

## **The Adventure Zone Royale: Episode 6**

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**Griffin:** Previously, on TAZ Royale...

**Justin:** I very recently did Grakhan a kindness, which he admitted, where I complimented his powers.

**Griffin:** You are unconscious, and you are through the barrier. You are not dead. Grakhan has pulled you through.

**Travis:** Okay, I'm gonna trigger one of Hellgrammite's hit die heals, as I step back through the door.

**Griffin:** Try and get that last key, please!

**Hellgrammite:** Eh... sorry, I'm out of actions.

**Griffin:** Then Bobby Dazzler and Carmine, and the entire world outside is swallowed up in flames. I'm not gonna be the one who decides who the rest of the people are who failed and perished in this trial. I'm gonna leave that up to you guys.

[The Adventure Zone Royale theme music plays]

**Griffin:** Welcome back to TAZ Royale, everybody! We have finished up our second trial, the Trial of Abjuration. And all three of our brave heroes have survived.

**Clint:** Barely.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Barely.

**Justin:** Actually, I did fine. I had a really good time.

**Clint:** Yeah, you did great.

**Justin:** I had a great time.

**Griffin:** You did really good. You relied a little bit on the kindness of strangers, and not—by strangers, I mean your sworn, bitter rival, Grakhan.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But you got there, by hook or crook, and everyone has made it into the safety of the Ziggurat. And that is where we will—

**Travis:** Do you guys know what they call TAZ in France?

**Griffin:** What do they call it, Trav?

**Travis:** TAZ Royale.

**Griffin:** That's good!

**Travis:** Do you know what they call it if you get a cheeseburger?

**Justin:** Wait, wait, let me do one, Trav. Do you know what they do—

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** Do you know what it's called when there's—do you know what they call a TAZ episode in France that has Travis on it?

**Travis:** What?

**Griffin:** What's that?

**Justin:** A Royale with cheese. [chuckles]

**Clint:** Do you know what they have—

**Justin:** Shut up!

**Clint:** Did it—oh, the—you know what they have—

**Justin:** Let it breathe, Mac!

**Griffin:** Let it breathe and let it open up.

**Justin:** Mac, let it breathe. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** The tannins need a moment to—

**Justin:** Mac, let it breathe, it's a heady one.

**Clint:** That was good.

**Justin:** It's a heady one, man, you gotta let it breathe.

**Griffin:** All right, now, Dad, you get yours out of your system.

**Clint:** You know what you do if you're gambling on TAZ in France?

**Griffin:** What's that, Dad?

**Clint:** You go to Casino Royale.

**Griffin:** Cool, cool, cool.

**Clint:** Trav, yours was better.

**Justin:** [chuckles] Dad pulled over the car to put his head in a dumpster.

**Griffin:** Travis has been silent since Justin issued his—

**Travis:** Yeah, just said, "I don't appreciate the cheese."

**Justin:** I shattered every one of—

**Clint:** A stinging—

**Travis:** You know—

**Clint:** A stinging rebuke.

**Travis:** I don't know if it was just the last straw, or—

**Griffin:** *Whoosh!* So, you all have made it into the Ziggurat. You were the last one in, Hellgrammite. Moments after you entered, the flames outside the front gate just rage and roil, baptizing the world outside in cleansing flame. And then, as suddenly as these fires appeared, they vanish without a trace. And as they pass, you all can see that the island outside has been completely untouched. You see—

**Travis:** Wow. Even Bobby Dazzler?

**Griffin:** [chuckles] The gardens are untouched. The rows of cabins in the distance are spotless and new. The only thing that's different are the people and bodies, who were outside moments before. Hellgrammite, you left through the gate with the final key. They are all gone, including Bobby Dazzler.

**Clint:** Are you telling me that the Ziggurat is not even smoking?

**Griffin:** It is not, no.

**Clint:** Because that's bad for you.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you shouldn't—

**Clint:** That's real bad for your health.

**Griffin:** If you're a Ziggurat, you shouldn't smoke or vape.

**Justin:** Heh.

**Griffin:** Inside the Ziggurat, forty-eight wizards—

**Travis:** Sorry, hold on, Dad, was that because "Ziggurat" sounds like "cigarette?"

**Clint:** Yeah, but we didn't let it breathe.

**Travis:** No—

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs] That was the problem, Dad.

**Griffin:** Forty-eight wizards cluster in small groups around this cavernous, central chamber of the Ziggurat. It is a room, akin to sort of like a fancy hospital lobby, or university commons. There's potted plants of all shapes and sizes that adorn several comfortable-looking seating areas. There's stacks of stone staircases branching off to these eight floors in this MC Escher-esque fashion.

There's crystalline water pouring slowly down these seven silver basins emerging from the rear wall, before splashing into a grand fountain in the center of the chamber. And there is just a flurry of activity around this room as the trial ends. Sentient cauldrons filled with luminescent liquids slosh their way throughout the crowd, distributing healing drafts to those who are sporting injuries. Lorovith, you awaken to a floating spoon, lovingly feeding a tonic into your mouth.

And as you choke back to life, you realize that the wound from Helvetica's knife has vanished, and you feel just right as rain. And in the moments after the flames pass, everyone sort of takes a look around this room to determine who survived the Second Trial of the Conclave. And that's what we're going to settle right now. So, through playing, we have confirmed nine of the sixteen wizards who died in this trial.

Those wizards being Bobby Dazzler, Tremora, the Yellow Ranger; Powder Keg Kelly, the goblin; Ignacio, the Red Ranger; the Green Ranger, Zephyr; gust of wind. A tough round for the Rangers, this one. Three out of four, not great. We had Whisper, Helvetica, Athena and Carmine, who all perished in the final battle. And we also confirmed eight of these survivors. You three, obviously, Grakhan, the Spider—the Spider, who is a big spider, Hasty Jane

Jennings, Absolute Zero, and the Gentleman, who stole your key when he froze time.

**Travis:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** So—

**Clint:** What about the other two spiders?

**Griffin:** The other two spiders, we have not confirmed whether or not they have gotten in or out. These are all the things that we have sort of confirmed through play. Right now, that leaves seven survivors who died that we do not know. And here's how—

**Justin:** Seven survivors who died? Shit, they are going to have quite a confusing day. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Seven Aspirants, thank you, Justin, who died. And here's how we're going to pick them. Each one of you are going to pick two more Aspirants who perished in the second trial. And then I will roll on the table to see who the last one is, for a total of seven. You can choose an Aspirant for any reason you like. Maybe you don't like the concept behind their character, maybe their name is too corny for you to want to share a season of The Adventure Zone with them. Or maybe you want their spell to sort of join the pool of possible new spells you could, you know, gather later on down the road. So, I would ask each of you to open up the list of aspirants here. And Juice, we can start—

**Travis:** Where's that list?

**Griffin:** I've just dropped it into the text chain.

**Justin:** Our family's text thread.

**Griffin:** Our family text thread.

**Travis:** But that's sacred, Griffin?

**Griffin:** It is so not fucking sacred, dude.

**Justin:** This is for family business.

**Griffin:** If I scrolled through—

**Justin:** This is for dad letting us know when old celebrities have died.  
[chuckles] Why am I gonna—

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Or when there's a great auction for... movie and television props.

**Justin:** What was it yesterday? What was our auction yesterday, dad? What was our auction you shared yesterday?

**Clint:** Oh, gosh—

**Griffin:** It was the—it was a tombstone from—

**Justin:** It was a tombstone...

**Griffin:** From... Curb Your Enthusiasm.

**Clint:** Oh, it was all kinds of things from a bunch of different HBO shows.

**Justin:** Ah! Okay, we didn't click through, as is our want.

**Clint:** Yeah, of course you didn't, because I sent it. But no, there's like Dexter props and—

**Travis:** Okay.

**Clint:** Costumes from all shows. So, you would like it.

**Justin:** There is a lot of great merchandise.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Okay, Juice, you have the list. Kill a wizard.

**Justin:** I would like to claim the life... of Stink Bug.

**Clint:** [gasps] Hah...

**Justin:** Stink Bud is—

**Griffin:** Stink Butt.

**Justin:** Stink *Bud*, with a D, is a grunting stink bug. And the lore, if I could take everyone inside the lore of Stink Bud, "A largely non-verbal stink bug who speaks only in grunts and sprays." He couldn't cut it out there, unfortunately, and he fell into a ravine. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah, we flash back to the second trial. Stink Bud is—

**Justin:** Okay, okay, I'll play Stink Bud. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Sure, yeah.

**Justin:** I think that—I think if I—I think if you kill him, you should get to see him off. Doesn't that seems fair?

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah, sure.

**Stink Bud:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm gonna get a—get a key! Gonna get a key! Gonna get a key, gonna get a key, gonna get a key. Key-key-key. Gonna get a key...

**Griffin:** And then he falls into a—

**Stink Bud:** [shrieks] *Aah!*

**Griffin:** [laughs] Okay. Oh, Stink Bud, we hardly knew you. Okay, that's our first one down. Travis, how about you?

**Travis:** I'm gonna take out... I'm gonna to take out... Sergeant Brace.



**Griffin:** Sergeant Brace... okay. A sergeant in the Alchemical Army, buttoned up. He dies. How does he die?

**Travis:** He polishes boots too much and—

**Griffin:** He just lost track of time?

**Travis:** No, well, it reflected in his eyes, and the glare distracted him while he was fighting with one of those sword leaf... things.

**Griffin:** Oh, wow. Yeah.

**Travis:** Sliced him right in half.

**Justin:** Are you gonna do the scene?

**Travis:** Shall we play it out?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** Thank you.

**Sergeant Brace:** En garde, you terrible—oh, ah! Oh, my eyes. Oh—oh, no! Ah! My guts! Oh, my guts have spilled out all over the ground. No!

**Griffin:** Okay, Sergeant Brace—

**Sergeant Brace:** *No!* My beautiful shoes are ruined! Why did I spend six hours polishing my boots, only to have the guts ruin them?

**Justin:** "My beautiful guts." [chuckles]

**Sergeant Brace:** My beautiful guts!

**Clint:** [chuckles]

[a bell sound rings]

**Griffin:** We should point out, as Stink Bud died, Poison Spray joined the pool of spells. And as Sergeant Brace goes down, Fire Bolt joins the pool of spells. Dad, who do you want to kill?

**Clint:** I'm going to kill... Scorching Ray.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Brutal! Can you read Scorching Ray's like full bio here?

**Clint:** Yeah. Scorching Ray, whose talent was Scorching Ray—

**Griffin:** Yeah, and what was the reference?

**Clint:** Reference was Ray Romano.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And the lore was?

**Clint:** And the lore was, I fully and completely ran out of ideas here at the very last guy. [chuckles]

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I thank you for killing Scorching Ray. Give me Scorching Ray's death, please?

**Clint:** Scorching Ray's death, he finally got around to eating a lunch that his mom packed.

**Griffin:** In the middle of this hour-long trial.

**Clint:** In the middle—well, he needed the energy.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** You know, because you gotta have the carbs for the fire.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Clint:** And he—

**Scorching Ray:** Ah, ma—eh—ah!

**Clint:** And the linguini was bad.

**Griffin:** And he died from it?

**Clint:** And he died from it.

**Travis:** It was real bad.

**Griffin:** All right. Scorching—

**Clint:** Really bad linguini.

**Griffin:** Scorching Ray's Scorching Ray joins the pool of spells. All right, back to you, Juice. Your second death.

[a bell sound rings]

**Justin:** No, gotta hear—did Scorching Ray get a death scene or no?

**Griffin:** I mean, he did one, sort of—

**Scorching Ray:** Oh! This linguini, Ma! Why, Ma?!

**Justin:** Okay, thank you. Thank you. Now I feel really—

**Scorching Ray:** Oh, the linguini!

**Griffin:** I think we should all—we've all been so good lately, I think we should all get a chance of pretending to be Ray Romano dying.

**Travis:** Thank you.

**Justin:** [titters] Yeah.

**Travis:** "Oh, ma!"

**Griffin:** That's your Ray Romano?

**Travis:** I'm working on it. "Deborah!"

**Griffin:** "Deborah!"

**Justin:** "Deborah! *Deborah.*"

**Clint:** Oh, that was good. Wait, who did the last one? The chocking—

**Griffin:** "My bile, Deborah! Oh, my bile's seeping out of my pores, Deborah."

**Travis:** "Ma! The linguini you made not—*ah*. My beautiful guts!"

**Clint:** And then his brother stepped on him.

**Travis:** "Ah! My beautiful guts, ma!"

**Justin:** Okay—

**Travis:** "Ma! You ruined my beautiful guts!"

**Griffin:** [guffaws]

**Justin:** I'm gonan do... I would like to do Betty Fortuna, please.

**Griffin:** Betty Fortuna... let me find Betty Fortuna on this list of sixty-four wizards. Betty Fortuna, owner of Fortune's Favor, who is basically Lady Gaga. Yes. "A flashy, famed gambler and known wreck on tour." How does Betty Fortuna perish?

**Justin:** She's on the phone with her friend, standing underneath a tree. And then a big, heavy branch fell off and killed her.

**Griffin:** Wow. A lot of—

**Justin:** It was—

**Griffin:** So give me that?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Betty Fortuna:** Yeah, like I was saying, I just don't think the other races are as good as mine—*aah!*

**Travis:** Whoa.

**Griffin:** Crack! Whoo—squish. All right.

[a bell sound rings]

**Justin:** Whoa, did you know that about Betty Fortuna, Griffin?

**Griffin:** Didn't know that about—didn't know that about Betty Fortuna.

**Justin:** She's a huge racist?

**Griffin:** Damn, dude, that's—

**Justin:** Damn, dude. I'm glad she died, though.

**Griffin:** I'm glad she got—yeah, for sure, dude.

**Justin:** Shit, man!

**Griffin:** I'm glad she got squished. All right—

**Justin:** I can't remember the last time the death of a racist made me this happy. No, wait, yes, I can. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Okay, Travis, your second pick, please.

**Travis:** Oh, thank you.

**Griffin:** There's some names on there where if you pick 'em, I'll never—I'll never fuckin'—

**Travis:** Yeah, I know, that's what I'm trying to—

**Justin:** But will you let it play, Griff?

**Griffin:** I mean, I—yeah, I'll let anything happen. I'm gonna roll the dice later and see who dies, so one of my beloveds could get the axe here.

**Travis:** Hm... let's see... [chuckles]

**Justin:** The letting us choose, dude, it feels like—it feels like you had sixty-four action figures, and you were like, "Yeah, guys, if you want to play, that'd be cool. You guys just pick which ones you want to throw into the wood chipper, it's fine." [laughs]

**Travis:** "I mean, maybe not that one."

**Justin:** "Not that one! I really liked—okay, yes, fine, go ahead! Yeah, he—yeah, it's stupid anyway." [chuckles]

**Travis:** I'm gonna take out Wink Trufellow.

**Griffin:** Wink Trufellow, yeah, okay.

**Travis:** Based on fake psychic John Edwards.

**Griffin:** Yes, with his spell, Detect Thoughts. Betty Fortuna's spell—oh, I deleted it already. It was something about like twist fate, or some shit like that.

**Travis:** I thought it was Fortune's Favor?

**Griffin:** Fortune's Favor, that was it, yeah.

**Justin:** Fortune's Favor, yes.

**Griffin:** Yes, thank you.

**Travis:** Wink Trufellow looks at the person he's walking with and goes:

**Wink Trufellow:** I'm sensing... I'm sensing that there's a key. There's a key? I'm getting a key, right in—I'm gonna walk through this door, and there's a key.

**Travis:** And he opens the door, and a bear just eats his head off.

**Griffin:** Okay, awesome. Detect Thoughts rejoins the pool.

[a bell sound rings]

**Griffin:** And Dad, your last pick, please?

**Clint:** Mrs. Glass.

**Griffin:** Mrs. Glass.

**Justin:** Aw...

**Clint:** Mrs. Glass.

**Justin:** Darn it...

**Griffin:** That is the Mary Poppins-inspired— "an aristocratic, middle-aged woman, famed for her power of turning invisible." Invisibility rejoins the pool. How does Mrs. Glass perish?

**Clint:** Musically, she announces it musically.

**Justin:** Oh, thank god.

**Travis:** That she's dying?

**Clint:** Yeah, yeah.

**Justin:** Let's hear it, Dad. I'm ready for this—

**Clint:** She serves notice.

**Justin:** Mary Poppins parody.

**Clint:** [sings] Super gallus fragile listen to extermination notice!

**Griffin:** Wowzers, Dad.

**Justin:** Oh my god, dude.

**Griffin:** Jesus Christ, man. That actually gave—sent a chill up my spine and took my breath away.

**Clint:** That was the intent.

**Travis:** Somewhere, "Weird Al" Yankovic just announced his retirement.

[a bell sound rings]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Yeah. Him and Cletus Judd.

**Griffin:** All right, I am going to now roll a... number.

**Clint:** Now, wait, are we in this list?

**Griffin:** You are, but you're safe, so—

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That would be wild!



**Griffin:** [chuckles] That would be so fucking—

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** That would be such an insane way to handle this.

**Justin:** The Sword of Damocles has chosen. [titters]

**Griffin:** Okay... [sound of dice thrown] Forty-five is... Bill Shredley.

**Clint:** Ah!

**Justin:** Ah, man.

**Griffin:** Bill Shredley, based on Slash. "A guitar-slinging rock star with a devoted following." He is standing on a bluff, overlooking the rest of the island, as the fireball comes down from the sky. Knowing that he's too late, pulls out his guitar, plays a beautiful elegy, as the fires come down and consume the island.

[a bell sound rings]

**Griffin:** His spell, Thunder Wave, rejoins the pool. All right, that's it. That's our sixteen. We are down to forty-eight wizards. Amazing. Well done.

**Justin:** That was really fun, Griff. Thanks for letting us do that.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. I don't know that it will happen like that again.

**Justin:** Oh, that's too bad, because I really, really liked it. [chuckles]

**Travis:** I like killing—

**Justin:** That was like the most fun this has been. [titters]

**Travis:** I like killing.

**Griffin:** It's just killing the NPCs like—

**Travis:** Sure! Yeah, killing the NPCs in the game. That's what I meant.

**Griffin:** After things sort of calm down, after you are revived and healed here in the Ziggurat hall, holographic depictions of each of the sixteen fallen wizards appear around the Ziggurat hall. You see the spectral image of Bobby Dazzler just doing some tight rolls. You see—

**Travis:** Everybody falls before it screaming, "It should have been Hellgrammite. It should have been Hellgrammite!"

**Griffin:** [laughs] You see Stink Bug looking at his like arms, his pincers, like confused that he's dead. And he's a hologram now? That's crazy.

**Justin:** Can I talk to Hellgrammite?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure, of course.

**Justin:** Do I remember where, which tower—

**Griffin:** Yeah. I mean, yeah, you have—

**Justin:** I want to talk about the Bobby Dazzler thing.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Lorovith:** You made a difficult choice there.

**Hellgrammite:** Yes, I did. I think we all made a lot of difficult choices.

**Lorovith:** Hm... so more than most. How is it sitting with you?

**Hellgrammite:** To be honest with you, I'm a bit convicted and a bit conflicted. I... you didn't help me, but Rictus did. Rictus helped me quite a bit. And, you know, I think maybe I've seen the light. I think I need to change the way I'm approaching this contest.

**Lorovith:** Oh, that would be quite a shame! Honestly, I enjoyed your show quite a bit. [chuckles]

**Hellgrammite:** But of course. I... I want to know more about my playmates. My opponent, my—

**Lorovith:** So gross. So gross, gotta go. Nope, you messed up. I have to go.

**Hellgrammite:** No, no, tell me—

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Hellgrammite:** Tell me your hopes!

**Lorovith:** No, no, I regret this conversation I've entered into. I must—

**Hellgrammite:** Your hopes, your... your dreams? Did you like your parents?!

**Griffin:** I have to ask, Hellgrammite, is the conflictedness you're feeling that Rictus did save you at one point, and then also did steal your key to go inside? I don't know if you forgot about that in the five—

**Hellgrammite:** No, I—

**Griffin:** Full calendar weeks since we recorded.

**Hellgrammite:** I remember.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Hellgrammite:** I remember. I just... but it's... what have you done for me lately?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. I mean, the most latest thing he did was to steal your key—

**Travis:** No! I healed him after I stole the key.

**Clint:** He healed me.

**Griffin:** Oh, that's a good point. Good point. Good point. Okay.

**Hellgrammite:** Do *you* remember?

**Griffin:** Yeah, fair.

**Hellgrammite:** I remember very well.

**Griffin:** It really, it has been such a long time.

**Hellgrammite:** I would have died for like the fifth time.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** True.

**Hellgrammite:** If it hadn't been for Rictus, so—

**Travis:** '90s kids remember.

**Griffin:** '90s kids—

**Hellgrammite:** Maybe I want to know about Rictus? Rictus, tell me about your parents!

**Rictus:** I'd rather not.

**Justin:** He's so far away. He's so far away.

**Rictus:** Yeah, I'd rather not right now.

**Hellgrammite:** Okay. Maybe we'll have a nosh later.

**Rictus:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Suddenly, the three of you hear a splashing from the fountain at the center of the room, and from the basins. And you all see the eight wizards of the Octave. Each emerge from one of these seven silver basins and this fountain at the middle of the room. Osham appears from the central fountain, the wizard who addressed you before the last trial. And he clears his throat and he says:

**Osham:** Congratulations, Aspirants, for passing the second trial of this conclave. By demonstrating your courage, cleverness and opportunism, you are now one step closer to your arcane ascension. Mourn not your fallen fellows, as their will lives on within the very stone foundation of this island. We are now adjourned and shall proceed with the third trial in two days' time. After each trial, you will have a day to rest, to spend how you please. We will proceed in this fashion, trial, then rest and so on, until the final trial on the fourteenth day. You will be spending a fortnight with us.

**Griffin:** And he looks around the looks around the room. [chuckles]

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** He looks around the room... and gets no recognition.

**Osham:** Okay, the keys—

**Justin:** No, I'm there! I laughed.

**Griffin:** Okay, good.

**Osham:** The keys you all obtained have imbued you with an enchantment that shall grant you access to a designated living quarters in the southern room of the island. The quality of your lodgings and the rewards waiting within do correspond to the value of the key you scavenged. You will rest, while you may enjoy your day of leisure and study. And we shall reconvene here the morning after next.

Now, some ground rules. First, you must never remove your Grimoire from your arm. Doing so will mark your immediate disqualification from the Conclave. You may not attack, injure or bring direct harm to another

Aspirant, unless otherwise directed. You are all prohibited from approaching the Crystalarium at the island's—

**Lorovith:** Sorry, sorry, may I ask a clarification?

**Osham:** Yeah, for sure.

**Lorovith:** Directed by whom?

**Osham:** By us, by the rules of the trial. If a snake or something slithers up to you and is like, "Hey, you should go and, you know, you should go kill. Dr. Legume."

**Griffin:** And Dr. Legume looks at himself like, "Why... why me? Why did you pick—why did you say my name?"

**Lorovith:** And why am I a Parseltongue?

**Osham:** The snake is a trickster trying to trick you.

**Lorovith:** I'm no trickster, I don't commune with snakes.

**Osham:** Okay, well, don't—yes, don't listen—I guess, unofficial rule, don't listen to any snakes.

**Lorovith:** What if the good—what if the good doctor asked me to hurt him?

**Osham:** I suppose that there is some precedent for hurting someone to help them... then that is—

**Lorovith:** Cruel to be kind in the right measure! I believe is the saying.

**Osham:** If you have—if you require clarifications about a choice, a course of action you are considering, you may inquire—

**Lorovith:** If time allows.

**Osham:** Your personal—

**Lorovith:** If time allows!

**Osham:** If time allows—

**Lorovith:** If time allows! We can all agree on this. If time allows.

**Osham:** Your personal assistant, Chris, who lives within your Grimoire, will be able to help you suss those out. And don't go towards the big crystal at the top northern end of the island. All other areas of the island are free for you to explore. Patronize our endless library, our relics of histories forgotten. Find the secrets to the arcane questions that have plagued you your entire life! You will learn much here, I can promise you that. Are there any questions?

**Hellgrammite:** Do we get to choose where we will live, did you say?

**Osham:** No, I pretty much specifically said that you have been assigned lodging based on the key that you acquired.

**Hellgrammite:** I know, but is it... is it strictly location, location, location? Or is it how nice the domicile is?

**Osham:** I mean, I thought it would be pretty self-evident, but like, there's name plates with your names over all the different places where you're going to be staying.

**Hellgrammite:** Will I be close to my new friends? I would like to be placed somewhere near to my two—

**Osham:** I suppose if you want to trade rooms with someone, you could work that out with...

**Rictus:** Can I get a humidifier in mine? I like it real dank.

**Osham:** What color key did you get?

**Rictus:** Copper.

**Osham:** Absolutely not. [chuckles] No way, dude, Absolutely not, that's—

**Rictus:** If anybody ends up with a humidifier and doesn't want it, please let me know.

**Osham:** Okay, well—

**Rictus:** Is there a place to plug in my CPAP?

**Osham:** Of course. We wouldn't—we are actually required to provide you with any sort of CPAP accommodations you may—

**Hellgrammite:** CPAP and a humidifier too?

**Rictus:** Yeah.

**Hellgrammite:** What kind of pulmonary functions do you have?

**Osham:** They're getting him coming and going!

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Rictus:** It's very complicated.

**Osham:** Okay. Well, you—that is not the type of questions I was expecting, as you are all competing in a deadly game for which there can only be one winner.

**Rictus:** Is the cafeteria like a points thing? Or is it—do we have like a budget of like money that we can spend there? Or what's...

**Osham:** Ah, yes, if you—if you make your way to the—to the Crystal Orchid at the northwest end of the island, your culinary desires will be catered to promptly. Okay, well, I guess I'll see y'all in a couple days. And... good luck. Prepare for this next trial. Rest, study, spend your time how you would like. And I wish you all a good evening. I didn't—

**Rictus:** Okay, bye!



**Osham:** I didn't mean to say that like a vampire, but... all right.

**Griffin:** And Osham and the other seven wizards of the Octave descend into the water of their respective basins, and they disappear. And slowly, the wizards file out of the Ziggurat. And you all approach the lodgings, which are sort of arranged in a few different rows at the southern end of the island. You all can see a row of two-story, really, really, really nice looking cabins. As you approach them, there are golden nameplates over each one. And on those nameplates, you see a few familiar names; the Spider, Grakhan, The Gentleman. It actually says The Gentleman from Wizberry over his.

And Lorovith, you find your cabin right next door to Grakhan's. And a handful of other names. I have not assigned the other color keys of the winners, because I didn't know who was going to die. So, we'll settle that a little bit later on. These are the residences down at the bottom right corner of the island. They are behind this *giant* bonfire that's between these residences and the Ziggurat, that have these four floating red crystals surrounding it.

It looks really magical, and it casts a really sort of lovely, soft light on these eight, you know, primo cabins that are closest to it. The next row features sixteen smaller-looking almost like duplexes, sort of like studio apartments kind of set up. They are made out of this sort of light granite material with some windows. Not like the fanciest lodgings, but like, you know, a hotel room, or a motel, perhaps, that you might stay in. And you find your room assembled amongst the others here, Hellgrammite. The only other silver key we know is Hasty Jane, but there's fourteen other wizards here staying in this row as well.

And finally, at the very end of the island, we have a row of twenty-four—is that right? Yes, twenty-four tents that are set up. They are... I mean, they're decently-sized tents. These are like sort of higher-end tents that you might find at an REI, not like a stick holding up like a single tarp. Like, they are—they are decent, but they are definitely much smaller and much less secure than the other lodgings here in the residential block. And as you walk through, you find a wooden name plate hanging over a dark blue tent, that has your name on it, Rictus.

**Travis:** I would like to intercept The Gentleman before he goes into his residence.

**Griffin:** Sure, his is on the very end, so you see him kind of like approaching the stoop, walking up to his grand front entrance, as the rest of the crowd kind of like files past, making their way to their individual rooms.

**Rictus:** Sorry, excuse me?

**The Gentleman:** Yes! Oh, my goodness. Sorry, what was your name? I didn't catch it.

**Rictus:** Rictus Ravenwood IV.

**The Gentleman:** Ravenwood? One of the—*wow*. I—oh, wow, this is... truly, it's nice to meet someone from such an esteemed family, Rictus!

**Rictus:** Oh, thank you. And what—you're The Gentleman, but may I ask—

**The Gentleman:** You may call me The Gentleman from Wizberry. And let me cut you off, I am so sorry about taking your key. I have but one power, and when all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. And so, in that moment, your—taking your golden key was the only option that was available to me in order to survive. Certainly, you can understand that? Certainly, Rictus?

**Rictus:** Well, I wanted to give you the opportunity to trade me back.

**The Gentleman:** Trade you... oh... oh! Trade you back keys?

**Rictus:** Yeah.

**The Gentleman:** Well, I'm not sure, because the keys have bestowed us with, you know, an enchantment... as soon as we crossed the threshold of the Ziggurat, so it's not a physical thing that I can trade you. I suppose we could speak to Chris and ask if there's any way to transfer, but it just

doesn't seem like it's in the spirit of the competition, Rictus. And that's very important.

**Rictus:** Yeah. But—

**The Gentleman:** I'll tell you what, I am so beat, Rictus. I am so, so tired. I am advanced in years. Let's get some sleep. We'll sleep on it tonight. Tomorrow, we can—

**Rictus:** I also, I just wanted to say—

**The Gentleman:** Yes?

**Rictus:** Thank you.

**The Gentleman:** Oh? For what?

**Rictus:** Oh, so, when I kind of joined in to this competition, I was just kind of doing it, you know, like because it seemed like a thing to do, and kind of earned my family's approval, and all that. But you have given me purpose in it, so that I now really want to win.

**The Gentleman:** Oh, wonderful.

**Rictus:** So I can use my newfound power and my necromancy skills to punish you.

**The Gentleman:** Oh? Careful. Careful, Rictus. There's no need to threaten me. Obviously, you—

**Rictus:** Oh, it's not a threat. Oh, it's not a threat.

**The Gentleman:** It felt threatening, if I can be honest with you, Rictus. Yes, I know that I have slighted you, I am not ignorant of that. And I do apologize, Rictus, this is not—I am not a nasty man down on the terra firma. It's just, this place, it is a—it is a competition. And I—

**Rictus:** It is-

**The Gentleman:** I do intend to win. So, I welcome this healthy rivalry between the two of us. Perhaps our paths will cross as colleagues, as co-conspirators, from time to time. But if those crossroads should meet on a battleground, I suppose we will figure that out as well. I must bid you a good evening, though. So tired, so old.

**Griffin:** And he makes his way in the door of his cabin, and shuts it behind him.

**Clint:** So Lorovith is in the gold—

**Griffin:** Lorovith is in gold. Hellgrammite, you are in silver. The silver sort of like duplexes here. And Rictus is in a tent.

**Hellgrammite:** Friend Rictus! Rictus, my friend? Hello?

**Rictus:** Yeah?

**Hellgrammite:** It's me, Hellgrammite. I feel like I owe you.

**Rictus:** Oh?

**Hellgrammite:** For... for basically saving my life. I would be happy to swap with you, if you would like to switch domiciles? I think that I am more used to roughing it and being close to the earth. I think... I think perhaps I would be happier in a tent, and you would be happier in a residence that was a little bit more high-class than just a tent. And I would like to reward you. Would you—would you consider that? Friend?

**Travis:** Hey, Griffin?

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Travis:** Can I make an insight check against another player?

**Griffin:** Yeah, certainly. Dad, if you want to text me, I guess, if your motivations here are on the level or not. Or we can have—that way I know if you're rolling a deception check, or if you are sort of telling the truth here.

**Travis:** I'm trying to get ulterior motives.

**Griffin:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Travis, why don't you roll the insight check first? And we'll see—

**Travis:** Yeah, we'll see how that goes first, before—

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** It's a five, so... who the fuck cares. [titters]

**Griffin:** Yeah, I guess it doesn't really matter, Dad. I suppose your intentions here are—[chuckles] Dad texted all of us, which defeats the point.

**Travis:** Yeah, I didn't even look.

**Griffin:** Dad just said "buttering," which is—[laughs] which is great. Okay, with your five insight check, you get the sense that he's buttering you, Travis.

**Travis:** Is it big enough for us to be roommates?

**Griffin:** No, that is—

**Travis:** Griffin... really think about the possibilities here.

**Hellgrammite:** Well, I—let me add, I would like to have our domiciles in a row. You know, like Lorovith in the gold, and you in the silver, and me in the bronze—the copper. And just, the three of us in a nice line. Like our own little—

**Justin:** Is there a reason he's even thinking about us? Like, I want to know why you even have my name in your mouth. [chuckles] Like we had—like seriously, why are thinking about us?

**Griffin:** You all did stand back to back as... you know, as—

**Clint:** In battle.

**Griffin:** Cooperatives in battle.

**Travis:** And it makes sense, because you and I were working together, Lorovith. And then I saved his life, and took his key.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it is up to you, Trav. Do you want to trade?

**Justin:** I'm going to join them then. Can I come over?

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** If they're talking about where we're living.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Lorovith:** Please, take mine. Maybe—

**Rictus:** What?

**Lorovith:** Oh, have you looked inside the gold?

**Justin:** I'll open the door to them so they can look inside.

**Griffin:** It is—

**Rictus:** Ah, shit...

**Griffin:** It's incredible. Polished—

**Rictus:** You have a PS6?

**Griffin:** Hardwood. There's a PS6 in there hooked up to a seventy-one inch plasma screen. [chuckles] Plasma screen? Yeah, it's a plasma screen.

**Travis:** Yeah, whoa!

**Griffin:** That's what makes it fantasy! TV, it's—there's a huge ice chest filled with snacks of all shapes and sizes.

**Hellgrammite:** Is it a smart ice chest?

**Griffin:** It actually—

**Hellgrammite:** Oh my god, I can't get out of the voice.

**Griffin:** What's funny is, actually, Lorovith, as you went in there, when you opened up the ice chest, it was full of your favorite food. It was very much designed for you.

**Lorovith:** I don't... I don't feel anyone could actually sleep in this. Whichever one of you wants this, I'll—

**Hellgrammite:** Would you be happy in the silver?

**Lorovith:** I would be thrilled to sleep under the stars, on the grass.

**Rictus:** Okay—

**Justin:** So this is—for a—for a Goliath, this would—

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure!

**Justin:** Like not be—this feels to him like not—an environment he'd be comfortable in. It's way too like crafted, it feels way too distant from nature. It also feels for him extremely exposed.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** So, he does not—this does not feel like a treat for him. So...

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rictus:** Okay, I will... I will happily accept the gold. But I'll have like an open door policy, so you guys can come in and like raid the fridge and stuff if you want.

**Hellgrammite:** Clubhouse! Yay! [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I love that. Okay, all these houses, we'll say, on the far right end, in a row, there's this dark blue tent here that ends up being yours, Lorovith. And then Hellgrammite, you have this duplex here on the right side. And then you have, Rictus, this gold cabin. As you sort of make these verbal agreements, you see the name plates over the tent and the cabin swap. And now there's just like one cabin with a wooden name plate, and one tent with a golden nameplate, designating those as your guys' respective domiciles.

**Justin:** Griffin, when I look out the back of my tent, what do I see?

**Griffin:** You look out the back of your tent—

**Justin:** If you look at our map, the way our map is set up, these tents are sort of at the outer rim of our—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Of our map. So I'm curious like what my tent, what I'd be seeing out there.

**Griffin:** So, you can see, it is... dusk. And you can still see through kind of like the dawning moonlight, the lands below. You are on the very edge of the island. And I am not sure what that experience would be like for someone as kind of connected to the Earth as—

**Justin:** Is it a force field? Is it physical?

**Griffin:** Nope—



**Justin:** Is it—

**Griffin:** No force field, nothing whatsoever. It is a sheer drop off down, you know—

**Clint:** Don't sleep walk.

**Griffin:** Several hundred feet.

**Clint:** Whew!

**Griffin:** Yeah, you get the sense that if you rolled out of bed a little bit too enthusiastically, it would be the last thing you ever did. But you can see the lands below. From where you all are, I mean, now that you don't have the pressure of this fireball hanging over you, I think you all get the feel that this is a truly sort of surreal, just kind of sensory experience, being on this island. It's moving quite slowly through the skies right now. But from this position, you can see almost all of the fold, this area that has been kind of contained here, this world that you know. Surrounded by this towering wall of fog that surrounds it.

**Justin:** So—

**Griffin:** It is... a scenic vista, to say the least.

**Justin:** Lorovith, when he gets back over, he packs up the tent into like a tight roll, and he gets his pack. And he sets up sort of a... a little seat there, facing out over the edge. Because it's like, it reminds him of the mountain peaks. It reminds him—

**Griffin:** Awesome.

**Justin:** Of being up. So, he sets it up, that's his like bed there, as he's just like set up a little wedge for him to nestle himself in. Just with a view out over the edge.

**Griffin:** Rad. I love it. So, you're sleeping out under the stars?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** No tent. Okay, fantastic. As you do that, as you sort of roll up your designated tent, Hellgrammite, as you make your way into your silver residence, and you make your way into the gold one, Rictus—Rictus, you find that Lorovith's food didn't change as you guys swapped houses. And so it's just like huge—what is it? What's food for Lorovith? I imagine big beef. Big, beefy men slapping beef.

**Justin:** Yeah, I think that it would be... most of the year, they would be eating preserved meats, because they wouldn't—for the rest of the year, they can't, you know, catch live meat. So for him, I think it would be fresh game.

**Griffin:** Awesome.

**Justin:** Like, that is—that is a delicacy, from his point of view, the stuff that won't keep.

**Griffin:** Okay, so a wonderful little cultural exchange that has happened unintentionally here, Rictus. As you all make your way into your lodgings, you are—as everyone, all the forty-eight Aspirants are, I imagine, quite exhausted from the preceding day. The first and second trials basically happened back to back. And so, in this past day, you, you know, underwent this wild sort of psychic experience with the Trial of Divination. And then this struggle for survival in the Trial for Abjuration. You're pretty worn out. You do notice among the sort of like belongings that have been laid out for you, each of these residences contained a small pouch.

And Lorovith, in the pouch, inside the tent, you find three small metal cubes that are made out of copper. And Hellgrammite, same for you, you find three metal cubes made of silver. And in your cabin, Rictus, you find a pouch with three cubes made out of gold. And you assume this to be the rewards that Osham hinted at earlier. And with that, you all take stock of your stuff. And as the stars come out, sort of uninterrupted in the sky above, you are closer to them than any of you have ever been, you all drift off to a night of deep slumber.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Hey, folks, we've got some live shows coming up. We're going to be in Atlanta, for TAZ Versus Popeye. We're doing My Brother, My Brother and Me in Atlanta. We're doing Dragon Con in Atlanta! Atlanta, more like Coolanta, because we'll be there, doing cool stuff. That's what they call it.

**Griffin:** I didn't like that.

**Travis:** They call it Coolanta. Did you know that?

**Griffin:** I don't think they call it Coolanta, dude.

**Travis:** They do!

**Griffin:** All right, man.

**Travis:** Oh, the cool ones do. We've also got shows coming up in Texas, Utah and California. All TAZ shows for the rest of the year are going to be TAZ Versus shows. Like I said, we've got TAZ Versus Popeye in Atlanta, we're doing TAZ Versus Hercules in Texas, and even more coming up. So, make sure you get them. Tickets for all the shows are on sale now, and get all the info and ticket links at [bit.ly/mcelroytours](http://bit.ly/mcelroytours).

**Griffin:** We got some new merch up in the merch store. We also got some great deals up in the Merch Store. We're doing a back to school sale. Select items up to forty percent off. You can get three different back to school bundles. You get a free mystery pin with a purchase of thirty dollars or more. And ten percent of all our merch proceeds this month will be donated to World Central Kitchen. All that and more over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). That's it, enjoy the rest of the episode. And we'll be back with a new one in two weeks. Bye!

**Travis:** Bye!

[ad break]

[theme music plays]

**Griffin:** The sun rises over the Octave Ziggurat the following morning, and you all awaken, inside of your different places of rest. Rictus, you had a great night's sleep. Awesome, awesome mattress in here. Hellgrammite, I don't know what kind of bed situation you're used to, so maybe the sort of... modest lodgings of these duplexes is, you know, a bit better than you are used to.

**Clint:** He did much better trying out the lazy bug. And kind of—

**Griffin:** The lazy bug.

**Clint:** Sitting.

**Travis:** Instead of lay—

**Clint:** Lazy bug.

**Travis:** Instead of lazy boy. Or ladybug, either one of those.

**Justin:** He's combined 'em.

**Clint:** It works both ways. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** It works no ways. [chuckles]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And Lorovith, I mean, sleeping—you sleep as you always sleep. This is not—this is not a weird experience for you. But you all basically have the day here to do as you want. I don't have like... there's lots of features on this island, if you want to go and check things out. I figured you all could, you know, each have time to have an activity here. And then we will sort of all gather at the... the atelier at the end of this day off, for you all to acquire some new spells. We should also point out that you all have leveled up to level three, in the time, I guess, as you slept. It was such a good sleep, you leveled up twice.

**Justin:** Dang, dude.

**Griffin:** And as such, I anticipate that you all got some new stuff. But for wizards—

**Justin:** Gotta be a wet dream situation. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, super, duper—

**Travis:** Wow.

**Griffin:** Duper wet. Constantly. Buckets.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] And now you all are a bit hardier, more HP. Which is probably the most kind of noteworthy thing, since wizards, in the classic rule set that we are using, get some stuff that is maybe not going to be so relevant to this season. Travis pointed out that now you can learn necromancy spells at half the cost.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Which is not really anything that we are going to be dealing with here. Was there any feature added in your third-level acquisition that you guys want to share? I am curious to hear what school you all have chosen—

**Travis:** Well, you already touched on mine, but with the School of Necromancy, I did pick up Grim Harvest. Once—

**Griffin:** What does that do?

**Travis:** "Once per turn, when you kill one or more creatures with a spell at first level or higher, you gain HP—you regain HP equal to twice the spell's level. Or three times its level, if the school—if the spell belongs to the School of Necromancy."

**Griffin:** Oh, that's cool!

**Travis:** But that doesn't work on constructs or undead.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** I, in—I did want to mention, in the second level, there's a scholar perk. And I am taking advantage of what I believe is a typographical error here.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Justin:** It says, "While studying magic, you specialize in another field of study. Choose one of the following skills in which you have proficiency; arcana, history, investigation, medicine, nature or religion. You have expertise in the chosen skill." But in the drop down box, my choices are; religion, nature, medicine or intimidation. So, I took intimidation!

**Griffin:** [laughs] Okay, you became such a good wizard that you are a bit scary now.

**Justin:** A little scary! [chuckles]

**Travis:** That's fair! Yeah.

**Justin:** Just a little scary.

**Griffin:** I do like that a lot.

**Justin:** Well, I'm also—

**Griffin:** Which—

**Justin:** I'm also seven and a half feet tall. [titters]

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. No, it makes a lot of sense. What school did you choose?

**Justin:** Evoker.

**Griffin:** Evoker.

**Justin:** Yeah, I'd already found the Absorb Element and I had my Lightning Lash, so I just felt like—

**Griffin:** No, it makes a lot of sense.

**Justin:** Evoker was a good—now, I do have similar, the—I have one called an Evocation Savant. Which lets me choose—

**Griffin:** Right, which makes it easier for you to learn—yeah.

**Justin:** Two spells that I can learn for free. But of course, that's not really—

**Griffin:** We will—we will be handling spell acquisition in a very special way this season, and we will get to it later in this day. But how do you all want to spend your days? Do you have any ideas? Anything you want to do to, you know, answer some grand, arcane question of the universe? Magic is still widely not like fully understood in this world, except for those who are members of the Ooctave.

So, like, you know, some sort of secret unveiled, might happen here. If there's any way you want to try to prepare, or like get a leg up on the next trial? Do some investigation, find out what it might be, that is an option. If you want to go to one of the landmarks here on the map, just to see if there's anything, you know, waiting for you there. You are welcome to do that also. I would just ask, not the atelier, since that is how we will sort of conclude the day. Anyone want to go first? Any ideas?

**Clint:** Hellgrammite bounds into Rictus' place.

**Hellgrammite:** Hello, bud! Time for our day!

**Rictus:** Okay.

**Justin:** Fuck yes, I love this freaking energy, dude.

**Hellgrammite:** Come on! What are we gonna do today?!

**Rictus:** I kind... I was—

**Hellgrammite:** You said open door policy?

**Rictus:** Yeah, no, I know, but I kind of need—

**Justin:** PS, it's 5:15 in the morning. [chuckles]

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Rictus:** Ugh, what? What time is it?

**Hellgrammite:** Is that what you sleep in?

**Lorovith:** Did you guys know bucks don't—

**Hellgrammite:** Are those jammies?

**Lorovith:** Bucks don't sleep. Did you guys know that?

**Rictus:** That's weird. Yeah, these are my jammies. I—well... I guess I'm up. We could, I don't know, watch the sunrise together, and then go our separate ways to do shit?

**Hellgrammite:** What? Our separate ways?

**Rictus:** Well, I usually spend about six to seven hours in quiet contemplation, thinking about life and death and stuff.

**Hellgrammite:** Oh... well...

**Griffin:** Yeah, but what does—what does Rictus do, Travis?



**Travis:** Ah, yeah. Listen to a lot of Fallout Boy.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Hellgrammite:** I guess I could see what Lorovith is doing.

**Rictus:** Yeah, he seems like he'd be down to party with you today.

**Hellgrammite:** Well, okay. Well, then maybe we could have—

**Rictus:** Yeah, let's get lunch.

**Hellgrammite:** Cool. Cool. Okay, I'll go see what Lorovith is doing.

**Rictus:** Cool, man.

**Griffin:** All right.

**Clint:** Hellgrammite bounds down and... encounter—well, where is Lorovith?  
[chuckles]

**Justin:** I'm down at the edge of the world.

**Griffin:** Yeah, he was sleeping under the stars.

**Justin:** Yeah, you arrive with Lorovith, he is—

**Hellgrammite:** Eeh... not good with heights.

**Justin:** You see that he's... during the night, he slept poorly, and he struggled to sleep well. So he used a spade to dig himself a small trench, to try to help him sleep a little bit better, to make a little space to nestle in there. It kind of pissed the people in the surrounding tents off. Like, they didn't love it.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] That's what I was gonna say! Yeah, your next door neighbor is Dusty Underside, a blue collar dwarf, came over like:

**Dusty Underside:** Hey... that's really loud. Please, if I don't get my forty winks, I'm gonna be a real grump in the morning.

**Lorovith:** I apologize, friend—

**Dusty Underside:** Hey, great voice! Great voice you got there.

**Lorovith:** Great voices talk alike, that's what they say. All right.

**Hellgrammite:** Lorovith, could you come away from the edge little bit? I've got a thing.

**Lorovith:** I suppose.

**Hellgrammite:** You know, heights. [chuckles] I thought we could hang today! Come on! Let's go to town.

**Lorovith:** Walk with me, Hellgrammite, I was thinking about going to the eggs and having a fuck about.

**Hellgrammite:** All right, as long as it's not near the edge.

**Lorovith:** May I make a confession to you?

**Hellgrammite:** Yes, of course.

**Lorovith:** I know we don't know each other well, but I... I slept fitfully, and I wanted to discuss it.

**Hellgrammite:** Tell me.

**Lorovith:** Do you remember the singer? The racist singer that we all hated.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Hellgrammite:** The racist singer?

**Lorovith:** Yes, Fortuna, the racist singer we all hated. Do you remember?

**Hellgrammite:** For argument's sake, I'll say yes.

**Lorovith:** Okay... well, she was killed in the last competition. Do you remember?

**Hellgrammite:** I remember—

**Lorovith:** Now, my other query to you. Do remember Stink Bud?

**Hellgrammite:** Oh, yes, I remember Stink Bud.

**Lorovith:** Well, this is my confession to you, and the thing I find so troubling. I wished both of them dead.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Hellgrammite:** Oh? Well, I mean—

**Lorovith:** I wished—I didn't just... I don't know how to say this, but I wished both of them dead... and then they were. It's as though my... I could not shake the feeling as I slept that my wishing made it so.

**Hellgrammite:** Ah... listen—

**Lorovith:** I know, I know.

**Hellgrammite:** Don't feel bad! Listen, we're in a competition where it's every creature for themselves. And—

**Lorovith:** I know! I know that, but it—

**Hellgrammite:** There can be only one! You know?

**Lorovith:** There's some part of me, in some sense, I can't help but feel that because I didn't connect with them more, in some sense, or because I had such a distaste for them, I wished them dead, and then they... they died.

**Hellgrammite:** Have you—have you wished anyone else dead?

[pause]

**Hellgrammite:** This long pause does not bode well for our friendship.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Lorovith:** For some reason, I feel as though you would be unaffected.

**Griffin:** All right. [chuckles] Yeah, you've made your way to the eggs. Within which you saw Absolute Zero head in... which one did he go into? Egg two, I want to say? Egg three. And had this incredible spiritual experience, and did not quite reveal to you the nature of that experience. But you make your way to these eggs. There are eight eggs all lined up in a row, and they are all—feature these sort of openings with a Roman numeral above, labeling them one through eight. And they all appear to be open.

**Lorovith:** Hellgrammite, I apologize for the modeling start to the morning. Pah! [claps] Now we have arrived, and now our business may begin. So, here's what I ask of you. I wish to have a fuck about in the eggs. But when I saw Absolute Zero—

**Hellgrammite:** Yes!

**Lorovith:** It seemed that he got a little, if you'll pardon, scrambled!

**Hellgrammite:** Mm-hm.

**Lorovith:** So, what I'd like for you—

**Hellgrammite:** [laughs]

**Lorovith:** Hellgrammite, to go inside and have a fuck about. And then come out and tell me what happens.

**Hellgrammite:** Oh... fine!

**Lorovith:** I will remind you, Hellgrammite, you do want to stay on my good side, just in case, hey! [laughs]

**Hellgrammite:** I do! [chuckles] I do indeed.

**Lorovith:** Just in case! [laughs]

**Hellgrammite:** [chuckles] Ah-ho-ho.

**Clint:** And he tries to give him a hearty pat on the back, but he—

**Justin:** Rock just frigging solid. Like claw—like mandibles, claws, talons, rock, no good.

**Griffin:** I love this. If this is the thing you do with your time, Hellgrammite, it will be what you—what you do with your time.

**Justin:** I kind of lured him into it. If he doesn't want to—

**Griffin:** Right, of course.

**Justin:** That's fine. But I wanted to get—this is what—I was gonna find somebody to try to do this with, and Hellgrammite came to me, so...

**Griffin:** Right.

**Hellgrammite:** No! Hellgrammite's up for it.

**Griffin:** All right. You have these eight eggs all lined up, numbered one through eight. Which one do you choose?

**Clint:** Egg two, Brutè.

**Griffin:** Egg two.

**Lorovith:** Wait, wait, wait! Wait, wait, wait! Wait, wait, before you—before you take egg two, wait—

**Justin:** Egg two is the one he went in, right?

**Griffin:** Egg three is the one that—

**Justin:** Okay, egg two. Egg two is fine.

**Lorovith:** Before you—wait, wait, ah...

**Justin:** And he runs back to his satchel, and he finds some like paper. And grabs some charcoal out of the fire, because it's the morning, so the fire is burned down.

**Lorovith:** Here. Try to take some notes, because it is absolutely no help once they emerge. So please, if you could try to document while you're in there, for posterity, you understand?

**Hellgrammite:** Are you sure you do not want—

**Lorovith:** Oh, I am absolutely sure! Yes. I would never try to rob you of the limelight of history, or what have you.

**Hellgrammite:** All right... all right, well—[chuckles] All right, bud. [chuckles] I shall do so! Into egg goo—

**Lorovith:** Step on it!

**Hellgrammite:** I go.

**Griffin:** Okay. You step into the second egg. Lorovith, you see Hellgrammite just kind of vanish into the darkness, as he passes through the aperture, into egg number two. And as soon as he vanishes into that darkness, the aperture shuts, and he is now trapped inside.

**Justin:** Lorovith puts his ear on the outside of the shell.

**Griffin:** Give me a perception check, just to see how much of the following scene you are able to hear.

**Justin:** Perception check is a...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Natural 20.

**Griffin:** Holy shit—

**Travis:** Ooh.

**Griffin:** You can hear it all, my man.

**Justin:** Oh, thank god, that would have made—honestly, Griffin, from an engineering perspective, Rachel thanks you, certainly. [chuckles] Then we don't have to—

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Yeah. Sure, yeah. No, I guess you guys are not going to have to, you know, hop off the call,, as—

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** As Hellgrammite has this moment.

**Travis:** I'm not in this scene, so I was barely paying attention anyways.

**Griffin:** He's definitely not paying attention—

**Justin:** Okay, good.

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure.

**Justin:** Good.

**Griffin:** Okay, you—

**Justin:** I would prefer Travis—I worked hard for this information. I'd prefer Travis not have it.

**Travis:** Yeah. Travis will hear it. Rictus won't know it.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** You... you are standing in a small, obviously darkened room. But the darkness in here is so absolute that the dimensions of this space become like really, really abstract, instantly. And you can tell that you're standing, but you can't really see the ground beneath your feet. You're just kind of like in this void. And as you are in there, you see a sudden light that it takes your eyes a moment to adjust to. And you see this diamond shape come out of the central stone of your Grimoire on your wrist. And you see the holographic projection of Chris, your personal assistant, appear. And a voice comes from this this projection and says:

**Chris:** Hi! I'm Chris, your arcane assistant here on the island. I noticed that you've chosen to spend your time within one of our eggs today. Are you at all familiar with what awaits you inside?

**Hellgrammite:** No, not in the least bit, Chris.

**Chris:** I see. These eggs are one of our most profound educational tools. You see, the Ziggurat is just as much a learning facility, as much as it is a sort of locus for all magical energies that enter into the—

**Hellgrammite:** Locust? Did you say locust?

**Chris:** *Locus*.

**Hellgrammite:** Oh, right.

**Chris:** And we have designed these eggs to transport their inhabitants to one of the eight eras of our world, so that you can experience what it was like during that time. And that is what we will be simulating for you today. I say simulate, but it will be just as if you were present during this era in... which egg are we? Egg two? Quite ancient history. [titters] And if you are ready, we will begin with the simulation.

**Hellgrammite:** I am ready as rain.



**Chris:** Then let us away into the second era of our history, the era of manifestation.

**Griffin:** Suddenly, you are not standing on ground anymore. You are floating in an infinite vacuum of nothingness. You look down at your hands and there's nothing there. The paper and charcoal is not there. Your hands are not there. You are not there. You are floating in a void of oblivion. And your consciousness is still very much kind of present and aware of what is happening. And no living thing is supposed to see what you are seeing right now.

And for just a moment, you feel absolute, frigid terror coursing through your body, as you are confronted by nothing. And then, in an instant, there is a spark of light, hundreds of miles in the distance, just a faint flickering. And then from that, radiating in all directions, is everything. In this moment, you are witnessing what is essentially the Big Bang. You are present at the birth of the extant universe. And it is all sort of flying past you, consuming you, creating you. I need you to make a wisdom saving throw for me, please.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** It would be a fifteen.

**Griffin:** Fifteen? Fantastic. It's too much. It's too much for you to kind of bear. Your mind is having trouble, kind of comprehending the nature of creation itself. But this energy, you realize, is something profound. It is something extremely powerful. And you decide you can, kind of—you can kind of ride the wave a little bit. If you open your mind and you kind of just let this moment of creation happen around you, you allow yourself to be a part of it, rather than trying to like wrestle with comprehending it. You realize that there is incredible power here.

That even though it is some simulation of, you know, prehistoric past, you feel an enlightenment settle upon you. And you feel arcane energy absolutely coursing through your body. You feel yourself thrumming with energy and understanding. And you feel yourself connected with magic in a way that you have never even come remotely close to before. I'm going to

allow you to open up the list of spells, anything that's not claimed second level or below, you can just pick. And we are going to add that to your spell sheet.

**Clint:** Wow.

**Griffin:** As you have this moment of magical enlightenment.

**Clint:** Okay...

**Griffin:** It needs to be a wizard spell, with a check mark next to it. And not yellow, that means that it has been claimed. But any cantrip first level or second-level spell, you will now get to choose sort of outside the boundaries of how we will otherwise normally assign these things.

**Clint:** Well, I'm looking down the list—

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Clint:** And you know what? I think... I think that it's only appropriate that I get Scorching Ray.

**Griffin:** Yeah, okay! That's a second-level spell, I believe? Yes. Okay, I'm going to put that in your name. Please go into your character sheet and make sure you add that spell to your list under the second-level spells that you all now have access to, as you are third level. Travis, we will also now need to get rid of the homebrew version of your original spell that we kind of came up to—we came up with, because it is a second-level spell. And now just give you the second-level version of that.

Wither and Bloom, you can now add that. Okay, yeah, you feel heat radiating through your body, the primal heat of the universe. And you know, other times where you all have gotten these spells on the island, you—it has been through like the absorption of some memory of one of your fellow fallen Aspirants. This is not that. This is like, you have been bestowed a, you know, a modicum of power from the Big Bang itself. It is—it is pure in a way. It still shows up as a like crystal in your Grimoire. But it is—it is yours.

And in this moment, like you feel like you may be the only person here who has two kind of natural inherent spells, one that you were born with, and one that you have been granted in this moment of enlightenment. It is a wild and overwhelming feeling. With a fifteen on your wisdom saving throw, I'm going to say that you are definitely going to be thrown for a loop. You are definitely going to be sort of in this weird, euphoric, elated state, similar to the one that Absolute Zero was in.

But you have not lost your mind, which maybe would have happened if you had rolled a very bad wisdom saving throw here. And then suddenly, as it sort of came upon you, the Big Bang vanishes. And the aperture opens, and your eyes adjust to normal sunlight. You are standing there, again, you are holding the paper and the charcoal in your hands, but you also have this new crystal in your Grimoire, and a new spell at your command.

**Hellgrammite:** [chuckles] Look out! Look out, baby! Hellgrammite's ready to raze some... well, hell... grammite. [chuckles] Ho-oh-oh-oh-oh! You, *you*, big guy!

**Justin:** I'm not there.

**Hellgrammite:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** He's not there. Yeah, about halfway through, he got bored and headed out.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** I'm over it. I'm over it. Now, you hear—as you come out, though, you do hear a splashing, off near the falls.

**Lorovith:** Hellgrammite! Hellgrammite!

**Hellgrammite:** Hah...

**Lorovith:** You lived!

**Hellgrammite:** Where did you... let me show you... what do you mean I lived?

**Lorovith:** I'm thrilled!

**Justin:** All right, and about halfway through, he got bored, and it started getting kind of hot. So, he went to the falls and had a swim. Wash off, get a fresh start on the day. About the time the Big Bang started, he just—his attention started to wander. So he went over to the falls and had a splash, just like... just like feeling good.

**Lorovith:** How was it?

**Hellgrammite:** Oh, amazing. Shall I show you the paper and the charcoal?

**Lorovith:** Out of curiosity, yes!

**Hellgrammite:** [titters] Watch this!

**Justin:** What do I—what's on the paper?

**Clint:** Yeah, nothing's on the paper. But all of a sudden, it bursts into flames.

**Justin:** Whoa?

**Clint:** And so does the charcoal!

**Lorovith:** Amazing!

**Hellgrammite:** I know. [chuckles] I'm a—I'm a pyromaniac! [sings] Maniac on the floor!

**Lorovith:** I would head into one of these other eggs immediately if that hadn't taken you so long.

**Hellgrammite:** Ow, ow, ow.

**Clint:** And he puts his hands in the water to put out the fires.

[The Adventure Zone Royale theme music plays]

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