a massive shadow and just start like picking it apart as they're hanging off of it. And you see scenes of the world winning the fight.

Justin: All right, I jump back through the portal.

Taako: Hey, it's seems like they've got it, so. I'm good to hang.

Clint: [laughs]

Magnus: Are you guys like 100%?

Taako: Yeah, fuck it.

Merle: Yeah, let's go.

Magnus: All right, fuck it.

Travis: And I give Istus like a double low-five. You know like both hands, smack.

Magnus: Yeah, let's do this.

Justin: [chuckles]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: As you do that, Istus fades and you see her disappear through this rift, as she returns to the place and time where you first met her in her

temple in Refuge months ago. And as time starts to catch back up to you, and the world regains its color, and you start to move toward Lucretia, you hear a voice through this rift say:

Istus: You're going to be amazing.

["Lucretia (Reprise)" by Griffin McElroy plays]

Griffin: And we see the shadows crest the bow of the ship, tearing toward Lucretia as she reaches towards you. And then we see her gasp as the three of you suddenly charge past her, crashing fearlessly into the horde. We see Magnus barreling behind his shield, throwing himself into the melee as he disappears inside the wave of shadows. We see Taako, charging past Lucretia, riding on Garyl's back, calling down a pillar of fire as he too is surrounded by darkness. And we see Merle's hand in the air as he reads a passage from the Extreme Teen Bible, and his words become rays of light that pierce the shadows as he is also overrun.

And we see Lucretia scream in protest, and then we see her transform. Her head cranes backwards, her eyes turn toward the sky above, and this sharp wind sweeps around her. And a slender beam of light shoots from the end of her staff, and we follow it there, watching it sail up, and up above your final stand. Into the quiet sky. And then, light.

[music swells and ends]

Merle, you feel something crawling on your back. Moving up to your shoulder. And you feel a small claw scratching gently at the hair on the side of your face. And that's what you feel as you are the first to wake up and you're lying on your stomach on soft, red carpet. And you reach up and you feel cold metal. And as you peel it away, you see something... Surprising. It's Scuttlebuddy.

Clint: Scuttlebuddy!

Griffin: This little robotic bug is pinched between your fingers and it's humming happily as you inspect it. It's not just a Scuttlebuddy, it's yours. It recognizes you.

Clint: Aw.

Griffin: It missed you. And it doesn't take long to solve the mystery of why you were reunited. Because as you look around you now, you realize you are sitting in the dining car of the Rockport Limited. And... I just realized as I'm reading this that it's gonna make it sound like you guys like dozed off in the Rockport Limited and this was all a dream, but—

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: No. Taako and Magnus you're up now too and you see the same scene. You're on the Rockport Limited passenger car, all together. Lucretia is there too and she's rubbing her temples as she rises to her feet. And this train car is just like you left it. There's some luggage around that the other riders stowed during your trip aboard this train a year ago. And the window curtains are open, and outside you just see white. Not like white light, there's nothing shining through these windows, it's just an endless, empty, white space. But it's not completely empty. As you look outside, you see what looks like thousands of circles floating in this space at varying distances.

And as you're trying to survey what they are, one of these circles soars by the train, close enough for you to see what it is. They're all planes of existence. And... there's a presence here in this train car with you. There's no better word for it. You can tell that someone is here and that they're not invisible, they're just like in a place you can't see. Like they're not up or down, or left or right, or in front of you, or behind you. It's like they're in a direction that you don't know about yet. But they're here and you hear them say:

Presence: Hey. I know you're confused, and I can... I can explain some of what's going on. But I need you all to be cool about this, okay? This is breaking virtually every protocol that we've got in place, but I think this qualifies as extenuating circumstances.

Magnus: God?

Presence: No, ah. See, this is exactly what I was afraid of. No, I'm—

Merle: Jesus?

Presence: No, not him either. Oh man, this... maybe this was a bad idea...

Merle: Go on. No, no, no, please.

Presence: I'm not God, I... I can't really tell you my name—

Magnus: That's exactly what God would say.

Merle: Mm-hm.

Taake: Mm-hm.

Merle: And his friend, Jesus.

Presence: I can't— [chuckles] I can't tell you my name, I don't wanna run the risk of one of you like, going back and starting a doomsday cult in my name or anything. But I—

Magnus: Jeff.

Presence: If that's what you want to call me—

Magnus: Andrew.

Merle: Just pick—

Magnus: Just tell me when I get there.

Merle: Jeffandrew.

Jeffandrew: Jeffandrew is— Let's just stick with that. I—

Magnus: Jeffandrew...

Jeffandrew: I, Jeffandrew, um... Y'all know that's not my real name, right? I do have to be clear. But I don't wanna like look in here like—

Taako: Too late, I'm updating the Wikipedia page.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: He says:

Jeffandrew: I... well, myself and a small team of other folks, we made your world. Or I guess, your existence. Or actually to be more specific still, we made the... the laws of physics and... and thermodynamics and arcane interactions and all that stuff that govern your world.

Magnus: Gary Gygax?

Clint: [laughs]

Jeffandrew: Who— I don't know who that is.

Griffin: He says:

Jeffandrew: This place that you're in is... Well, it's nowhere. It's a kind of safety net. The laws of this world dictate that everything's somewhere and that no two things can be in the same somewhere at the same time. And... The Hunger, as you called it, it broke that law, flagrantly, using the Light of Creation. It was just this big jumble of places all occupying the same somewhere, just this big mass all tied together with the bonds that it stole.

And when you cut those bonds, the laws caught back up to the Hunger, and all those places couldn't be in the same place anymore. And so, they ended up here. And fortunately, now that they're here, we can start putting em' back in place. Who did that by the way? Who cast that spell? That... I didn't think anything like that was possible?

Magnus: That was... her.

Griffin: Lucretia kind of waves like all around. Like:

Lucretia: Hi... That was me?

Griffin: And this voice says:

Jeffandrew: You're the most powerful person I think I've ever met. And I owe you an enormous debt of gratitude.

Taako: I did cast the Whirlwind thing?

Merle: Yeah.

Taako: I mean, I didn't want— I thought you were talking about me, honestly. Hi, Taako, from TV. Am I dead? I should've asked earlier.

Griffin: He says:

Jeffandrew: No, you're not dead. [chuckles] You...

Taako: Nice!

Magnus: Is this purgatory?

Jeffandrew: No, it's not that either.

Taako: That's what he would say, though!

Magnus: Yeah.

Merle: It's nowhere.

Magnus: Have we been in purgatory this whole time?

Griffin: He says:

Jeffandrew: I don't actually know why you're on a... Oh, oh, oh! When you made this train disappear and then the teleportation magic didn't hold, it ended up being nowhere. So, I guess that's why you're... here too. Gosh, we

got some... we got some stuff to work out. I guess I owe all of you a debt. We don't have the tools to interfere with a world once it's made. So, when the Light of Creation slipped out of our domain and into yours, we had no way of recovering it. We thought that was... we thought that was it for this world. But the four of you and your friends, you saved everything. And... I know this doesn't make much sense and it won't mean anything to you, but I'm... I'm so proud of how you turned out.

Merle: Thank you, Jeffandrew.

Magnus: So, you... you said you made it. You made all this stuff, you made our world. And if you're so great, why'd you make bad things happen? Hmm?

Griffin: He says:

Jeffandrew: We don't control that, we... I was worried that you might ask something like that. We...

Griffin: He says:

Jeffandrew: We... I... We're not... Like I said, I'm not God. We, I guess, made the gods. Or I guess the laws that made the gods come into being. We don't really control the worlds that we make, that's not really our style. We just... we just make em'.

Magnus: Mm-hm, mm-hm...

Taako: I have a question, Jeffandrew. Are they ever gonna bring back Josta?

Clint: Oh, that was so good...

Griffin: He says:

Jeffandrew: If I could, I would... I would reach my finger in and make Josta happen again. But that's just not... that's not really how it works.

Magnus: Jeffandrew, could you make a Josta so big that even you couldn't drink it?

Clint: [laughs]

Taako: Let me at it, they couldn't do that for me.

Merle: Could you pass a bottle of Josta through the eye of a needle?

Magnus: Mm-hm?

Griffin: He says:

Jeffandrew: I... We don't have Josta in our world, it's a very—

Magnus: Oh, god! I'm so sorry.

Merle: Savage!

Jeffandrew: I mean, that's the thing though. Like, we made your world and Josta was in it, and it's delicious and good. And someone else made my world and didn't put Josta in it. Maybe they have it in theirs. But then somebody made their world, and somebody made theirs. That's the beauty of existence, that's the reason that we're all here. Just... we're all taking the lives that we're given and breathing life into new things. Like Josta.

Taako: I'm getting a migraine.

Travis: [chuckles]

Merle: All right, I got a serious question.

Magnus: I doubt it.

Merle: Did we win?

Griffin: He laughs, and he says:

Jeffandrew: By any measure, Merle, you won. This... We thought this world was lost, we thought it was done. And you all kept that from happening. And listen, I— the migraine isn't surprising, it's really not safe for you to stay here much longer. And to be fair, we've got a few centuries of work to do, putting these planes back in their right place that we need to get started on. But I want you all to know something. Whenever we make a world, we're... guessing, mostly. We're putting some English on a ball that will roll and roll for eons. And we hope that it lands somewhere good. And we've been observing your world for some time now. And... I've been in the minority of those who think that this world was worth saving, that it could be saved at all.

Griffin: And then the train that you're standing on fades, and fades. And and you all feel this world that you're in, you feel yourselves leaving it. And that presence says:

Jeffandrew: Thank you for.. Thank you for proving me right.

Griffin: And we see one of the shadows attacking Neverwinter stop in its tracks, and we see its form start to glow with a bright, white light. And then this shadow, along with all the others still standing, they all turn into light and drift slowly up and into the sky. And through that shadow's form, we see Lup and Barry, back-to-back. And they drop their combat stances, and they witness their foe's disappearance. And the rest of the army reacts too as the Hunger is spirited away. And the massive tendrils above, they glow white also.

And they begin to peel backwards, away from the sky, splitting apart at the top into long branches that arc downward, turning them into the shape of these great, light-filled, weeping willow trees. And then they explode in a shower of brilliant, slowly cascading balls of light. And, your friends are all bewildered by this scene. We see the lights reflected in Angus's glasses, across the windshield of Hurley and Sloane's wagon, on the polished sheen of Lucas's Upsy mech, in the faces of everyone who put their lives on the line to defend this world. And then we see them back on Barry and Lup's faces, and then they look down, and standing right in front of them are Davenport, Lucretia and the three of you. Returned.

Magnus: Hi!

Griffin: And... they move to—

Merle: We met god! We just— we just met god and we found out that he couldn't—

Magnus: And he said he wanted us all to worship in his name! Jeffandrew!

Merle: Jeffandrew!

Taako: Jeffandrew, everyone say it with me. [chants] Jeffandrew!
Jeffandrew!

Merle: [chants] Jeffandrew! Jeffandrew!

Magnus: [chants] Jeffandrew! Jeffandrew!

Griffin: And Barry and Lup step closer to the five of you... And their faces are just cast with disbelief. And Lucretia and Davenport step closer to them, and nobody's saying anything, but Lucretia, just a big smile spreads across her face. And she just... nods.

[“Let Them Know” by Griffin McElroy plays]

Griffin: And immediately, Barry and Lup turn toward each other.. and they embrace, as much as Lup's spectral form will allow. And then Lup floats over to Lucretia and she hugs her too. And Davenport walks up to Barry and gives him a big, firm handshake. And they're all celebrating the end of this thing that they've worked for, for over a century. And they turn to you, and they quickly, quietly celebrate too. And you see Angus walk out of the crowd towards you, and he comes to you and he says:

Angus: Is it over, sirs? Did we win?

Taako: You know what, little man? Believe it or not, we did.

Travis: And I hoist him up on my shoulder, and I say:

Magnus: Let em' know, kid.

Angus: Hey, everybody! Johann was right! We won!

[music plays]

Griffin: It takes time, as all difficult and important things do, for the world to recover from what was done to it that day. But it does recover, and not just that, it thrives. The City of Goldcliff was left in ruins after the attack, but its citizens worked tirelessly to recreate its gorgeous skyline that stands over the wastes. The greedy principles that once defined this city were abandoned on that day when its people banded together and refused to die. The bank's coffers were emptied without hesitation in the rebuilding efforts and Goldcliff was reborn anew, its towers and people standing taller and prouder than they did before.

It remains a destination for those who seek life's harmless pleasures. Folks come from around the world to rest their worries at its lofty resorts, but mostly, people come for the races. The battle wagon teams banded together under Hurley and Sloane's leadership and their sport goes legitimate. And its participants become beloved by hordes of adoring fans. People have fun at these races now, and fun is a thing that people in this world are still getting used to. Refuge was largely untouched by the catastrophe, save for a rift that opened in the ground on the outskirts of town. And inside that chasm, explorers found a rich vein of diamonds that were undiscovered by Refuge's former mining operation. Under Mayor Cassidy, the town citizens worked to safely excavate those precious gemstones.

Refuge and its people find enormous success thanks to their newfound wealth, and are happy. Not because of their riches, but because of their compassion for one another. And that story is not an especially uncommon one in this world. Neverwinter's salvation took a tremendous amount of time and effort, but with the help of its citizens, the city was saved. Lord Artemis Sterling dissolves the council that managed the city for centuries. The former rulership's focus on wealth and power just isn't suitable for this world anymore. Not after what they survived, not after the story they all heard.

This, the largest city in the land became a beacon of equality and justice for the rest of the world to witness. They set an example that the rest of the world followed. And in that city, Lucas Miller founded the Academy of Arcane Sciences. A grand institution that works to democratize the vast amounts of knowledge that his family had assembled for generations. That school's star pupil was none other than Angus MacDonald, who enrolled on the day of the Academy's opening. And he worked tirelessly to better himself and, of course, to impress his teachers. He makes so many friends. He joins the soccer team. He's so grateful to all of you for everything you did, but this is maybe the most important gift that Angus MacDonald received. The gift of a normal life.

Davenport, still unsure of his place in this new world, finds his home at sea. He sails across the face of this world, immersing himself in the cultures and customs of every port town he comes across. He lives a traveling life and is filled with such contentment. More than anyone else you've traveled with, he celebrates the very existence of this world that you saved. You receive postcards from him, quite frequently. He ends each one the same way, "Joyfully yours, Davenport."

Lup and Barry are visited by Kravitz soon after your victory. The Raven Queen cannot abide a pair of liches to walk the world in violation of the laws of life and death. But Kravitz, as he's one to do, strikes a deal between his new friends and his goddess. Lup and Barry join Kravitz's ranks and work to help him hunt down those souls who escape the Astral Plane, seeking to do harm to the world of the living. It is a duty that Barry and Lup find themselves perfectly suited for and it gives them a purpose that fills them both with satisfaction. But in the Kingdom of the Raven Queen we see Barry and Lup and Kravitz hashing out the details of this job. And Barry smiles and says:

Barry: Just one more thing, I'm gonna need to bend the rules one last time before we get started.

Griffin: And he reaches into his bag and he pulls out a piece of paper and he walks over to Lup and displays its contents, just two words, "Back soon." And a mark at the bottom. The note was sealed with a kiss. And Lup looks up, kind of confused. And then we see that note floating in a tank of brackish

green fluid. And then, months later, we see that tank explode as Lup in her body, once again, steps out. And she drapes herself in a flowing red robe. And she looks up at Barry and says:

Lup: Man, I forgot how good I look.

Griffin: And then she says:

Lup: I'm about to smooch your fucking brains out, babe.

Griffin: And she does.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Lucretia, against all odds, finds happiness too. With the war won, she transforms the Bureau of Balance into a humanitarian organization that works to help the destroyed cities of this world get back on their feet. They provide aid to those displaced by The Hunger's attack, and work to rebuild the villages that fell on that day. Carey and Killian are appointed as her head overseers in this task. Avi manages relocation efforts, Leon helps dispense funds from the organization's treasury. Robbie— sorry, Pringles provides the snacks to the construction crews.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: They've renamed the organization, The Bureau of Benevolence. They didn't even need to change the logo. And Lucretia, who finally has a chance to do some good in a world that she knows will never be taken from her ever again, delights in the good deeds that they perform. The world doesn't just recover from the Hunger's onslaught, it thrives, and in large part thanks to the unification they experienced on that day.

The world banded together to turn back the tide of this hateful consuming darkness, forming bonds with one another that could never be broken. They all heard the same song. They all heard the same story of heroism and selflessness, and they all took it to heart. And conflict still stirred from time to time in this world, but they never raged as long or as painfully as they

could. The world was saved from annihilation, but this, this betterment was the true legacy of The Day of Story and Song.

It is one year later. We see a large temple made of intricately woven wood perched on a bluff overlooking the Stillwater Sea, which now houses several small wildflower covered islands that grew out of the body of The Judge who fell here a year ago. There are people outside of this temple standing at small tables sipping cocktails and overlooking that sea, there are people dancing to a troupe's music and children weaving through that dance floor laughing and holding hands in a chain.

And now we're inside that temple, in a large kitchen. And Lup is sitting at a counter and she's holding a wooden spoon. And she lifts it to her mouth and she tastes a bright red sauce. And she grimaces overdramatically and she looks at you from where you're standing over the stove, Taako. And she says:

Lup: Just... just one thing. One small criticism. I think you may have forgotten to make it taste good?

Travis: [chuckles]

Taako: I mean, there's no accounting for taste, it's more refined, it's sort of... You know what it is?

Lup: Kind of yucky, a little bit?

Taako: Continental. It's kind of... artisanal.

Lup: You're kind of full of dogshit sometimes.

Taako: That's what it was, I forgot. I did include dogshit that's... you're right.

Griffin: She spits that sauce out and... I want this to— I think it's a freeze frame, [chuckles] as she like spits out this sauce. As the two of you kind of rag on each other. And in this moment Taako, I want to jump back and I want to ask you what did Taako do in the year following The Day of Story

and Song? I want to mention here, I want you all to like come up with this. I wanna know what happens to your characters from your perspectives. I also have what I'm calling 'offers' for each of you of like the world responding to what you did. And I think together, that that will probably maybe influence it. Or you can say, "No, fuck your offer." I want to hear from you first, Taako, what have you done this past year?

Justin: Well, Taako realized that Sizzle It Up with Taako is... just too small. Taako is a name that's on everybody's lips, thanks to the fact that everyone on every reality knows who he is. So, it's become more of a trans-media brand, it's a website, it's a Snapchat feed.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: And Taako—

Griffin: You're joking, but because like your fuck'n story reached the real world, there's definitely a Taako Snapchat feed, there's definitely a website for Taako.

Justin: What part of that sounded like I was joking?

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: So, at this sort of spearhead of this sort of new media empire is Taako's Amazing School of Magic. I say that I run it and Ren is my number two, but really, she does pretty much everything at the school. She's really the one in charge. But Taako visits when he can to the Amazing School of Magic and does demonstrations for the students there. But is honestly a bit busy on the media circuit and promoting the lifestyle brand of Taako. It's cookware, it's fashion. You know, it's pretty much everywhere. And he has fully embraced Taako. Taako is a person for sure. But Taako's also a license.

Griffin: Okay?

Justin: Taako's a label. You know, Taako means so much to so many people he didn't feel like it was right to keep that within himself. So, he's doing whatever the 100% exact opposite of that is.

Griffin: Is this in direct competition with Lucas' school of the Arcane Sciences? I guess his more like a... his is more like a fuck'n like tech institute I'm envisioning. And yours is more like Hogwarts it sounds like. But like where every— there are no four Houses, just everybody's in House Taako and they wear Taako T-shirts all the time.

Justin: Yeah, and the students at my school have to duel constantly. Like you have to duel to stay in the school. Like if you have a dispute, you know, you want to hang with the real magic, you have to beat someone in the school. It's a very savage environment that is honestly widely despised by the students that attend it. But they know that they're getting a quality education and that's all that matters.

Griffin: Sure. You're absolutely right, like Taako's... Taako's brand, like, is so attractive, like I said, not just in this world but in all worlds. And I sound like I'm doing a winky like self referential like 'oh isn't the Adventure Zone great.' But I like the idea that Joaquin probably is a public figure now in the world and helps sort of spread the word. Like, "Yeah, Taako, he fuck'n gave me magic powers for a bit and it was radical and he saved the world and isn't he so great." There are heroes now in that world, and they know you as one of them. I'm gonna revise my offer a little bit, and let's just work through it together. Because I think... I think that I can make this work.

So, about a month after the Hunger attacked, you got a letter from the sheriff of Glamour Springs. Because after hearing your story from the lights in the sky, Sazed surrendered himself to the village court. And the letter details these events and grants you a full pardon for the incident that happened at Glamour Springs so many years ago. And as Istus' design would have it, later that day there's a knock at your door. And when you answer it, you see Ren. And she looks nervous as you answer the door, and she reaches out her arms. And she hands you a plate with a single profiterole on it. And you can tell that there's some sort of magical enchantment on it. And she just kind of, I think that she just doesn't even say anything, she just hands it out to you.

Taako: What's this?

Ren: Well this is... This is a job application, I guess, Taako.

Taako: Okay? Let me give it a whirl.

Justin: I take a bite.

Griffin: It's... it's magically delicious. [chuckles] I can't believe we've never said that.

Clint: [in leprechaun voice] What sweet surprises.

Griffin: It's extremely good. And you feel yourself magically warmed from within as you eat this incredibly delicious little puff pastry. And she sets the plate down on the banister and she says:

Ren: I want to show you something.

Griffin: And she reaches into her bag and she pulls out a roll of parchment, and she spreads it out on the floor of the porch that she's still standing on. And you look down at it, and it is... it is a proposal. It is like, there's blueprints on it and a business plan on it. And all kinds of— all kinds of like designs... logo work, graphic design, for Taako's Amazing School of Magic. And she says:

Ren: I don't— I don't know if you've heard, but Refuge has had kind of a windfall since the Story and Song. And we've all seen our fair share of prosperity and I recently came into a decent chunk of change myself and... I thought of the perfect place to put it.

Griffin: And she— yeah, I think she pulls out like a big diamond from her bag too, and like sets it down on this roll of parchment. And she says:

Ren: This is a gift, no strings attached, okay? But I was hoping maybe I could be your... your lieutenant? Your number two? Your... deputy? I know things didn't work out last time, that you kind of set out on your own with a

small business. But I promise I won't let you down. I think we could make something really amazing together. I could help you make something really amazing. But I just... more importantly, I saw you be a hero, Taako. And you were amazing. And I just think you'd be real good at this. And I think the world deserves to... to see what you can do.

Taako: On this we are agreed. I love this. I should mention my boyfriend is Death. So, he will be staying over from time to time. But if you're comfortable with that, Ren, it would be my honor.

Griffin: She stands up and over this parchment, she reaches out her hand for a handshake.

Justin: I do it.

Griffin: And we're back in the present. And we see Ren now, come out of a back chamber of the kitchen and she's holding a big pot of a stew that smells really amazing. And she comes in right as Lup spits this sauce out and she kind of freezes in place, and then walks over to the stove and puts it down and she says:

Ren: I think it might need more salt, but can you taste that when you get a chance?

Griffin: She says:

Ren: Hi, Lup!

Griffin: And she walks back into the kitchen. And Lup says:

Lup: So, are you... heading back to your big great school of magical awesomeness when this is all done?

Taako: Actually, I promised Kravitz that we'd take a vacay. We're... we're gonna go, yeah, on that side. I'm kind of dreading it. I wanted to go somewhere beachy, but—

Lup: You're going— Sorry, you're going on an afterlife vacation? Is that even— is that allowed?

Taako: Our vacation yeah, after— I think he knows some people who know some people. I think we're gonna be fine on that end. Plus, you don't have to pack sunscreen, which is huge.

Griffin: She tastes that sauce again and she smiles. And she puts the spoon down and she says:

Lup: I'm really proud of you Taako. It seems like... it seems like you're really happy.

Griffin: And through the door out to the hallway you see Kravitz and Barry walking by, and they pop into the doorframe and Barry says:

Barry: They're getting started soon, we should probably get out there.

Griffin: And Lup steals one more bite of food and says:

Lup: I was just kidding about the sauce, by the way, you're doing great.

Griffin: And her and Barry disappear through the— down the hallway and out of sight. And Kravitz walks into the kitchen and he says:

Kravitz: Don't miss it, okay? They're definitely gonna want you there.

Griffin: And he tastes the sauce and he smiles and he says;

Kravitz: God, that's good.

Griffin: And he says:

Kravitz: I'm really looking forward to next week.

Taako: Me too.

Kravitz: I promise not to take you anywhere like, too spooky.

Taako: You know what, I'm a big boy. I'm fine.

Griffin: And he steals a kiss and he says:

Kravitz: I know you are. I'll save you a seat out there.

Griffin: And he walks out the hallway. And you hear him— you hear him bump into someone and apologize. And then, into the kitchen walks Angus McDonald. And he's taller than the last time you saw him a few months ago. He's been really dedicated to his studies at Lucas's school. And you've, you know, been at your own magical academy and the timing just hasn't really worked out. But he beams when he sees you and he says:

Angus: Hello, sir! Did you get my letters?

Taako: Of course, I did, Ango. I opened all of them and read them.

Angus: Why did you say that weird?

Taako: Nothing, I just read them. All of the words. Pictures? Were there pictures? No, just the words, I can tell from your face it was just words, no pictures. So yes, I read all of the letters.

Griffin: He chuckles and he says:

Angus: Well, just in case... you didn't, I just wanted you to know I'm doing really well at the academy. Lucas thinks I could be teaching there by the end of the year, isn't that wild?

Taako: You wanna... drop the zero and go with the hero, or what?

Griffin: He says:

Angus: I mean if you can provide an attractive enough job offer, I'll think about it. I've been demanded, you know, a decent salary. I'm just a little kid, but I wanna be fairly compensated for my efforts and abilities.

Taako: Okay let me show you the benefits package.

Justin: And I just stand there in front of him with my hands open.

Taako: Here it is. What do you think?

Angus: It's— Well, I'll have my people talk to your people, sir!

Travis: [laughs]

Taako: Okay.

Griffin: He walks towards you and he says:

Angus: There's a... there's a letter that I didn't have time to send before I left to come here, but I just want you to know that... I thanked you 100 times for all the things that you've done for me and all the things that you taught me. But I still feel like my... my thanks haven't been enough, you know? And I just... I want you to know that... you've changed my life, Taako. You changed my life.

Griffin: And he moves in for a hug and—

Justin: And I whisper in his ear:

Taako: Starting salary is non-negotiable.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: He laughs as the two of you are embracing and he says:

Angus: I know about the silverware. I'm... I'm a pretty good wizard now but:

Griffin: And he moves away from you a bit and he looks you in the face, he says:

Angus: I'm still the world's greatest detective.

Taako: Okay, somewhat negotiable. It is open to negotiation.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: He starts to walk away and he turns back to you one last time and he says:

Angus: It's gonna be a good day, isn't it?

Taako: Yeah, little man, I think so.

Griffin: Merle.

Clint: Mm-hm?

Griffin: You're in a small vestibule of this temple and you're looking at yourself in the mirror. And you're wearing some formal vestments and just looking at yourself. And the figure that you see is so different from the dwarf who started this adventure years ago. You reach down to your belongings which are laid out on the vanity in front of this mirror, and you snap in some cufflinks and you drape a stole over your shoulders. And you look down at your Extreme Teen Bible, which you've had rebound in the year that's past. And you have a sheet of paper with your prepared remarks. And in the mirror, you notice the door into this chamber creak open. And through the crack in the door you see Mavis, kind of like sighing. And then you see Mookie slip in through the crack and sneak up toward you, trying to surprise you. What do you do?

Clint: I cast— no.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Clint: Well, I turn and throw my arms open.

Griffin: He jumps towards you to like tackle you, like just as a surprise tackle. But you turn and intercept him in the air and you grab him in an

embrace. And again, time freezes. And I wanna know what Merle did in the year following the day of Story and Song.

Clint: Okay. Well, Merle looking back on the— all of the epic times he had as one of the Tres Horny Boys, realized that there was nobody— there were people teaching magic, obviously. But there was nobody who was preparing the next generation of adventurers. Oh yeah, the world's a lot better, but it's not perfect. And it's still gonna need people to go out and right wrongs and defeat evil, and make a lot of money doing it. So, he started a company. And it was a great way for him to travel with Mavis, 'cause she's almost of age. And they took Mookie along, sort of like as a sidekick. And he called them— He was going around and taking young people on adventures.

Travis: [chuckles] Taking them from their homes.

Clint: Well, I mean, with their parents' permission, sort of like summer camp. But he called them Extreme Teen Adventures. And with this he would go from village to village, town to town, get a group of these young adventurers, and share his vast knowledge of clerical behavior and battle.

Griffin: Okay?

Clint: And teaching them how to be a great warrior.

Justin: It's just a— the logo is just a picture of Merle with like a Ghostbusters circle line through it. Just like, do the exact opposite of what I did at every intersection.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Clint: Teaching by example.

Travis: Each class takes about five minutes. "And that's all I've got, goodbye!"

Griffin: That's great—

Clint: Mookie and Mavis and I travel from town to town taking young people on adventures.

Griffin: That's awesome. Okay, so I'm gonna revise my offer for you also, 'cause that's really good. And change it to sort of offer a different sort of base of operations for this. What is the— what's it, Merle's Extreme Teen Adventures?

Clint: Yeah, Extreme Teen Adventures.

Griffin: Okay. So, I'm gonna say like recently, like... a month ago or so, like 11 months after the Hunger attacked, you're spending a quiet morning at home back from one of these trips and, you're sort of planning out your next Extreme Teen Adventure. And I think it's a wildly successful operation, right? Like, first of all, everybody in this world knows who you are, and knows that you are a hero. You cannot get a better marketing campaign than that.

Clint: Right, yeah.

Griffin: But also like everybody wants their kids to learn from you, everybody wants their kids to like, become better. And so, this operation's really successful and I think it's like growing a little bit faster than you can manage out of your house. So, it's 11 months after the Hunger attacked and you're spending a quiet morning at home, and there is a knock on the door. And when you go to answer it, two big burly guards fill the doorway. And they glower down at you, and they don't say anything.

Merle: Yeah? No, I don't want a watchtower.

Griffin: They— the two of them part. And you see Lord Artemis Sterling, the leader of Neverwinter, standing behind them. And he waves when he sees you, a little nervously, and he says:

Artemis: Hi Merle, uh, you mind if I come in? I need to talk to you about some important business.

Merle: Yeah, come on in, kingy dude.

Griffin: He comes in and he immediately walks into the kitchen and he starts boiling some water and preparing what smells like a spicy cinnamon tea and he says:

Artemis: I hope this is okay? They don't really let me near the kitchen in my estate and nobody knows how to brew the tea just right, so I gotta jump at every chance I get. How... How have you been since you saved the world?

Merle: Oh, I've been great. Been hanging with the kids... I don't hear much from the big guy or the elf guy, but I'm sure they're doing good. They've been doing their own thing. And business is booming, going out, having a bunch of adventures. And you know, preparing the next generation for hero-dom.

Griffin: He laughs and he says—

Travis: I just want to say, canon, I would imagine that Taako and Magnus actually try to call Merle all the time, but like he forgot to turn his Stone of Farspeech off of silence. And so like—

Griffin: That is so fucking true to life and I love it. He walks into your living room and he hands you a cup of tea and sits down with you and he says:

Artemis: Yeah, I've actually heard about your organization, it's pretty incredible. I'm kind of here to see if you might be interested in taking on a second task. And in return I can help grow your organization into... into the sort of enormous force for good that I think it could be. I got an offer for you, will you hear me out?

Merle: Yeah, knock yourself out.

Griffin: One of the guards hands him a big briefcase and he puts it down on the table, and he pops it open, and he pulls a few things out of it. He retrieves a small, sealed roll of parchment and a quill and an inkwell and then a map that he unfurls on the table. And then a big bag that, as he plunks it down, you can hear that it's full of coins. And he says:

Artemis: I told you after Wonderland that I was gonna try to find a way to make it up to you for what happened to you down there. And while I've been focusing on the rebuilding efforts for Neverwinter and the neighboring regions, I realized exactly what that could be.

Griffin: And he motions down to the map and you see a long stretch of coastal region on the western edge of the continent. And as you inspect it closer, you realize the area depicted is Bottlenose Cove, the beach resort town that you and the boys visited months ago, in our first live show episode. And Artemis says:

Artemis: Bottlenose Cove was destroyed when the Hunger attacked, and a lot of villages were, and I've been working to get them back in shape. And well, I think you can help me out in this particular case, because I trust you, Merle. I trust you to make the right decisions and do the right things and help this place become a thriving community for all the beach dwarves that were displaced.

Griffin: He says:

Artemis: I'm not asking you to quit doing the guild, we can build a massive guild hall there for you, and help you expand to service the whole world. And if you agree to this, you'll be granted land at Bottlenose Cove, and a lofty estate as well. And, well, a title. Governor Merle Highchurch, the leader of Bottlenose Cove. You'll have access to my treasury to aid in the village's repair and the guild's growth and you'll be in charge.

Griffin: He says:

Artemis: This isn't a gift, Merle, this is an enormous responsibility. But I think you're the perfect guy for the job, if you'll accept.

Merle: Hm... Well, I got some conditions.

Artemis: I figured you might.

Merle: I still get to go out and do my Extreme Teen Adventures with Mavis and Mookie.

Artemis: Yeah, of course! I don't want to get in the way of that. Again, what I think you're doing is incredible.

Merle: All right, second, I don't want to be called governor. I want the title of earl.

Artemis: Sorry, so you want to be Earl Merle?

Merle: Yes.

Justin: [laughs]

Merle: I wanna be Earl Merle.

Griffin: He sighs and he reaches down to that scroll of parchment and he pops it open. And he takes the inkwell and dips a quill in it and scratches a few things out, and fills in a couple of other things. And he says:

Artemis: It's unconventional, but if that's what it takes, okay.

Merle: And finally, I want the name of the community to be Merlegaritaville.

Artemis: I won't do that. Absolutely not.

Merle: Chesney Beach.

Artemis: No. No, that would be very disrespectful for the people who were displaced from Bottlenose Cove who just wanna live in Bottlenose Cove.

Merle: Vine Lovers' Haven.

Artemis: [sighs] I'll build you a bar myself there called Vine Lovers' Haven or Merlegaritaville.

Justin: [laughs]

Artemis: I won't call the town that, but is that enough? I will build it personally, Merle, if that is what it takes.

Merle: I think I wanna call it Chesney's. I want to— I just— I gotta go with Chesney's.

Artemis: That's fine. Chesney's I Love This Bar and Grill, is that acceptable to you?

Griffin: And he reaches a hand out over the table.

Clint: I shake his hand!

Griffin: And I think the next thing we see is Bottlenose Cove, and it is in pretty rough shape. And I think down the beach, we do see... we do see Lord Artemis Sterling like with his sleeves rolled up. Like trying to figure out how to build a bar on the beach. And we also see your estate, and it's all ready for you, and it's right next to the guild hall that a large team of people are building, like right next door. And you can see the sign hanging over it that says Merle's Extreme Teen Adventures.

And in the estate, it's this huge manor built into the cliff wall that runs along Bottlenose Cove, and we see you plunk down a big stack of boxes on the veranda of that estate as you start moving into your new house. And on the beach, you see Mavis and Mookie both running up, each carrying their own box. And Mookie trips up the stairs and he throws his box down onto the veranda and he runs into the house, and you hear him yelling from inside like:

Mookie: Oh, man, there's a ping-pong table! Oh man, they got a hot tub, yeah dude!

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Mookie's the best!

Griffin: And he runs out and he tugs at your sleeve. He says:

Mookie: They got a ping-pong table!

Griffin: And then he sprints back inside. And Mavis finishes climbing the stairs and she carefully sets down her box, and she says:

Mavis: I think this is gonna be really nice.

Merle: It's... You can call me Earl.

Mavis: I'm not gonna call you Earl, Merle.

Merle: That makes you an Earline. That makes you Earline Mavis!

Mavis: I don't know that that's exactly how it works.

Griffin: And you both hear a crash from inside and you hear Mookie in the distance just yell:

Mookie: I'm okay!

Griffin: And Mavis smiles and she says:

Mavis: You're his hero, you know? When we heard the story of what you did when you travelled with Uncle Magnus and Uncle Taako and Aunt Lup and Aunt Lucretia and Uncle Barry and Dav, it's all he talked about for weeks.

Merle: Yeah, well, what about you, pumpkin?

Griffin: She smiles and she says:

Mavis: Well, you're my hero too, Dad. Not just because you saved the world, but because.. I know how hard you're trying.

Griffin: And she comes in for a hug, and she says:

Mavis: I love you, Dad.

Merle: I love you too, baby.

Griffin: And back in the present, you catch Mookie in your arms, and Mavis moves into the room. And you set Mookie down, and Mavis wipes some dirt off of his face. And looking at you, she says:

Mavis: You look really fancy!

Merle: Well, I mean, I am officiating a wedding, you know.

Griffin: She says:

Mavis: Yeah... please don't tell any embarrassing anecdotes about us in your speech, okay, you promise?

Merle: Oh, I will. I will.

Mavis: You will promise? Or you won't? Which one?

Merle: Honey, we gotta go, it's about time to start.

Griffin: She says:

Mavis: Yeah, we gotta go get our seats. I just wanted to wish you good luck out there.

Griffin: And she grabs Mookie's hand and the two of them walk outside. And you see the last few attendees shuffle through the large double doors into the main hall of the temple. And from behind you, you hear a door open and shut. And when you turn, you see Killian. And she's wearing this beautiful floral tunic and a silk sash, and her hair is up in a tall bun with an emerald hairpin. And she's wearing the rosewood ring that Magnus gave to Carey over a year ago. And she smiles, and she says:

Killian: You look really fancy! Thank you for doing this. It really means a lot to us.

Merle: Well, listen. It was an honor for you to ask. And like, you have my check, right? I mean, that'll be after, but I'll go ahead and do it now. But you do have the check, right?

Griffin: I think she just ignores that, and she comes and stands next to you in front of the vanity. And you're both looking at yourselves in the mirror, and she says:

Killian: It's been a pretty strange road that got us here, huh?

Merle: Extremely strange.

Griffin: She smiles, and she kneels down, and she puts a hand on your shoulder and says:

Killian: I want you to know, I wouldn't change a thing.

Griffin: And she stands up, and walks out into the empty hall. And Merle, you make your way out too, and you go through these large double doors, and walk down the aisle of this congregation hall to the lectern at the front of the crowd, and as you do, you pass by familiar smiling faces in the audience. You see Angus, who puts down a large book as you walk by, and he looks like he's about to tear up already, and he's sitting with Mavis and Mookie, and Mookie tries to stand up on the bench that they're all sitting on and bounce up and down, but Mavis grabs his hand and pulls him back down the bench and she gives you a thumbs up.

And you see Lucretia sitting in the front row with the rest of the Bureau employees in attendance, and she just smiles softly and makes eye contact with you, Merle, and she lifts her hand up to her heart for a few seconds, and she puts it down. And you see Lup, and she's got her arm around Barry, and she makes this big gesture and flashes an 'okay' symbol at you and she winks, and Barry kind of chuckles. Sitting next to them are Taako and Kravitz, and Taako, just as things are about to start, Kravitz reaches down and takes your hand in his, and it's warm. And the two of you lock eyes for a while as Kravitz smiles, and he turns his eyes back toward the lectern. And Merle, you also walk by Magnus.

Magnus, you feel something small hit you in the back of the head, and you see a small pebble fall to the ground at your feet. And when you look behind you to discern the source of this rock, you see a side-door into this grand hall cracked open, and you see Carey inside. And she's looking at you with a stern face, and she motions you towards her and she slips away behind the door.

Magnus: If you will all excuse me, I have to shit.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: You see Lucretia like turn to look behind and like look at you, she just kind of shakes her head and smiles and turns back forward as you creep your way toward that door. And you walk through it into another vestibule, and you close it behind you, and when you look up, you see Carey. And she is wearing this silver dress with an ornately patterned dark blue vest over it, and she's wearing a circlet of the same flowers that match the pattern on Killian's tunic, and she's wearing one half of the BFF necklace that you gave her, and she smiles as you enter, and she says:

Carey: How do I look?

Magnus: You look amazing.

Griffin: And I think as the two of you are standing there, looking at each other, the scene freezes, and we find out what Magnus has done in the year following the Day of Story and Song.

Travis: So, here is what Magnus has been doing. Similar to Taako and Merle, he has also opened a business/school. On the remains of Raven's Roost, he has built a school where he trains in protection, so that the students can go out and protect the people that need them. And he has become a dog trainer, specializing in working with Scottish Deerhounds. And he trains service dogs to protect and serve those that need them. And with him is his constant companion, the largest, the smartest, the bravest of any dog he has ever trained, who he has named Johann. And Johann is his constant companion, never leaves his side. And together, they make the world a better place through training animal companions.

Griffin: All right.

Travis: And the name of this school, by the way, is Hammer and Tails.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Hammer and Tails (A Dog's School). [chuckles]

Griffin: A school for dogs.

Travis: No, a dog's school. With an apostrophe in there, somewhere.

Griffin: I don't really have the same offer for Magnus that I did for Taako and Merle, I just have a question. Which is, how does Magnus die?

Travis: You know... I kind of envisioned him from the beginning as like, a guy who was looking for a cause worth dying for. And I've always kind of envisioned this kind of big Blaze Of Glory moment. And then somewhere along the line he became— I realized that he had found something worth living for, and the relationship between Taako and Merle and all of his friends and stuff and what he was doing, started to trump that, became more important. I wanted him to live, I wanted him to survive. And so, if you had asked me three years ago when we started, I would've said he died epically in battle.

Griffin: He got eaten by a dragon that he tried to fight by himself.

Travis: Yeah, something like that. But I actually think he dies peacefully of old age, calmly, and holding in his hand, his wife's wedding ring. And that's how Magnus dies.

Griffin: And other folks are there too, this is just like— Taako and Merle are there too, that's like how dwarf and elf age work, you got old before they did. And they're there too, and they're with you. And Lucretia is there with you, and she is much, much older, I think she is sitting in a chair at your side. And Carey and Killian are there, and Carey is holding your hand in hers and she's smiling, and she's just saying:

Carey: It's okay, bud. It's okay.

Griffin: And Davenport is there, and he's at the foot of your bed, just smiling warmly, and he places a hand gently on your leg. And Angus is there, and he's all grown up. And he is... he's so upset, but he's trying to force a smile for you, Magnus. And Barry and Lup are both there, and they look so happy for you, they are this force of reassurance. All of your friends that you have known for over a century, who've been with you and have loved you for so long are all with you. They're all ready to say goodbye.

You are surrounded by friends as things gets hazier and hazier in a way that you're kind of familiar with. And then, in a flash, the world is clear. And there's Kravitz. And he looks like Kravitz, he's not in his reaper form, but nobody else seems to see him in this moment. And he reaches out his hand and takes yours, and he helps you to your feet, and he says:

Kravitz: My friend, I think this one's gonna take.

Magnus: Well, let's hope so for your sake, I don't want you getting in trouble with the boss.

Griffin: And the two of you drift away for a while, and then we see the two of you in the astral plane. And you're standing on these still waters, and below the surface, you see millions of these swirling lights stretching downward into infinity. And in front of you, there's a small island. And on that island is a wooden cottage that has clearly been crafted with expert hands. There are windows of cut glass that are half-open, letting in the gentle breeze that's blowing over these waters. And there's a workbench out in the yard. And the walls of the home extend upward into a loft, and on top of the house is an earthen roof covered in lush, green moss. And Kravitz turns to you as you're standing on the water and he says:

Kravitz: You... you can't stay here forever. Eventually, you're going to need to join the rest of the souls here, but I'll make sure you have as much time as you need.

Magnus: Thank you.

Griffin: And he walks away. And the door to the cottage opens, and two dogs come bounding out. And one is a large, old bloodhound who's moving kind of slow as he plops down in the yard. And the other is a Scottish Deerhound, and it takes you a second, but you realize that it's Johann. And he's moving much faster than he did when he got older. And he's running around the yard all excitedly and he jumps over the sort of slower bloodhound as it lays in the grass.

Magnus: Hey, buddy! Oh. [chuckles]

Griffin: And then there's Julia. And she's carrying a ladder and a hammer, and she's got some nails that she's holding in her mouth, and sets her tools down on the workbench, and she goes to set up the ladder on the side of the cottage. And then she stops, and she turns, and she sees you, Magnus. What do you do?

Travis: I just stare at her. Not in a dumbfounded way, not in a 'I can't believe it' way, but just... I can't not look at her.

Griffin: She sets her tools down, and she smiles, and she says:

Julia: You lived so much longer than I thought you were going to.

Magnus: I know. I'm sorry I made you wait.

Griffin: I think she starts running towards you, and you start running towards her, and you... you embrace in front of this house. And the two dogs are just kind of weaving around your feet as you stand there for what feels like hours. And—

Travis: I whisper in her ear:

Magnus: I tried to make you proud.

Griffin: She laughs, and she says:

Julia: Well, I couldn't exactly see what you were doing out there, but I've heard stories, and I'm sure you did.

Griffin: And she pulls away from you, and you're both still pretty tearful, and she motions towards the cottage, and she says:

Julia: What do you think?

Magnus: Did you make this?

Julia: Yeah— No, the dogs made it.

Travis: [chuckles]

Magnus: I love the joints, really good craftsmanship, this is amazing. Is that cedar? Is that cedar?! That's good. Smells wonderful.

Griffin: She says:

Julia: I've envisioned this moment for a long time, Magnus, and I was so hoping you would compliment the joints.

Griffin: And she smiles and says:

Julia: I really have thought about this moment for a really long time and I... I don't want to rush it, I want to savor every second of this. And we got all kinds of time. So, why don't you come inside and tell me everything, okay?

Griffin: And she walks back towards the house and opens the door and she whistles, and the two dogs go bounding back inside, and she turns and smiles at you, and she steps into the cottage.

Magnus: Well, it all started when I met the most beautiful elf and the bravest cleric he ever met. Well, he said he was a cleric, we can never be sure.

Griffin: I think you're telling this story to her as you walk into the house, and the camera just kind of zooms out as we watch you walk through the

yard towards the door, reciting this story, and we see you one last time as Magnus rushes in.

[piano music plays]

Griffin: And we're back in the present, and you see Carey, and she's just pacing nervously in this vestibule. And she starts to speak kind of frantically, she's like:

Carey: I know this is stupid, I know I'm being silly, it's just like... I'm really excited to spend my life with Killian— It's not that, it's just like... When I walk through that door, my life's gonna change, Magnus. And it's gonna be so good, but it's still really scary.

Magnus: Yeah, you know... the fact of the matter is, your life is a constant stream of changes. I mean, you start one day accepting a job offer, and you end saving the world. And you're going to walk through that door, and your life will never be the same. And I wish I could tell you that every day from now on will be amazing, and the happiest day of your life, but that's not the way that life works. But every day will be made better because she's in it with you. You aren't going to be alone ever again, even if you're ever separated, you'll still never be alone.

Griffin: She stops pacing, and she catches her breath and she looks over at you, and she's got some tears forming in her eyes, and she grabs a cloth and blots them, and she's like:

Carey: I'm going to streak my fucking eyeliner.

Travis: [chuckles]

Magnus: Give me a hug, lizard girl.

Carey: Don't fucking call me that.

Griffin: And she gives you a hug. She says:

Carey: I'm a proud Dragonborn.

Magnus: I know.

Griffin: And she pulls away from you, and blots her eyes one more time, and she says:

Carey: Okay.

Travis: And Magnus says in thieves' cant:

Magnus: Are you ready?

Griffin: And she gestures back:

Carey: I'm ready.

[music plays]

Griffin: And that door opens, and Magnus slinks back to his seat as that troupe of musicians take their place beside the lectern and start playing. And we see, at opposite ends of the room, two doors open up, and Carey and Killian step out of them. And everyone rises to their feet, and we see Carey and Killian lock eyes and smile, and both start tearing up. And they begin walking slowly toward the front of the hall. And then we see the smiling faces of their friends and family in the audience.

And then Carey chuckles, and starts walking faster, and Killian sees her and starts moving faster, and soon they are both running at full speed, turning the corner as they reach the ends of the aisles and they crash together in front of the lectern. And Killian lifts Carey off the ground in an embrace, and she lowers her down, and they kiss. And they turn toward the audience and smile sheepishly, and everyone kind of laughs through their own joyous tears, and then Carey and Killian turn toward you, Merle, and they nod.

And we see them all now in this temple overlooking the sea, celebrating this moment of peace and love and joy, as the camera pans up to show the scope of the audience in attendance at this wedding, and we see the faces of

the people who fought for this day, and we feel their longing remembrance of the ones who died for it. And they're in attendance too, in a way. The day of Carey and Killian's wedding was full of laughing and dancing and feasting and loving. It was one of the happiest days of all of your lives, and even happier days were to come, because that was the world that you made. That was the ending you earned.

And then the camera pans up, and up, above the temple, above the world, past the sky, and into the space beyond your plane. And there, drifting between the planes that once again dance around one another in a harmonious orbit, we see Fisher, slowly swimming away from your home. The lights inside of it are swirling and shining brightly, as it sings itself a song as it drifts through this place, its tendrils spinning slowly around its body, and then it stops and turns backward, and sees its child swimming behind.

And Fisher waits for them to catch up, and it does. And Fisher wraps its tendrils around Junior, and Junior nuzzles into the form of Fisher, and they both glow in unison. And then they separate, and Fisher nods its bell, and takes one of Junior's tendrils in its own, and they start drifting away together now, slowly, out of sight, looking for new worlds to explore. Looking for new stories to tell.

[music plays]

Justin: Thus ends the Adventure Zone: Balance, the story of four idiots that played D&D so hard, that they made themselves cry.

Travis: Yup.

["No Dogs on the Moon!" by Griffin McElroy plays]

Travis: Did you guys cry?

Clint: Shut up!

Justin: I cried at how hard we played Dungeons and Dragons.

Travis: That's fair.

Clint: Can we play again? Can we play again?

Travis: Yeah, we're going to keep playing—

Justin: Yeah, let's play again. Different... let's do it different this time.

Griffin: This time, I'll be a... sorcerer.

Justin: No, a different game. We just played Dungeons and Dragons for, it feels like weeks.

Travis: Ugh.

Griffin: It was three years. World of Warcraft? Should we all get really into WoW?

Travis: Yeah!

Justin: We could do WoW, that's fine.

Travis: Or we could do Magic the Gathering, I think that'll be unpleasant to listen to because I think it'll just be a bunch of like shuffling sounds.

Justin: Yeah, and the pizza we ordered should've been here around January 20—

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: I'm fucking starving.

Clint: And, you know what? Thank god for Coke Zero. And because it's the—
What? So much has changed.

Justin: So much has changed, Coke Zero is gone.

Griffin: How long have I been asleep?!

Travis: I'll have to cut off this giant beard I've grown.

Justin: This giant beard.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: If anybody is listening and you enjoying this, please send mops for the just unfathomable amount of urine that I have coated this— the playroom in.

Travis: Wait, is it weird that I haven't peed this whole time?

Griffin: In three years? Travis, go to the emergency room now.

Travis: I mean... Well, I think I've just started sweating it out. I also haven't consumed any liquids though, so like...

Griffin: Oh, you're good then. Oh no, wait, you're not good. Travis, go to the emergency room right now.

Justin: Yeah, this is serious.

Clint: And my whole beard is coated with Cheeto dust.

Travis: That's normal.

Griffin: That's normal. That's just your everyday state of being.

Clint: Every day is like that.

Griffin: Bye, everybody!

[“No Dogs on the Moon!” by Griffin McElroy plays]

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