

SETH: Hey everyone, it's Seth Lind. I play Nermut Bundaloy. Maybe not the coolest crew member on Mission to Zyxx, but, um, safe to say, the shortest. It is the MaxFun drive, the time when we celebrate this amazing listener-supported podcast network we are proud to call home, Maximum Fun. It's also the time when we get to thank the people without whom this show would truly, truly not exist. And I mean you, the MaxFun member who clicked Mission to Zyxx when joining. Thank you so, so much. You are what makes it possible not just for us to make this show, but to put it out into the world for anyone to listen to for free. And that's precisely because the show is supported by listeners who are in a position to help us make it. And I am here to invite you to join them. I noticed a comment on one of our Facebook posts the other day from a listener named Lucas. I'm just going to pull it up here. Here's what he said. And he said... I could quote it here. This comment struck me just because it was so sincere and sweet. Here it is. He said, "It always makes me so happy to hear this podcast. It is my favorite because you all make me smile. I work in a sawmill and lumber yard, and I need to keep my mind busy. So many podcasts are about true crime and depressing stuff, but when I get to listen to Mission to Zyxx, it makes my day so much happier. I hope your fund drive goes well. I wish I had the funds right now to donate. I would send thousands if I could, but I will continue to tell everyone I know about Mission to Zyxx." Thank you, Lucas, for the comment and for telling people about the show. That is its own amazing donation. And thank you, listener who supports the show financially via Maximum Fun, for making the show exist, for everyone out there in Lucas's position or any position like that, because that's the thing. It's especially important to us at a time like this that we're in now, with an economy-crushing pandemic when so many people's employment and finances have been thrown for a loop, for us to be able to put this incredibly laborious show out for free. That is more important to us than it's ever been. But part of that bargain is the trust that to someone, maybe you, it's actually not free. Right? That's kind of the contradiction inherent in this, is that in order to keep this thing free for a select group of people, it isn't. But rather, it's something you pay a little bit for, or however much you can or want to, so that other people can benefit from it. So if you love the show and are in a position to support it, we would be just honestly delighted if you would join now over at MaximumFun.org/join. If this is resonating with you, I'd ask you just hit pause right now and join up before you forget. It's the kind of thing that we all just think, "Yeah, that seems right," and we don't get to it. So just hit pause and the show will be here when you're back. Did you hit pause? Did it feel good to join? Okay. Here's the episode. It is a really fun one featuring a guest we've wanted to get on the show for a long time, and thank you so much for making this show exist.

NARRATOR: [foreboding music] It is a time of chaos. Without a ruler, the galaxy is paralyzed by lawlessness, unrest, and of course, the colossal Allwheat, which looks like a bruise with an event horizon. Now, Captain Dar and their intrepid crew must

survive the looming threats, reunite a fractured galaxy, and meet weird bug creatures and stuff. This is Mission to Zyxx. [music swells]

[sound of someone sharpening a knife]

DAR: Hey, Horsehat?

HORSEHAT: Yeah?

DAR: Oh, did you get a chance to finish Bargie's script?

HORSEHAT: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

DAR: No, I agree. It's amazing.

HORSEHAT: Dahhh, doo, a wawa.

DAR: Right? And also, it just felt like none of the characters announced what their quirky traits were. They were just themselves, like the whole time.

HORSEHAT: Dah dah goo. Dah dah dah dah dah dah! Mmm.

DAR: Exactly!

C-53: Are we talking about Bargie's script?

DAR: Yeah.

HORSEHAT: Yah.

C-53: It is—

DAR: Horsehat and I both finished it. Did you finish it?

C-53: It's fantastic.

DAR: Right? I mean, I don't mean to sound so surprised, but...

[knife is set down on the table]

HORSEHAT: Dahduh duh.

DAR: Okay, it is... Horsehat has a point. It is a little surprising, but you know, Bargie's been in the business for a long time.

AJ: Are you guys talking about Bargie's script?

C-53: Yeah.

AJ: Yeah. There's so many pages, right?

C-53: AJ, did you get through it?

AJ: No, I mean, I, like, started it.

DAR: Sure, yeah.

C-53: Yeah, no, I'm asking if you finished it.

AJ: Like, what's finishing it? You know what I mean?

C-53: It's reading to the end.

AJ: I sort of read, like—

[door opens]

PLECK: Are you guys talking about the Allwheat?

C-53: Mm, no.

DAR: Uh, no.

AJ: No. We're talking about—

HORSEHAT: Nahh.

DAR: Never... You know, it's funny. None of us really ever think about the Allwheat, you know? It's really not...

C-53: It's more of a Pleck thing.

AJ: Sorta just you.

PLECK: It's sort of a galactic existential threat, I'm not su—

BARGIE: Hey, are you guys talking about Barge's script?

C-53: We actually are, Barge.

DAR: Yeah, Barge.

AJ: Yeah, Barge.

BARGIE: Garbage, right? Completely garbage, terrible. Worst thing I've ever done.

C-53: Hey now, Barge... This script?

BARGIE: I hate it.

C-53: It's great.

HORSEHAT: Dahh, doh.

DAR: Yeah, I mean, to piggyback on what Horsehat is saying, it's just... It's really refreshing.

AJ: And to piggyback on what everyone else is saying, you know, there were... I mean, there's so many pages to it, and um...

BARGIE: That's true.

AJ: I just thought it was really tight and printed out... [thumping as AJ tries to climb C-53]

BARGIE: Thank you.

DAR: AJ, AJ, please stop trying to piggyback C-53. It's not an actual... It's not...

AJ: And just to piggyback on what everyone else is—

C-53: AJ, you gotta get off my back here.

DAR: It's not a literal piggyback.

AJ: Okay, all right.

C-53: It's a conceptual piggyback.

AJ: Right, but just to piggyback on that...

C-53: Get off, AJ!

AJ: Okay. All right. All right.

BARGIE: Well, I just want to say I appreciate everyone reading my script, okay? But don't worry about it, because I already deleted it. It's over.

C-53: Bargie!

DAR: Bargie, what? No.

PLECK: Bargie!

BARGIE: I thought I'd write something honest for a change, really put myself into it.

DAR: Yeah, that came across in the script.

C-53: One hundred percent, Barge.

BARGIE: Nope, I threw it away, instead I'm writing a spec for Sherk 5.

C-53: No...

AJ: Oh, Sherk 5? [doing a Sherk impression] Dunkey!! Dunkey!!

DAR: No, not Sherk 5: The Sherksical.

C-53: We don't need another Sherk movie. We need *this* movie, Barge.

DAR: No one wants... And especially not a musical version.

BARGIE: It's the only—

DAR: No, Barchie, please.

AJ: Oh wait, does Dunkey sing... does Dunkey sing in it?

BARGIE: Yeah.

AJ: Yes. I'll read that.

DAR: It's just... I thought Dunkey died at the end of Sherk 4.

AJ: What? Wait, what? Is that how you interpreted that? I thought he just sort of...

DAR: It doesn't matter. They always resurrect Dunkey. It's just so... It's always without consequences.

BARGIE: No, I straight up killed Dunkey in the first page.

C-53: Wow.

AJ: What!?

C-53: Yeah, that's a hot take on the Sherk franchise.

DAR: Oh, so when you say spec, you are writing fantasy fiction.

C-53: Pleck, did you... You were talking about the Allwheat or something?

[laughter]

AJ: Yeah.

PLECK: Uh—no, you know what? It's fine. I understand you guys don't think or talk or worry or...

AJ: You said... No, but you just have that look.

PLECK: ...dream about the Allwheat quite as much.

AJ: You know what I mean? He has that...

PLECK: What?

AJ: He has that kind of look in his eye. Does anyone know what I'm talking about?

C-53: Oh, yeah. There's a certain sheen to the surface of his eyeball, yeah.

BARGIE: Oh, yeah. Kind of look that Dunkey has in the first page right before he takes his own life.

PLECK: What?

AJ: Bargie, I want to see that Sherk 5. I want to hear about Dunkey. I'm almost sure you should probably bring him back. Because if there's anything people love, it's when a beloved character that everyone thought was annoying dies and then comes back.

[communicator beeps]

C-53: Captain Dar, I have an incoming transmission from Temporary Emergency Emissarial Negotiations Missions Operations Manager, Nermut Bundaloy.

DAR: Hello, Nermut.

NERMUT: Hey, crew.

DAR: What is up?

NERMUT: Bargie, this script is incredible.

BARGIE: Oh, thank you so much. Is it... you're talking about Sherk 5?

NERMUT: Uh...

C-53: No... I don't think so, Barge.

NERMUT: I'm definitely not talking about Sherk 5.

BARGIE: 'Cause spoiler. There's more of my real life in that one, I'll tell you that.

NERMUT: Oh, boy. Uh...

PLECK: Do we have a mission, Nermut?

AJ: Yeah, what's our mission, man?

NERMUT: Yeah, of course. So, uh, the PR coming off of having promised that... zombification would help the galaxy is, as you can imagine, a little rough. So we've arranged a photo op. So you will be meeting Seesu Gundu at the Plencheus Children's Hospital.

C-53: Okay. We're supporting Seesu at the hospital?

DAR: What is our role?

C-53: Yeah, yeah.

NERMUT: You're going to be kind of like... background. It's a time where the children have all been annoyingly mostly cured. So they need people to kind of fill up beds in the background of the photoshoot.

PLECK: That can't be right.

C-53: Yeah, Nermut, we're not gonna pass as kids.

NERMUT: Well, if you're far enough in the background, they're really desperate. So they're going to move the beds kind of further back. And you're going to be in the back of shots playing sick children because there are not enough.

PLECK: I dunno...

C-53: Seems a little disingenuous.

AJ: I mean, I'm six, so I'm in.

NERMUT: AJ's in.

DAR: I mean... I guess anything for Seesu.

AJ: Yeah.

NERMUT: Thank you. So here are the coordinates to Plencheus.

PLECK: You know what, Nermut? Actually, let me punch those coordinates in for you. I don't mind.

[door opens, Pleck walks out of the room]

C-53: Um—

NERMUT: Uh...

AJ: Whoa.

DAR: Uh, Pleck, that's not really something that you normally do.

C-53: Yeah, Pleck generally—

AJ: Yeah, this is weird.

PLECK: [from the other room] Just punch in the coordinates here.

[Pleck struggles with equipment]

C-53: Pleck, I could just transfer these coordinates straight to Bargie. It's... not really a—

PLECK: [returning] You take a break, C-53. You're always doing stuff in your cube, and with Bargie, interfacing.

C-53: It's... Almost no effort.

PLECK: [typing] Yeah, well, you know, I like to get my hands dirty sometimes, punch in a coordinate or two.

NERMUT: I mean.... I guess you still technically don't have a job in the crew. So if this makes you feel better, I guess...

C-53: Yeah, fair enough.

DAR: Yeah, you know, Nermut's right. Pleck, anything to get that look out of your eye!

NERMUT: All right, I'm sending them straight to your data pad, Pleck.

PLECK: Okay.

NERMUT: So here are the coordinates to Plencheus, specifically the Little Bill Preemptive Memorial Wing.

C-53: *Preemptive* Memorial Wing?

PLECK: What does that mean?

NERMUT: He's holding on, but obviously not for long.

C-53: Oh, that's not good.

NERMUT: Well, he's been terminally ill for a long time. It can't—you know, like—

C-53: You're saying he can't last? Don't love that.

PLECK: Yeah, it seems like he's had a good run so far. How old is Little Bill at this point?

AJ: Who is this?

NERMUT: Little Bill's 41.

BARGIE: Hey, Pleck. Pleck.

PLECK: Yes.

BARGIE: When you're punching in the numbers, could you scratch the third number? It kind of itches.

PLECK: Wait, wait, you mean three? The number three?

BARGIE: I don't know. Just the third one. Next to one and two, whatever that's called.

PLECK: Okay, that'd be three.

BARGIE: I don't pay attention to numbers. Just scratch it.

PLECK: Okay. Like this?[Pleck starts scratching]

BARGIE: But like a deep scratch. Nah, that's too light, like a deep, deep scratch.

PLECK: Oh, okay. [Pleck scratches harder]

BARGIE: All right, yeah, oh, that's good. That's really good. All right.

PLECK: All right, let's hit the old... Hyper... space lanes.

[Beat]

AJ: What?

[transition]

ZIMA MASTER AWDEEO: All right, Ki, we're rolling. Ready to go?

ZIMA MASTER KIARONDO: Indeed.

ZIMA MASTER AWDEEO: Okay, hit it.

ZIMA MASTER KIARONDO: My greetings to noobs and papas alike. It is I, Zima Master Kiarondo, with stereophonic audio log entry 2-1-2. Though who can say when this audio shall find its way to your ears? The internet on Zima Prime has been down for, oh, a good seven months, ever since an unknown disturbance in the Space knocked out all our stuff. We'll just assume everything is fine and the galaxy is fresh as ever. But I digress. Today I wish to impart to you my love of a most magnificent pair of devices, my Raycon earbuds. For you see, these wireless earbuds sound incredible, delivering pristine clarity, thumpy bass, seamless Bluetooth pairing, and a compact design at about half the price of other premium wireless earbuds. I have used these bad boys for everything from conference calls with the other masters, to analyzing Beetlemen records, to binging podcasts. And these earbuds, in my case, the Everyday E25 earbud in blue, for blue is the freshest color, allow me to listen to my audio, and not whatever my roommate is watching, or the drum circle, or whatever that little wooden boy is prattling on about.

TOOPER SPICKLE: Well hey there, mister! Well, I just got a letter from my pen pal saying that the emperor fused with a bean and became a horrific—

ZIMA MASTER KIARONDO: And believe me, my expertise in audio comes from the very fabric of the space itself, which imbued me with the power to harness the aural vibrations of the universe. Plus, I was a stock boy at A.G. Cornax and Sons all throughout high school, so I know audio equipment, friend. Raycon earbuds are stylish and discreet, with six hours of playtime and top-notch noise isolation. So before you go dropping hundreds of kroon on a pair of earbuds, check out Raycon, and heed my words. Right now, get 15% off your order at buyraycon.com/zyxx. That's buyraycon.com/zyxx for 15% off Raycon wireless earbuds. Now, as a resident Zima Master here, I should probably talk to Spurch about why no ship has docked on Zima Prime for seven—[BEEP]

[transition]

C-53: Wait a minute. This isn't a hospital... This isn't even Plencheus!

PLECK: C-53, everyone. I have something to admit to you.

DAR: You don't know how to put in coordinates?

PLECK: No, no, I actually do know how to put in coordinates.

AJ: You're a clone?

PLECK: What? No, why would that be what I—no!

AJ: It's weird, isn't it?

PLECK: Hear me out, okay? I punched in these coordinates after the call with Nermut. This is more important than our mission, okay? This is the real mission.

AJ: Wait, hold on. Is that why you wanted to punch in the coordinates?

PLECK: Yes, AJ, thank you for catching up.

AJ: Are you guys getting this?

DAR: Yes.

C-53: No, we're... Mm-hmm. Yeah.

AJ: That he totally decided to punch in the coordinates so that he could... Oh!

PLECK: Listen, guys. I'm sorry I lied to you, but this is—

BARGIE: I know what this place is.

PLECK: Wait, you do?

BARGIE: I know where we are. We're at They Teen magazine headquarters. Oh, they did a story on me once that said "They Be Too Old."

PLECK: I mean—

BARGIE: I'll never forget it.

PLECK: Yeah, that's—

AJ: They used the name of the magazine in the article name?

BARGIE: That's right. All the magazine headlines start with a "They."

DAR: Yeah.

BARGIE: "They Sexy Dresses..."

C-53: Pleck, are you jucking kidding me right now? You took us to They Teen magazine headquarters?

PLECK: Yes, okay?

DAR: Everyone, everyone, listen. I know we just spent a lot of time getting our sallow makeup perfect. But if this is what Pleck needs—

PLECK: Thank you, Captain.

C-53: Alright...

PLECK: Bargie, can you open the hatch?

BARGIE: Alright.

[Bargie's hatch opens, crew starts walking]

PLECK: We didn't want to pose in the background of a photo at a—an empty children's hospital. That sounds terrible.

C-53: I mean, it didn't sound—

PLECK: Some questions are just too big for us to be able to figure out on our own. I've been struggling with what my destiny should be for months now. But I realize there's only one person who can answer my questions. It's Maxie Wiggs.

AJ: Who—

C-53: Who is—

AJ: Yeah, why would we know that—

DAR: None of us read They Teen, so you're gonna have to tell us who that is.

C-53: Who is Maxie Wiggs?

PLECK: Maxie Wiggs is the advice columnist at They Teen. Every single week, she cranks out this incredible advice for people all over the galaxy with these crazy personal questions.

C-53: But hold on. You think Maxie Wiggs is going to give you, a 26-year-old man, pithy advice about your destiny as a Zima Knight?

PLECK: Listen, C-53, this magazine isn't called Girl Teen. It's not called Kid Teen. It's called They Teen. That encompasses everyone, all of us.

C-53: It's called They TEEN, Pleck.

PLECK: Okay, that part is secondary.

AJ: Okay, so I guess we just tell this receptionist that we need to see Maxie Wiggs?

PLECK: Yes. Yes.

C-53: All right.

AJ: Hey! Hey! [dings bell]

RECEPTIONIST: Hello, are—Oh! Did you sick—Sick children—

AJ: What?

PLECK: We're no—We're not sick children.

RECEPTIONIST: Win a wish to come to the They—

AJ: We're not sick children. Oh, it's the makeup.

DAR: No no no, no no no no no. No, no, no. We are, we are—

RECEPTIONIST: You wanted to come to They—

DAR: We are sick children. We're—[coughing]

RECEPTIONIST: Oh my goodness.

DAR: Very sick children teens.

RECEPTIONIST: Very rarely do they make their wish to come here. Welcome, welcome.

AJ: Yeah. Great.

PLECK: Thank you, thank you. We would like to speak with Maxie Wiggs, please.

RECEPTIONIST: Who are we to say no to—

DAR: Sick, sick children. [another fake cough] Oh, no. We're all—

C-53: This is starting to feel worse than the thing we were supposed to—

DAR: Yeah, this—

RECEPTIONIST: This way, this way, this way. This way. Um. [door opens, light switches on] Let me move, I'm gonna move these boxes out of the way.

AJ: Wow, this, uh—This area is—

RECEPTIONIST: Maxie keeps a lot of storage boxes kind of blocking them.

MAXIE: These are my treasures!

RECEPTIONIST: [moving things out of the way] Okay, and Maxie, these sick kids are here specifically for you.

MAXIE: Okay, come in, just step over the porcelain figures. Don't knock any of this over, these are all very expensive. [typewriter sounds]

C-53: Lot of porcelain figures.

AJ: Yeah, so many.

PLECK: Yeah, you really managed to pack a lot of stuff into this little office.

DAR: [from outside the room] You know, I don't think C and I are gonna fit in here.

C-53: Maybe we just leave it to you two.

PLECK: Oh, okay, oh, he's gone.

DAR: I'm gonna piggyback on that and literally jump on you, C. Okay, take me with you.

C-53: We're outta here.

[beeping sound of loader frame reversing]

MAXIE: Oh, okay, well, I thought you all wanted to talk to me, if that's not the case, then that's fine.

PLECK: No, no, no, Miss Wiggs, we want to talk to you desperately.

AJ: I'll stick around.

PLECK: Thank you, AJ. My name is Pleck Decksetter.

MAXIE: Hm! That's a tongue twister.

PLECK: I'm a Zima Knight, and I've been a subscriber to TheyTeen for 14 years.

MAXIE: Oh, wow, did you come here to get a... a sticker?

PLECK: No, no, no, I came to get advice from you.

AJ: Wait, you got stickers? What kind of—Hold on, hold on, hold on, wait a second. Hey, see, what's the sticker situation like?

MAXIE: [pulling out a drawer, rifling through it] We got stickers for people who've had a membership a long time, so you get a sticker every year you get a membership. So you guys, you guys got 14 stickers to turn to this plan. They're gold stars, they look like planets, they're all very beautiful.

AJ: Wow, these are all great, yeah.

PLECK: Yeah, yeah.

MAXIE: Scratch and sniff that one.

AJ: Oh, whoa. Oh, yeah, it smells like space.

PLECK: Wow, cool! Listen, Miss Wiggs, I'm not here for a sticker, I'm here for advice. I need your help.

MAXIE: Well, you came to the right place. You know, I've been writing advice for my whole entire life, actually. I came out of my mother, and the first thing the doctor asked me was what he should do about his wife cheating on him.

PLECK: Really? What, do you remember what you said, or was it...?

MAXIE: I cried and he said, "That's right, I guess I should express myself."

PLECK: Oh, wow. You were sort of born to do it.

MAXIE: It's an innate gift.

PLECK: I know you have a gift. I, I haven't gotten a letter through to the magazine, I think because I'm more than a decade older than most of your subscribers. But I just know, I just know you can help me.

MAXIE: What's your issue? What's your problem? What's your issue? [Maxie lights a cigar and opens the window]

PLECK: Okay, okay. Oh, this is amazing.

MAXIE: Just lay it on me.

PLECK: This is amazing. I destroyed the emperor of the galaxy, who then turned into an enormous flaming black hole. I think that it's my purpose to fly into the Allwheat and see what's on the other side. But I know it puts myself at risk, it puts my best friends, my ship at risk.

MAXIE: Mm-hmm.

PLECK: It puts the entire galaxy at risk if I DON'T do it!

MAXIE: Wow, this is really heavy. All right, I'm gonna give you a little quiz, and then this will kind of help me narrow you down a little bit.

PLECK: Okay, all right.

AJ: Oh, a quiz...

MAXIE: Okay, it's a multiple choice. So you—you—you find—you see your friend is in your class, and they're cheating on a test, and the teacher asks you after class, "Who cheated?" Do you A) tell on your friend? Do you B) say YOU cheated? Or do you C) say you didn't see anything?

PLECK: Uh, I guess C?

MAXIE: Youse just gonna lie and say you didn't see anything.

AJ: Wow.

PLECK: Well, I mean... they're my friend.

AJ: Why would you?

PLECK: AJ.

MAXIE: Number two. [Maxie puffs out smoke] Your friend is always complaining about their body. Do you A) tell them they look great? B) tell them something they could work on? Or C) say you didn't hear them?

PLECK: I—I mean, are those the only three options? I feel like you could probably be a little more diplomatic.

[Maxie shuts the window and sprays freshener]

AJ: I have a follow-up question. Is the combat unit, have they not been conditioning properly?

PLECK: AJ, I'm trying to get to the bottom of a real issue here. You're, you're...

AJ: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm just gonna play—I'm just gonna look, not—not touch, but look at some of these figurines. So...

MAXIE: Oh, do not touch that.

AJ: I won't be touching them. I'm just looking.

MAXIE: Those are from some of the original clowns that have ever been.

PLECK: What?

AJ: Whoa. Originals? Like some of the first clowns?

MAXIE: Those are porcelains of them.

PLECK: What does that mean?

AJ: Whoa. [AJ starts taking pictures]

MAXIE: Well, there was—well, if you want me to take you back in time, there was originally clowns that we all base our clowns on now that we know, and they were the original, and then they had merch, and I bought it.

PLECK: Okay. Huh.

AJ: Woow. Ancient clown porcelain, incredible.

[Maxie's door opens]

SUSAN: [pushing past the boxes] Maxie, Maxie, hi. I, uh...

MAXIE: [typing] Mm-hmm. What, what.

SUSAN: I have a very important conversation we need to have. Do you want to have it in private, or do you want to have it out loud in front of these strangers?

MAXIE: Anything you could say to me, you could say to these guys.

AJ: Aww! Maxie!

SUSAN: Maxie, as you know, They Teen has, uh... we're not doing the best financially this quarter.

MAXIE: [typing, not paying attention] Hmmmmm.

PLECK: What?

SUSAN: And unfortunately, we're gonna have to let some people go.

MAXIE: Mmmmm...

PLECK: Are you kidding me right now?

SUSAN: And... and despite your many years here...

MAXIE: Okay.

AJ: [whispering] Where are they going with this?

SUSAN: We think maybe it's in your best interest...

MAXIE: I'm gonna stop you right there.

AJ: Wait, what's happening?

MAXIE: I'm gonna stop you right there, because I can't hear you. Option C, I can't hear you.

AJ: Option C, yeah!

PLECK: Oh, wow.

MAXIE: I can't hear what you're saying.

SUSAN: Okay.

MAXIE: So if I can't hear, then I don't think I can really follow through on whatever your—whatever your desire is.

SUSAN: Okay, well, I think you understand what I mean, so if you could, by the end of the day...

MAXIE: You know what? You know what? It would take me days, weeks, months, years to get all this stuff out of here, so I feel like it's easier if I just stay, and you could just work around that.

SUSAN: [walking out of the office] There's no option C in life, Maxie. Goodbye.

MAXIE: To be determined.

PLECK: Maxie. Maxie, this is—this is terrible. You're a pillar of the They Teen community. They can't fire you.

MAXIE: You know what? They've been using a picture of a young woman as my—as my image in the magazine for years, and I think this is ageist.

AJ: It's true.

[Maxie uncorks a bottle, pours, takes a sip]

PLECK: I think so, too. I mean, as a 26-year-old subscriber to They Teen, I totally understand where you're coming from when you say that.

MAXIE: See? I've always said They Teen should be for everyone of all ages.

PLECK: Yes, yes! That's what the "They" refers to! That's what the "They" is in They Teen!

MAXIE: That's what I've always said.

[Maxie takes another sip]

[transition]

DAR: Uh, C, you can—you can put me down.

C-53: Okay.

[C-53 sets Dar down, they keep walking]

DAR: I'm not super hungry, so I don't really want to raid any snack areas, but uh...

C-53: What other departments might they have here?

[opens door]

STEVE: Nobody's clicking on the... Nobody's clicking on the ads.

DAR: Oh.

C-53: Okay, advertising department seems a little boring.

DAR: Not for us. No, no, no, no. All right, uh, let's see here.

[opens door]

PHOTOGRAPHER: Take your hat off, yes! Take your hat off!

MODEL: I'll throw it in the air!

DAR: Oh, that's...

C-53: Okay. Yeah, no thanks.

DAR: Okay. Um...

[they continue walking]

DAR: No, no, no, wait. C?

C-53: Now what.... Is this?

DAR: This is for you and me.

C-53: Gossip Central! Hellooo...

DAR: Oooh, yes. Dar likey.

C-53: Let's... let's just poke our heads in and see what's going on...

[opens door]

[ominous humming, intermittent zapping]

DAR: Okay, let's see what... Says here this is the cube that holds *all the gossip!*?

C-53: Hohoho, are you kidding me? All of it?

DAR: *All* the gossip?

C-53: Oh, hold on, Dar there's fine print here. [mumbling] "If you pick up the cube, something something something consequences..." Um...

DAR: Pick. Up...

C-53: Oh, boy! Dar!

DAR: Get your phalanges on this one, C. Come on.

C-53: Okay... Here we go!

[clattering, zapping as Dar and C-53 pick up the cube]

DAR: Oh, C, hold on. Shh, I think someone's coming in.

C-53: Oh, uh, here! I'll just take the cube and just hide over here.

[Dar and C-53 hide]

STEPH: Uh, Jared, are you gonna finish that sandwich?

JARED: No, I... it's fine.

[The Gossip Cube starts beeping]

C-53: Oh, Jared!

DAR: Oh, Jared...

C-53: We heard his name! The cube's starting to vibrate!

DAR: Oh, the name is activating something!

C-53: Oh, there's a lot in here. There's a lotta goss!

[humming and pulsing increases, Dar and C-53 grunt]

DAR AND C-53: OOOOOOOOOOoOOOOH GFT!

[humming dies down]

DAR: Oh, Jared, you wily rascal.

C-53: We gotta tell people about this.

DAR: Oh, yeah, who can we tell? I guess we could just start going office to office.

C-53: Yeah, that's true.

[door opens]

DAR: Yeah, he seems sad and like he could do with some hot goss.

STEVE: If the banner was the full width of the site, I think we could get the...

C-53: Hey, uh...

DAR: Excuse us.

C-53: Hey, excuse me.

STEVE: Huh? Yeah? Can I help you?

DAR: How do you feel about hot goss?

STEVE: I mean, I don't like to pass it on, but I like to hear it.

C-53: Okay, okay.

DAR: All right.

C-53: Do you know Jared?

[transition]

PLECK: Maxie, I know things are difficult for you right now with They Teen, but if you could just help me with this problem. The fate of the galaxy rests on it.

MAXIE: We're so close to getting the answer. I need to figure out what type you are so I can figure out how to best solve your problem.

AJ: Oh, we gotta figure out the type, Papa.

PLECK: Yeah, okay, sure. Um...

MAXIE: Okay, next question is this. You're having a birthday party. You want to invite everyone from your whole school, but you don't like everyone. So do you A) invite everyone anyway, B) only invite the kids you like, or C) pretend you didn't hear it was your birthday and then just see how it shakes out?

PLECK: Uh, yeah. Sorry, Maxie, I just feel like...

AJ: C. C. C.

PLECK: Why would you do that, AJ?

MAXIE: I love this. So, and I'm gonna say you said C for the last one, which is pretend you didn't hear your friend when they're talking about their body.

AJ: Only way to do it.

PLECK: Fine. Okay. Okay, great.

MAXIE: So what this means is you're a really great person and you have a good strong belief system, but you also are a bit of a coward.

AJ: [quiet awe] Whoaaa...

MAXIE: So this is where your issues come into play.

PLECK: That really sorta... Wow. I gotta say, Maxie...

MAXIE: But—no, hold on. What it means you should do is you should have the confidence to ask anyone out that you want to ask out, and you shouldn't be afraid of the rejection.

AJ: Yeah, right. Papa, you should ask out whoever you want to ask out. [AJ claps Pleck on the back]

MAXIE: See? AJ's got an answer for you. [Maxie uncorks another bottle and pours another drink]

AJ: Yeah.

PLECK: You know, Maxie, even though you sort of pushed me into answering C for all of those, and even though my question has nothing to do with dating, you really summed me up. I'm optimistic, I want to do what's best, but I'm a little bit of a coward.

MAXIE: Well, the quiz is always right, which is why they should keep me around here, because these quizzes has been helping teens for many, many eons.

AJ: Whoa.

[Maxie opens the window and lights a cigar]

PLECK: Well, you know, I try to be brave, but sometimes, you know, I just don't know what path to take. I mean, I spent months studying the space. I learned how to use my dinglehopper. I dueled the emperor on top of a—

MAXIE: What's that, a comb? Dinglehopper?

PLECK: No, no, it's a wood saber. I mean, I don't want to brag, it's sort of the most powerful—

AJ: It looks like a stick, but it's a wood saber.

PLECK: It's the most powerful wood saber in the galaxy.

MAXIE: Interesting.

PLECK: It actually is infused with the power of the Space, even though it's Stuff.

MAXIE: Wow. Well, OK, well, then maybe you can help me, because that lady who keeps walking in here keeps trying to fire me. So what would you do if you were me? Because it's getting a little bit scary.

PLECK: Wait, you want—you want *my* advice?

MAXIE: If you could. I know it sounds crazy, because I'm the advice lady, but it's happening to me.

AJ: Right.

PLECK: You know what I think you should tell her, is that you're the reason that They Teen is great. You give the subscribers something to look forward to. And I guess, you know, you always gave me something to hope for, that if I ever had a really big problem, that you might be able to help me out.

MAXIE: Wow.

SUSAN: Um, sorry to interrupt. I just, I—again, you have guests here. You don't... Is this something I'd rather talk to you in private?

PLECK: Same guests, we're actually the same guests from before.

AJ: We're the same people. Still going through the clowns. [AJ snaps a photo]

SUSAN: Would you like me to just say it in front of these strangers?

MAXIE: They know me better than anyone.

SUSAN: OK.

AJ: I mean, you look at somebody's ancient porcelain clown collection and you... you know 'em.

SUSAN: Yeah. OK, so as you know, They Teen has not done well financially this past quarter. But the new, um, uh, worst development is that the gossip cube that fuels all of our content has gone missing. So if that's not found by the end of the day, I think we're all going to have to pack up, like you, to roam free.

MAXIE: Wait, hold on.

SUSAN: Yes.

MAXIE: I have something I need to say now.

SUSAN: OK.

MAXIE: I know that I have did many things that is very good for this magazine.

AJ: Yes, that's it.

PLECK: Yes, yes!

MAXIE: And I have did many things that have changed it for the teens and all ages and allowed everyone to read it.

AJ: Yeah, that's it.

PLECK: Pretty close.

MAXIE: And I have did many things that people have thought is good. And I did a lot...

AJ: Wow, Papa.

MAXIE: ...here, because...

AJ: It's like... She's saying the advice that you said to her...

MAXIE: I did good.

AJ: But it's not good. It doesn't sound good.

PLECK: Yeah, I mean, it's almost like she's so used to giving good advice that she just doesn't know how to take advice. Maybe that's what it is.

MAXIE: I have did good and no bad because...

PLECK: Maxie, you got this. You got to believe in yourself.

AJ: That's it!

MAXIE: All the what I didn't do is respected because it wasn't bad because everyone was thinking it was good.

AJ: Keep going Maxie, that's it!

PLECK: It's... you're almost, you're so close!

MAXIE: And when they got the magazine, they thought, "it's good." [Maxie pours another drink]

SUSAN: Uh—What? OK, well, I-

MAXIE: I'm done.

SUSAN: [walking away] OK, I'm gonna go now.

MAXIE: All right, you could go.

[beat]

MAXIE: [whistles] That was close.

AJ: That was perfect.

MAXIE: You liked it?

AJ: I loved it.

[transition]

[C-53 and Dar both sound slightly frantic]

C-53: You know, we got some looks 'cause we're carrying this cube around, but I feel better having the cube in my hands.

DAR: Oh, yeah, absolutely. And, you know, I mean, you saw what Carol was looking at us, but, hahaha, I know things about Carol now.

C-53: Yeah, things that Carol doesn't want you to know... but we know.

DAR: Ooh, we know.

C-53: Doesn't it just—it makes your fingers feel good to touch the cube, right?

DAR: Yeah, the cube won't stop vibrating and I'm losing—I'm losing—I'm losing...

C-53: Yeah, they're getting numb. A little bit.

STEVE: Uh, no big deal, but the gossip pages have disappeared from the site.

EMPLOYEE: [screams] The gossip pages have disappeared! The gossip pages have disappeared!

STEVE: We've got, uh... no gossip. And that's the main traffic driver. And nobody's clicking on the ads.

DAR: I think we should go down a different hallway.

C-53: OK, yes. Just gonna turn here real quick.

DAR: Okay.

C-53: [hushed, quickly] Dar, you realize they figure out that's we're the ones who took the cube, they're gonna try to take the cube away from us-

DAR: [hushed, quickly] Nonononononono, no one can take the cube away from us.

[beeping of heart rate monitor]

LORKIN: [cough] I'm a sick kid.

[beat]

LORKIN: My name is Lorkin.

GOSSIP CUBE: [whispering] Lorkin...

DAR: Oh, wait. Ooooh...

C-53: Ooooh... Oh, Lorkin, you got some secrets there, don't you buddy, huh?

DAR: Yes...

LORKIN: What?

BORKIN: Nobody met us at reception. We was supposed to get a tour...

LORKIN: This is my twin brother, Borkin.

GOSSIP CUBE: [whispering] Borkin... [beeping, humming, zapping increases]

BORKIN: I'm Borkin...

DAR: Oh no. Now we know the name. Ohhhhh...

[Dar and C-53 get increasingly more excited]

C-53: Ooh boy, shouldn't have told us your name, Borkin, 'cause now we know a lot about you.

DAR: Borkin, you should know that Lorkin kicked your sandcastle! And that's the reason why you lost the contest. Not because a rogue wave came crashing in.

BORKIN: But Lorkin said it was a rogue wave!

C-53: And Lorkin, you should know that your favorite blue shirt that you thought was lost?

LORKIN: No, no.

C-53: Borkin took it and he spilled chocolate on it. So he threw it in the garbage! That's why you can't find it anymore!

LORKIN: That's my favorite shirt.

BORKIN: Lorkin, I would never, I would never.

DAR: But here's the juiciest piece of the pie! [Dar gasps]

C-53: [whispering] It's so juicy.

BORKIN: I thought the earliest part was juicy... What's coming next?

DAR: You're actually Lorkin!

LORKIN (FORMERLY BORKIN): No!

DAR: And you're actually Borkin!

LORKIN: Wait, so I kicked the sandcastle?

DAR: No, they just confused... They got confused.

C-53: No, your parents got you... mixed up!

DAR: Oooohooohoo! Hooohooohoo...

C-53: Oh, they wanted to tell you, but you couldn't tell you because it was too late!

BORKIN (FORMERLY LORKIN): Oh no.

DAR: Ooooooh... yeah!

C-53: In your heads, you were Borkin and Lorkin, but now you're Lorkin and Borkin!

LORKIN: Now we're Lorkin... I hate this tour!

BORKIN: So when mom says she loves Lorkin the best...

C-53: Your mom picked a favorite between twins?

[the gossip cube's humming dies down]

BORKIN: Yes! On day one.

LORKIN: I mean... did send very bad messages.

C-53: Between terminally ill twins?

LORKIN: Yeah, it was a weird decision.

C-53: Very odd!

DAR: All right, we're off. See you later.

[Dar and C-53 walk away]

BORKIN: AhhHHHHH!

LORKIN: Maybeeeee!

[transition]

MAXIE: I actually feel really, really confident after that pep talk.

AJ: Yeah?

MAXIE: I'm not even afraid. Let her come back in here because I'll show her what's what.

AJ: That's great. And what I always say is, "lock and load."

MAXIE: I want to write that down.

AJ: Just write—yeah.

MAXIE: How do you spell that?

AJ: What?

MAXIE: How do you spell that?

PLECK: How do you spell lock and load?

AJ: How do you spell lock and load? It's L-O-C-K.

MAXIE: [typing] C-K!

AJ: What did you think it was?

MAXIE: And then what?

AJ: Well, "and."

PLECK: A-N-D.

MAXIE: OK. Mm, interesting.

AJ: Papa... Pleck, is she illiterate? What's-

MAXIE: And then you would say...

PLECK: Load. L-O... L-O-A-D.

MAXIE: A-L... A-L-O-A-D? What?

AJ: "Load." I'm saying "load."

PLECK: No. Load. L-O-A-D.

[Maxie crumples the paper]

AJ: Load.

MAXIE: "Lock and load..."

PLECK: Maxie, you can't just-

MAXIE: I'm gonna remember that.

PLECK: OK. Alright.

AJ: Yeah.

[Maxie types a bit more]

PLECK: You're the writer of the column, the advice column, right?

MAXIE: I write the column. Here we go [grabs a bottle]. At the magazine, which is actually a very important magazine because it is very important for our teens and all ages.

PLECK: I said that. I said that to you.

MAXIE: The magazine is important because it finds your destiny.

AJ: Yeah.

PLECK: Uh... Yeah. Yeah.

AJ: Right. Pleck, you found your destiny. And I think my destiny might be collecting porcelain figurines. I really am, like, vibing with these.

PLECK: These? The original clowns?

AJ: Yeah.

MAXIE: [sips drink] You gotta go online.

AJ: OK. And just type in... porcelain?

MAXIE: [spelling] L-O-C-K. A-N-D. L-O-A-D.

AJ: Why would I type in “lock and load” to look for...

MAXIE: Clowns.

AJ: How would I find...

MAXIE: You know what I mean? It'll never steer you wrong. That's what you always say.

AJ: You're right. I'll go and find porcelain clown figures by typing in “lock and load” into a search bar.

[clattering of someone trying to enter the office again]

SUSAN: Hi.

AJ: Oh.

PLECK: Oh!

MAXIE: Mm.

SUSAN: Um, just wanted to say...

MAXIE: Anything you could say to me, you say in front of my family. They are my family and they can hear it.

AJ: That's right.

PLECK: Yeah, I think she said we're friends, and then that we know her better than anyone, and then family.

AJ: We're family now! No, but we're family now. That's awesome.

PLECK: I just want to make sure I'm keeping track. OK.

AJ: Yeah yeah yeah, yeah.

SUSAN: Well, I brought a guest.

MAXIE: Oh, *you* have a guest now.

[someone else starts shoving their way past the junk into the office]

SUSAN: This is Steven from ad sales, just to reiterate the point about how we're doing financially. So.

STEVE: Maxie, good to see you, love the column.

MAXIE: Thank you.

STEVE: So... they're not clicking on the ads. I think we're going out of business.

MAXIE: OK, why does everyone keep saying this?

PLECK: All right. Listen, Steven from advertising. And I'm sorry, what's your name?

MAXIE: Maxie.

PLECK: No, not-

AJ: AJ.

PLECK: Not you, Maxie. What's your name, miss?

AJ: AJ.

PLECK: No, AJ. I'm talking to the woman who's trying to fire Maxie Wiggs.

AJ: Oh, OK.

SUSAN: Susan They.

PLECK: You're the owner of They Teen?

SUSAN: Yes.

STEVE: She founded the magazine.

AJ: Oh!

PLECK: Mrs. They.

SUSAN: It's *Miss They*. I have not engaged in marital status yet.

PLECK: Oh, OK.

MAXIE: She's really banking on this one guy she's seeing. She thinks it's going the right way. But based on her quizzes, I have other opinions.

SUSAN: OK.

PLECK: Susan, listen, don't you see what's happening? Maxie Wiggs is the heart and soul of *They Teen*. And I think you could learn something from her. Right? You have problems at the magazine.

SUSAN: Yeah.

PLECK: You have problems in your personal life.

SUSAN: Yes.

PLECK: I'm telling you, Maxie can fix them.

SUSAN: And at the farm?

AJ: The farm?

PLECK: I mean, yeah, maybe she could.

AJ: What farm?

PLECK: Maybe she can fix stuff at the farm. What's going on at the farm?

AJ: Is that *They Teen* related or is it kind of your own... thing?

[Maxie opens the window and lights up another cigar]

SUSAN: No, it's just—

MAXIE: Oh, we're going to get into the farm now?

AJ: Should we?

STEVE: Every CEO needs a hobby farm.

PLECK: Susan, what's going on? Why is the magazine going under?

SUSAN: Print... isn't... the future.

AJ: What?

PLECK: Really?

AJ: We've said that a lot, that it *is* the future.

SUSAN: It's the past. Also, all the people who have been subscribing seem to be over 18.

PLECK: OK.

STEVE: Not the demo.

AJ: Here's a suggestion. Why don't you just change the magazine to "They?"

MAXIE: Now, this is why I brought him in.

PLECK: Wait a second.

AJ: I don't think she brought us here, did she? Papa.

STEVE: Susan... that's a pretty damn good idea.

MAXIE: And I said we needed to have big changes because we're going under.

SUSAN: Steve, that's a really good idea.

AJ: Did... Pleck, did she bring us here? I thought you brought us here. Who brought us here?

PLECK: No, AJ, just relax and listen.

AJ: OK, OK.

STEVE: "They," that's new. That's—I'd click on that.

SUSAN: Would it be online?

STEVE: We do have an online version already, to be clear. That's where they're not clicking.

SUSAN: But what about the gossip cube? Without it, we have nothing... to gossip about.

PLECK: Maybe—maybe what teens and adults alike need isn't gossip. It's... the truth.

STEVE: Print truth?

SUSAN: What?

[Maxie shuts the window and starts spraying freshener again]

SUSAN: This type of rebrand and pivot, it—it costs a lot of money. And the magazine, well, it's fallen on hard times.

AJ: Yeah, we know.

PLECK: Yeah, no, we know that it's—

SUSAN: [excited] Maxie, do your guests have the funds, the venture capital to make it happen!?

AJ: What? No. No, no.

PLECK: You talking about us?

SUSAN: Yeah.

PLECK: No. No, we don't have any money.

SUSAN: OK. I'm just going to leave these boxes here. Again, take your time. It's not “being fired.” We don't use that word. We use “going to pasture.”

PLECK: That's worse, because it feels like a value judgment.

MAXIE: So I'm going to pasture.

SUSAN: To the farm. You're going to the farm.

MAXIE: I'm going to the farm.

[transition]

[gossip cube humming at full force, zapping]

C-53 AND DAR: [groaning]

C-53: I've got to be honest. This is maybe too much goss.

DAR: It's too much. It's too much. The goss is too hot. The goss is too hot!

C-53: My hand.. sort of feels like my hands are burning and are fusing to the cube.

C-53 AND DAR: [slightly maniacal laughter]

C-53: I know so much about people who I'm not connected to in any way!

STEVE: Uh, you guys using the printer... or...?

C-53: No, just, uh... oh.. oh...

DAR: [gasps] It's the ad guy, it's the ad guy! Listen ad guy, you know-

STEVE: I have a name.

DAR: Oh, yeah. What's your name?

C-53: Yeah. What's your name, tough guy?

STEVE: My name is Steve.

[the gossip cube hums at a higher frequency]

DAR, C-53, AND GOSSIP CUBE: StEEEEEEve.

STEVE: You know what'd make me tougher is if they were clicking on the ads....

C-53: Oh, Steve!

DAR: SteeEEVE!

C-53: Are you sitting on a HOT piece of goss!

DAR: Oh!

[transition]

SUSAN: [shoving past junk] Maxie.

PLECK: Oh, yeah. Susan.

SUSAN: Hi. Sorry, I don't want to— Am I interrupting with—who are these people?

PLECK: We're the same people-

MAXIE: No, no. You can say anything you want in front of my bosses here. These are my two bosses.

AJ: Hey.

MAXIE: These are my best friends. Very close employees, we work together.

SUSAN: Um, as you know, the company has not been doing well. But recently-

PLECK: Susan, you don't have to open every conversation like that.

AJ: Yeah, you keep telling us that.

PLECK: We've heard this four times in the last 20 minutes.

MAXIE: Some people just say hello.

SUSAN: I just wanted to say...

PLECK: We're all on the same page...

AJ: Yeah.

SUSAN: It turns out that the gossip cube had been taken by two very sick children, one of them huge and the other made of metal.

PLECK: Wait... that's Dar and C-53!

AJ: [whispering] No, Papa, she said they're sick children.

PLECK: No, I know-

SUSAN: Anyway, they unlocked some critical gossip, revealing that the magazine's profits were actually all piled under someone's desk!

[someone starts shoving past the junk again]

MAXIE: [gasps]

PLECK: What? What?

AJ: Perfect hiding space.

MAXIE: Amazing.

SUSAN: It seems like Steve in advertising was hoarding all of the money himself.

STEVE: I admit it. They were clicking on the ads! They were clicking the ads, and I just rerouted it! Oh, they were always clicking!

AJ: Wow.

STEVE: They were clicking on the ads!

SUSAN: Wow, we have the funds, everyone!

MAXIE: We've got the funds. We're not under, we're above. [Maxie pops another bottle, pours another drink]

STEVE: Yes!

MAXIE: Steve, does this mean that I get a paycheck now?

AJ: Wait, you weren't getting paid for this?

PLECK: Maxie, you weren't getting paid before this?

MAXIE: It was always a little bit late... by many years.

AJ: Yikes.

PLECK: Susan, you owe this woman a lot of back pay. And furthermore, it's our friends who stole the cube and found out where all that money was!

AJ: Thought they were sick kids.

PLECK: So, you know, we wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Maxie. So, you know, effectively, Maxie saved the magazine!

AJ: [whispering] Papa, she said it was sick children.

PLECK: It was not-

SUSAN: Maxie brought us the funds! Everybody clap. [Susan applauds]

MAXIE: Yay, I did it.

AJ: Yay!

SUSAN: Maxie, you get to keep your office. In fact, you can get the suite at the end of the room.

MAXIE: Oh, that's too much space for my figurines.

PLECK: Suite at the end of the room?

AJ: At the end of the room? Just right over there, just a little corner?

[transition]

[The Gossip Cube is blasting hot goss across the room]

DAR: Oh, okay!

C-53: This hurts my hands so much!

DAR: I think my hands are the cube. I think, I think-

C-53: I don't know where I end and the cube begins!

DAR: Me neither, me neither!

AJ: Oh, hey guys!

[gossip cube starts to slow down]

AJ: Hey guys.

PLECK: Guys, what are you doing?

DAR: We...

PLECK: Put that down, we have to get back on the ship.

C-53: Yeah, we can't put it down. There's so much good goss.

DAR: We can't put it down. It's too good. It's too hot!

PLECK: Yeah, is it physically hot or is it like hot, like cool?

AJ: Oh, good question.

DAR: Both!

PLECK: Okay, guys, seriously, I called Bargie. She's waiting out in the parking lot. We gotta go.

DAR: We're not gonna put it down, PLECK!

GOSSIP CUBE: [whispering] Pleck...

DAR: [bellowing] Pleeeeeeck...

C-53: Whoo, that's some hot goss about Pleck!

DAR: Oohooohooohoo!

PLECK: Wait, what's the hot goss?

DAR: Wow. Whoa.

C-53: Oh.

DAR: Wait.

C-53: Have you really been hearing the Allwheat?

DAR: Like, in your head this entire time?

PLECK: Yeah, I've told you guys that so many times. That's not gossip. That's just a thing that happened.

C-53: [no longer excited] Dar, we maybe need to let go of this thing.

DAR: Yeah, I don't want—I don't want this in our lives anymore.

[The gossip cube falls inert to the floor]

PLECK: Yeah, some gossip is just sort of sad facts.

AJ: Option C. I refuse to hear this or believe that it's happening.

[transition]

C-53: So Pleck, what was it like meeting Maxie?

PLECK: I don't know, C-53. You know, they say you should never meet your heroes. I guess I went there looking for this great advice, some guidance in my journey. But you know, Maxie is kind of a mess. She's all over the place. She doesn't speak very well. She works in this tiny little closet, basically. None of her co-workers respect her. Her confidence was so low, she didn't even realize she had the power to save the magazine, you know?

BARGIE: Uh, is Pleck talking about himself?

[beat]

C-53: [quietly] I mean, sorta sounds like he is, right?

PLECK: What? We're talking about Maxie. Maxie!

DAR: Well, it's just, you know, the lack of confidence, not believing in yourself...

C-53: The tiny little room..

BARGIE: The jucking up situation...

AJ: Yeah, we don't respect you...

PLECK: No, I'm talking about Maxie! She's also just obsessed with, like, all the stuff in her office, like these clowns, these ancient objects that she keeps around because she thinks they have some sort of significance.

C-53: You're talking about your stick, right?

DAR: Yeah, the one that's in your hand right now.

PLECK: No, I'm talking about-

AJ: You mean, like, the Stuff?

PLECK: That's different-

AJ: Like, you've literally been just jabbering on about all the time? Stuff?

C-53: Oh yeah, you're always talking about the stuff.

PLECK: No, the Stuff is different than that stuff. I mean, that stuff is Stuff. [beat] Wait a second. You're right! Maxie was somehow giving me the advice I needed to save the galaxy, to believe in myself! I don't know how she did it. She's a genius!

C-53: Yeah, so he's definitely not talking about himself now, right?

DAR: No, no, he doesn't even know how to put in coordinates.

BARGIE: Oh yeah, that's true, that's true.

AJ: Ohoho! What a burn!

NERMUT: [over comms] So you guys didn't go to the hospital?

PLECK: Oh, wow, Nermut's still here.

BARGIE: Um... I wanna say something.

AJ: Oh, cool.

PLECK: Oh, okay, Barge.

BARGIE: I sold my script!

PLECK: Hey, congratulations!

NERMUT: Really? See, we told you it was good!

C-53: Congratulations, Barge!

DAR: Lady in Jade?

BARGIE: For Sherk 5.

CREW: Eeeehhhhh...

AJ: Yes! Awesome!

BARGIE: They liked my angle! I mean, the notes were good. They said that no, Dunkey shouldn't take their own life in the first page.

PLECK: Yeah, that's completely-

BARGIE: They didn't understand what having a "Pleck Look" meant.

PLECK: Yeah, okay.

BARGIE: Menacing twinkle. They didn't get that. Instead, Dunkey is going to be going into high school as a hot, hot, sexy, sexy college freshman.

NERMUT: So Dunkey's getting younger in the sequel.

DAR: And Dunkey is a hot college freshman in high school?

C-53: What does this have to do with Sherk?

AJ: I don't care if it's a reboot. I'm just happy to get back into the Dunkeyverse!

[outro music]

C-RED-IT5: This is C-RED-IT5, credits and attributions droid, commencing outro protocol. Pleck Decksetter was played by Alden Ford. C-53 was played by Jeremy Bent. Captain Dar was played by Allie Kokesh. Bargie the ship, Susan They, and Lorkin—no wait, Borkin—were played by Moujan Zolfaghari. TEENMOM Nermut Bundaloy, Steve the ad guy, and Bork—Lork—Lorkin were played by Seth Lind. AJ was played by Winston Noel. Maxie Wiggs was played by special guest Lauren Lapkus. Lauren has appeared on many TV shows, including Orange is the New Black, Crashing, and her own episode of the Netflix sketch comedy series, The Characters. On her long-running podcast With Special Guest Lauren Lapkus, each guest is the host of their own podcast, and Lauren appears as a character on their show. She also co-hosts the podcast Newcomers with Nicole Byer, in which they watch all the Star Wars movies and shows for the first time. Lauren releases even more exclusive podcast episodes and videos on Patreon. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram @laurenlapkus. This episode was edited by Seth Lind, with sound design and mix by Shane O'Connell. Theme music composed by Brendan Ryan, and performed by FAMES Macedonian Symphonic Orchestra, with additional performance by the Chime Street Brass Quintet. Opening crawl narration by Jeremy Crutchley. Ship design for The Bargarean Jade by Eric Geusz. Audio hosting by Simplecast. Mission to Zyxx is a proud member of the Maximum Fun Network. The MaxFunDrive is on! Thank you for everyone joining up to support the show. Become one of them at maximumfun.org/join.

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[outtake begins]

JEREMY: Like your fancy stick.

MOUJAN: Oh yeah.

ALDEN: That's—that's different. That's different.

WINSTON: And aren't you talking—weren't you just literally talking about the Stuff? Like, you talk about that a lot.

JEREMY: Oh yeah, you're always talking about the stuff now.

ALDEN: No, the Stuff is different than that stuff.

MOUJAN: Also, don't you—

ALDEN: I mean, that stuff is Stuff.

MOUJAN: Don't you tend to like, give yourself a different name, you know? Like you give yourself nicknames, right? [pause] ...No one?

ALLIE: That's a bit of a stretch, Barge. Bargie, I think that's—

JEREMY: What?

WINSTON: Nicknames?

ALDEN: Now you're talking about *you*.

MOUJAN: What are you talking about? Anyway, old Hucklebee is going to sleep.

CAST: [laughs]

MOUJAN: I'm asleep!