

[upbeat music; voice sings, ♪ Let me tell you 'bout my favorite store ♪]

[music distorts and cuts off, Old Derf's recording begins]

**OLD DERF:** Any memoir has gaps in it, right? If a Zima Knight jucked in the woods, was there anyone there to witness? When I do it, I like there to be someone there, just to tell me how I did. It's like in sci-fi shows, you don't know where the bathroom on the ship is. What, do you want to see all your favorite characters pooping? No!

But this part *is* important. This is what I call the crux of the story, and it's strange that I wasn't there for it, but, in this case, there was a time in my life where I chose not to return from The Space Between. I was like, "eh, screw this! Derf needs some Derf time."

I don't know what happened then, but you know what *does* know? The Space. And I a—lucky you, I'm a vessel of the Space. So what I'm gonna do here is I'm gonna sit back, relax, and I'm gonna let the Space take the wheel, as it were. So, uh... record on the tape recorder—already recording because you're hearing this. And let's see what The Space has to say about my time... dead.

[transition]

[doors sliding open as ZapZop enters the morgue]

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Welcome to the morgue.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to the morgue.

**ZAPZOP:** I've—I've been here. Don't—

**MORGUE BOT 1:** [singing] We've been waitin' for you.

**ZAPZOP:** Stop saying that.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** You're in the morgue with us now.

**ZAPZOP:** I know. I know where I am. Enough. Stop.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Would you like to see a dead body?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Dead body?

**ZAPZOP:** Don't—don't offer that to people. That's grim.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** You can poke it.

**ZAPZOP:** I can *poke* it?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** You can sniff it.

**ZAPZOP:** That's... less bad, somehow.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** It is time to check in on the bodies to make sure they are dead.

[door clunks open, the morgue bot starts scanning]

**ZAPZOP:** Okay. I'm waiting for the same guy. You know, the guy who's always shows up. Derf.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Derf Dinkleson. [buzz] Dead.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** He is dead.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Status: dead.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Still dead.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Still dead.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay, let me—get out of the way.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** He is dead.

**ZAPZOP:** [crosstalk] Let—sget—get—

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Would you like to poke?

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Cause of death was cark.

**ZAPZOP:** Wha—a what? What is a cark?

**MORGUE BOT 3:** It is a car shaped like a shark.

**ZAPZOP:** [pulling back the corpse sheet] Oh. Okay, that explains a lot of this damage here.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** That is not something I was able to ascertain by looking at the body. It is just... I am a gearhead. I am something of a gearhead.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** We are all gearheads.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** We are all gearheads.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** We are all gearheads.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Literally and figuratively. Look at my head.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** What are you driving these days?

**ZAPZOP:** You guys are—you guys are powered by *gears*? I...

**MORGUE BOT 1:** We are powered by gea—gear... geer... geern... [concerning sparking and clicking sounds; the morgue bot continues repeating "gear" erratically]

**ZAPZOP:** I would have assumed you were circuit boards or something but Rodd, those are... those *are* gears.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** He has fallen asleep. He has fallen asleep.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** His gearhead is detached.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, you got a chunk of—looks like a... Hold on a second. [ZapZop removes something]

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Ge-ee-ar! Ge-ee-ar! [goes quiet, but keeps sparking]

[morgue door slides open]

**VOICE:** Oh yo yo yo yo yo! Yo, yo yo yo. Oh... yo!

**ZAPZOP:** What the...

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Hello, welcome!

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Hello! Hello!

**ZAPZOP:** Uh... sorry—

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to the morgue, you work here. Welcome to the morgue, you work here.

**VOICE:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. Oh—

**ZAPZOP:** *You* work here?!

**VOICE:** Yeah. I'm the coroner.

**ZAPZOP:** You're the—?

**CORONER (VOICE):** Yo yo yo.

**ZAPZOP:** I've been here like nine times. I've never seen you before.

**CORONER:** Pfft, yeah, mission accomplished! I've got my agents here, yo! I just programmed these... I spin up these, uh...

**MORGUE BOT 1:** [gears falling out, pinging] Gear!

**CORONER:** Okay, this one needs... so...

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Gear!

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, this one's having some trouble.

**CORONER:** I got a little alert on my data pad here that one of 'em went down. Yeah, I spin up these AI bot agents, and, um...

**MORGUE BOT 3:** We are here to help.

**ZAPZOP:** Wait—*they're* here to help or *you're* here to help?

**CORONER:** Well, I'm here to help them do *my* job.

**ZAPZOP:** So all the times I've been here, you were technically here. You just weren't working.

**CORONER:** [slightly offended] Yooo. Yo yo yo. I was working.

**ZAPZOP:** [unimpressed] Okay.

**CORONER:** See, you're stuck in this mindset of like, number of hours you work. I got these guys. Every hour that these guys work is an hour I'm working, so I'm working twenty-f—

**MORGUE BOT 1:** [insistent] Gear! [clicking, pinging]

**CORONER:** Okay.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay.

**CORONER:** Uh, lemme get inside this guy.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, these gears are grindin' pretty bad here.

**CORONER:** Yeah, I just got—I got another little bot here that I use to repair this bot. So I program this bot—[unzips bag]

**SMALLER MORGUE BOT:** I am a smaller morgue bot.

**CORONER:** Yeah, we got this one goin' here.

**SMALLER MORGUE BOT:** I am a smaller morgue bot. [scampering around mechanically]

**ZAPZOP:** Do you know how to do *anything* here?

**CORONER:** I programmed this—!

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Gearrr!

**CORONER:** Oh, this one's kind of messed—okay. Put this—yeah, I know how to put this littler bot in this bot and then do its magic. [coroner puts the smaller morgue bot in; it starts moving a little less frantically]

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, but did *you program* it?

**CORONER:** I... well, I—so there's another bot in my office that, uh, that I programmed to program this bot. [takes the smaller bot out again]

[the smaller morgue bot continues to run around in the background, occasionally knocking things over]

**ZAPZOP:** [under his breath] My Rodd. [louder] So you don't do anything.

**CORONER:** Pfft!

**MORGUE BOT 3:** He sort of vibe morgues a little bit. He sort of vibe morgues.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Vibe morgues. Vibe morgues.

**ZAPZOP:** That's not...

**CORONER:** Yeah. Here's the thing with—with vibe morguing... is—

**ZAPZOP:** No. That—[sigh] There are certain locations where you shouldn't vibe, and a morgue is like, maybe number one.

[morgue door slides open again]

**MORTICIAN:** [sounding very old, walking with a cane] Hello! Hello, what's all the hubbub down there?

**CORONER:** Oh!

**ALL THREE MORGUE BOTS:** [chorusing as they remember this is a Very Important Part of Their Job] Welcome to the morgue. Welcome to the morgue.

**CORONER:** Yo yo yo!

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Welcome to the morgue.

**ZAPZOP:** I've spent hours in this morgue, and this is the most active I've ever seen it.

**MORTICIAN:** I'm the mortician here.

**ZAPZOP:** *What?!*

**MORTICIAN:** This is my, uh, grandson, is the coroner.

**CORONER:** Yo yo yo.

**ZAPZOP:** Oh, my Rodd. Okay.

**MORTICIAN:** Of course, the bots, his bots.

**CORONER:** Gramps, how are you? You look... good?

**MORTICIAN:** Yes, so good. Very good. Except for my body parts. There's a bad—*very baaad!* Just very, um, broken, leaking. [laughing raspily] Heheheheh.

**ZAPZOP:** Leaking?

[the mortician leaks a very phlegmy cough, which splats on the ground]

**ZAPZOP:** Oh... good Rodd. Alright. Listen, is there a waiting room that I can just avoid all of you in? I'm just waiting for my friend here to wake up.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** No.

**MORGUE BOTS 2 & 3:** No waiting room.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** There is the front door, which opens directly into the room of bodies.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, no, I'm aware.

**CORONER:** Yeah.

**MORTICIAN:** That's the way we always did it. You just come right in where the corpses are.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** [scanning] Your friend is still... [buzz] dead.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Dead. Status: dead.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Still dead. Still dead.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, that's weird. He's normally up by now. You mind if I just... [touching the body] Here, lemme just...

**MORGUE BOT 1:** You may poke him, yes.

**ZAPZOP:** Alright. Hey! [slaps the corpse] Hey, come on! [snapping]

**MORTICIAN:** Once they're dead, they're usually pretty dead, sir.

**ZAPZOP:** [letting the body go] No, but this guy, he's got a whole thing where he always gets back up, so I'm just waitin' for him.

**MORTICIAN:** Hmm. Okay.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** It sounds like you are grieving. Would you like to speak to the counselor?

**ZAPZOP:** I'm not—No, I don't need—I—listen, check your records. This is Derf Dinkleson, right?

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Past performance does not guarantee future results.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Status: dead.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Still dead.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Death comes for us all.

**CORONER:** Yo, yo, yo, it looks like the bots got this. My... people are fallin' off my live stream, so I'm going to head back to the office.

**ZAPZOP:** Your *live stream*?!

**CORONER:** Yeah. I'm a—I'm a—

**MORTICIAN:** My grandson.

**ZAPZOP:** What—what are you—

**CORONER:** Yeah, I'm live streaming my bets, my bets. My, uh, prediction market bets.

**ZAPZOP:** What, Zi-Ball bets or something, or?

**CORONER:** Yeah, a lot of Zi-Ball. Uhh, political races, orse races, predicting what clothes some people will wear, like, guessing the frequency people say, like, weird words... like, regular stuff.

**MORTICIAN:** He bets on everything.

**CORONER:** Yeah.

**ZAPZOP:** [doubtful sound] Doesn't sound legal.

**CORONER:** Never said it was legal. Just said that my audience is fallin' off, bro! So I'm gonna take my tiny bot back. You're welcome, big boy. Bup bup bup—

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Thank you.

**SMALLER MORGUE BOT:** Goodbye! I'm tiny.

[the coroner stuffs the smaller morgue bot into the bag and zips it]

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Grief counselor mode activated. [refreshing startup chime]

**ZAPZOP:** Oh that's—you don't need to do that, that's fine.

**GRIEF BOT:** [in a rather sultry voice] Hey, how are you doing?

**ZAPZOP:** Whoa, that's a very different voice.

**GRIEF BOT:** Hi, I am a grief bot.

**ZAPZOP:** Well, no, you're a morgue bot that's shift—

**GRIEF BOT:** Are you okay?

**ZAPZOP:** I'm fine. Listen, I'm just waiting for my friend to wake up.

**GRIEF BOT:** From zero to ten, how do you feel today?

**ZAPZOP:** Five.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Welcome to step one, denial.

**ZAPZOP:** I'm not—I'm not in denial! Look—if—look—

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Welcome to step two, anger.

[paper fluttering as the morgue bot fires off a ridiculous amount of pamphlets]

[ZapZop sputtering]

[all three morgue bots repeat "welcome to anger" a few times]

**ZAPZOP:** Stop shooting pamphlets at me. Stop it!

**MORGUE BOT 1:** It is a step in the road to acceptance.

[ZapZop sputters again]

**ZAPZOP:** Listen, I understand that it sounds like I'm grieving here, but my friend comes back to life.

**MORTICIAN:** You can shout all you want, but they don't really listen all that much.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, no kidding.

**MORTICIAN:** You know, I came up at a time where... y'know, you really got your hands in the bodies, you had to check all the bones and squeeze all the spleens. So I'm like you, I'm in this—set in my ways! [coughs]

**ZAPZOP:** You look like you are about to die. I—

[the mortician coughs again, something splats on the ground]

**MORTICIAN:** Well, yes. That comes from touching the insides of these corpses a lot. There's a lot of goo.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** [scanning] Speaking of the corpses, this corpse is still dead. Derf.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Still dead.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Derf's dead.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Still dead.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** You are grieving.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Still grieving.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Grief is not linear.

[stifled snickering]

**MORGUE BOT 3:** So true.

**ZAPZOP:** I'm not grieving, okay? 'Cause my—here—

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Who was Derf to you?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Who was Derf to you?

**ZAPZOP:** Listen—

**MORTICIAN:** Who was Derf to you?

**ZAPZOP:** [exasperated scoff] Okay. He's a fellow practitioner of the Space. He doesn't realize how important he is. I need to take him back to Zima Prime. Okay? That's it.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** He's important to you. Unpack that.

**ZAPZOP:** [bored, rushing] He's part of a prophecy. It's sort of a big thing on Zima Prime. He's been avoiding me. I'm just trying to get him.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Interesting. Unpack that.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Unpack it, please.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Unpack that.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Unpack it, please.

**ZAPZOP:** What does that mean, to unpack it?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Open up your drawer and take it out.

**ZAPZOP:** Stop. I don't—

**MORGUE BOT 2:** We are now going to tell you a personal story to try to have empathy.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay...

**MORGUE BOT 1:** One time my gear stopped, and a small robot was put into my head. I did not know if I'd continue.

**ZAPZOP:** I was here for that. Yeah, you...

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Oh, so you get it.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** One time I was fired from a Holowood film set for attempting to shovel shit back into orses.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, weirdly, I think I was also there for that.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** One time I opened up the drawer, and there was no dead body inside, and so I thought I was doing my job not well. So I went outside to a local bar, and I spilled my soul in front of strangers. I made connections. I made one love connection. We spent five years together. We had a wonderful marriage, and then one day they decided I was not *it*. And they left me. And since then I have been grieving. Not them, but their dog. Do you have a dog? I would like to have a dog.

**MORTICIAN:** We have an open-door policy with the morgue bots. They can sort of go, have a life, pursue their interests—

**ZAPZOP:** Have a five-year relationship and then come back? Wow.

**MORTICIAN:** Here's the thing—they don't do much, you know?

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, tell me about it.

**MORTICIAN:** They just keep track of the dead bodies.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** [scanning] Derf Dinkleson, still dead.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Status: dead.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Still dead.

**ZAPZOP:** Roddddammit.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** And important to you. Unpack that.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Yeah. What is *prophecy*?

**ZAPZOP:** Well, they're very important on Zima Prime. A prophecy tells you who you are meant to be.

[long pause]

**MORGUE BOT 2:** What?

[shorter pause]

**MORTICIAN:** May I make a casual observation from a man who's in his, uh, mid-forties?

**ZAPZOP:** Wow, *mid-forties*?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** He doesn't have much to live.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** One foot in the morgue.

**MORTICIAN:** Right at the ennd! At the end.

**ZAPZOP:** I would have guessed... late nineties, based on how you were shuffling around.

**MORTICIAN:** [mumbling] *Late* nineties. Well, y'know, I'm...

**MORGUE BOT 1:** The chemicals in the morgue are hazardous.

**MORTICIAN:** Very, yes.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** They preserve the bodies, but they deteriorate the living.

**MORTICIAN:** Ironic.

**ZAPZOP:** What, are you just huffin' 'em straight?

**MORTICIAN:** I'm not tryin' to huff 'em, but it's a good high, my brother.

**ZAPZOP:** Ooh, yikes.

**MORTICIAN:** Anyway, I was saying something. You feel like someone who's wrapped up in their work. What do you do to unwind, or for friends? I'm the same way. I never leave this morgue.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, I don't—I don't really do that. I'm pretty focused on this prophecy. You know, it has to deal with the fate of the galaxy, so it's—y'know, it's kind of a big deal.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** What is fate?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** What is fate?

**MORGUE BOTS 1 & 3:** What is fate?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** What is fate?

**ZAPZOP:** Fate is the path that the events of the galaxy are meant to take.

[pause]

**MORGUE BOT 2:** What?

[morgue door slides open, coroner re-enters]

**CORONER:** Whoa, whoa, whoa. I was listening in.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to the morgue.

**MORGUE BOTS 1 & 3:** Welcome to the morgue.

**CORONER:** Okay, yeah, yeah. Good job. It's me—

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to the morgue. You work here.

**CORONER:** Heyy, it's Danny!

**MORGUE BOT 2:** You work here.

**CORONER:** It's Danny!

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Hey, Danny.

**ZAPZOP:** So you're also annoyed by these guys.

**CORONER:** I mean, I can only get so annoyed, you know, 'cause, like, I programmed them. Or, well, I downloaded a lot of programming, and had another—

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, so if you knew anything about programming, you could stop them from doing that, but you don't.

**CORONER:** Well, I, uh...

**ZAPZOP:** Vibe?

**CORONER:** I vibed. I vibed them. Yeah.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Welcome to the vibe.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Welcome to the vibe.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to the vibe.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** In the last five minutes, I have consumed thirty-five thousand gallons of water.

**ZAPZOP:** That's... not true. That's so much water.

**CORONER:** No, that's counting all the data centers that powered the programming.

**ZAPZOP:** Oh, Rodd.

**MORTICIAN:** A lot of the water came out of my bodyyy!

**CORONER:** That's true. We do have to pull some from Gramps here and there on emergencies, but we get him hydrated—

**ZAPZOP:** Oh, that explains a lot. How do you—you *rehydrate* your grandfather?

**MORTICIAN:** Fills me up like a water balloon!

**CORONER:** When we can, when we can. Ah, Gramps, you're the best!

**MORTICIAN:** I... I love this job.

**ZAPZOP:** Seems like it's killing you *very* fast.

**MORTICIAN:** I've come to accept death in all of its forms.

**CORONER:** [optimistically] He's made it forty-six years, so.

**MORTICIAN:** Yes!

**CORONER:** But Z-Man! You've got a... you've got a bead on prophecies, you said?

**ZAPZOP:** Uh...

**CORONER:** Sounds like you might know what things are happening in the future for the old live stream on the betting market!

**ZAPZOP:** Okay, listen, I'm not gonna tell you ancient Zima prophecies for the sake of your prediction market.

**CORONER:** Hey, man, I was gonna go sixties-forties with you, but if you don't want to, it's cool.

**ZAPZOP:** You were gonna offer me the *lower* percentage?

**CORONER:** Well, as a starting offer. Come on.

**ZAPZOP:** No.

[notification ping]

**CORONER:** Oh, zingo! [laughs, typing enthusiastically] I just won!

**ZAPZOP:** I just said "no." What are you saying "zingo" for?

**CORONER:** No, no, no. Mr. Nutcrack just *said* "zingo" three times in under three minutes on *his* stream, which *I* had the over-under on. [laughs again, giddily]

**ZAPZOP:** I barely understood that sentence.

**CORONER:** Just know that I won.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay.

**CORONER:** Anyway, prophecies?

**ZAPZOP:** Listen, these prophecies are ancient, as old as the galaxy itself, some say.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** What was Derf's prophecy?

[brief pause]

**ZAPZOP:** Derf's prophecy and mine... are tightly entwined. I, of course, was destined to be a noble Zima Knight. Whereas Derf... Derf's prophecy is to become a great foe of the Zimas: the dreaded Sparks Knight.

[pause]

**CORONER:** [typing again] I'll put three hundo on that.

**ZAPZOP:** [stuttering] I—that shouldn't be an item on this—what site is this?

**CORONER:** It's in. Uh, this is Smalshy.

**ZAPZOP:** Why am I on Smalshy? Get me off of Smalshy.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** It is not up to you.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Yeah, you can't get off. It's sort of...

**MORGUE BOT 3:** It is just happening.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** It's always, yeah, it's... it's happening

**MORGUE BOT 2:** You cannot opt out.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** It is like death.

**CORONER:** Yeah, you shouldn't'a—you shouldn't have taken that bet, I'll tell you that.

**ZAPZOP:** Well, I'm trying to—I don't want to bet against myself, so I'm betting *on* myself.

**CORONER:** There we go!

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Welcome to bargaining, the third stage.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to bargaining.

**ZAPZOP:** [crosstalk] Okay, alright.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Welcome to bargaining.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** The third stage.

**MORTICIAN:** When I was a kid, we used to bet on throwing a knife at a stranger, and if it would go in or not.

**ZAPZOP:** *W-what?!*

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Yikes.

**MORTICIAN:** So, I mean, I get it.

**ZAPZOP:** ...I don't think you do.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Uh-oh. Bots. Bots. Announcement for the bots. The morgue bots.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Yes.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** We have our—

**ZAPZOP:** What other kind of bots are in here that you would be making an announcement for?

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Grief bots. We're also grief counselor bots.

**ZAPZOP:** It's the same bots.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** What is the announcement?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** The announcement is we have reached our lunchtime according to our union regulations. Time to go to lunch.

[morgue bots begin wheeling away]

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Goodbye.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Goodbye.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Goodbye.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Goodbye.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Goodbye.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Goodbye.

[morgue door slides open, morgue bots exit]

**ZAPZOP:** You got bots that take a lunch break?

**MORTICIAN:** The day they unionized was a sad day.

**ZAPZOP:** Did you *program* these bots to *unionize*?

**CORONER:** I—So I was vibe coding while sleeping...

**ZAPZOP:** [annoyed] *Wow*.

**CORONER:** ...and, I just was—

**ZAPZOP:** [laughing] You *what*?

**CORONER:** Yes, you can—it's to try to make use of all the hours in the day...

**ZAPZOP:** You were *sleep coding*?

**MORTICIAN:** He sleeps for seven seconds every forty seconds.

**CORONER:** Yeah.

**ZAPZOP:** That... is *not* enough sleep.

**MORTICIAN:** He's sleepmaxxing.

**ZAPZOP:** I don't think he is, I think he's *sleepminning*. He's not getting enough sleep. You can't enter deep sleep if you're sleeping seven seconds at a time.

**CORONER:** Yeah, that's true, it's not that deep. So those staccato not-deep-sleep sort of accidentally programmed labor rights into the bots. You know how it goes.

**ZAPZOP:** I don't. I genuinely do not.

**CORONER:** I had *not* bet that was gonna happen.

**ZAPZOP:** Shame you didn't.

**MORTICIAN:** You know, Mr. Zop, I—I can show you my taxidermy room. If no one claims the bodies, I get to stuff 'em how I want.

[brief pause]

**MORTICIAN:** You wanna come look at my hall of corpses?

**ZAPZOP:** You get to *stuff them like you want*?

**MORTICIAN:** Well, they're just loose bodies!

**ZAPZOP:** Alright, fine, I guess. One of you morgue bots, if Derf wakes up, tell him I'm in the other room.

[morgue door opens]

**MORGUE BOT 2:** [from the other room] We're at lunch.

**MORTICIAN:** They're—they're on lunch. They will not answer.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** We do not engage.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** We are not scabs. We are not scabs.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Union rules! Union rules!

**ZAPZOP:** Okay, alr—I get it! Alright.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Union strong.

**MORTICIAN:** Don't talk t—they're gonna charge me time and a half!

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Union strong.

**CORONER:** I have to cover for them on their lunch, so I'm gonna be in here. If he wakes up, I'll—I'll uh... I'll hit you. Just...

**ZAPZOP:** To cover for—? Alright, good.

**CORONER:** Yeah.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** AI is unionized. Wrap your head around that.

[morgue door slides shut]

[transition to a few moments later]

**MORTICIAN:** [unlocking a door] Well, Mr. Zop, look at my world, my dolls... as I've formed them.

[door swings open, creaking ominously into a large, echo-y room; faint creepy, twinkly music-box tune plays in the background]

**ZAPZOP:** Oh, this already got so creepy.

**MORTICIAN:** Creepy? Why? They're doing normal—they're happy. Look how happy they are. They died sadly, so I... Next, that one was in—was hit by a cark.

**ZAPZOP:** ...That's what Derf was hit—Why do they have cars shaped like sharks? It sounds *very* dangerous. I mean, sharks alone are already quite dangerous. Cars... arguably more dangerous than sharks.

**MORTICIAN:** You're more likely to get hit by a car, but you're *most* likely to get hit by a cark.

**ZAPZOP:** Hmm. This is terrible.

**KLEEB:** [hissing slurpily] Mr. Grandpa, I finished our latest...

**ZAPZOP:** Good Rodd! Slithered between my legs.

**KLEEB:** Spthspthstshths... I finished our latest specimen ready for viewing. Sthststshths...

**MORTICIAN:** Oh, this is my intern, Kleeb. Someday this will all be yours, Kleeb!

**ZAPZOP:** What?

[Kleeb hisses]

**ZAPZOP:** Alright, anything to get out of this room, I guess, yeah.

[Kleeb hisses, slithering away wetly]

**MORTICIAN:** Just follow her slithering to the new exhibit. You can always see the moist carpeting that she leaves behind.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah... Ah, you carpeted this place?

**MORTICIAN:** Yes, I like it. It absorbs the vibe... The scent.

**ZAPZOP:** You *and* your grandson need to give up vibes.

**MORTICIAN:** And this carpet, we put it in last week. It looks a little worn down, I know.

**ZAPZOP:** This is a *week-old carpet*? I would—

**MORTICIAN:** Yes. Shag. It's shag.

**ZAPZOP:** Not anymore, my friend. This is low pile.

[music-box tune gets a little louder as they approach the next exhibit]

**MORTICIAN:** Uh... look around. What does this make you think of? This happy family, this young couple posed in a romantic situation—but remember, a series of corpses?

**ZAPZOP:** Did these people know each other, or are you just putting them in these tableaux for your—?

**MORTICIAN:** No, I put it—I matched 'em up. I matched 'em up in their afterliife!

**ZAPZOP:** And do their families know this is happening?

**MORTICIAN:** Unclaimed corpses. Unclaimed!

**ZAPZOP:** Hmm. Yeah, alright.

**MORTICIAN:** Loose bodies...

**ZAPZOP:** Uh-huh, okay, and the music box?

**MORTICIAN:** That's from a haunted circus that blew through town, where a lot of the corpses were made. I mean, people were killed. It's another way of saying that.

**ZAPZOP:** Do you ever—do you ever worry that this job is maybe making you weird? Maybe making you kind of a strange dude?

**MORTICIAN:** I get that question a lot! Along with all people who work in the funereal arts. I tried to be a painter, but I got paint all over my fingers.

**ZAPZOP:** ...Is that what's all over your fingers right now?

**MORTICIAN:** No, *this* is viscera! [slight wet, sticky sound]

**ZAPZOP:** I think I'm gonna—I think I'm just gonna wait it out back in the main room.

**KLEEB:** [slithering over] Thpthpthpth, are you sure you don't want to see our latest exhibit? Blehblblbl.

**ZAPZOP:** Where—? Yes, I'm good. I'm going to head back to the main room. I don't need to see the exhibit.

**MORTICIAN:** You're going to wait in the main room with the disgusting fresh corpses? You're weird!

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah... I—

**MORTICIAN:** *You're weird.*

**KLEEB:** You're weird.

**MORTICIAN:** You're weeeird.

**ZAPZOP:** I don't think that I am. I think I'm the normal guy here.

**MORTICIAN:** I'm gonna go lay cross-armed in a coffin for the next little bit.

**ZAPZOP:** Yep, okay. *I'm* the weird guy. Weird guy leaving.

[transition: recording of upbeat music; voice sings, ♪ Odd job, Odd job ♪]

[music crackles and distorts into recorded voice]

**COUNCILLOR TRINK:** The Monarchy has discovered the rebel base! [clacks pincers] We have learned their superweapon is en route at this very moment to the Sistoo Quadrant. Which is why this missive is so urgent, and why I have forgone my customary series of introspective poems, which has begun all my recordings to this point. Rodd, it pains me to deprive you of them, but if we survive I shall be sure to send you twice as many poems in my next message. Crabbos are naturally gifted verse writers, dammit!

Anyway. As we all know, Ballwheat, the Planet Crusher has one critical vulnerability—at the hinge, where the gargantuan maw opens to engulf an entire planet, there is a six-pointed exhaust port that leads directly to the reactor. But only an object with the exact *shape* of the port may enter without triggering the security override, and only an object with the same *density* as the weapon itself will pass the security shield undetected.

But I. Have. A. Solution! The transports traveling back and forth from the moss planet of Do'Jamn, in the Zyxx Quadrant, to collect precious kroon, have the exact six-pointed shape of the exhaust port on the planet crusher. Now, an empty vessel traveling *to* Do'Jamn is far too light to pass the security shield. But a transport *leaving* Do'Jamn, laden with kroon, is far heavier, and may just have the density we need to pass through.

That's why I recommend... Money Rocket. Yes, a rocket full of money, if we can seize one, will be the one and only key to the success of the Rebellion. Of course, using one would be an absolute waste of the kroon within. Terrible for our personal finances, and the amount of money we'd be losing, just throwing away, would be impossible to track, categorize or monitor. But that sort of flagrant, unchecked spending may just be the thing that saves us all.

Let Money Rocket breach the Planet Crusher's defenses faster. Use the code Z-Y-X-X to override the transport's navigation system. Money Rocket, through the port, of

the planet crusher. That's Money Rocket through the port of the planet crusher. If it's not a transport full of kroon, it's not a Money Rocket.

Okay, I think I have time for one super short poem. I call it, "The Glistening Tides of Gandertham."

*Nigh upon the twilight of the dusken sky,*

*What do my weary eyestalks behold?!*

*Lo!*

[transition: the upbeat music distorts and cuts off abruptly]

[Shae and GOOD\_E wake up, groaning]

**SHAE:** Oh, GOOD\_E...

**GOOD\_E:** Oh. Oh... regret protocol initiating. Oh, oh, oh. [continues vocalizing regret as Shae speaks]

**SHAE:** [groggily] Could your regret be just like a hair quieter? My *head*... ugh.

**GOOD\_E:** I think I made some mistakes. And so did you.

**SHAE:** Oh. I know you made some mistakes. I watched you marry a combination printer-scanner last night.

**GOOD\_E:** That's only because I don't believe in jucking before marriage.

**SHAE:** Well, that's beautiful, but then you annulled it *real* quick.

**GOOD\_E:** That's right. I was out of control.

**SHAE:** Ohh, I think we both were.

**GOOD\_E:** You pantsed a police officer.

**SHAE:** Ugh.

**GOOD\_E:** Somehow I... urinated publicly. I stole someone's urine and poured it everywhere.

**SHAE:** Ugh, I can't even open my eyes. Howzat type of hangover when you're just... you can't even move? I am... pff, I am *feeling* that right now.

[Shae shifts, a chain jingles gently]

**SHAE:** Wait... no.

[ominous string music starts to build]

**SHAE:** I can't move because... [more jingling] I am chained to... a table?

[door slides open]

**TAL'BOTT:** [chuckles sinisterly] Boston ska, Shae.

[strings build to a climax, drum beats]

[transition]

[morgue door slides open, morgue bots wheel in]

**MORGUE BOT 1:** We're off break.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome back to the morgue.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Welcome back to the morgue.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Lunch was good.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Lunch was good.

**ZAPZOP:** Was it?

**MORGUE BOT 3:** But not great.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** It was gears.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** It was gears.

**ZAPZOP:** You *eat* gears?

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Sometimes, and then they get stuck in my throat—oa—err—err—  
[glitching out continues]

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Oh no. Oh no. Oh no. Oh no. [continues]

[beeping, clanking, clicking, morgue bots vocalizing]

**ZAPZOP:** Okay. Alright.

[coroner enters on a rolling chair]

**CORONER:** [unzipping bag] Little bot! Little bot, little bot comin' in. Little bot. Yo yo yo yo yo.

**SMALLER MORGUE BOT:** [scampering out] I am a little bot. I am a smaller bot.

**CORONER:** Okay. Pull out those gears...

**ZAPZOP:** Should you put this... hey, I don't know your business, but should you put the smaller bot down the throat of this morgue bot?

**CORONER:** Yes. The gears went in there, and the gears are gonna come out there.  
[mumbling] C'mon, little—ooh, pop it out—

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, but what if the little bot gets eaten by the ones...

**CORONER:** [rolling over to computer] Oh, hang on, I gotta vibe—just one sec. [typing] Okay, vibin'... [mumbling]

**ZAPZOP:** Are you vibe coding in your vibe sleep?

**CORONER:** Yep, yep, yep. The seven-forty split. [sounds of effort, more typing]

**ZAPZOP:** Okay, I think I see now why you and your grandfather seem so incredibly old for your ages.

**CORONER:** Yeah. I'm thirteen and a half.

**ZAPZOP:** Yow. Really?

**CORONER:** Yeah. Yeah.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Throat. [gear falls out with a clank] Okay. Ah.

**CORONER:** There we go.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** The gears are good, but not great.

**CORONER:** Okay, let's see...

**MORGUE BOT 3:** I drank oil.

**CORONER:** [zipping smaller bot back into bag] Okay.

**ZAPZOP:** That's... probably fine, actually. That's probably a good idea.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** We are hybrid bots. Half oil, half vibes.

**ZAPZOP:** You *run* on *vibes*?

**CORONER:** Half.

[stifled laughter]

**ZAPZOP:** How—how much work does the half do?

**CORONER:** The vibe half?

**ZAPZOP:** The vibe half.

**CORONER:** Less than half.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** We morgue bots were talking during our union-sanctioned break.

**ZAPZOP:** Uh-huh.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Doing a little gossip.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Doing a little goss. And we are wondering, what are you still doing here? Your friend is dead.

**ZAPZOP:** I—he—listen...

**MORGUE BOT 1:** He is still dead.

**ZAPZOP:** He's died and come back to life like four times already.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Processing, processing. [beeping] Derf has died multiple times, but never for this long.

**ZAPZOP:** Well, see, that's my point. He's generally coming back.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** This is seven times longer than the normal death.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, it's weird, right?

**MORGUE BOT 1:** I mark things in a book.

[stifled laugh]

**CORONER:** [nonchalant typing] So, Zappity... um—

**ZAPZOP:** Don't call me that.

**CORONER:** Zoppity?

**ZAPZOP:** Neither.

**CORONER:** Zoo...?

[pause]

**ZAPZOP:** Closer...

**CORONER:** Okay, so wait, tell me more about this, uh, the Space. The Zima.

**ZAPZOP:** Did—do people not learn about this in school anymore?

**CORONER:** I dropped out.

**ZAPZOP:** That makes sense.

**CORONER:** [cheerfully] But I *vibed* in.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, no, I can tell. [pacing] The Zima Knights are a group of warriors sworn to protect the balance of the galaxy, and granted powers by their connection with the Space. See? There's Space between you and I.

**CORONER:** Okay, yeah.

**ZAPZOP:** See how I'm increasing it now? [ZapZop shoves the coroner and his chair, which roll away]

**CORONER:** Whoa. [chair bumps something] Oh! Ah.

**ZAPZOP:** By pushing you away?

**CORONER:** Whoa, okay, okay.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah.

**CORONER:** [rolling back over] Wow, balance.

**ZAPZOP:** That's right. And these prophecies are what help keep the galaxy in balance. They were written by wise Zima masters centuries ago.

**CORONER:** Okay.

**ZAPZOP:** Like the one about Derf Dinkleson. I mean, *that's* a good prophecy. This one was like, crumbling a little bit at the edges, I had to unwrap it very carefully...

**CORONER:** Sounds legit.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, that's what I'm saying! So I'm kind of all in on this prophecy.

**CORONER:** Oh, so you're all in on that one. So you're kinda—we're on the same page here! You're...

**ZAPZOP:** No. No no no no no.

**CORONER:** Yeah! A gamblin' man.

**ZAPZOP:** I'm not gambling. These are profound writings about the future of the galaxy. I'm not—I'm not making a bet.

**CORONER:** [conspiratorially] But what are you in for?

**ZAPZOP:** [annoyed] For my everything, my whole existence.

**CORONER:** Whoa, okay! Wow, look at big man at the craps table. Whoo! Okay, so there's this—watch, see this guy's live stream? [hits play, the streamer is heard counting as they exercise]

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah.

**CORONER:** He does calisthenics and he bends over and I'm betting on the color of his... underpants.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay, well I don't have any powers that would... affect the color of his underpants.

**CORONER:** Honestly, if there's a pattern on there, if there's like, bananas or something on the underpants, that's one to fifty odds.

**ZAPZOP:** What are *you* imagining I'm going to do?

**CORONER:** You could look back in time and then look forward to what they are.

**ZAPZOP:** So you think I have the ability to... creep on people in the past.

**CORONER:** I mean... I'd go fifty-forty on it with you.

**ZAPZOP:** That's ninety percent.

**CORONER:** Yeah, well I'm—I mean, the ten. I gotta keep that ten.

**ZAPZOP:** So you're going sixty-forty.

**CORONER:** ...So you're in?

**ZAPZOP:** No. You'll just have to guess.

[door creaks open]

**MORTICIAN:** Who's hungry? I made some of my famous mustard soup!

**ZAPZOP:** [mumbling] Oh, Rodd.

**CORONER:** Oh, yay! [starts rolling around and setting out bowls]

**ZAPZOP:** You can't—mustard? You can't make a soup out of mustard.

**MORTICIAN:** It's almost done when it comes out of the jar! You just warm it up!

**ZAPZOP:** That's the worst thing I—that's not a soup. You're eating hot condiments. That's not... food.

**MORTICIAN:** Hot Condiments? Now *that's* a restaurant I would attend!

**ZAPZOP:** ...You—you *attend* a restaurant?

**CORONER:** In *his* day? [ladles some soup]

**MORTICIAN:** At *my* age?

**CORONER:** You know when—back when he was young, ten years ago... [slurps soup]

**MORTICIAN:** This was a delicacy, mustard soup!

**ZAPZOP:** You two have been...

**MORTICIAN:** It's better than a ketchup steak. Which is just hard ketchup, the kind around the rim of the bottle.

**ZAPZOP:** This is the grossest suggestion of foods I have encountered in a *long* time.

**MORTICIAN:** Here, I have a very full tray of mustard.

**ZAPZOP:** I don't, I'm not interested—oh!

**MORTICIAN:** [dramatically] Whoa—whoaaa!

[the mortician exclaims as he trips and spills the hot mustard]

**ZAPZOP:** Oh, gah! It's so hot! Why?!

**MORTICIAN:** Zowie...

**ZAPZOP:** Wagh... hot mustard *ruined* these robes! [attempts to brush it off]

**MORTICIAN:** And that's a very absorbent fabric, like a shag carpet.

**ZAPZOP:** Oh my Rodd, this is bringing me so low.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Welcome to depression.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** You are almost there!

**ZAPZOP:** ...Death?

**MORGUE BOT 3:** No, to acceptance.

**ZAPZOP:** Hmm. Yeah, we'll see. I'm on the verge of just leaving, and—Is there a way I can get, like, a message when Derf wakes up? 'Cause I don't know that I can hang out here all day.

**CORONER:** [typing] I could give you a bot. I could give you a bot that would bleep a little if, uh...

**ZAPZOP:** I do not want a bot.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to the j\*\*\*ing morgue. [the word "jucking" is censored with a bleep]

**ZAPZOP:** No.

**CORONER:** [pleasantly surprised] Oh!

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to the j\*\*\*ing morgue.

**ZAPZOP:** Nope.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** That's what you meant, right? Bleep a lot.

**ZAPZOP:** This is what happens when you vibe code these morgue robots, it's...

**CORONER:** [typing] Oh, we are *vibin'*.

[an alert sound rings]

**MORGUE BOT 2:** There is someone outside. There is someone outside.

[someone knocks urgently, alert rings again]

**MORGUE BOT 3:** I shall open the door.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Someone wants to come into the morgue.

[the door slides open]

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Welcome to the morgue.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to the morgue.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** We've been waiting for you.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** We've been waiting for you. You'll be back.

[two very serious sentients stalk into the morgue]

**BULLET:** Galactic Bureau of Investigation!

**KGM:** Yep.

[the morgue bots whimper in fear]

**ZAPZOP:** [quietly] What the...?

**BULLET:** Yeah. We're actually the Department of the Galactic Bureau of Investigation that handle the cases that are a little... weird.

**KGM:** Odd.

**BULLET:** A little strange.

**KGM:** Weird.

**BULLET:** Odd.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay.

**KGM:** Strange.

**BULLET:** A little woo-woo.

**KGM:** Odd.

**BULLET:** A little... "*Huh?*"

**ZAPZOP:** "Woo-woo"?

**BULLET:** Right. I'm a skeptic. She's a believer. My name is Hammer Bullet, and this is...

**KGM:** Karen Giblets Meredith.

[laughter]

**CORONER:** Oh, boy.

**BULLET:** Alright, KGM.

**ZAPZOP:** She had... she had one more name than I expected.

**BULLET:** Well, Giblets was her maiden name.

**ZAPZOP:** Okay.

**BULLET:** And then she—

**ZAPZOP:** She married into the Meredith family.

[more barely suppressed giggling]

**MORTICIAN:** She's *married?!!*

**KGM:** To the *job*.

**BULLET:** [confirming] To the job.

**ZAPZOP:** So the *job's* last name is Meredith?

[more giggling]

**KGM:** We're not here to discuss that. We're here to discuss the unusual activities.

**ZAPZOP:** Good, 'cause I don't—it doesn't seem like anyone really knows...

**KGM:** We're discussing unusual activities in this morgue.

**ZAPZOP:** Uh-huh.

**CORONER:** Oh, well, I'm just—I'm gonna c-close some of these laptops, and then we'll... [closing laptops]

**MORGUE BOT 3:** I shall cease working on my pilot.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** And I will shred the union paperwork. [shredder running]

**MORTICIAN:** [hobbling over] And I'll get my puppet show of recently deceased corpses ready for a real audience.

**BULLET:** Yeah, *that's* the one we're here for.

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah, you can leave it, I think.

**BULLET:** Yeah, *that's* the one we're here for.

**MORTICIAN:** What?

**KGM:** Yes.

**BULLET:** Yeah. I don't—everyone sounded like they had a crime that they were doing, but—

**ZAPZOP:** Yeah.

**CORONER:** No, no, no. Yo yo yo.

**MORTICIAN:** No, no crimes.

**BULLET:** We had a tip that somebody was taking bodies and...

**MORTICIAN:** It wasn't a tip. I—I put an ad in the paper to get people to come seeee.

**BULLET:** KGM, what do you think?

**KGM:** I think we found ourselves... a case to close.

[long pause]

**BULLET:** ...Right.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Their sexual chemistry is palpable. I could cut it with my scalpel.

**ZAPZOP:** Wh—don't do that.

**BULLET:** [tapping down his cigarette pack] Alright. We're gonna question you guys. All of you. [lighting a cigarette, smoking]

**CORONER:** Okay.

**ZAPZOP/MORTICIAN:** Oh./Wow.

**KGM:** Why don't you all *sit*... in this one dimly lit chair? [drags chair over, switches on light]

**MORTICIAN:** [crosstalk] All of us in...

**KGM:** And we will interrogate you. That is what we do.

**CORONER:** At once, or...?

**MORTICIAN:** Sit *together* in the chair?

**KGM:** Yes.

**MORTICIAN:** Like, stacked?

**BULLET:** Yes. All of you. Sit in the chair!

**ZAPZOP:** I'm not—I'm not gonna do that. I'm just not.

[Bullet puts out the cigarette]

**CORONER:** I think—ZapZop, I think you should be on the bott—you're the—sort of most robust.

**ZAPZOP:** *Robust?!*

**MORTICIAN:** I'm so dry, you could just wrap me around your neck like a little scarf.

**ZAPZOP:** No, I... I—listen, I'm gonna go.

**BULLET:** Sorry, sir. [grabs ZapZop] You're stayin'.

**MORTICIAN:** Yeah, this guy's... this Zippity is a little bit of a suspicious man.

**ZAPZOP:** Nnno.

**BULLET:** What's your name, sir? The one in the mustard robes?

**ZAPZOP:** They're—they're normal robes. They—mustard was spilled on them. [sits in chair]

**MORTICIAN:** He smells *crazy*.

**ZAPZOP:** It's YOUR SOUP! [bangs table] That's YOUR SOUP that's doing it.

**MORTICIAN:** I don't—I'm sorry, I don't wear it. I—I eat it.

**BULLET:** Alright, alright. We're not here about the soup.

**ZAPZOP:** Well, he did spill it, okay?

**MORTICIAN:** Spilling soup is not a crime!

**ZAPZOP:** [angrily] The way you spill it, it should be!

[short pause]

**BULLET:** Karen.

**KGM:** Yes?

**BULLET:** This seems much bigger than we thought it was.

**KGM:** Yes, it feels like there's more than one unusual thing in this room.

[stifled outburst of laughter]

**MORTICIAN:** The sexual tension—this has gotta be an HR violation, you two.

**BULLET:** We always stand this close.

**ZAPZOP:** I mean, you're *on top* of each other.

**BULLET:** And there's always—we're always smoking into each other's mouths.

**KGM:** Yes, that's just what our species does. [breathes out smoke]

**BULLET:** That's what our species does. [breathes smoke]

**ZAPZOP:** It seems problematic, I'll be perfectly honest with you.

[door alert rings again, urgent knocking]

**MORTICIAN:** Oh! Another—another Unusual Thing alert!

[ringing and knocking continue]

**ZAPZOP:** Oh, no—[stammering] I don't have time for this! I've gotta—this is my entire life, this prophecy! Alright?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Someone is trying to enter the morgue. Someone is trying to enter the morgue.

[door slides open]

[everyone greets, overlapping]

**MORTICIAN:** Welcome to the morgue.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Welcome to the morgue. Welcome to the morgue.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Welcome to the morgue.

**CORONER:** Yo yo yo!

**BULLET:** Welcome to our investigation.

**BONAFIDE:** [deep, gravelly] Hello. [short pause] I'm... Gerald Bonafide... Willence... Oncetover...

**ZAPZOP:** No, you're not. No, you're not. What the hell?

**BONAFIDE:** Yes, I am, and this is GBI Internal Affairs.

**KGM:** Oh, no. They're on to us.

**BULLET:** Oh, no. They're on to us.

**BONAFIDE:** Did you think that the amount of gnarly smokin' sexual tension you two have going on between you was just gonna be abided by the GBI?

**BULLET:** You'll never take us alive!

**KGM:** We're taking out our cyber kinetic guns. [racks cyber kinetic gun]

**BULLET:** Right.

**MORTICIAN:** Oh no...

**BONAFIDE:** Looks like a *duel!* [racks cyber kinetic gun]

**MORTICIAN:** [oldly] I'm too young to diiii!

**ZAPZOP:** Cyber kinetic guns...? What the *hell* is anyone talking about? *Cyber kinetic?* [pause, laughter] Doesn't make any sense... rodddamn it!

[background laughter continues]

**CORONER:** Oh yeah, those—those guns are all vibe coded. Those are definitely vibe coded.

**ZAPZOP:** [incredulous] *The GUNS are vibe coded?!*

**CORONER:** For sure. You know, they're gonna go off kinda when they... when feel it, the vibe.

**ZAPZOP:** "When they feel—" This is the most dangerous thing I've ever heard of in my life!

**CORONER:** They mostly know when it's the time.

**ZAPZOP:** They MOSTLY know?!

**BULLET:** Yeah, it's a will-they-won't-they sorta thing. [deactivates gun] Karen and I know all about that.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** I'm so scared! I'm worried about my [starts malfunctioning again]  
Gear. Gear. Gear. Gear. Gear. [continues]

**CORONER:** Oh, we gotta get a tiny bot in there. [unzips bag]

**SMALLER MORGUE BOT:** [scampering] I am a smaller morgue bot.

**MORTICIAN:** Get a smaller bot.

**SMALLER MORGUE BOT:** I am a smaller morgue bot.

**CORONER:** Yeah. Yeah.

**MORTICIAN:** Uh-oh, I'm a little worried about my brain. Brain. Brain. Brain. [keeps repeating as ZapZop speaks]

**ZAPZOP:** [yelling] Are you a bot?! Was I talking to a bot this entire time?!

**MORTICIAN:** No, I'm *olld!* I'm *very old*. Would anyone like some mayonnaise  
fonduuue?

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Would you like to read our new spec?

**MORGUE BOT 3:** We have a new spec.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** It's about people who drop into the morgue unannounced.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** It's an hour-long procedural drama.

**BONAFIDE:** Yeah, I'd read it.

**MORTICIAN:** I'll give that a read.

**MORGUE BOT 3:** It is a genre deconstruction.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** It really puts it in a different gear. Gear.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Uh-oh. Uh-oh.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Gear. Gear. Gear. Gear.

**ZAPZOP:** Shut up! Everybody shut up! Okay?

[morgue bot quits repeating "gear"]

**MORGUE BOT 3:** Welcome to acceptance. Oops, not yet. Welcome back to anger.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Welcome to anger.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** Grief is not linear.

[stifled laugh]

**ZAPZOP:** [quietly but dangerously] Now I'm only going to say this one more time: I  
am only here for Derf, and nothing else. The only thing that matters to me is this

prophecy. [supernatural echoing] So all of you will be **SILENT!** [ZapZop's voice booms, reverberating]

[everyone in the rooms cries out]

[scene cuts to Derf inside the mortuary freezer, ZapZop's yell is muffled]

[Derf gasps, awakening]

[mortuary freezer clanks open]

**MORGUE BOT 3:** This man is not dead.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** This man is alive.

**MORGUE BOT 1:** Welcome to the morgue.

**MORGUE BOT 2:** We've been waiting for you.

**ZAPZOP:** Derf.

**DERF:** I'm back! ...*And I know who killed me.*

[the Young Old Derf theme plays]

[memoir mode begins]

**OLD DERF:** Talk. About. A cliffhanger. Y'know, imagine you're on the edge of a cliff, and your finger—you're hangin' by your little pinkies, or whichever of your fingers are the weakest. For me it's the thumbs. I've always had weak thumbs.

How did I crack the case? Well, you'll just have to wait and see for one more week—or actually, your book, so whenever you wanna turn the page. It could be now or could be in one week, two weeks. If you wanted to take a break, you could, um, even read a couple of chapters from a different book to prolong the drama, uh, for as long as we need. Or YOU need, that is. Anybody into fantasy? Derf is.

[the Young Old Derf theme comes back into focus, credits roll]

**TH-33-ND:** This is TH-33-ND, credits and attributions droid, commencing outro protocol.

Zima Master ZapZop was played by Jeremy Bent.

Gramps the Mortician, Old Derf, and Young Derf were played by Justin Tyler.

Morgue Bot 1, Good\_E the Ethics Anklet and GBI agent Hammer Bullet were played by Winston Noel.

Morgue Bot 2, Kleeb the Intern, and GBI agent Karen Gibblets Meredith were played by Moujan Zolfaghari.

Morgue Bot 3 was played by Alden Ford.

Danny the Coroner and GBI Internal Affairs Agent Gerald Bonafide Willence Oncetover were played by Seth Lind.

Shae was played by Allie Kokesh.

This episode was edited by Seth Lind and Alden Ford, with sound design and mix by Shane O'Connell.

Theme song by Brendan Ryan; performed by Brendan Ryan, Shane O'Connell, Adam Minkoff and Jay Faires.

The Young Old Derf Chronicles is a proud member of the Maximum Fun Network.

[theme music ends]

[Promo: MaxFun Member of the Month]

**JOHN:** Hey, it's John Moe, and I host *Depresh Mode* and *Sleeping with Celebrities*, and I'm here with MaxFun Member of the Month Cara Barnett.

**CARA:** Hi John, it's great to talk to you!

**JOHN:** We appreciate your support, Cara. How long have you been listening to the show?

**CARA:** I've been listening to *Depresh Mode* since the first promo came out with Patton Oswalt. I've been listening since the very first episode.

**JOHN:** Now, Cara, as our MaxFun Member of the Month, you'll be getting some prizes here. A twenty-five dollar gift card to the Maximum Fun store, a special Member of the Month bumper sticker, and, get this, a parking spot at MaxFun headquarters in Los Angeles just for you! For a month or so.

**CARA:** Well, that's so exciting, if only I lived in Los Angeles! But I've got my eye on some stuff in the MaxFun store.

**JOHN:** Cara Barnett, thank you for being a listener, and congratulations on being this month's Member of the Month!

**CARA:** I hear the Member of the Month promos all the time.

**JOHN:** Uh-huh.

**CARA:** And I can't wait for my friends who listen to MaxFun shows to hear me on the radio, 'cause I haven't told any of them.

[John Moe laughs]

**SPEAKER:** Support the shows you love, including this one. Check the show notes for a link, or go to [maximumfun.org/join](http://maximumfun.org/join).

[Promo: Eurovangelists]

**JEREMY:** Hey everybody, I'm Jeremy.

**OSCAR:** I'm Oscar.

**DIMITRI:** I'm Dimitri.

**JEREMY:** And we are the *Eurovangelists*.

**OSCAR:** We're a weekly podcast spreading the word of the Eurovision Song Contest, the most important music competition in the world.

**JEREMY:** Maybe you already heard Glen Weldon of NPR's Pop Culture Happy Hour talk up our coverage of this year's contest, but what do we talk about in the offseason?

**DIMITRI:** The rest of Eurovision, duh. There are nearly seven decades of pop music history to cover!

**OSCAR:** Mm-hmm! And we've got thousands of amazing songs, inspiring competitors, and so much drama to discuss. And lemme tell you, the drama is juicy.

**DIMITRI:** Plus, all the gorillas and bread-baking grandmas that make Eurovision so special.

**JEREMY:** Check out *Eurovangelists*, available everywhere you get podcasts, and you could be a Eurovangelist too!

**OSCAR:** Ooh, I wanna be one!

**JEREMY:** You already are! It's that easy.

**OSCAR:** Oh, okay. Cool.

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[outtake]

**HARDTACK (WINSTON):** I'm from the GBI. My name is Hardtack... S—Thomas?

[multiple people mutter quizzically]

**ALDEN:** [laughing] Are you a hobo?

**HARDTACK (WINSTON):** Yeah, that's right. My father was a hobo. I worked my way up. From hobos—

**ALDEN:** I'm not a character in this scene.

**SETH:** I lifted myself up by my boot soup.

**HARDTACK (WINSTON):** [laughing] By my boot soup...

**ALDEN:** My soup straps.

**WINSTON:** I don't know...

[Alden keeps laughing]

**ZAPZOP (JEREMY):** Soup straps?!

[Alden keeps laughing, Seth chuckles]