

The Adventure Zone Royale: Episode 4

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Griffin: Previously, on TAZ Royale...

Rictus: Yeah, I had to break my foot to get it, but I got it.

Griffin: Go ahead and make an acrobatics check for me. I want you to beat a fifteen in order to get through these waters safely.

Travis: How about a six?

Griffin: No, that actually, weirdly, doesn't do it.

Justin: I'm gonna cast... I'm gonna cast Burning Hands.

Travis: Yeah, give that dragon a taste of its own medicine!

Griffin: You snatch this stone out of the liquid.

Hellgrammite: Ah-ha-oww!

Griffin: And through the windows, you can see the trees near you rustle, as the Titan reappears.

[The Adventure Zone Royale theme music plays]

Griffin: Welcome back to The Adventure Zone! We are deep in the midst of our second of the eight wizardly trials of the Conclave. The sort of clock interface hovering above the Ziggurat shows there's only like fifteen minutes left before the great fireball in this guy descends. The three of you have had varying levels of success in securing the keys you need to reach the Ziggurat before the fireball falls, that we're just going to pick right back up with Rictus Ravenwood IV, the first in our initiative order. Hi, Trav.

Travis: Griffin, is it too early to use my summon?

Griffin: Is it too early to use your summon?

Travis: Yeah, to summon—

Griffin: I mean, has your—has your limit gauge...?

Travis: Fuck, you're right. Yeah, I'm only at like sixty percent. Fuck, okay.

Griffin: Yup, you gotta think about that. You had just unsuccessfully attempted to get through this waterfall, to find this shining treasure within that you are—

Travis: Or you could say I successfully failed at it.

Griffin: You failed. And fell in the water, where you were pulled up by a young man wearing a big plush-looking sweater and headphones, who whispered to you in a very like convincing voice, that you should give him your key. He is casting his special spell on you, and that special spell is Suggestion. You make a wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it pursues the course of action described to you, to the best of your ability. The number you are looking to beat is thirteen.

Travis: Okay?

Griffin: And this is technically a charm spell, which I believe you have advantage on.

Travis: Yes, I do.

Griffin: Okay, so, roll twice. Trying to beat a thirteen on a wisdom saving throw.

Travis: I had the map up. I don't like to roll through the map.

Griffin: Oh... but I worked so hard on the map?

Travis: No, I like to look at the map. I'm looking at the map, but I want to have a second thing up. Okay, you said wisdom saving throw?

Griffin: Yup. With advantage, beating a thirteen.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Wow, okay.

Travis: There's a thirteen.

Griffin: Thirteen on the money.

Travis: And there's a 19.

Griffin: Okay, amazing. You definitely feel this guy sort of reaching into your mind. I think that maybe this guy chose the worst imaginable target for this—for this ruse, because you just sort of put this evil entity underground in its place, that was way better at this than he is. And so, you are unmoved by this—by this action. He still kind of has you by the wrist, what do you do?

Rictus: Yeah, I'm sorry, man, but I'm not gonna do that. I just, I broke my own foot to get this one. So like, I'm gonna hold on to it, and stuff. But I can—I'll help you find your own key, if you want?

Young Man: Shit...

Griffin: He—

Rictus: What's your name?

Griffin: He pulls you up onto shore. And he whispers:

Young Man: Called Whisper.

Rictus: Whisper? Okay, yeah, that'll be easy to remember. I don't even need like a mnemonic device or anything.

Whisper: Sort of the only way I talk is by—

Rictus: Yeah. Should I whisper?

Whisper: You don't have to.

Rictus: Oh, okay, great.

Whisper: Actually, I wouldn't—I wouldn't be able to hear you.

Griffin: And he points to his headphones.

Rictus: Oh, right, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. But I'll help—I can help you find a key, if you want? I've already got mine.

Griffin: He kind of squints his eyes at you, as if he is checking you over to tell if you're trying to screw him over, in the way that he just tried to screw you over. I think make a persuasion check here.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: It's maybe weird to have to persuade somebody to help them, but I think that it is so weird that you... your response to—

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Ah!

Griffin: Being conned—oh, that is a failure. That is a one.

Travis: Ah.... It hovered on nineteen, you know?

Griffin: He says:

Whisper: Nice try. I wasn't born yesterday. I'll find my own key.

Rictus: Okay.

Griffin: And he takes off in... to the south, towards the rows of houses down in the residences, desperately, desperately searching for a key. You look

around, those icons over the Ziggurat show that there's only like one or two gold keys remaining. Most of the other keys have been picked off.

You get the sense that this guy's gonna have kind of a tough time, at this point. And just looking around, like the wizards who don't have these like floating key icons over their heads are getting pretty fuckin' panicked and running around. Just like knocking over potted plants, looking under them, and just lifting rocks up off the ground, one by one, trying to find—

Travis: Making their own keys out of soap.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: You do see—you actually see a dwarf who is... he's found like a little patch of grass by where you are on the west side of the falls here. He is like on the side of the mountain, and he is like digging earth out to try to make like a hole to hide in. Hoping that that will be sufficient to keep him from getting—people are—people are kind of freaked out, and understandably so.

But you have about fifteen minutes here, and you have your key. You cannot be attacked for it, unless you're in the red zone around the Ziggurat. So, as long as you don't go in there, you're fine. You can see from your position, there are some people camped out in that red zone, waiting for people to try to fuckin' step through. So, you get the sense that it's not—

Travis: Well, with Whisper—yeah, with Whisper out of there, I'm gonna take another run at climbing up into the falls.

Griffin: Okay?

Travis: I think I can maybe move a little more carefully.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: A lot more slowly now, take my time.

Griffin: For sure! Go ahead and make a... what did we say last time? Acrobatics or athletics? Your choice.

Travis: I'm gonna choose acrobatics. And like I said, I'm moving slowly.

Griffin: I will reduce—

Travis: If that changes the DC at all, yeah.

Griffin: I will reduce the DC, because this is your second shot at it.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: I think you'd probably have a better approach.

Travis: A fifteen.

Griffin: Right on the money, baby, yeah. Okay, walking a little bit more carefully this time, you are able to sidle sort of across this very, very narrow gap, pressing hard up against the rock, as the falls just sort of hammer down behind you. You get the sense that if you had really gotten in there, it would have been pretty uncomfortable being pounded by this waterfall. But you're able to reach this alcove behind the falls, where there is a plinth set up. And on the plinth is a crystal, not unlike the one that is set into your... into your gauntlet, into your Grimoire. What do you do?

Travis: Well, I mean... it's why I came up here. So, I... I grab it?

Griffin: Okay?

Travis: And I eat it. No. No, no, no. That was a different thing.

Griffin: That was a different arc.

Clint: You just lick it. Just lick it.

Travis: That was a different arc, yeah. I grab it, I put it in another slot in my *Grimoire*.

Griffin: Yeah. I should have picked a different—

Travis: My glove.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: Grimoire is a great word.

Griffin: Cool. I do like it. All right, you slot it into your Grimoire. And this is a—this is Rictus' first new power, right?

Travis: Yup!

Griffin: So, you have this extremely disorienting experience where you are suddenly subject to memories that are not your own. They are the memories of what looks like an acolyte or a priest? It's hard to kind of like tell exactly what's going on, but there's—it's definitely some sort of monastic kind of order. And you see an invasion happen. The sky turns dark outside of this abbey, and demons pour out and begin to assault the church. And this wizard raises their hands, and a warding circle goes around the inhabitants of this abbey. And as you snap back to reality—

Travis: Oh, there goes rabbit.

Griffin: I think we... did that like even in the last episode?

Travis: Oh, boy.

Griffin: You realize that with these memories, you have gotten a new power. You have a second spell. You can now also cast Protection from Evil and Good. That is your new spell.

Justin: One of our more judgmental episodes.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely.

Travis: But also non-committal.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Yeah, what about the just like, the horrible... like just the middle? You know, the—with evil of neutrality. That's actually—

Travis: Oo-ah!

Justin: To me, a little bit scarier is apathy.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Hey—

Travis: Protection from eggshell!

Justin: Father Gary, protect me from apathy.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: You know?

Clint: Maybe we should—

Griffin: That's what we all—

Travis: Commit.

Clint: All pray for that.

Griffin: Maybe we should all just pray—

Clint: But I just don't care.

Griffin: Yeah. Okay, with this spell, you feel like your kind of natural talent for warding off, you know, mental manipulation spells is like dramatically enhanced when the source of that thing is, you know, celestial or aberrant, or, you know, demonic in nature. Like, for instance, the skeleton statue that tried to take over your mind in—

Travis: Okay, I want to go back there then and make fun of it.

Griffin: It's too late, you already beat him.

Travis: Ah, fuck. Damn it, okay.

Griffin: You beat him the hard—you beat him—you broke the—[chuckles] this is a sequence break, speed run. Rictus Ravenwood IV speed strats.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Let's hop over to Lorovith. Lorovith, you... you have seized the golden key from the icy dragon that you thoroughly destroyed with a melting blow. Are you—are you leaving the mine? Or...

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: I'm done with the mine.

Griffin: Great.

Justin: I did what I meant to do here. I'm all set.

Griffin: Great. As you step outside, you can see the two surviving Elemental Rangers cleared out. From your position, sort of like on this plateau in the middle of the mountain, you get a great glimpse of the entirety of the Octave Ziggurat island. You can see just anything you want to from your position.

You see this great purple crystal building up to the north, this huge, wide path of woods surrounding the western border of the island. There's a lake with this intricate glass lily building in the middle of it. There is an arena. There's all kinds of stuff. You can also see this display over the Ziggurat, showing that there is, you know, maybe fifteen minutes left, and not many keys left. And you can see the people sort of camped out in the middle, waiting for people to try and get through to the entrance.

Travis: Griffin, can I ask a clarifying question real quick?

Griffin: Yes, please.

Travis: I know it's not—but it's just occurred to me. I've had it in my head this whole time that like the doors, or whatever that we would use the keys for, are not currently accessible. But could we go there at any time?

Griffin: Anytime, yeah.

Travis: We just have to get—

Griffin: There seems to be a—I will say—

Justin: Is there a deadline, though? If I don't do it before fifteen, is that like a problem?

Griffin: If you don't get in the Ziggurat before the fireball falls, you will be destroyed.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Justin: No, no, no, I'll be in the Ziggurat—

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Justin: Trust.

Griffin: There is not a—the doors are open, right? The hesitance here, Trav, and I mean, I think you can see this too, for sure, Lorovith, is like there's also people—you can see a lot of people with those key icons over their heads, just outside the border of the Ziggurat.

Justin: There's people running D, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: There's people who decided that they were going to be on defense—

Griffin: And there's lots and lots of people. You get the sense that, though keys have been seized, not that many people have actually gone in the Ziggurat, because people are waiting for other people to go first, to get killed by the people running defense, so that then—

Travis: Got it.

Griffin: They can go in unperturbed. But so far, nobody's kind of—

Justin: Are there any animals up here?

Griffin: Are there any animals up on this—I mean, burps—birbs. For sure, birds all over.

Travis: Big burps, little burps?

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: I was just looking for someone to talk to. [titters]

Griffin: You can talk to animals?

Justin: No, just like—

Travis: Talk at.

Justin: I just want to talk—I just don't have anybody to tell what I'm thinking, or talk about my feelings—

Griffin: You know what? Just as you—just as you, Justin, think that, it's so crazy, a wizard climbs up over the edge of mountain plateau. [chuckles]

Justin: No shit? Okay, cool.

Griffin: Yeah. And it is... it's gonna be—let me see, which one is it gonna be? [chuckles] Who do you want it to be, Juice? I'll tell you this, I'll send you—I'll send you the Google Doc—I'll send you the Google Doc.

Justin: Is it a number? Can I just choose a number?

Griffin: Yeah, sure, choose a number between—

Justin: Thirty-seven.

Griffin: Thirty-seven... Okay, sure. Very, very quickly, up the side of the mountain, you see what appears to be a ninja, wearing this very detailed blue armor. They have these like spikes of ice coming up off of their forearms. They hop up on top of the mountain. And you see this icy ninja look at you, and then look at the cave, and say:

Ice Ninja: You did it already?

Lorovith: Yes, yes. There's no spoilers in there remaining, I'm afraid.

Ice Ninja: Shit...

Griffin: He starts immediately looking out over the vista, looking for a key. He seems kind of panicked.

Lorovith: Listen, you... look at me, yes? You can see me, you—the thought of taking my key wouldn't cross your mind, right?

Ice Ninja: I mean, I—if I understand the rules correctly, I cannot, or I will be punished.

Lorovith: Well, excellent. Excellent. So, I'm going to go down and have a fuck about in the eggs.

Griffin: [titters]

Lorovith: Would you like to come along? Perhaps there'll be a key there for you?

Ice Ninja: You think... in the eggs?

Lorovith: I have no idea! I have my key. I'm not that concerned about it. But what I'm saying is, I'm going to go have a fuck about in the eggs! If you'd like to join me, perhaps you'll find a key, eh?

Griffin: Make a—

Lorovith: What's your name?

Ice Ninja: I'm called Absolute Zero.

Lorovith: Hm... fascinating.

Travis: Can we just call him Calvin?

Lorovith: Do you want to go have a fuck about in the eggs with me, Zero?

Clint: [chuckles]

Lorovith: Perhaps we'll find a key for you, hm?

Griffin: Make a persuasion check. If you want to just fuckin' chill with Sub-Zero here—I mean Absolute Zero here.

Justin: I think that he should do a person—I'm offering to help him?

Griffin: Yeah. No, for sure, but he also—

Justin: I'm offering to let him come on my fuck about.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Yeah, but so—

Justin: Okay, it's a seven, so don't come.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: With a seven—

Lorovith: So no—so no, never mind, I can tell from your expression.

Clint: [laughs]

Lorovith: You know what? Absolute Zero, I bid you the very best. But I'm going to go have a fuck about in the eggs.

Absolute Zero: No, I'll go. I'll go. If there's nothing here, I'll go.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, cool. He starts climbing down the mountain to head towards the eggs. And you do the same, I assume?

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. You are—you are able to find an easy enough path down. You are a mountain man, I'm not gonna make you roll to climb down this—

Justin: I actually do roll. [chuckles]

Griffin: Oh, okay?

Justin: That's my secret. [chuckles] I just Sonic all the way down.

Griffin: Yeah—[chuckles] you turn into a little man ball, and you *zoop* down.

Travis: Oh! He's a Goron.

Griffin: You and—

Justin: That's a better pull.

Griffin: You and Absolute Zero roll up to the eggs. They're—

Justin: See? We're still rolling. [chuckles]

Griffin: There is a... it's like a... they're in a row, in a sort of quarter circle around the Ziggurat, lined up against this sort of circular pathway going all the way around the building. And as you approach, you can see there are eight of these little, tiny dome-shaped... like... bigger than a pup tent, but that's vaguely the shape of them. They would be big enough for you to go inside without having to, you know, crouch down or kneel.

Justin: I would like to start by investigating the surface.

Griffin: Of the eggs?

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay!

Justin: I wanna figure out what they're made of.

Griffin: Okay. Give me an investigation check.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: Oh, a six.

Griffin: Hm... egg?

Justin: Egg. Is there a door?

Griffin: There is, there's a small, arched door in each egg. You also notice that they are numbered one through eight. You are—

Lorovith: Zero!

Absolute Zero: Yeah, what is it?

Lorovith: Do you want to open one of these doors? Perhaps there'll be a key?

Absolute Zero: I don't want—what if it's a trap? And then the trap lasts for longer than fifteen minutes—

Lorovith: Oh, that could be fatal for you, Zero! But you know what will be fatal? Not finding a key, yes?

Absolute Zero: Okay, fine. All right, yeah, you're right.

Lorovith: What's your lucky number, Zero?

Absolute Zero: I mean, zero, but that's not like one of the options.

Lorovith: Not an option, is it... maybe three?

Travis: [laughs] "How does three feel? Feel good?"

Griffin: He looks at three, he says:

Absolute Zero: Yeah, okay, I guess so. Yeah, three is as good as any, I guess. I'll catch you on the outside, unless I get out way before you, in which case I'm just gonna make a run for the Ziggurat. Good luck.

Lorovith: Zero, if you should die... may I have your gem?

Absolute Zero: What are you—what is that—what are you talking about? What is that—

Justin: I'm winking. I'm winking.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: [chuckles] I'm winking.

Lorovith: Zero, I'll be taking it anyway, hm?

Absolute Zero: That's... I'm... all right, man.

Lorovith: Open the door, Zero. We're running out of time.

Absolute Zero: Yeah, we really are.

Griffin: He climbs inside of the door. And as he goes into the door—

Justin: I watch behind him to see what I can see inside.

Griffin: It's... it disappears. The door disappears immediately. And now he is just inside of this egg.

Justin: The door disappears—so, what do I see—when he—

Travis: So now it's just an opening?

Justin: I just wanna see inside, Griffin! What's inside?

Griffin: You see egg.

Justin: [chuckles]

Travis: Like yolk and shit?

Justin: I feel like—I feel like my bad investigation roll is still haunting me, Griffin. [chuckles]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: It's still definitely—

Justin: I think I'm still shaken up.

Griffin: Casting a shadow. No, I mean—

Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: You see—you see—you do not see anything inside. It appears to just be a white egg.

Justin: Just say it's an egg! Okay, fine.

Griffin: Just an egg. But as you go—

Justin: And the door disappears? Okay, I press my ear to the egg.

Griffin: Okay. Give me a perception check, please.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: It's a natural twenty.

Griffin: Holy shit.

Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: You hear—

Travis: You can hear the baby chick inside, pecking a well.

Lorovith: I cannot see the egg, I cannot feel the egg. But with God is my witness, I will kill this egg!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: You hear—[muffled talking] you hear—

Lorovith: Not with a twenty, I don't!

Griffin: A voice speaking. With a twenty, you are able to tell that... have you talked to your gauntlet yet? Hm... I don't remember. I don't think—I don't know if you have. You hear a pleasant man's voice speaking, and you hear Absolute Zero sort of answering in return. You just kind of make out sort of... you know, Peanut's teacher style, the timbre of their voices, but not exactly what they're saying. And then you hear what sounds like... a wave, like an ocean wave. And then you hear like the sounds of different wildlife. And you hear Absolute Zero go:

Absolute Zero: Whoa...

Griffin: And that is what you hear within the egg. What do you do, Lorovith?

Justin: Man, I don't know, I already got a key... [chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles]

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: Hm... I'm gonna wait another thirty seconds and see what happens next. [chuckles]

Griffin: [laughs] Okay, then we're gonna jump over to Hellgrammite.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: it didn't—

Justin: I don't know, I got a key! I don't see any reason for me to be a hero right now.

Griffin: The funniest imaginable outcome of this is Absolute Zero rolls out like, "And what—how was your egg?" [chuckles]

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: "I don't know what the fuck you're talking about, man." Okay, Hellgrammite, back to you. You have just seized a gemstone from the bottom of this acid-filled barrel, at the bottom of this tall tower. Just as you hear the telltale signs of the invisible Titan outside, returning from its pocket dimension where you kind of scared it off to. What do you do?

Clint: I'm gonna slam that crystal into my Grimoire.

Griffin: Okay. As you do so, you receive a... a memory from beyond. It is not one of your own. In this memory, you are a... a human man. Which, you know, is weird enough already, not being in your insectoid kind of form in this memory. And he is a very sort of like wispy, tiny-lookin' dude. And you see him climb on top of a platform in the middle of a town, and open his mouth.

And as he does so, this shrill, piercing siren comes out to alarm the town, as a horde of monsters approaches, giving them time to prepare for the assault at hand. And as you come back from your reverie, you realize that this power that this man had is now your own. You now have the spell Alarm. "You set alarm against unwanted intrusion. Choose a door, window or area within range, and until the spell ends, an alarm alerts you whenever a tiny or larger creature touches or enters the warded area.

You can designate creatures that don't set off the alarm, and you could choose whether the alarm is mental or audible." Also, as you come back from your memory, you realize that someone else has come into this bottom floor of the tower.

It is a dude with very sharp features, very awkward-looking, almost a unibrow. He's got like this ill-fitting gray suit that is too small for him. And he also is like picking some leaves and twigs out of his hair. And as you see that, I think you realize that you've seen this wizard before. He was just grabbed and launched from the tower by the invisible Titan, and appears to have survived the encounter. And he looks at you and says:

Wizard: Oh, dear... this is—this is uncomfortable.

Hellgrammite: Yes, yes... Yes, it is. How do we resolve this? Oh, wait, wait, wait! I have an idea. I have an idea.

Wizard: Okay?

Clint: And he takes off sprinting up the stairs.

Griffin: [laughs]

Wizard: Wait. Wait for me.

Hellgrammite: No. No. No.

Griffin: All right, you take off up the stairs. This tower is about seven stories tall, with this winding staircase leading up the entire span of it. You are not going to be able to reach the top with sort of a single action here, but if your plan is to try to like gain as much ground as you possibly can, you know, before the, you know, Titan figures out what's going on, or before this guy can catch up to you, that is certainly within your power to do so. I would need an athletics check, if you're just like straight runnin'. Unless you have some other sort of wily scheme up your sleeve?

Clint: I was thinking Leaps and Bounds?

Griffin: Leaps and Bounds, okay, that's—

Clint: Is there a way I could use acrobatics?

Griffin: There is—not for just running up a flight of stairs.

Clint: Okay, all right.

Griffin: So... I mean, you're not gonna fail and like fall down the stairs. It's a question of like how fast you are, basically.

Clint: Right.

Griffin: So, go ahead and give me that athletics check first.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: Okay, that's a ten.

Griffin: Okay. Yeah, with a ten, you take off, you catch this guy by surprise. And he is going to start running right behind you. I'm gonna roll for him. Just keep it honest. We'll see—we'll see—he is—he has a negative one also to athletics, just like you. So, this will be fair... That is a thirteen. Okay, with a thirteen, he is able to kind of catch up to you, and you guys are basically on the same step. Give me a perception check, please.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: There it is, and that is a twelve.

Griffin: With a twelve, you... it's like a shadow passes by the window that you were—that's just sort of to the side of the step that you were just scaling. But it is not a like fully opaque shadow. And that is enough to tell you that you—the Titan is just sort of outside where this window is.

Clint: Okay. Is this the same window from through which it grabbed this poor wizard—

Griffin: You are a bit lower than the window that this wizard apparently made it to before. I think he comes to a—he comes to a dead stop on the stairs. And kind of—

Clint: Is he ahead of me?

Griffin: He was about the same level as you. So, he has stopped sensing that there's a thing outside of the window. What do you do?

Clint: I'm going to try to blend in using the carapace, the chameleon carapace.

Griffin: Does that just give you advantage on all stealth checks?

Clint: Stealth checks, yes.

Griffin: Because that seems insane.

Clint: Well...

Travis: I mean, the rest of his life he spent as a bug, Griffin, so, I mean, there's checks and balances.

Griffin: Yeah. Okay, giving you advantage on stealth—

Travis: Like he's not gonna have an easy time like getting into the clubs, or whatever.

Griffin: Right. So, the exact language is, you get advantage on dexterity stealth checks made to hide. So, I think the limitation here is like if you're hiding in place, you can use this. But if you are like trying to sneak by something, it would not be as effective.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: If you—what—so, what is your end goal here, I guess?

Clint: I want to get past that window, and leave Twiggy there—

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Behind, to... to distract the Titan.

Griffin: I think with that in mind then, if you are trying to—if you are trying to move while being sneaky, to try to get even more ground in front of this guy, it's just gonna be a regular stealth check.

Clint: Okay. All right, stealth check. And that would be—come on, give me something good.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: Sixteen.

Griffin: Yeah, okay. With a sixteen, this shadow passes. And you change the color of your carapace to match sort of the stone of the stairs. And this wizard looks kind of alarmed. As you continue moving, you hear him say:

Wizard: Oh, don't—he caught us. Stop moving. He'll kill us both.

Hellgrammite: Well, you survived before, right? So, you know, take your best shot. Seriously, I'm sure he won't see you? I mean... and even if he does, if he throws you? You survived the last time! You'll survive again.

Griffin: Give me a persuasion—[chuckles] give me a persuasion check. I'm gonna say this is a pretty high check.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: I want to see like a—maybe an eighteen or higher.

Clint: No, thirteen.

Griffin: No. He shakes his head and he says:

Wizard: I have a special falling power, but I can only use it a few times a day.

Travis: [titters]

Clint: Hm...

Griffin: The shadow leaves. It passes away from the window. He says:

Wizard: Wait, wait, can we just talk about this before we take off in a race? It seems dangerous for us to just push ahead like this. We can—we can probably figure out another way to settle who gets the key.

Hellgrammite: All right, what'd you have in mind?

Wizard: What's your name?

Hellgrammite: I am Hellgrammite.

Wizard: Hi, Hellgrammite. I'm doctor—

Hellgrammite: And you would be?

Wizard: I'm Dr. Legume. And—

Hellgrammite: Dr. Legume? I thought my name was bad...

Travis: Griffin, you son of a bitch. It's Mr. Bean, but it's Dr. Legume.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Dr. Legume kind of—

Hellgrammite: My flexible friend.

Griffin: He says:

Dr. Legume: There's another key in the tower. There's a—there's a copper key about halfway up. So, we can go up and play rock paper scissors, and decide which one of us gets the gold and which one of us gets the copper. It's only fair.

Hellgrammite: That... does sound fair. But... no, I don't think so.

Clint: And he takes off running again.

Dr. Legume: Oh, god...

Griffin: He is going to run in pursuit. You have made it about a third of the way up the way up the tower, let's get another athletics check here.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: God! Seven.

Griffin: Okay, that is a... ten. He is able to get a lead on you. You hit a step that has eroded somewhat, and you trip, and he is able to run in front. Give me just one more perception check for me.

Clint: Okay. [titters]

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: That's a ten. God, my rolls suck! What are these things you guys keep rolling with the two and the zero?

Griffin: That's a—

Travis: A two.

Griffin: A twenty. When there's—

Travis: Oh.

Griffin: Consecutive, it is a twenty. You... neither of you actually clock it this time. You see, just too late, a shadow pass over a window in front of the two of you, and you both kind of come to a halt. He's like three or four steps ahead of you, as you hear the Titan roar from outside. And then you see some of the stonework surrounding this window crumble inside, and you can just see the faint traces of a fist and an arm, as the Titan reaches inside of the tower to grab you!

Clint: To grab who?

Griffin: Both, to grab you both. To grab you both. He is in front of you. He is closer to the hand. So I guess to grab Dr. Legume, if that is where his hand falls.

Clint: [chuckles]

[theme music plays]

Griffin: Hey, what's up? It's Griffin McElroy! You're dungeon master, best friend and your master of... disaster! Thanks for listening to this episode of The Adventure Zone Royale. I hope you're enjoying it! Because it's a lot of fun on our end. I want to say a big, hearty thank you to everybody who came out to see our shows in California. Next up, we got some live shows coming... Atlanta, we're coming to you next! We're doing TAZ Versus Popeye. We're doing MBMBaM, we're doing a bunch of stuff at Dragon Con.

We're also coming to Texas and Utah, and back to California later in the year. All our TAZ shows this year gonna be TAZ Versus. So, you can grab your tickets, find out information on where those shows are and when those shows are, over at bit.ly/mcelroytours. We got some new merch over at the McElroy Merch Store, at mcelroymerch.com. We've got a "Don't do a hit" bumper magnet, an important message for the cars trailing you, and everyone else out on that big, beautiful highway. And some other stuff too. Ten percent of all merch proceeds this month will be donated to the Immigrant Defenders Law Center.

Also, I'm writing a Choose Your Own Adventure book. It's going to come out next year, next March, and you can pre-order it now at bit.ly/griffinstowaway, because that's—the name of the book is The Stowaway. And I'm very, very excited for you to read it and go on a big, fun outer space adventure! One more time, that's bit.ly/griffinstowaway for my upcoming Choose Your Own Adventure book! That's it. Enjoy the rest of the episode. We'll be back with another episode in two weeks, so we'll talk to you then. Bye!

[ad reads]

Griffin: All right, Rictus.

Travis: Yes... I'm looking at the map.

Griffin: Yeah?

Travis: And it seems like the best coverage for a clandestine approach to the Ziggy is through the eggs. So, I'm going to make my way to the back of the eggs, to plan my approach.

Griffin: Okay, cool. We are having our first... our first encounter here. You make your way towards the eggs. I'm not going to describe all the stuff again, because you, Travis, got to hear it, and now Rictus sees all this stuff. The third egg appears to be sealed for some reason? Not sure why. You can see that there is a very imposing-looking Goliath wizard staring at these eggs intently, trying to decide what to do—[chuckles] what to do with them.

Justin: Sorry, to be clear, I think he's listening to the eggs.

Travis: Yeah, he's got his ear pressed up against it.

Justin: Yeah, that's what he sees.

Griffin: Oh? Okay, great.

Justin: I got a twenty, so I'm not going to stop doing—

Griffin: Yeah, no, you're going to hear the fullness of this egg experience.

Travis: And he has a—he has a gold key kind of insignia over his head, right?

Griffin: He does, as do you.

Travis: Excellent.

Griffin: And I'll say, in this moment, you two definitely catch each other's eye. Thank you for reminding me about the gold key symbol hovering just overhead. You can also see, because of those symbols, there are some people—there's at least three people in the lawn, in this red area surrounding the ziggurat, who are camped out. And they are just gonna keep a fucking beady-eyed watch on the two of you.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Because they can tell you have what they want.

Lorovith: Ah, hi! Hail.

Rictus: Hi... how... how's it going? Congratulations on your key.

Lorovith: Same, congratulations to you, it's quite formidable.

Rictus: Are you waiting for the egg to—

Lorovith: I was gonna go fuck about in the eggs.

Rictus: Oh? Okay?

Lorovith: And my friend... not my friend... hm, another competitor slipped in here, and I was rather waiting to see who's going to die.

Rictus: Oh, okay. Did he?

Lorovith: Not as yet!

Rictus: Okay?

Lorovith: Or at least I haven't heard the... sirens?

Rictus: Okay. My name is Rictus. Rictus Ravenwood IV, heir to the Breathless Fields and blah-blah-blah-blah-blah.

Lorovith: Well, I'm Lorovith!

Rictus: Lorovith?

Lorovith: Lorovith Dreamwanderer Gonjuban.

Rictus: Okay... can I... I—this... you're—seem very—

Lorovith: Wait, one moment.

Rictus: Okay.

Lorovith: Apologies.

Justin: I'm gonna take another listen at the egg.

Griffin: "Oh my god... Wow! Life is so beautiful!"

Justin: I stop listening.

Lorovith: I tell you, he's having a heck of a time in there.

Clint: [laughs]

Rictus: Okay.

Lorovith: The next time we're free to wander around, I think I might come to the eggs and have more than a fuck about, if you catch my meaning.

Rictus: A fuck around?

Lorovith: Perhaps even a fuck with.

Rictus: Ooh?

Justin: [chuckles]

Lorovith: If the mood strikes.

Rictus: Okay, cool.

Lorovith: No, but I sent my ninja friend in here to see if he would—well, I was trying to assist him in a rather lateral way. And it seems like it's working for him!

Rictus: Cool!

Lorovith: Unless he is, of course, tragically killed.

Rictus: Yeah. I was thinking, since we already both have gold keys and stuff, should we like work together to get to the Ziggurat? Maybe get some other people with keys to like team up to get to the Ziggurat safely.

Lorovith: You mean a collaboration?

Rictus: Yeah.

Lorovith: I love that.

Rictus: Yeah!

Lorovith: So, what should we call ourselves?

Rictus: The Survivors.

Lorovith: The Key Masters!

Rictus: Sure.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Lorovith: The Key Masters will watch each other, and they'll have each other's backs. A lone fighting unit, protecting their keyless friend, the ninja, Absolute Zero.

Rictus: Well, I mean, I guess? If he wants to make his way to the Ziggurat. But I don't—if he doesn't have a key yet...

Griffin: The door reappears on the side of the egg. And you—

Travis: It's a boy!

Griffin: [laughs] You see Absolute Zero climb out. And he has lowered his mask. And you can see he is just like grinning ear to ear, tear-stained face. He has a copper key insignia over his head.

Rictus: Oh?

Griffin: And he says—

Lorovith: Well, there's no shame in that, Zero!

Absolute Zero: Oh my god... you guys... [panting]

Rictus: It seems—

Lorovith: Don't let them spoil it, I'm going to have a fuck with. Later!

Rictus: It seems like he had a pretty good *eggsperience*.

Absolute Zero: [shudders] Ah-hah...

Clint: [grimaces] Oo-ah!

Absolute Zero: Wow... It's just that I saw all of it. Life, the connections and—

Lorovith: No, again, again, I... I'm going to have a fuck about later in the eggs, so I—

Rictus: He asked for no spoilers, man.

Lorovith: Thank you.

Clint: [chuckles]

Absolute Zero: It's all connected. It's all connected!

Lorovith: I'd rather—I—Zero... I believe I asked nicely.

Absolute Zero: Okay, fine. Who's this? You found another gold key guy? That's cool.

Rictus: Yeah, I'm Rictus.

Absolute Zero: You guys, hey—

Lorovith: This is Rictus. You—the three of us are the founding members of the Key Masters!

Absolute Zero: Oh? Okay. Does it matter that I'm like in the—like in the copper key club, I guess?

Rictus: No, all are welcome.

Lorovith: Of course you'll have a lower part of the hierarchy, but you're still a member, darn it! You won't have many of the same privileges. should we ever develop some sort of clubhouse. Perhaps you won't have—

Rictus: There will be access level—

Lorovith: Unfettered access.

Rictus: Yeah, access levels, obviously.

Absolute Zero: Okay. So, are you guys gonna go in these eggs or fucking what?

Lorovith: Next time—

Rictus: Yeah, there's like—

Lorovith: It's next time!

Rictus: Eight minutes left—

Lorovith: Yes, but for now, let's go—let's, the three of us, journey—

Absolute Zero: I think I'm actually gonna...

Griffin: He takes a look at all the eggs.

Absolute Zero: I'm gonna take a pop into egg one, maybe. Just to kind of... see. Like, I liked three so much that I would love to actually just get a taste of one.

Lorovith: Well, I—

Absolute Zero: Because what if the—what if the eggs are gone after this trial? Like what if the eggs are just a trial thing, and then we can't do 'em any other time?

Lorovith: Zero, I don't think that's a good idea, my friend. I think you might end up getting destroyed by the gigantic fireball.

Absolute Zero: I can get in and out, no problem. I've gotta check out egg one.

Griffin: You can make a persuasion check here, if you'd like to try and convince Absolute Zero to not go in egg one.

Justin: Yeah. And the reason I am going to do that is because I am about to leave.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Justin: No question.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: And I'd rather he not use up all the eggs, you know what I mean?

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: You don't know how many charges.

Justin: I don't know how many—as far as I know, three is cashed.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: [chuckles] Okay? So like, I don't—

Travis: In this economy? You can't let him use up all the eggs.

Justin: [laughs] So yeah, I am gonna persuade him to come with us, just as like the—I guess also the added muscle for the key mask.

Griffin: Let's—I—you're trying to beat a thirteen persuasion check here, to get—

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: No, that was—perception. Ignore that five.

Griffin: Wow. Lucky—

Justin: Ignore it.

Griffin: Lucky duck.

Justin: It was perception.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: Eighteen.

Griffin: Eighteen. Absolutely. With an eighteen, he looks inside of one.

Absolute Zero: Eh... fine. Ah... right, yeah. Shit... gosh—

Rictus: We can come back and do like a Key Masters team building exercise, with like the eggs and trust falls and stuff.

Absolute Zero: Yeah, you're right. Okay, cool. Key Masters, great. So what's the plan—what's the plan here? Are we're gonna make a run for it? I can shoot ice—

Rictus: I'm gonna look around—

Absolute Zero: I can shoot ice knives out of my—quick sort of summary! I can shoot ice knives out of my hands.

Rictus: Oh, okay?

Absolute Zero: And that's gonna come in handy I think if anyone tries to like try and kill us when we're in the red zone. What's your guys' sort of whole deals?

Rictus: I have like spectral hands. One that comes out of my left, that hurts people, one that comes out of my right, that heals people. And it's kind of a loop—an exchange, a closed circuit.

Absolute Zero: Very, very cool. And what's your—

Rictus: Oh, I also have a ward against good and evil.

Absolute Zero: That's a really complicated—your power is that you have magic hands that also—

Rictus: Yeah, it's a lot of like esoteric judgment calls.

Absolute Zero: Yeah, cool. And what about you? Lorovith?

Lorovith: I'm the one who brought you to the eggs.

Absolute Zero: Okay.

Lorovith: So, the three of us will team together.

Absolute Zero: All right, man. Cool.

Lorovith: The Key Masters.

Absolute Zero: All right.

Lorovith: And we'll barrel our way through. Zero, you should stay to the rear, I assume.

Travis: I want to scope around, Ditto, and see if there's anybody else camped out with keys floating above their heads, like waiting—

Griffin: Yeah, go ahead and make a... perception check, I guess? If you just looking around to see—to get a lay of the land a little bit here.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: That's a seven.

Griffin: Okay—

Travis: I want to look again, harder.

Griffin: [titters] No. With a seven, you—I mean, people are scattered kind of all over. You can see—with a seven, you can see that there is at least one body laying in the middle of the—of the red lawns surrounding the Ziggurat. So, someone has already perished in their attempt to make it to the—to the door. You can see there's like a cluster of people on the other side of the—on the other side of the Ziggurat. You can see like a handful of folks over by the... in front of the gardens, there's like rows of benches in front of a small platform.

You think it's maybe a bit—like an outdoor lecture hall. And you can see that there are at least a couple of gold keys and a couple silver keys floating over some wizards' heads. And they seem to be like sort of gathered up in a circle, maybe trying to come up with a plan. You can also see that one of those gold key guys, like you can't make out a lot of details about these people, except one of them is a giant tarantula. So, that one is pretty easy to see from here. [chuckles]

Travis: Noticeable?

Griffin: Noticeable, yes.

Travis: Yeah... And one last clarifying question about the Ziggurat.

Griffin: Yeah?

Travis: Are there multiple entryways, or is there like one place we're trying to get to?

Griffin: There is a... great question. The Ziggurat has one main entrance. You can see it on the front here. It has sort of three different ramps to the west, east and south, that are leading up to this front entrance. And then there are doors you can see on the higher levels of the Ziggurat, but it is a like twenty-thirty foot climb up pretty sheer, smooth stone. So you get the sense that that would be quite difficult, but, you know, it would be another route. Fittingly, most of the kind of defenses, I think you guys have figured out, are surrounding these front ramps up to the—up to the entrance.

Rictus: Well, I'm not really like a combat guy or whatever, but should we like go to the front and see if we can get more Key Masters? And like just, you know, full frontal assault? Or... what do you think?

Lorovith: I'm so glad that ended with assault.

Rictus: Yeah.

Lorovith: Listen—

Rictus: I kind of—I stumbled mentally halfway through saying it.

Lorovith: I feel that the more of us that can work together, the better. We are running rather short on time for the recruitment.

Justin: Where are we at?

Griffin: There's about eight minutes left.

Justin: I know you're pulling this out of your ass. You're not tricking me.

Griffin: No, I have like a special—I have a special hourglass.

Justin: I know you're just—

Griffin: No, I have a special hourglass made of ebony! And—

Justin: It's embarrassing enough to ask my brother what pretend time it is.

Griffin: Seven minutes left now, because you're being like this.

Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: And can I say, seven minute—eight minutes would have been long enough for you to do an egg. But seven minutes—

Justin: I don't wanna do a—

Griffin: But seven minutes is—

Justin: I already told you, I'm not trying not to use up your eggs. I'm trying not to rush through your incredible edible eggs.

Griffin: Just sayin', fuckin' Absolute Zero has such a good time in the egg, he wanted to go on another one. So, must be something good there.

Justin: [chuckles] I bet he's out of the time of his life. Where are we at now, time-wise?

Griffin: [chuckles] You ran out. The fireball killed you all.

Travis: No!

Griffin: Seven minutes.

Justin: Let's—

Lorovith: I say we head back to the front and see if anyone wants to join the burliest boys in the whole... game.

Griffin: [titters]

Rictus: I'm not that burly, but... yeah. Let's do that.

Griffin: Okay.

Lorovith: Round up for me.

Rictus: Oh, okay.

Griffin: The key mast—the key masters begin walking, I'm guessing, around the red lawn of the Ziggurat, not through it.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: To where the other... the other key havers are strategizing in this outdoor lecture hall. And we're gonna hop back over to Hellgrammite. Hellgrammite, you are about a third of the way up the tower, as the invisible arm of the Titan smashes through a window on the side of the tower. You know what? You and Dr. Legume make dexterity saving throws. He's going to have disadvantage. And the loser is going to get targeted. His lowest is a thirteen.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: How about a natural twenty?!

Griffin: Holy shit, man!

Travis: There it was.

Griffin: Yeah, a natural twenty will absolutely do it. You see him stop, and the scene kind of stands still, as some of the stonework from the window like rattles down the stairs and falls the, you know, two or three floors down to the ground level. And as that happens, Dr. Legume looks back at you, sort of nervously. And then says:

Dr. Legume: I think it's gone. I think we're—*waah!*

Travis: [chuckles]

Clint: Wait! Wait! Wait! Wait! Do I have a time to speak to him before he's tossed?

Griffin: [titters] Hm... yes. You have time to—

Justin: No, he doesn't!

Griffin: He is not—

Justin: I heard you go "rah?"

Griffin: He is not yeeted immediately, he is kind of like seized from the stairs. And now you see him sort of floating over the—just like the void, falling down to the—where he would fall down if he was released by this Titan. He is floating and seems to be in great discomfort.

Hellgrammite: Thank you! Let us form an alliance! I can help you! I will save you! But we have to form an alliance. We'll call ourselves the Keywanhas. We'll be the Keywanhas!

Travis: All right.

Hellgrammite: And—

Travis: All right, yeet both of 'em.

Hellgrammite: I will save you. I will save you.

Travis: Squish dad with Mr. Bean.

Griffin: [chuckles]

Hellgrammite: I will save you, if you promise I can have the gold key and you'll take the copper key.

Griffin: Give me—[chuckles] give me a persuasion check, I guess—well, okay, you know what? There's no atheists in foxholes, right? That's what they say. And I don't think that that's true or makes sense, but I don't think you're gonna need to persuade Dr. Legume here to let you—he says:

Dr. Legume: Yes, help me! He's squishing me!

Clint: All right! And so, Hellgrammite casts Infestation on the hand of the Titan.

Griffin: Okay. So, it is going to—

Clint: Now, let me ask you something.

Griffin: Yes?

Clint: Which side of the tower is it reaching in from?

Griffin: It is reaching in from the—

Travis: The outside.

Griffin: Yeah. Well, yeah, I don't know if that was what you were asking—

Clint: North, south, east or west?

Griffin: North.

Clint: Okay. So, Infestation, the hand has to make a constitution saving throw.

Griffin: Yes, yes.

Clint: Or takes one D6 poison damage.

Griffin: Yes. But I'm assuming this is sort of like what you are... what you did last time, where it is sort of a distraction thing? Or are you just trying to—

Clint: Hm, no, no, no.

Griffin: Okay. All right..

Clint: There is—I do have a plan.

Griffin: I will do this on the table. This thing is a giant, and so it has a... a plus four to its con save.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: So it's thirteen plus four, seventeen. Which I do imagine is going to—

Clint: That does it, yeah.

Griffin: Succeed. [titters] Dr. Legume says:

Dr. Legume: Okay, so what's the plan? Ah-ah-*aah*!

Griffin: And he is yanked out the window, as your bugs fail to find purchase on the—on the arm of this Titan. As you look out the window, you see Dr. Legume go soaring through the air. And then you see, just as he is about to disappear again into the woods, crashing down with tremendous force, you see just an explosion of illusory feathers, just sort of cascade off of him. And his descent slow dramatically and he yells:

Dr. Legume: That was the last time I can do that!

Griffin: And Dr. Legume is gone.

Clint: Hellgrammite hauls ass up the tower.

Griffin: Okay, give me an athletics check again, please.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: Damn! Two.

Griffin: All right, it's not going to go great. You start rushing up the tower. And I think that it's maybe a mental thing more than anything, because you know that this Titan is outside, and you have elected to just like try and rush, knowing that you are sort of short on time here. You are able to reach sort of the halfway point of the tower, where the stairs expand out into a little overhang, looking over the... the fall down the center of the tower. And sure enough, as Dr. Legume promised, sitting on a plinth on this small overhang, is a copper key. With this athletics check, you are not fast enough to like make a lot of progress before you hear the Titans stomp back over towards the tower.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: I'll need a persuasion—or a perception check, if you want to like try and really triangulate his position. But you're about halfway up this tower.

Clint: I think I will grab the copper key.

Griffin: Okay! You grab the copper key. As you do so, you see a faint copper key insignia appear over your head. And...

Clint: So, let me ask you this; this is a spiral staircase running along the edge of the tower, correct?

Griffin: The inside of the tower, yes.

Clint: The inside of the tower, correct?

Griffin: Correct.

Clint: Okay. Then Hellgrammite's gonna try to jump to a lower level.

Griffin: Okay, very, very—

Clint: Of this spiral staircase.

Griffin: Very cool. This will be an acrobatics check.

Clint: Okay.

Griffin: And you're jumping down, right?

Clint: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Okay, you are basically trying to jump the width of the tower. It is not—it is obviously much, much taller than it is wide, it is a tower! And so, this will not be the most difficult—the most difficult check. I will need a—if you want to do it without any consequence, I'm looking for a thirteen or higher. You will clear it with a slightly lower roll, but we will see how that goes.

Clint: Sure.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: How about a dirty twenty?

Griffin: A dirty twenty absolutely gets it. With a dirty twenty, I will also say, you lost track of this Titan. You were not really keeping a great eye on it. And so, you were on this little overhang on the north side of the tower. As you jump to land on the stairs like, you know, one story lower on the south side of the tower, you see the window that was just next to this overhang also explode outward, and something grab that plinth and lift it up into the sky, and yank it out of the tower. It is very, very good that you moved.

Clint: Shew... So I'm twenty feet up, right?

Griffin: You are, yeah, about twenty feet up.

Clint: And there's a window where I am?

Griffin: There is, yes. There are windows every like five feet or so. So, you can be next to one.

Clint: I am going to jump out the window into the trees, and hope I can keep from killing myself.

Griffin: Cool. So... [titters] "One D6 bludgeoning damage for every ten feet a creature falls." You are next to a pretty big thicket of trees, right? They reach up about... they reach up about ten feet. So, if you want to try to make an acrobatics check again—

Clint: Yes.

Griffin: To try to land among the branches of these trees—

Clint: Yes.

Griffin: Then that is absolutely fine. Depending on your success, will determine how much damage you take from the fall, from the trees, from whatever. Yeah.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: Twelve.

Griffin: Okay. Describe to me what it—what it looks like.

Clint: Hellgrammite looks up, sees that invisible hand grabbing the plinth, takes a look at how far down he has to go down the stairs, doesn't think that's gonna work. So he looks out the window, sees the top of the... see the top of the trees and just kind of leaps out of the window yelling:

Hellgrammite: For the Skritch!

Griffin: [chuckles] Okay. You leap from the tower. And you're not a bug with like wings, right?

Clint: Well, they're not functional.

Griffin: Okay, cool. I think your wings, whatever non-functional wings you have, kind of reflexively are like, "Oh? Come on. Nope, nope—okay." You

land among the upper bows of these tall pine trees. And desperately kind of, you know, splay out your limbs and your tail, trying to just like grab anything you can to slow your descent. But instead, you kind of just like, one hits you right in the stomach and knocks all the wind out of you. And you kind of loop around it, and then fall, and you hit several more branches. You do land—

Hellgrammite: Ooh! Ah! Ooh! Ah! Eeh!

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: You do land in a fairly sort of like soft patch of grass underneath these trees, but you are going to take some bludgeoning damage just from being whacked by all of these pines. You take three points of bludgeoning damage.

Clint: Whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo... okay...

Griffin: Were you hurt—were you in—you were injured from the acid already—

Clint: I sure was.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: All right, cool. You are—you are beat to shit. Like you had a healing potion earlier, obviously, but like your garments or whatever at this point have been slashed and acid burned and, you know, whipped with tree branches. But you do manage to get to your feet, wounded, but still with it. And you can see the tree branches—or the trees on the opposite edge of the tower, on the sort of north side of the tower, begin to bend and break, as the Titan figures out that his quarry has escaped. What do you do?

Clint: I'm gonna, to quote Credence Clearwater, I'm gonna run through the jungle! I'm heading for the Ziggurat, baby!

Griffin: Okay. Then... you run through the trees, back towards the sort of observation platform where you were revived. As you get here, you can see that just next to the observation platform, there's this outdoor lecture hall, where several other wizards have gathered. And these wizards appear to be strategizing, to figure out a plan of attack.

As some other latecomers rush up to join this position, Lorovith and Rictus and Absolute Zero arrive here around the same time as well. At this point, there's about... there's eight of you all in total, with keys of varying qualities. And you all reach this platform. And as you do so, a bell chimes. And the clock hanging over the Ziggurat begins to flash red, as it displays that there are five minutes remaining before the fireball descends.

[The Adventure Zone Royale theme music plays]

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