

The Adventure Zone Royale: Episode 23

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Justin: Hello, my friends! It's Justin Tyler McElroy! These are my brothers, and their names escape me, help me out, guys.

Travis: It's Travis.

Griffin: Chunwell.

Justin: Welcome to The Adventure Zone. Our dad is not here with us, but you are, and it is the Max Fun Drive, which means right now, if you like our stuff, go to maximumfun.org/join. If you can chip in five bucks a month, you can help keep this show rolling, and we'd really appreciate it.

Travis: We sure would!

Griffin: You get access to a bunch of bonus content when you do that, including this year's bo-co for TAZ, a new entry in the TAZ Charlieverse world, actually TAZ CousinVerse, where five of our six kids got together to plan a one-shot for us. It's darling, it's madcap, and it can be yours, along with a suite of other bonus items.

Travis: So you can go sign up and become a new member, you can upgrade your membership, or even just boost by a couple dollars if you're not ready to move to the next level. It's all there, maximumfun.org/join. Let's get to the episode.

Griffin: Previously, on TAZ Royale.

Lorovith: Doober?

Doober Sweetleaf: Yes?

Lorovith: We're very close to the end of it now, Doober. You play yourself a jaunty little tune, in case the noises get too upsetting.

Hellgrammite: Listen, I gotta go! Those bugs are to protect you! Later!

Rictus: Wait, no, hold on, I saved your life, man! You owe me.

Hippocrates: Fine. It's an antidote. I don't know to what, but... there's probably a reason it's here.

Griffin: Then he turns around very quickly and starts to charge downward, down the hallway, as he screams even louder:

Scorpo: Run!

Griffin: As another corpse mound, a horde of zombies, begins to pour into the room, ready to eat your whole body and ass.

[The Adventure Zone Royale theme music plays]

Justin: I was thinking this morning, as we were getting ready to record, I'm really—when we stop doing this, I'm really gonna miss this character. I love doing this guy. This guy makes me so ha—

Griffin: Lorovith?

Justin: Lorovith, it makes me so happy. Like, I really, I get excited when we're gonna sit down and record, because I love do—I love this guy.
[chuckles]

Griffin: I never really know what he's—I never really know what any of your guys' characters are gonna do next. It is my favorite thing about this season, is I don't know what the fuck—Hellgrammite is always up to some shit. Lorovith's always up to some shit. Rictus is always on his own shit. It's like—

Travis: Doing his best.

Griffin: Doing his best, I—

Justin: Griffin, you say that, but I've been attempting to parent a boy for three straight months! I don't know, I'm not throwing you curveballs, man!

Griffin: Yeah, that's fair.

Justin: I adopted a man—[chuckles] I adopted a man—

Griffin: The fact that you adopted an adult man is itself, I think, a curveball.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: Yeah, but it's past you, dude! It's on the ground! [chuckles]

Travis: Rictus is just out here battling his inner demons, Griffin. I don't understand—

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Travis: He's trying not to be an evil murderer, as he has to murder people.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Travis: He's Death's avatar. I don't understand—

Justin: And Dad's a little shithead. [chuckles]

Travis: Yeah!

Griffin: And Dad's a nasty fucking shithead.

Justin: A nasty—

Clint: Which, ironically, everybody's falling in love with! It's a—

Griffin: Yeah!

Justin: Yeah, a nasty little shithead everyone loves.

Griffin: People can't get enough of Hellgrammite being nasty. Welcome back, everyone, to TAZ Royale, our battle royale winner-take-all season. We are in the middle of the sixth Trial of the Octave Conclave, to decide who will become the new member of the Octave, the god wizards that rule the world of the Fold! We are in the Trial of Necromancy, where you all have—

Justin: Sorry, Griffin?

Griffin: Yeah?

Justin: Griffin, I'm sorry—

Griffin: Go ahead, go ahead.

Justin: We're in the Trial of Necromancy, I—Dad has rearranged his setup due to a recent My Brother, My Brother and Me McElroy Family Clubhouse recording.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: He has rearranged his setup, so there's a picture of him—

Griffin: A big picture of Dad.

Justin: A huge picture of him pulling open his shirt with a Superman-style C underneath it. It is—I am not super easily distracted on these. It's incredibly distracting.

Griffin: It's usually distracting—

Justin: It looks like the—

Griffin: It's sitting—it's like a poster-sized picture, sitting on a tripod, and it does look like the entrance to his funeral, like—

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: [chuckles] Hey, Dad? Hey, Dad?

Travis: If there was a wreath there?

Griffin: Yeah!

Justin: Kidding aside, man! Put that somewhere easy to find, okay?
[chuckles]

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: [guffaws]

Travis: No, no, no! Don't—

Griffin: No! Dad, don't take it down!

Justin: No, no, no! Dad, Dad! You're gonna lose it! Dad, you're gonna—
you'll—

Griffin: You're gonna lose it.

Justin: Forget when you put it if you move it right now. [chuckles]

Travis: Leave it right there.

Griffin: Leave it there.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: We are in the Trial of Necromancy. You all are taking shelter inside of a manor that is under assault by the fallen 52 wizards, fallen 52 Aspirants, who have died in the previous trials, who have come back in undead form, assaulting the mansion. In the last episode, we lost a couple of real sweethearts. The Spider, Tommy Falcon, both lost to the undead horde.

The rest of you are kind of scattered across the first floor of the manor. You are on a sort of mission to find the... whatever is powering the barrier, cutting you off from the second floor, so that you can take up a more defensive position up there. Let's start on the east end of the house. Lorovith, you're on the ceiling of the library.

After stowing Doober Sweetleaf inside of a piano, you have followed Burger Man and The Spider into the office, saw Burger Man murder The Spider. Before running into the office, you did sneak a peek at the rune that is powering the barrier inside that office, before Burger Man locked himself inside.

A corpse mound has smashed through the window, and witnessing Burger Man's crime, has sort of been aggroed onto him. So, you are on the ceiling in the library and you can see the corpse mound sort of bashing against this door, trying to gain access to the office where Burger Man and the rune are hiding. Lorovith, what do you do?

Justin: The door's shut?

Griffin: The door is shut, yes.

Justin: The blob's trying to get through the door, to Burger Man.

Griffin: Yeah, it is a mound of corpses. It's not like a slime situation.

Justin: I know, okay. Sorry, I didn't—

Travis: You get it, though?

Justin: I didn't call your blob the right thing.

Griffin: Our words are—our words are all we have, Justin.

Clint: [laughs] Literally!

Justin: No, Griffin, your words are all you have. I carry a knife all the time. [chuckles]

Griffin: That's true, that's fair.

Travis: And I got big muscles!

Justin: I'm watching! I'm watching for a second.

Griffin: Yeah, dude! That's a totally fine answer to this situation.

Justin: What are they doing? What are the—what is the mound doing?

Griffin: They're smashing against the door. Give me a—

Travis: Like a blob against the door.

Griffin: Like a blob would do against the door. Give me a perception check. I'll give you advantage. You have a nice vantage point here on the—on the ceiling.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: 13 and a...

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: Nine.

Justin: 13.

Griffin: It's not going to take them long before they are able to smash in this door. It is already starting to rattle off the hinges and creak and crack in the center of its big, wooden frame. With that perception check, you can also hear Burger Man just screaming from inside.

Travis: He's in a real pickle.

Burgger Man: Aah! Help me! I'm in a real pickle!

Travis: Yeah.

Hellgrammite: I guess he can't cut the mustard. [chuckles]

Rictus: We need to ketchup to him.

Hellgrammite: [laughs]

Griffin: Justin, do something, please, I'm dying. Please, they're going to keep going until we do something. Unless you want to keep waiting and wait for them to just smash the—

Travis: Let us help him!

Clint: Oh, good!

Justin: I'm going to cast Shield on myself.

Griffin: Okay, great! Shield, that increases your AC, I believe, by a flat amount.

Justin: Yeah. And now I'm going to body slam into the big mound of corpses. [chuckles]

Griffin: Oh, wow? You have a plus five bonus AC, that's awesome.

Justin: Yeah, I don't have—that's the only point I'm—they're just completely distracted. If I shield myself, then I could just completely get the drop on this big mound of corpses. It's taken a beating in my head. It's got to be pretty well beaten up. So, you know, and I—and also, I've got to be honest with you guys. There's this big symbol in there that I saw, that I got a peek at. And like I—this is not really about Burger Man for me, but if he hits that and gets a cape? I'm going to fucking flip out, okay? [chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles] Yeah, sure. Yeah, absolutely. Okay, so, this is a surprise attack. I'm going to grant you advantage. This is the same corpse mound that you blasted with a fireball earlier. And so, it is—it is somewhat

diminished in size. So, you're going to make this attack with advantage here, as you leap down from the ceiling and smash down onto them.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: It's a 14—

Justin: 14 and a...

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: 18!

Griffin: 18, okay, yeah, absolutely. With an 18, you are going to hit. You have this shield on, right? And you're landing sort of in a mosh pit. So, I'm not going to make you take like any sort of falling damage here, as you leap down from the ceiling. Instead, I think I'm going to confer that falling damage onto the corpse mound, using Newton's third law.

Justin: Sure. Tough but fair.

Griffin: So, go ahead and first roll your unarmed attack damage, and then you're going to add 1D10 to that.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: Four.

Griffin: Oh, nice. Plus a D10?

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: Seven!

Griffin: Nice, okay—

Justin: Plus four, 11.

Griffin: Okay, you come crashing down onto this corpse mound. As you do, you fully flatten a couple of—a couple of zombies. You see—you see—let me see, let me pull up the list. Who's dead? You hear the poor frame of the goblin demolitionist, Powderkeg Kelly, get just completely squished underneath you.

There's a few of these guys you have now taken out. The corpse mound is less than half the size it was when you first sort of fed Tommy Falcon to it. With that, Burger Man, you can see, you know, one of his eyes peeking out of his sesame seed bun, peering through a crack in the door. And he shouts:

Burger Man: Yeah! Get him! Do it, Lorovith!

Griffin: I think reflexively—

Lorovith: Nothing more from you, meat boy!

Griffin: [chuckles] With that, the corpse mound is going to counter, and—

Justin: Eh, well, real quick.

Griffin: Oh?

Justin: I would like to use my bonus action to activate my large form.

Griffin: Oh, shit, okay. Remind me what—

Justin: Because I'm fighting a big mound of fuckin' bodies, so I'm gonna go ahead and do that. [chuckles]

Griffin: Give me a—what does that mean? Your large form.

Justin: I'm big. For 10 minutes, I'm big. I have advantage on strength checks, and my speed increases by 10 feet.

Griffin: All right, cool. You stand up from the pile of corpses you have just kind of dispersed a bit, and you are now considerably larger. You also have a plus five to your AC, which is great. Because of their diminished size, they

are not going to make three attacks against you. They are only gonna make two.

Justin: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I'm gonna roll this on the table.

Justin: And it is worth noting that it, also, because of my Hill's Tumble, it has received the prone condition from me. Now, I don't know how a big mound of bodies goes prone, but—

Travis: You know! Like bowling pins!

Justin: So, it's not leaping into an attack. It's gotta take a second to re-comodulate.

Griffin: Yeah! I mean, they'll spend their move action to stand up, but you also landed in them, so they're not having to move particularly far. Okay, so, the first thing that happens is one of these zombies lurches upwards and tries to sink its teeth into your shoulder. What's your AC? What number am I trying to beat here? You *really* don't want these guys to hit you.

Justin: Oh, you'll never—you'll *never* beat nine!

Griffin: It's a nine plus five—

Justin: [yells out] You'll never beat nine!

Griffin: So, a 14.

Justin: Plus, wait, hold on, plus my shield.

Griffin: Oh, I'm not sure that's—

Clint: *Ooh!*

Griffin: That's not gonna matter, my man. That is a 19 plus two—

Justin: Plus my shield, Griffin. [chuckles]

Griffin: Nine plus five is 14. We've covered this. That is a—that is a 21. Okay—

Travis: Your AC is nine?!

Justin: I mean, I don't know? That's what Griffin said? I'm a wizard? I mean, why does a wizard need better AC than nine?

Travis: You're a big, ol' dude?!

Justin: I don't know, man. It's just, it's been nine the whole time. But can I just say, it could have been a lot higher, and I still would have taken a beating there.

Griffin: Yeah, that's a big—that's a big hit.

Justin: With that 19.

Griffin: Okay, so—

Justin: It's all semantics at this point.

Griffin: You see this zombie, it is rotted sort of beyond your ability to recognize them—crashes into you. Its teeth sink into your shoulder, and you are going to take... god dang, 22 points of damage. And now I need a constitution saving throw. You are trying to beat a DC 15.

Travis: I see here that Lorovith has not great dexterity, I think is the AC problem here.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: I believe that is a crit fail.

Justin: [in a silly voice] It's a critical failure, my lord. [chuckles]

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: Sorry, I don't know why I talked like that. I'm a failure in podcasting as well as adventuring. [chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles] Lorovith—

Justin: [laughs] Neither entertaining nor confident.

Griffin: As the teeth of this creature sinks into your shoulder, you feel an immediate sort of burning sensation begin to course—

Travis: When you pee.

Griffin: Throughout your body, when you pee from this wound. You are going to take... nine points of necrotic damage. And that is going to continue until you are able to save from it. There's another attack coming your way too. Another zombie of the corpse pile is going to try and claw at your legs. They do not succeed, that is a three on the dice. Okay, you see Burger Man shout through the door—

Justin: Lorovith's like:

Lorovith: Fool me once! *Aah!*

Griffin: [chuckles]

Lorovith: Missed me, sucker! *Bleh!*

Clint: [chuckles]

Lorovith: Blood-blood-blood!

Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: Burger Man through the crack in the door shouts:

Burger Man: I'll help!

Lorovith: I swear to god, Burger Man!

Griffin: He shoves his meaty mouth up to the crack in the door and grease begins to shoot out of it, covering the ground where the zombies are currently trying to get to their feet, creating a slippery, slimy, greasy hazard. And he says:

Burger Man: I did it! I'm a hero!

Griffin: Let's jump over to the western side of the manor, where when we last left our heroes, we had four wizards in the hallway. We had Scorpo, Rictus, Pranklin, and Hellgrammite. And you were investigating these sort of servant quarters here on the west side of the house before a corpse mound smashed through the door, leading Scorpo to race away in flight. Hellgrammite, you're on sort of like the farther end of the hallway.

Clint: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Through the door leading back into the kitchen, you see the corpse mound has smashed in and accessed. So, you guys are basically facing two corpse mounds now that are coming at you from kind of two directions. From the servant quarters, you have a couple exits that are not blocked by zombies here. One leading to the north, toward the stables in the north sort of wing of the house. Or you can head back into the dining room that Rictus and Pranklin just sort of ran in from.

Clint: Hellgrammite calls out:

Hellgrammite: Through my psychic link, I realize Lorovith is in great danger.

Rictus: Where Where?

Hellgrammite: In the library! You guys got this covered, I'm going to go help Lorovith.

Clint: And he bolts through the door into the dining room—

Rictus: Have this covered?!

Travis: Rictus yells after him. [chuckles]

Griffin: Scorpo just sighs, as Hellgrammite bails on them. Okay, I will say that you will be able to make it all the way to the library. I don't think that there is a path you can cut that does not go through Haze and Blaze. Unless you're lying, and you don't actually want to go through the library?

Clint: I thought they were dead?

Griffin: No—

Travis: Well, they're all zombies, Dad, so in a way.

Griffin: I believe it was Raze and the other one, Frasier. [chuckles] Frasier.

Travis: Daze?

Griffin: Daze, yes, that have been killed. Blaze and Haze are both kind of just sort of very slowly crawling, chasing after Rictus. So, unless you want to attempt some sort of maneuver here to kind of get around them, they're right flat in the center of the room. They will get opportunity attacks on you, if you want to try to make it to the library in one turn.

[pause]

Justin: Hey, Griffin, that's not fair—[chuckles] that's not fair. Dad thought he was—[chuckles]

Griffin: Dad thought they were dead, so there's—

Justin: Dad thought they were dead. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Griffin, make undead!

Griffin: No.

Clint: Okay... So, I'm going to use... Misty Step.

Griffin: Okay?

Clint: With Misty Step, I can teleport up to 30 feet, to an unoccupied space I can—space I can see.

Griffin: Easy. Yeah.

Clint: So, I'm going to teleport to the door—

Griffin: Four, five, six, yeah, easy.

Clint: To the library.

Griffin: You can for sure make that. That's—that is no problem. You see Blaze and Haze reach up towards you, "*Beh!*" And you just kind of effortlessly vanish and reappear behind them. They turn and they look back at you, and then they decide that's not worth it, they still have their eyes set on Rictus, and they continue their crawling. That way, as you make it past, you're able to make it into the library, as you—

Clint: No. No.

Griffin: No? No.

Clint: No, I'm going to stay right here.

Griffin: Okay!

Clint: And he's going to mental—using the psychic link, he's going to tell Lorovith:

Hellgrammite: I'm on my way, friend! Hang in there!

Griffin: Okay. You take up a position by the door. And we hop over to Rictus. Rictus, you have corpses to the left of you, corpses to the down, and—

Justin: [sings] Here I am, stuck in the middle.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [chuckles] You've got Scorpo and Pranklin in the hallway with you. Scorpo is just kind of like taking very slow steps backwards, away from the corpse mound, unsure where to head next. What do you do?

Travis: I freeze time.

Griffin: Interesting. This is going to be—so, we haven't done this yet, since you first sort of discovered the power. The way this is going to work, when you cast Time Stop, it is a, I believe a ninth level spell in the D&D book. So, you are not supposed to have this yet. We have tried to convey this narratively through the fact that, when you've used this spell, it has been pretty fucking... pretty wild. Give me... it's going to cost you nine spell slots, right? It's going to cost nine. So like—

Travis: It is?

Griffin: If you have that, you can spend that. Or you can attempt to do it just as a third level spell, and you are going to have to roll sort of a wisdom saving throw to make sure that you can kind of handle the power. So, I'm offering you—there's a safe way of doing this, that is very expensive. Or you can attempt to use this spell at like your current level, with potential side effects. I have a plus five on wisdom saving throws, Griffin. Let's do that!

Griffin: Okay. I want you to, before you cast the spell, go ahead and use a third level spell slot.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And I want you to make a wisdom saving throw. The number that you're trying to beat here is a 17.

Travis: Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: That is a nine, plus what?

Travis: Plus four. Or a plus five.

Griffin: Okay. For a total of 14.

Travis: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: So that's it, right? You said I had to beat—what was it? You said an eight?

Griffin: A five. Yeah, you just had to beat an eight. No, you have not reached the 17 DC. Scorpo—

Travis: Ow! My brain!

Griffin: Scorpo and Pranklin look to you as you sort of reflexively sort of shout, as you try to channel this spell. And what happens is a bubble of sort of opaque light begins to envelop you and spread around you. You see yourself inside of this like area of frozen time, and you've been in it before.

And whenever The Gentlemen cast it, you were fairly good at resisting that kind of effect. Here, you conjured this sphere of light. And as it spreads out around you, you realize with horror that you are also frozen in here. You have created this sphere, and then sort of trapped yourself immediately inside of it.

And Scorpo, you can see through the bubble, like looks at you sort of in a panic. And Pranklin, hm... Pranklin's gonna try—Pranklin's gonna try to save

you. He's gonna roll a DC 17 also, to try to get in there and try and save you. And I'll roll this on the table. He is adding a... a four to this. You need a 14... All right—

Travis: That's my boy!

Griffin: Pranklin reaches—

Travis: That's my boy!

Griffin: Pranklin reaches in and grabs onto your elbow, and with considerable effort, manages to pull you back out of the bubble. Give me, as you sort of return to real time, I want you to give me a perception check, as you are sort of removed from the bubble.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: A 13 plus five, 18.

Griffin: Okay. With an 18, as you're sort of pulled through the edge of this bubble, looking back into it, you see a very, very faint image of a tall humanoid figure wearing a sort of tattered cloak. You realize, as you are pulled out of this bubble, inside of there, you can see this entity that has called itself Death that you have communed with a couple of times in the past.

He doesn't appear to be moving, he doesn't appear to be like completely all there. The image is like fairly staticky. But as you're sort of pulled outward and the bubble dissipates, you do witness that. Pranklin gives you a little sort of violent shake.

He is a—he is an orangutan, he's very, very strong. And you manage to come to your senses. And as you do, you see that time has passed as you were in here. The corpse mound has caught up to Scorpo, who is attempting to sort of hold off the crowd, the corpse mound. I'll give you another action here, since that one is—

Travis: Okay! Option B! I run to Scorpo.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And grab him.

Griffin: Okay?

Travis: And cast Thunder Step.

Griffin: Okay, cool. You can move other things with Thunder Step?

Travis: Yeah, you can move somebody... blah, blah, blah, the... You can also teleport one willing creature of your size or smaller. They must be within five feet of you when you cast a spell, and there must be an unoccupied feet within five feet of your destination space—

Griffin: Okay, great.

Travis: For the creature to appear in.

Griffin: Are you just sort of grabbing him and pulling him away from the corpse mound? Or—

Travis: I'm grabbing him, and then we are going to Thunder Step next to Pranklin by the door to the dining room.

Griffin: Okay, cool. And the corpse mound is going to take some damage here, right?

Travis: Correct!

Griffin: Or they have to roll something.

Travis: They have to make a con save, beat a 14.

Griffin: Okay. Let's see. That is a—what is their con save? Probably not great, they're a pile of zombies. Their con save is... No, that's not going to do it. Yeah, so they are going to take—wow, holy shit, man!

Travis: Yeah, they're gonna take—

Griffin: That's a lot of damage.

Travis: 18—3D10. 18 points of damage.

Griffin: Okay. As you do that, you see that, from around sort of the corner that you have teleported behind, you just sent a few full zombie bodies like flying backwards off the corpse mound, back through the door outside. You have—you have reduced the size of this mound considerably. I will say, as that happens and you appear by this door next to Scorpo, the door behind you leading deeper into the other side of the servant's quarters where the other corpse mound is starting to sort of move in to sandwich you, they have arrived on the scene.

Travis: Okay, I grab the other two and head towards the dining room.

Griffin: Okay. You head back into the dining room. As you break in, Blaze and Haze have made their way over and they are sort of the first thing you see as you come in here. The other thing you see is kind of Hellgrammite posted up—posted up—

Travis: I give him a—what the—

Rictus: Come on!

Travis: Like a big—

Rictus: Hellgrammite?!

Hellgrammite: I had to fight my way through those guys.

Rictus: No, you didn't!

Griffin: [chuckles]

Hellgrammite: How do you know?

Rictus: Because I'd already weakened them and they look exactly the same!

Hellgrammite: Well, I didn't say I effectively fought 'em?

Rictus: Then you'd be dead!

Hellgrammite: No, I'm just, I'm dodgy, I'm fast.

Griffin: Lorovith, we're gonna hop back over to you. You are standing sort of in this pile of now greasy zombies remaining from this corpse mound. Burger Man is now just kind of—

Travis: Just like your fanfiction, Griffin.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah. [titters] Greasy—this is—

Travis: These oiled up...

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: Mm-hm!

Travis: Glistening.

Griffin: These lubed up, shambling dead.

Justin: Okay, change of plans.

Travis: It's from Griffin's fanfiction, The Fucking Dead.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: Okay, so, change of plans here.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: We are going to—

Travis: Rick Grimey gets in there with the greasy zombies! [chuckles]

Griffin: You don't even have to change that! Grimes is fine!

Justin: Yeah, but he doesn't want to get sued. So like—

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: I'm gonna have a change of plans here. I am going to try to force my way into the room with Burger Man. So, 'cause I'm clearly outmatched here, I cannot take this thing mano... E-Blobbo. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah! [chuckles]

Justin: So I think that... I think I'm gonna just push my way in.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: And yeah, not—yeah.

Griffin: The door is weakened enough that it's not gonna put up much of a fight. Really, what this is gonna be is a strength contest to Burger Man. He sees you coming in and he is not going to—there is no way he will be down with opening this door at all. So, this will be just a straight up sort of strength contest. Burger Man has rolled a... 12. Very good.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: So, that's a one.

Griffin: [chuckles] The other one was an 11. So, 11 is close enough to 12. You push the door and it budes a bit. You hear him say:

Burger Man: Eh, no thanks! You can—I already got 'em greasy, so it should be easy enough to finish 'em off, I think! You got it—you got it, man! And then I'll come out. Once you finish them off, I'll open it up, for sure.

Travis: What's the smell like in there, Griffin?

Griffin: Not great.

Justin: Well, okay.

Lorovith: Fine, Burger Man! Have it your way!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [guffaws]

Justin: I climb up the wall—

Travis: Yeah!

Justin: Using Spider Climb. [chuckles]

Griffin: Okay. All right, you're just—

Justin: That's my one advantage that I have, is I can climb up fuckin' walls! Because I'm still—

Griffin: Okay, yeah, for sure!

Justin: Under the influence of Spider Climb. So, I'm going to climb away, because I can't—this thing will kill me, and I don't want to die. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Justin: No one will protect Doober.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely. Okay, you hop up onto the nearest shelf, scale upwards, towards—back towards the ceiling. The zombies, you notice, are

still kind of fixated on you. After having like come down and jumped down and smashed a few of these guys, their ire has been drawn towards you. So as you climb, they are kind of trying to fruitlessly scale the shelves behind you to—

Justin: Oh, and they're slippery too, I bet it looks so stupid.

Griffin: They're really slippery. They look like total dorks.

Justin: They have grease all over 'em from the spell.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah. So you are able to—

Travis: Even with their super well-defined muscles and great hair.

Justin: This is what I plan. I'm luring them away to save Burger Man's life.

Griffin: I will say that is an easy thing for you to do with your spider climbing and their greasiness. Like, you—as you move up around the wall, the corpse mound kind of just like shambles and slips and slops away. And you are able to get them out, away from the door. As soon as they are clear from the door, you see Burger Man smash the door behind them.

He looks at you, looks at the corpse mound, looks back up at you at the ceiling, and then he is going to bolt for this sort of rear door to the outside, away from you and the corpse mound, running and shrieking and leaving a trail of grease behind him, as he—as he hooks it, out of sight. Leaving the door to the office now open with the red rune visible inside. What do you do?

Justin: I mean, I don't think I can—well, okay, well, let me ask you, I feel like I've done an action and done a move, so...

Griffin: We're not in initiative right now.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: So, we're having some liberties—

Justin: But he's clocking me still?

Griffin: The corpse mound is following you, yes. In effect—

Justin: I'm trying—here's what I'm trying to determine, Griffin.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Justin: Because I ca—I mean, we have a map here, and even with this, I can't... Like, if I'm already up here, and I like want to make... It's just the symbol, man. I really want to touch that symbol.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah. The cape it be—the cape it bestows is truly legendary.

Travis: You got any fire?

Justin: Yeah, but, like, I, as an—as an entertainer, I'm hesitant to just cast Fireball again, you know?

Travis: Well, they are covered in grease?

Griffin: They are pretty greasy.

Justin: This is non-flamme—grease is non-flammable.

Travis: What do you mean it's non-flammable? [chuckles]

Griffin: What are you talking about?

Travis: It's burger grease!

Justin: Hey, guys? He cast Grease. Grease is non-flammable. Explicitly non-flammable. In 2024 rules, Grease is explicitly non-flammable.

Clint: But it's 2026.

Griffin: We're actually using the—we're using the 2018 classic ruleset, where I believe the wording is extremely fla—no, if you—I'm not going to railroad you into using another Fireball against these—

Justin: Hey, no, I'm tell—I just want you to—I—you guys are going to be really embarrassed. And I don't—I want to save you guys—

Travis: I already am!

Justin: The embarrassment.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: I'm playing Dungeons & Dragons professionally, Justin. How much more embarrassed can I be?

Justin: [laughs] I am—wait a minute. What's it doing right now?

Griffin: Sloppin' and slimin' and slidin' around the floor of this library, trying to chase after you on the ceiling.

Justin: Oh, fuck him then. He's not going to catch me. I'm going to bolt for the door.

Griffin: Into the office?

Justin: Yeah, he's not going to get me, he's got grease all over him.

Griffin: I'm not even going to make you—you don't even need to roll—

Travis: And you're on the ceiling!

Griffin: You're on the ceiling—

Justin: I'm on the ceiling! He's not going to expect this!

Travis: You're Lionel Richie-ing all over the place.

Griffin: So, you kind of double back, and the corpse mound is just simply not agile enough. It probably wouldn't have been even if it wasn't all greasy. By the time you reach the door to the office, they are on the other end of the room, struggling to—

Justin: And I'm like—I want to sprint towards the red symbol and like dive, so that the cape materializes as I'm flying through the symbol. And I'll like mid-air just like fly out the window, is what I'm hoping will happen.

Griffin: Some of that—

Travis: The cape was a thing you invente—like, what if it happens? And then it became so real for you, that you dove.

Justin: Yeah! Yeah! Yeah, Trav, again, I am playing Dungeons & Dragons professionally.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: You are absolutely—that is the writ of law.

Griffin: Okay, as you—

Travis: Can you describe the cape slowly and in detail, Griffin?

Justin: [chuckles]

Travis: As it materializes?

Justin: Yeah, okay, so, episode one, this guy finds a magical cape, and he fights—

Travis: It's all been prelude to this moment.

Griffin: Right, to this.

Clint: I miss that show.

Griffin: You run into the...

Justin: I run in—no, Dad, you're the only one. I run into it and—they threw a cape con every time Dad's alone in the room.

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles]

Justin: [chuckles] I want to walk up to the symbol and step into the red symbol.

Griffin: Okay. As you move towards the symbol—

Justin: Eh, I want to do a quick arcana check and then step into—

Griffin: Okay, cool!

Justin: I'm really bad at arcana, so it's—

Travis: The cape energy is so strong.

Justin: It's more of a formality at this point.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: It's whispering.

Justin: Fuckin' hell, man.

Griffin: Holy shit, man.

Justin: It's a one. It's a one. I just—

Griffin: So this is—

Justin: I really...

Griffin: This symbol—

Justin: This is why I think there's a cape! [chuckles]

Griffin: This symbol, you've never seen before, but it is magic, and that must mean cape. So, you've never felt more certain of anything in your life than the fact that when you step into this symbol, it will—it will—you'll gonna—you—something's going to happen to you.

Justin: I step into it, and I accept my cape!

Griffin: Yeah, you step into the circle. As you step into the circle, it flashes bright red.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Griffin: The cape must be invisible or something.

Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: The cape must be one of those invisible, weightless, intangible capes. But it's there, it's like your own invisible cape, like in that movie *Crash*. And you step in, and there is a flash of red light from the symbol. And as that red light flashes, you hear the corpse mound outside begin to get whipped into a frenzy.

Rictus: Cape? Cape! Cape! Cape! *Cape! Cape.*

Griffin: The symbol disappears, and you hear a loud whining hum emit through the first floor of the house, as the barriers separating the first and second floor dissipate. The other thing that you can see now through this like sloppy pile of corpses that has approached the door to the office now, behind them, on the other end of the library, some of the shelves appear to be kind of nested inside one another. They slide out away from each other, forming a stairway up to a balcony overlooking the library up on the second floor, that has appeared as you have removed this seal.

Travis: So, that's another way up to the second floor?

Griffin: Yes, there are now a few ways up to the second floor. You can see there's... let me use my ping tool. There's this guy here on the west side. There's basically the main foyer entrance, there's one to the north, and then one in the library, and one in the servant quarters past the now two giant piles of zombies that are creeping through there.

Justin: Okay, well, I want to look at—I want to look in the desk. That didn't do anything for me, Griffin. I want to at least want to look in the desk before you leave.

Griffin: Okay. Give me—

Justin: Before your all-seeing eye departs from me, I would just like to look in the desk real quick to see if there's a knife or some coins.

Travis: Or a candy bar.

Griffin: Give me an investigation check. You stop to check out the desk as the corpse mound inches ever closer.

Justin: No, it's having like no... it had no shot. You made that very clear.

Griffin: Give me an investigation check—give me an inve—Justin, I've got a box of toys over here.

Justin: 16. [chuckles]

Griffin: 16, great. There's a really nice fountain pen in there, man.

Travis: Ooh!

Lorovith: It's not even that nice.

Griffin: As you open up the desk drawer, you reach inside, sort of rooting through there quickly. And you find a small sort of cylindrical vial that is full

of a sort of luminous red liquid inside of it. You are going to now, also, before we leave you, thank you for reminding me, you are going to take six more points of necrotic damage from the toxin that is coursing through your shoulder. And you may make another charisma saving throw, trying to beat a 17 to break, to break, to fight off this contagion.

[sound of dice thrown]

Justin: Oh. Well, a three?

Griffin: A three is not going to do it. Okay, you are still poisoned, feeling pretty bad—

Justin: Oh, wait, I'll drink the vial!

Griffin: Okay!

Justin: It cured me.

Travis: And what's that growing out of your shoulders? Whoa!

Griffin: Whoa!

Justin: It's a cape potion!

Griffin: You chug the potion, the red potion, and it's—man, I'll—you know what? A little cape comes out. A little cape comes out of the wound. A little cape comes out of the wound in your shoulder, okay? So it's not like a full cape, it's like a half cape, but not in terms of length, but in terms of width. You have a little, basically like a little napkin that's going over your shoulder now that is blood red.

Justin: Like Captain Marvel has sometimes.

Griffin: Sort of, yeah, so you have this cool, red—

Travis: Scarf.

Griffin: Quarter cape, I guess, sort of scarf now. This is a potion of superior healing that you have chugged here, and also it gives you a cape. With the potion of superior healing, you are going to heal for... I do not—oh, 8D4 plus 8. You are still poisoned, but you are—

Justin: 84 plus eight, 92!

Griffin: Eight—[chuckles]

Justin: That's a lot.

Griffin: 8D4, plus 8.

Justin: I don't know why you couldn't do the math for me, but thank you.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, go ahead and recover 8D4 plus eight hit points.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: You still are poisoned. Look at all those big fuckin' pyramids—wow, dude! That's a pretty goddamn good roll for 8D4 plus eight.

Justin: Yeah, man.

Griffin: The 8D4 is 27, you heal 35 points.

Justin: Great!

Griffin: You chug, you feel a bit better, you still definitely feel this burning sensation in your shoulder, but it's—now you have like a cool kind of cape coming out—

Justin: Lorovith looks at the blob and licks some blood out of the corner of his mouth and says:

Lorovith: Bad news, pal!

Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles] The sloppy corpse mound begins to come towards you—

Travis: Piss itself!

Griffin: It is loud, as it sort of shambles and groans, but through that sound, you can hear another sound sort of echoing through the library, coming from deeper in the house. It is the sound of piano strings being scratched in a sort of frantic rhythm.

[theme music plays]

Justin: Wow, I really knock us out, you know?

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Oh?

Justin: It's times like this that I appreciate us more than ever. And if you're feeling the same way, listener, maybe it's time that you head on over to maximumfun.org/join.

Griffin: We have been a part of the net—well I mean, TAZ has been a part of the network since it started. That is how much trust that they showed in our—this little startup project. And here we are, defying the odds, 12 years later, still rolling. We've been able to really, really put a lot of work into this show, hire people to work on it and continue to make it what it is, thanks to listeners like you.

By going to maximumfun.org/join, you pick the shows you listen to. Some of the money that you give each month goes to Max Fun, to help us with the administrative side of things that we don't know how to do. And the rest of it goes directly to the shows that you pick to support. It is an incredibly direct way of keeping, you know, stuff that you like going in the world.

Travis: And there's all kinds of thank you gifts for becoming a member or upgrading your membership. For just \$5 a month, you get access to hundreds and hundreds of hours of bonus content—

Justin: That can't be right, Travis.

Travis: It is, because it's not just from this year—

Justin: Subscription prices for all of the—

Travis: I know.

Justin: Big services and I—there's just no way. It's such an incredible value.

Travis: Oh, it is, Justin, because it's not just this year's bonus content, it's every year of Max Fun Drive ever's bonus content. Including this year for TAZ, like we said at the beginning, we did another CousinVerse, but we have TAZ: Lords of Crunch, a TAZ episode we recorded with Matt Mercer, the full CharlieVerse catalog, all kinds of other stuff.

Including, we've been putting live shows up there early before they get published to the main feed. That's a benefit to being a Max Fun Member. And all the other shows on Max Fun put bonus content up in that feed too, and you get access to all of it for just \$5 a month.

Griffin: If you jump up to 10 bucks a month, you get an enamel pin from the show of your choosing. This year's design for us is a beautiful little Doober Sweetleaf. But you also get access to ad-free feeds for the shows that you—for most of the shows on the network, including this one.

So, if that is something that is important to you, you can get access to that as well by going to maximumfun.org/join. We are pretty well behind pace at this point, if you're listening to this on release day. We have—we have not even hit the halfway point of where we were hoping to be at during this year's drive.

So, we really could use the help now pretty desperately. So, please, maximumfun.org/join, go ahead and pick the level that works for you. And

you're gonna get a ton of great stuff, and the great feeling of knowing that you're, you know, helping keep us and an organization as rad as Maximum Fun afloat for another year.

Travis: And like we said! It's not just the new members that count towards our goal, it's also upgrading members. Maybe you've been \$5 for a long time and you're like, "You know what? I'm ready to move up to \$10 or \$20," or whatever. Or maybe you're like, "I wish I could move up to the next level, but I'm not ready yet." Well, you can become a boosting member by just committing an extra like \$1 or \$2 or whatever a month that you can do. All of that counts towards our goals. All of it is appreciated. Any support we get is appreciated, really. All of that can be done at maximumfun.org/join.

Justin: If you think about the services that you like, the way almost all of them work is that you pay some money and then you're allowed to use the thing. But with our podcasts on the Max Fun Network, we don't want anybody to be left out of those, so we just put 'em out there. And we hope that if you can pay for 'em, you will, because it's the nice thing to do, it's a good thing to do.

And maybe you'll pay a little bit more for the folks that can't. You know, that's the whole idea behind the thing. So, if you find yourself in a position to do that, you know, that's kind of the arrangement. So, we really appreciate it. [chuckles] Just go to maximumfun.org/join right now, before you forget.

Travis: Back to the adventure!

Justin: Yeah, let's get back into it.

[theme music plays]

Griffin: Back into the dining room. Hellgrammite, you've been sort of caught here. What do you do? Are you going into the library, or are you going to continue to sort of stay put here in the same room as Pranklin and Rictus and Scorpo and Haze and Blaze?

Clint: Hellgrammite is going to go into the library.

Griffin: Okay?

Clint: Right there, in that door.

Griffin: Okay?

Clint: And then immediately down into the drawing room.

Griffin: Okay, you come into the library. I will say like, you gain some information as you come in the library. You couldn't quite see the situation, but you do see this greasy corpse mound. You don't see Lorovith, because he's sort of tucked away in the office, and you see this staircase that has appeared up to the second floor.

Clint: More importantly, he doesn't see me, right?

Griffin: He does not see you, no. So, you are going—you definitely hear this sound of the scratching piano strings, down in the drawing room. And you make your way down into there. You see a room in a state of great disrepair. Lorovith caused quite a mess in here. He threw a fireball and a guy out that window.

There's blood all over the ground and toppled chairs and shattered bottles. And you see there is a piano that this sound is coming from. And right next to that piano, you see a zombie. And this zombie is about five times the size of any of the other ones that you have seen before.

It is also wearing a cute little conical hat that you recognize as the hat that Pip, the enlarging, reducing gnome that Doober dispatched in his duel, has come into the room and is kind of pounding on this piano. What do you do?

Travis: Griffin, this is so important. When the gnome enlarges or reduces, does the hat—

Griffin: The hat stays the same size, yes. The hat stays—

Travis: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Griffin: Of course, yeah, no, I got you.

Clint: So, Pip is the kind of guy that goes to a party, and if there's a piano, he just... he has to—

Griffin: [chuckles] Yeah, he's a real douche about it!

Clint: He's gotta play.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, yeah. He sits down and you hear him start playing Wonderwall. He starts playing some Ben Folds tracks.

Clint: Okay, so Hellgrammite is in that drawing room.

Griffin: Yes. For what it is worth, Pip doesn't seem to give a shit that you're in there. Pip's eyes are blood red, as you have seen sort of a few times before, and his gaze is fixed squarely on this piano.

Clint: Okay. Does Hellgrammite have any indication that Doober is in the piano?

Griffin: He has no indication. I don't think so, right? Did you reveal—

Travis: Well, you said Doober was... was Doober strumming the strings?

Griffin: Yes, you have an indication that someone's in there, but I don't think Lorovith communicated to you that Doober has been stored.

Clint: Okay.

Justin: I wouldn't communicate to any of you where Doober is stored!
[chuckles] That's privileged information.

Clint: So then I'm going to have a—Hellgrammite, as long as he hasn't been noticed by Pip, take a—take a little stop and use his psychic link to cast around, to see if there's...

Hellgrammite: Hello, you in the piano, are you okay? Are you good? Have you got this?

Doober Sweetleaf: Is that you? Hellgrammite, save me, please! I don't want to be squished! I don't want to be bitten and killed!

Hellgrammite: Oh, shnikey... If I don't help you, you'll tell Lorovith, won't you?

Doober Sweetleaf: Yes, definitely!

Clint: Poop. Okay, so Hellgrammite casts Infestation on Pip.

Griffin: Okay?

Clint: And he's going to shoot a bunch of maggots.

Griffin: Oh? Nasty.

Clint: Flesh-eating maggots that eat the flesh of the dead... Hey, I'm just going to lean into it a little bit.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely. So, this is going to do 2D6 damage after he—if he does not succeed on the constitution saving throw. Okay, Pip is going to make a con save here. That is a... 13. Does a 13 save?

Clint: Nope, doesn't make it. Constitution save of 14.

Griffin: Okay, then go ahead and roll your 2D6 damage against Pip.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: That would be a four and a four. That would be eight.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: I think poi—wait, is it just poison damage?

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: And it also moves it five feet away.

Griffin: Yes, so does this work on large... Yeah, no, it doesn't say anything about... Yeah, so yeah, this will—this will move him five feet. You can move... Oh, but you roll a D4, so it is a random direction. So, go ahead and roll a D4. I will say, if you roll a two on this D4, and you roll to the south, you will knock him out the window.

[sound of dice thrown]

Clint: That's a two.

Griffin: That is a two, man. [chuckles] That is very, very, very fortunate.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Pip, the gnome, takes a big, wobbly step backwards, trying to swat some of these maggots off of him, trips over the ledge of the window and falls outside. As he does that, you see him stand and his eyes meet yours, and flash red, as he sort of transfers over the aggro onto you. However, Pip is going to just kind of stand there menacingly for a moment, and then he rushes off into the woods, out of sight. You lose track of him, as he—as he leaves to regroup.

Clint: Okay, I'm going to open the piano and get Doober out.

Griffin: Doober looks at you and he says:

Doober Sweetleaf: Hellgrammite, thank... thank you, I... I always believed that you were good. I think Scorpo is wrong about you, sir.

Hellgrammite: You're like a nephew to me. I mean...

Doober Sweetleaf: You could have just set the piano on fire, and I would have died, and then there would have been one less—

Hellgrammite: Oh, god, I couldn't—

Doober Sweetleaf: Competitor.

Hellgrammite: Oh, no, no—

Doober Sweetleaf: Yes! I thought the—I was like sure that's what was about to happen!

Hellgrammite: [chuckles] Oh, no!

Doober Sweetleaf: When I saw the bugs come out, I was like, oh, time to be eaten by bugs—

Hellgrammite: Okay, yeah, shut up now—

Doober Sweetleaf: But then they went after Pip.

Hellgrammite: Shut up—

Doober Sweetleaf: Thank you, sir.

Hellgrammite: Okay, let's go through this door, and up these stairs, and let's get on to the second floor, okay?!

Doober Sweetleaf: Okay, sir.

Griffin: You're taking him into the foyer?

Hellgrammite: Those stairs lead to the second floor, right?

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely. Easy. Yeah. You are able to take him up the stairs, leading up to the second floor of the building. As you do that, we're going to hop over to Rictus. You are still in the dining room here, with the two

zombies you hadn't quite finished off, and a bunch of—just an absolute World War Z level wave of zombies pursuing you from the west side of the house. You can see Franklin has blocked off the doors leading back down, so you cannot access the kitchen or foyer from here.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Griffin: But the doors that are still open are the one out to the library, and then the doors to the north end of the house that you have not quite explored yet.

Travis: I cast Animate Dead on Daze.

Griffin: Okay, cool... What's that mean, as I try to add Daze back. [chuckles] I thought I was pretty safe in getting rid of his token there, but—

Travis: The target becomes an undead creature, which should be pretty easy for them. On each of my turns, I can take a bonus action and mentally command the creature I made, if they're within 60 feet of me. I decide what the—what action it will take, and where it will move on its next turn. You can issue—

Griffin: Okay, great!

Travis: A general command... And because I am a necromancer savant person, they get plus six health and plus three to attack damage.

Griffin: Okay, well, let me override the HP of this zombie. Okay, that is your action, right? Is using that, and then—

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: You have bonus actions. Okay, I'll go ahead and let you move Daze here. What's your—what's your goal here?

Travis: My command is; run interference for us.

Griffin: Okay. You see Daze look up at you, lacking that kind of like, you know, red, shining aura about its eyes. And it clambers over to its two sort of former teammates, Haze and Blaze, and grabs them by the ankles, and begins to claw at them. Give me... give me an arcana check, please, Rictus.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: That's a one.

Griffin: Okay, that's not good. That's not very good.

Travis: Magic happened here.

Justin: One of the lower numbers.

Griffin: One of the lower numbers. Really, really, really bad rolls today, guys. I know I usually wait until afterwards to give my notes on how you roll—

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: But really—

Travis: In the locker rooms! Yeah.

Griffin: Really, really, really super bad rolls today. Okay, yeah, Daze begins to pull at Haze and Blaze, whose attention turns back towards Daze, and it does appear to be—they do appear to be distracted for the moment.

Travis: And we run for that north door.

Griffin: Okay. Scorpo and Pranklin are sort of ahead of you here because they realize that is sort of the only safe option for them. And you head into the kind of north hallway. There's a few doors leading out of here, one sort of to a meeting room that has some small windows you can peek into and see. It appears to be empty.

No one has gone in there, undead or otherwise. You see at the end of the hallway, another door leading into like a sort of parlor and then back into the dining room. And then there's this sort of smaller carpeted staircase heading up to the second floor that is now, it is unprotected by a barrier.

The other thing you see is, opposite end of the hallway, you see two figures—the sort of plague mask of Hippocrates, who you ran into before he scattered and ran off out of the dining room. And standing over Hippocrates, you see Hasty Jane, who is holding in her hand a candlestick that she is using to make a series of pretty brutal melee attacks against Hippocrates, on the ground.

She is shrieking as she brings the candlestick down. You can't tell sort of how many times she's done this, but Hippocrates seems to be in pretty bad shape as she brings it down. The next blow, he kind of like manages to hold off. She rolls a 10—

Rictus: Jane?!

Griffin: Her attack roll. She turns around super quick, as she hears your voice. She, you know, her face is covered in blood, and she looks back at you sort of in a panic, and looks back down at Hippocrates and takes a step away. She says:

Hasty Jane: I had—I didn't have a choice, I... I thought for—he was moving towards me and he... He just, he—I could tell he had sort of a menacing aura, and I... I mean, look at him! He looks kind of scary! And I... Ah, fuck...

Rictus: Hey, it's okay.

Griffin: She's going to bolt. She turns on her sort of afterburner boosters and goes flying up the carpeted staircase, up to the second floor of the house, where you lose sight of her again. Hippocrates is on the ground in front of you, and he is sort of—he is—he is gasping for air. He, you know, has this mask on, so you can't quite tell how he's doing exactly, but he appears to be pretty injured here.

Rictus: Hey, the thing you gave me, the vial you gave me, will it help you?

Griffin: Hm, he... shakes his head "no." He says:

Hippocrates: But you gotta... you have to move me... They're going to catch me, I can't walk.

Rictus: Okay, Scorpo, Pranklin, can you guys get him upstairs?

Griffin: Scorpo kind of sighs and looks back at you, and he says:

Scorpo: Are you sure?

Rictus: Yeah? We need all the help we can get to survive, and I'm pretty sure when we kill people, they turn on us. The zombies target us.

Griffin: Pranklin pulls on your arm and gestures back to the doors, where he has started to kind of reinforce them. Pranklin is kind of walling up the places that you come through. He points at the door at the far end of the hallway, and gives you a thumbs up, basically saying like, "I'm going to go—" " Give me an insight check, just a baseline insight check to tell how well you can kind of communicate with Pranklin, sort of non-verbally.

[sound of dice thrown]

Griffin: God damn it, guys.

Travis: Fuck!

Griffin: That's a one. He points at that door and then gives a thumbs up, as if to say, "Cool door, huh?" You're sure he says, "Cool door, huh?"

Travis: I thumbs up too, man!

Griffin: Probably sandwiches behind there. Okay. Okay, it's—

Justin: [chuckles]

Griffin: It's going to take both you and Scorpo to haul Hippocrates away. Are you taking him up the stairs that Hasty Jane just bolted up or where—what's your plan for sort of trying to pull him away?

Travis: Yeah... I was going to go help Lorovith, but if Pranklin's not helping, then yeah, I'm going to help Hippocrates.

Griffin: Okay. You grab onto Hippocrates and Scorpo, and you begin to pull him up the stairs. Give me a perception check, please.

Travis: Okay, I'm pretty nervous now.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Okay, 16 plus five, 21.

Griffin: With a 21, you are able to hear and very quickly process. Back down the stairs, back towards the hallway in the direction that Pranklin was heading towards, there is a loud crashing noise. And you hear [monkey sounds], as one of the corpse mounds gets to the door before Pranklin does.

Travis: That's my boy. That's my boy, Griffin.

Griffin: Yeah. What do you do?

Travis: I burn all of my spell slots and freeze time.

Griffin: Whoa, holy shit, okay. All right, how many spell slots—let me look at your character sheet, I want to—I want to make sure we're doing this sort of honest. Because if you don't have enough, you're going to have to do it the nasty way again.

Travis: I don't even know, that was a panic maneuver. One, two, three, four—

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, absolutely, I could hear it in your voice.

Justin: Yeah.

Travis: I have eight available.

Justin: That shows a real human love for Pranklin that I think is really touching, Trav.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, if you want to do this, you're going to have to do it the bad way.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: All right, man.

Travis: For Pranklin!

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: Fuck!

Griffin: No, okay—

Travis: And I burn eight spell slots—Griffin, please, for Pranklin!

Griffin: No, you don't—you don't burn the eight spell slots, you didn't—

Travis: No, I'm saying—13 and I burn eight spell slots. Please! For Pranklin!

Griffin: Oh, I see, you've reached the bargaining phase.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. As you drop—

Justin: Sad.

Griffin: Hippocrates, Scorpo first of all, goes:

Scorpo: Ah! Fuck! What?! Why?!

Griffin: As he sort of now has to carry all of the weight of this large bird man wizard up the stairs by himself. You leap down, you see this mound of corpses begin to grapple Pranklin with its first attack. You reach outward, and project another bubble outward from yourself. Another bubble of opaque white light that spreads slowly away from you. But again—

Travis: I'll delete my cantrips too, Griffin! Please!

Griffin: [chuckles] You are unable to control this spell, as you are surrounded. And through the bubble, you see this corpse mound begin to pull Pranklin inwards. You are frozen in time, unable to help, unable to do anything. You see one of the larger zombies in the corpse mound sink its teeth into one of Pranklin's legs that it is pulling back inward, and he howls a terrible howl. And then from right next to you, you hear a voice say:

Voice: Well, if it isn't my master.

Travis: No—

Voice: That's what you said, right?

Travis: I'm—

Voice: Master of—

Griffin: You can't talk. You are frozen in time.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Voice: Master of death? Master of time, too? Looks like you've really, really got a great grasp on it, Rictus. I told you, and so did The Gentleman, these powers are beyond your control, and yet you thought you could hang on to them and make them your own... because that's what your family does. It is the only thing they know how to do. I am so disappointed in you.

Griffin: He says. He looks around and he says:

Voice: I don't know what you've done here. We are in a time outside of time right now, and that is, I guess, the only reason that I'm able to appear here in the Fold and speak to you. But if you can't control this and you keep using it, bad things are going to keep happening.

Griffin: Pranklin's going to take another attack here, as another zombie reaches forward and scratches along its leg. It seems to be doing sort of surface level damage, but he is trying very desperately to pull himself away from the mound, kicking backwards sort of helplessly into the pile. You can't speak, but you can think right now, Rictus. What's going on?

Travis: A lot of feelings about hubris.

Clint: [chuckles]

Travis: A lot of thoughts about the difference between master and servant.

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Travis: And wanting to be a conduit, rather than a control panel.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I think that this whole challenge, as much as Rictus has been looking forward to the necromancy challenge, I think that this has been a real like bastardization of his concept of necromancy, and like this like—these people died in the pursuit of the goal of this thing, and now their bodies are being used to continue to kill more. And not really given any kind of, I don't know, respect?

Griffin: Okay. Give me an insight check, please.

Travis: Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

Travis: That is a nat 20.

Clint: Finally.

Griffin: Holy shit, okay. Death drifts in front of you, between you and Pranklin, and lowers his head towards you. Close enough that you can sort of see through the darkness of the cowl. You see the kind of milk white sort of skull inside. And you are not afraid of this. It feels sort of natural to you, to have this kind of audience with Death. And in this moment, all of those thoughts sort of going through your mind, Death is recognizing too.

You can feel like a kinship with him that you have kind of aspired to kind of known, is your desire—known that it's something that your family hasn't always gotten right. All of these like pretty complex realizations are happening, and you can feel a kind of understanding from him. He takes a step back and looks at Pranklin behind him. He looks at you, Rictus, he says:

Death: You wish to save the ape?

Travis: And Rictus thinks:

Rictus: That's my dude.

Griffin: Okay.

Death: I can't keep helping you, Rictus, if I don't know... that you are ready to leave behind your family's ways, and become my instrument. If I help you now, I'm going to require collateral to know that you're ready to do this.

Griffin: And he holds out his hand, and grasps and pulls backward. As he does that, you see the ghostly figures of your great, great, great grandfather and his dad, Rictus Ravenwoods I and II, who have been with you in ghost form this entire time, pull towards him. And they are holding on to you as well. Death says:

Death: This is unnatural. This is unnatural. The mind is not meant to persist eternally, and that is what your family has built. This ruined world, this hellish contest, these are the wages of the eternal mind. Give them to me, and I'll free you.

Rictus: Yes.

Griffin: As you think that, you see a look of shock in the faces of your ancestors. And then you see a look of absolute stone-cold fear in their faces for just a moment, before Death squishes his hand into a fist. These ghastly apparitions vanish, and suddenly, you are freed from this bubble of frozen time.

[The Adventure Zone Royale theme music plays]

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Justin: What's that URL again? I can't forget—guys, I keep forgetting! What's the URL? Help me!

Griffin: Yeah, sure, it's a maximumfun.org/join, Justin. I assume that's the URL that you're talking about in such a panicked way. Yeah.

Justin: I want to support all these podcasts I love so much.

Griffin: Well, yeah, you—I mean, you make 'em. But the folks at home can also support them by going to maximumfun.org/join, and becoming a member and support us financially as we continue to make this show, and try and make it a really good thing. So, please help us out! [Maximumfun.org/join](https://maximumfun.org/join). Get all the bo-co. Get all the fun stuff waiting for you there and help us out, help keep us going.

Travis: And don't wait, because the Max Fun Drive ends in just a couple of days. It ends, well, maybe—I don't know when you're listening to this, but you know, go to maximumfun.org/join and see if it's still going!

Griffin: Yeah, it's follow the clues to our famous puzzle. Bye, everyone!