

## The Adventure Zone Royale: Episode 26

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

**Hasty Jane:** I don't wanna fuckin' kill anybody, man.

**Rictus:** There's a set amount of trials, Jane. And their assumption is it will come down to one person left. But that's assuming that the people who are left want to kill the others and be the only person left.

**Lorovith:** Very powerful illusory magics are at work here, Doober, they made me see a dragon you saw, so that me attack Randale. [chuckles] Oh, I should—or me, I could never—I would nev—could not!

**Doober Sweetleaf:** His name was Randolph.

**Griffin:** Hellgrammite, I think because you put him in that position, you realized that was the sound of—oh, shit. His name wasn't row—his name wasn't Rigatoni.

**Travis:** It was Formaggio Bucatini.

**Hellgrammite:** My plan worked! Good job!

**Griffin:** The remaining Aspirants look around, realizing that with only two trials to go, your number has dwindled to the Elite Eight.

[The Adventure Zone Royale theme music plays]

**Griffin:** Hello, everybody! Welcome back to TAZ Royale, our battle royale winner take all. 64 wizards enter, one—

**Justin:** In this arc, we got a specialization in e-joke-ation.

**Griffin:** And that's right. Justin, you're so freaking proud of yourself, man! We don't put out—

**Justin:** Evocation—

**Griffin:** Video of our—

**Justin:** E-joke-ation.

**Griffin:** Of our faces while we record this but you're really cheese maxxng right now, man.

**Justin:** Yeah, I'm just—I'm just really—e-joke-ation. Like it's weird that we have gone this far, we've talked about evocation.

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Justin:** So many times, never slid "joke" in there.

**Travis:** I thought we had said it—I thought we had done it already.

**Justin:** There's still a lot of meat left—I guess what I'm saying is, Griff, there's still a lot of meat left on this bone, despite what TV guide reviewer Jeff Garlin may have you believe.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** This show still has a lot of legs left in it.

**Griffin:** I think it's fucked that TV Guide only reviews one podcast and it's us. I think that that—

**Justin:** It sucks, dude. [chuckles]

**Travis:** At first I was flattered!

**Justin:** Get off our nuts, TV Guide.

**Griffin:** How am I supposed to compete with The Shield? I fucking can't, man. It's just the four of us and we make the stuff up as we go along.

**Clint:** And here's what I don't like, Cheers and Jeers, right? They say positive things—

**Griffin:** Go off, king!

**Clint:** Most of their jeers are things like... yeah, I— "They get a jeer because I want more episodes. It's so good." That's not a jeer?

**Griffin:** That's not a fucking jeer, TV Guide.

**Clint:** That's a reverse cheer!

**Griffin:** That's a backhanded cheer.

**Travis:** I laughed so hard, I pulled a muscle, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah, exactly.

**Justin:** Dad, all the TV guides you saved over the years, did you throw 'em away all at once, or did you throw away little by little?

**Travis:** Did you watch all of the VHSes as you recorded, and mark each show off as you went?

**Clint:** I—

**Travis:** And then throw away as you completed a book?

**Clint:** No, no—

**Griffin:** Just one big fire I think probably.

**Clint:** I got—I threw away a whole bunch, but I kept the fall premiere issues.

**Griffin:** Oh, you got to!

**Clint:** And I've got all those. And then I was at a used bookstore in Portsmouth and found hundreds of TV guides for 10 cents a piece, and I bought 'em.

**Travis:** Why?!

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**Justin:** Hey, Dad, this is so good, but I have gotta save this for our other podcast, Oh, Christ, Not Again.

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Justin:** [chuckles] Where we talk about—

**Griffin:** The McElroy boys intervene on their—on their ailing father.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** At the end of the last episode, you all had just survived the Trial of Necromancy. Fended off the undead hordes from the manor in which you were cooped up, survived until sunrise. Four of the Aspirants that were with you on that trial were killed in action, leaving just eight Aspirants. The three of you, Hasty Jane, Doober, Hippocrates, Franklin and Scorpo.

**Travis:** The investigation as to what happened to Formaggio Bucatini still ongoing.

**Griffin:** Formaggio bu—

**Clint:** Is that a cold case?

**Travis:** Did he lock it—did he lock himself in that closet? How'd he get in there?

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Yeah, that's a g—I don't think you guys even know he was in a closet? You just heard him scream and then heard him die.

**Travis:** Well, two of us don't!

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's a fair point. Hellgrammite, maybe your closest thing to a perfect crime the whole time we've been here so far. It is a—it is just moments after that trial concludes, the last of the sort of ashy remnants of the undead who dissolved into the sunrise light, vanish into a—into the sky.

And you all can see the large iron gates leading toward the manor's sort of courtyard swing open. And several members of the Octave approach the manor where you and the rest of the group are standing. Most of them joining you, most of the Aspirants are just kind of panting. Everyone is pretty beat up by this trial. Everyone took a few hits.

And from the handful of Octave members floating towards you, you see the skeletal specter who introduced you to this trial. He drifts towards you and claps two sort of bony hands together dramatically. And there is a quiet wind, begins sort of wailing through the graveyard. And Osham, the elderly Octave member who you've spoken with a few times before translates and says:

**Osham:** To our eight finalists, we would like to extend our heartiest congratulations. Never in the history of these enclaves have so many Aspirants banded together to reach this point in the proceedings. Your penchant for teamwork is admirable, if not a tad confusing, because only one of you can be ordained in the end. For surviving this trial, each of you shall find within your residences your gold-tier reward for surviving the Trial of Necromancy.

You may exchange that tomorrow during your free day at the atelier. Standard rules for the following days apply. No harming your other Aspirants and no approaching the off-limits part of our grounds, the Crystalarium. You may spend your day as you see fit, preparing for the final two trials standing between you and unlimited power; the Trial of Illusion and Enchantment. Yes, Lorovith, usually it's not you who interrupts these things with a question, but I do see you have your hand raised.

**Lorovith:** Yes, you and I haven't had much cause to speak.

**Osham:** I suppose we have not... What's go—

**Lorovith:** I just wanted to say, first of all, I have not enjoyed these proceedings.

**Osham:** I'm sorry to hear that, Lorovith. Do you—do you mean the trial that just concluded, or the entirety?

**Lorovith:** None of them have been particularly pleasurable.

**Osham:** Well—

**Lorovith:** Just saying.

**Osham:** It is not our explicit goal to make the Conclave pleasurable for the participants, rather to test their mettle and worthiness—

**Lorovith:** Well, it's not our—it's—well, that's fine.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Lorovith:** Just wanted to let you know. Haven't enjoyed them.

**Griffin:** Give me an insight check, please, Lorovith, as you say that.

**Justin:** Okay.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** Nat one.

**Justin:** Nat one, perfect.

**Griffin:** He is so enigmatic, this old wizard man, that you can't tell if he was even listening to what you were saying at all.

**Osham:** There we go—

**Justin:** I want to finish that—my thought.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Justin:** If I could. So, that's one. I don't have any insight of that. So I have the question that I'm gonna ask.

**Lorovith:** My question to you is this. Why is it so important to you that we... Fight?

**Griffin:** The skeletal sort of necromancy member of the Octave, you hear a sort of rhythmic wind sort of blowing through his hood, that you interpret to be a gentle sort of laugh. And Osham says:

**Osham:** I can clarify this. The power that will be granted to the one of you who joins our ranks will be truly world changing. You may exercise this power along with the other seven members of the Octave to change the world, or rather what small part of the world we have been able to salvage from the corruption beyond the fog, to change it as you see fit. It is a monumental task that has been laid before the Octave. And so in order to ensure that the wizard who wins is up to the challenge, they must prove themselves in these many ways.

**Lorovith:** And they prove themselves by... non-cooperation?

**Osham:** What do you mean?

**Lorovith:** Well, your problem was that you couldn't understand why we would cooperate to get through the challenges. You've mentioned that. So I am curious as to why this is so important for the proceedings that we be infighting, from your perspective.

**Griffin:** Give me another insight check, please. Actually, all of you can make an insight check, you're all present, if you would like to.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Now this time I got a natural 20.

**Griffin:** *Holy shit.*

**Clint:** Wow. From zero to hero.

**Justin:** Yeah, right?

**Griffin:** Rictus got a dirty 20.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Let's not—we actually have actually banned that a couple years ago, if I remember, right?

**Travis:** A synthetic 20.

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah. Okay, so—

**Justin:** Holistic 20, I would accept holistic 20.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Rictus, you're able to pick up on this a little bit. But Lorovith, being the one who asked the question, you kind of dialed this in and get it sort of dead to rights. Osham seems flummoxed by this question, he seems sort of annoyed a little bit. You can piece together that with the sort of laugh that the sort of skeletal member of the Octave who introduced himself with sort of four bony fingers, so I will hereby refer to as Four. You are able to deduce that this is not a question that comes up very often.

And I think sort of piecing that together with what Osham just said about how you all sort of collaborated is that, truly, it was referenced before the trial began that this trial could end and there be zero winners. Because, you know, people would turn on each other, you have the opportunity to kill other folks, and folks would do that for the opportunity to become a god, right? I think there's a little bit of annoyance. You are detecting a hint of maybe this conclave is not going the way that it usually does, or the way that they want it to.

**Justin:** Okay, I'm gonna push it one—building on that then, I'll push it with one more question.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Justin:** If I can build off of my 20.

**Griffin:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Lorovith:** Well, I guess asking another way, seven of you sharing god-like power, however do you keep the peace?

**Griffin:** Ooh. [chuckles]

**Osham:** But there are eight of us?

**Justin:** I thought they were looking for an eighth, right?

**Griffin:** One of them is being replaced. But that's a—the—I want to use that, I just—

**Justin:** I don't want to get hung up on the number—

**Griffin:** Got you, got you, got you—

**Justin:** That's not really the point.

**Griffin:** Right. Give me a—fuck, this is good.

**Justin:** Okay, Griffin!

**Travis:** Give me a fuck!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Give me a *fuck!*

**Justin:** Here it comes! [yells out] Fuck!

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [chuckles] It's the best I got.

**Griffin:** Give me a... give me a charisma check. And I will grant you advantage, because you have found sort of a bit of an exposed nerve here.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** 19. Clean.

**Griffin:** Okay! This question sends a sort of ripple. You actually see there's three members of the Octave here. They all kind of look at each other really, really quickly, trying to sort of cloak shit pretty decisively. When you say that thing, specifically about there being seven members of the Octave working together, they look at each other. With this charisma check, you know you've hit on something. Maybe there is some strife in the Octave, specifically from some member of the Octave, that is a sort of known quantity, that they are now surprised that someone else who is not a member of the Octave has kind of clocked.

**Justin:** I would just like ask that everybody else kind of clo—I don't want to have to go back and explain that to Rictus. But I—but Rictus has been like pushing it, so I want to make sure that Rictus clocks it too.

**Griffin:** You see that Osham is sort of losing his composure, he says:

**Osham:** Yes, it is a... it is an ongoing process. Rictus, you had a question?

**Rictus:** Oh, yeah, two things. One, piece of feedback to kind of mirror Lorovith. That trial was really fucked up.

**Lorovith:** It was really just unpleasant.

**Rictus:** Yeah! Like psychologically—

**Lorovith:** Didn't enjoy it!

**Rictus:** It just felt real fucked up. Not sure how that was a test of necromancy, so much as just necromancy weaponized.

**Lorovith:** Tell him it was mean too!

**Rictus:** It was mean. Yeah! It was mean, the way that you kind of threw the Aspirants that like we had defeated at your behest against us. Kind of messed up. Now question—

**Lorovith:** If I get—sorry.

**Russ:** Yeah, sorry, yeah, no, please.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Lorovith:** The cape was good.

**Osham:** I'm glad—

**Rictus:** The cape was good.

**Osham:** You enjoyed the cape. We put that in there hoping you specifically would find it, Lorovith.

**Lorovith:** I thought as much! *Ha-ha!*

**Osham:** Your feedback—

**Lorovith:** The case was good!

**Osham:** Your feedback has been noted, hasn't it, Four?

**Griffin:** Four sort of nods, looking at you like—well, you can't read his face at all, he's a floating sort of purple—

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Purple cloud.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Lorovith:** Sorry, Rictus.

**Travis:** I read his cloak.

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Rictus:** And question, which of the Octave has been voted out? Who's retiring?

**Osham:** It is not a voting process when a member of the Octave has reached an age where they feel like they are unable to fulfill their role. Then they shall be—they may make the choice to retire and be replaced.

**Lorovith:** It's sad if it's a female when the number is 27, it's very—it's very screwed up. They just get them out early. It's a really messed up system.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Osham:** Stop it.

**Rictus:** That didn't—

**Hellgrammite:** So which—

**Rictus:** That didn't—yeah, which one? That didn't really answer the question.

**Osham:** That information shall be revealed to the winner of the trials. There is no need for you to know that at this juncture.

**Rictus:** How often do you do these trials?

**Griffin:** Give me a history check. I think you would just kind of know some of this stuff.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Travis:** 14 total.

**Griffin:** It is—it is quite rare. It's once every sort of few generations, or so. I think give me a—give me a... what did you get on your history check?

**Travis:** 14.

**Griffin:** 14. It's a bit weird that it's a sort of retirement process, that someone sort of volunteers to step down from the Octave, and yet the conclave only happens once every few generations. It seems like it would happen more frequently than that. But so sort of strange are the ways of these sort of demigod wizard folk.

**Travis:** Sure.

**Osham:** Any other questions before we break for the day?

**Clint:** I'd like Hellgrammite to do something that is not... as spoken.

**Travis:** What an interesting way to—

**Griffin:** I'll ask him.

**Travis:** Phrase that, Dad! Yeah! [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Hellgrammite, would you—

**Travis:** You control him!

**Griffin:** Mind doing something?

**Clint:** I think hellgram—I want—

**Travis:** Are you two not speaking?

**Griffin:** Are you guys fighting? I heard—

**Justin:** Hold on. Hey, guys. Hold up. I'm texting hu—I'm texting Hellgrammite. [chuckles]

**Clint:** I want Hellgrammite to, while those other conversations were going on, to attempt to make mental contact with Set.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay?

**Clint:** Using that Thrikeen telepathy.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, you are a—this is not like a role, you are able to send a telepathic message to Set. He is the other sort of member, the golden scarab Thrikeen who administered the Trial of Transmutation. Okay, what would you like to say?

**Clint:** I think he...

**Hellgrammite:** Lord Set, oh the powerful and omnipotent, I... I know this is not hard for the course, so to speak, but is—I need—I need some information. It has nothing to do with the trial, has nothing to do with the competition. Is there any way that I can talk to you and ask you a few questions about echo mites? And more importantly, someone claiming to be my bride. Her name is Akari, and I need to—I need to know. I need information. Is there any way, perhaps later, I could have a conversation with you, even if it's just a mental one, to ask you these questions?

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

[sound of dice thrown]

**Clint:** 15.

**Griffin:** Great. Here's what happens on a 15, you project this message into the mind of Set, who is, you know, standing alongside Osham and Four. And usually when you do this to someone, you can see there is a moment of surprise. There's a moment of like, their head jerks in your direction, notices your mouth isn't moving, and then kind of like pieces together sort of what's happening. That does not happen.

Set does not sort of jerk his head to face you, doesn't seem to register what you are saying to him at all. And with a 15 insight check, I think you run down kind of like what—is he ignoring you, what could have happened? But I think with a 15, you realize that Set is—can't hear you, is not hearing this message that you are sending to him.

And that should be true, right? It should—this has worked every time that you have done it. Running down sort of the list of things required of this feature is, you know, they have to be willing creatures, they have to understand at least one language, or that they have to be within 120 feet of yourself. It would seem like all of these things are true, and yet for whatever reason, this is not—this is not reaching—

**Travis:** And what's Set the Octave member in charge of?

**Griffin:** Transmutation.

**Clint:** Transmutation.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Osham:** Okay, so if nobody else has any other questions, we shall—we shall take our leave of you. We've got—we've got some buffalo wings in the staff break room that I'm very excited to get back to, so congratulations to all of you. Rest well, study well. The Trials of Illusion and Enchantment are true righteous doozies, so prepare your minds and bodies. And we shall commence the next trial in two days hence.

**Travis:** When they leave—

**Griffin:** They float away, yeah.

**Travis:** Rictus is going to turn to the other Aspirants and say:

**Rictus:** I think we have—there's—there's a lot that could be discussed and debriefed after that one. And I just want to open an invita—could we like meet at my place before—

**Hellgrammite:** The Thunderdog house! We're going back to the Thunderdog house!

**Griffin:** Hasty Jane says:

**Hasty Jane:** What the fuck is the Thunderdogs?

**Rictus:** It's my—it's my house.

**Hellgrammite:** We're the Thunderdogs.

**Rictus:** Yes, like underdogs, but more powerful than that, you know what I mean?

**Hellgrammite:** Yeah. And—

**Rictus:** And—

**Hellgrammite:** Since it's his house, I thought dog house was—Thunderdog house, I thought—

**Rictus:** Yeah. That part's not as important as—

**Hellgrammite:** Well! I mean—

**Rictus:** If the eight of us could meet. If you don't want to, just whoever can be there in an hour, I think a discussion would be very beneficial to everyone.

**Griffin:** Pranklin gives you a big thumbs up and runs away on his knuckles and hands, back towards his house Hasty Jane says:

**Hasty Jane:** Yeah, I'll be there, no problem. Hippocrates, could we talk?

**Griffin:** Hippocrates sort of gives Hasty Jane a sort of side eye, turns to you, Rictus, and says:

**Hippocrates:** I'll be there.

**Griffin:** And the two of them walk off. And Scorpo and Doober, standing with the three of you still, Doober says:

**Doober Sweetleaf:** I think that would be a wise idea. I'm going to return to my home and just rest for a while. I have a lot—a lot to think about. And he sort of—he wanders off as well. And Scorpo says:

**Scorpo:** So this meeting, it's for all eight of us.

**Rictus:** Yeah, I think...

**Scorpo:** I'm... I'm interested to hear what you have to say.

**Griffin:** And Scorpo walks off as well, leaving just the three of you.

**Hellgrammite:** Lorovith? Lorovith? Are there issues between you and Doober? Are things bad? I mean, he's basically your son. Why is he going off to his place and not yours?

**Lorovith:** He doesn't live with me, he's an adult man.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Hellgrammite:** You consider him a child and your son—

**Lorovith:** He's my son—

**Hellgrammite:** Your progeny.

**Lorovith:** He's my—an adult...

**Justin:** Dad, the fact that you can't grasp the idea of an adult son is pretty challenging to me—

**Griffin:** It sucks, actually. [chuckles]

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Is that not what we are to you anymore?

**Justin:** It's like the fact that you can't even conceive of it in a fantasy realm is pretty rough.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Lorovith:** What more could you have to teach him? His age is over 18? Your work's done!

**Hellgrammite:** I knew he—

**Lorovith:** Shouldn't—

**Hellgrammite:** Acts like—

**Rictus:** He can rent a car!

**Lorovith:** Try to eat him like an alligator!

**Hellgrammite:** He talks like a child! I don't know if he has the maturity to—

**Lorovith:** Shouldn't you be hunting him for sport?

**Hellgrammite:** Well, all right. Maybe at your age, you should be going to live with him?

**Justin:** I shove him over. I shove him over into the dirt. [chuckles]

**Hellgrammite:** Hey!

**Clint:** Oh, and he just lays there and he's back—

**Justin:** Now, hold on, I gotta do a command. I gotta do an attack roll.

**Griffin:** Yeah, actually, yeah—

**Justin:** Unarmed strike.

**Griffin:** You can make an atta—you can make a...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Nine plus—oh, damn it. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That's a 12.

**Justin:** Six plus six, 12. I didn't mean to do it that hard anyway—

**Hellgrammite:** What are you doing? [chuckles] Oh, was that a playful shove? Was that—

**Justin:** Oh my god.

**Griffin:** Lorovith—

**Hellgrammite:** I knew we were—

**Griffin:** Your—

**Hellgrammite:** Going to be buddies!

**Griffin:** Lorovith, the gem in your grimoire lights up, and a little holographic image of an eye appears and says:

**Chris:** Oh! Hey there, Lorovith. Chris here. Just wanted to remind you that—

**Lorovith:** Can we not?

**Justin:** I cover it with my hand.

**Griffin:** He vanishes.

**Hellgrammite:** Yeah, you said in an hour?

**Rictus:** Yeah, in an—in an hour, please.

**Hellgrammite:** Okay, I gotta take a quick bio break and then I will be there. Shall I bring anything? Do you...

**Rictus:** Your presence is present enough.

**Hellgrammite:** Ah... man. We are—the three of us are getting tight! All right, see you at the Thunderdog house.

**Clint:** And he scuttles away.

**Rictus:** Lorovith—

**Lorovith:** Rictus—

**Rictus:** Yeah.

**Lorovith:** I will... I will come to your meeting, and I will hear you out. But you should know... I was thinking while I was watching them speak, thinking about the power they promised. And I am not thirsty for that kind of power. Of course I wanted the thrill of victory, the win. I'll be honest, I have plans, of course. But I think it would behoove us in a world where we care about many in it to consider who among the eight of us we feel comfortable with possessing that power.

**Justin:** And I slap Rictus on the arm and walk away.

**Travis:** Rictus goes home and puts some pizza rolls in the oven, you know, get ready for—

**Justin:** So did I—so do I! So do I! Sorry.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Justin:** So do I.

**Travis:** No, I'm making it for everybody!

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** And chopping up some breadsticks.

**Justin:** Like I don't want Travis to get some sort of bonus. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Justin:** Sorry! It's like if you could just say that, like I don't... you know what I mean? Like—

**Griffin:** Yeah, you just both make your own pizza rolls, so that when people start to file into Rictus' house, it's just everyone—Doober comes in and he's got a little plate of pizza rolls and he says:

**Doober:** Oh.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Doober:** Oh, I—

**Lorovith:** Oh, no!

**Rictus:** It wasn't BYOPR, I should have made that clear—

**Doober Sweetleaf:** Hey, guys! Big surprise! I got two big plates full of sausage and pepper pizza roll! Oh, fuck...

**Rictus:** I've made 300 pizza rolls—

**Lorovith:** Hey, everybody! Good news! Roll up! Look who's—

**Rictus:** Ah...

**Lorovith:** Oh, no.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Lorovith:** *Oh!* Oh, my. Well, this is—

**Justin:** I just drop 'em on the ground. [chuckles]

**Lorovith:** This is terrible.

**Rictus:** No! Add 'em to the pile.

**Griffin:** Pranklin shows up—

**Clint:** On the ground!

**Griffin:** Pranklin shows up, he's got a little plate of pizza rolls, he's like:

**Pranklin:** [disgruntled monkey sounds]

**Travis:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** One of the pizza rolls slides off of his plate and falls to the ground, and when it falls down, it sort of like explodes a little bit. And he kind of smiles because they're prank pizza rolls. And he dump—he dumps 'em in the trash can.

**Justin:** Nice.

**Griffin:** Okay, everyone has come at the appointed time to your house, Rictus. It is, you know, mid-morning. And it's a weird time for pizza rolls, but you've got about nine—

**Travis:** These are breakfast pizza rolls!

**Griffin:** Okay, you've got about—

**Justin:** Can you have made bagel bites instead? Because if pizza's on a bagel—

**Travis:** Yeah, can we take it back?!

**Justin:** Rachel—

**Griffin:** Rachel—

**Justin:** Let's just take this clean—

**Griffin:** If you can edit in every time we said "rolls—"

**Justin:** No, no, no, we don't have to do that. Just give her—give her like, Trav, if you could just give her a few clean—

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Bagel bites.

**Travis:** Bagel bites. Bagel bites. Bagel bites.

**Clint:** Bagel bites.

**Travis:** Bage—not you!

**Justin:** Not you, Dad.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** And Trav, I would love some singular ones.

**Travis:** Bagel bite. Bagels bite. Bagel bite.

**Justin:** Okay, now Trav—

**Griffin:** And now—

**Justin:** In case it starts to feel weird to say the whole thing, if you could invent a few slang terms for them?

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Yeah. Bages.

**Justin:** That we could...

**Travis:** Just a couple bagies!

**Griffin:** And Lorovith—

**Travis:** Bagey bees.

**Griffin:** We do—

**Travis:** Just some bagey bees! Just gonna have some bagey bees!

**Griffin:** Bagey bees is really good. Lorovith—

**Travis:** Bagey bees—

**Lorovith:** All of my bagey bees are on the floor!

**Griffin:** Lorovith, I'm worried the roll up pun is not gonna play now, so if you could give me a different take. [chuckles] A different sort of pun joke, but using bagels or bites in it—

**Travis:** That'd be great.

**Griffin:** Just say that.

**Justin:** Okay. Okay. Okay. Hold on. B-b-bage-bage-bagel-bagel... Okay.

**Travis:** Some with bites?

**Justin:** I'm ready.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Lorovith:** I'm afraid I might have bagel biting off more than I can ch...

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Lorovith:** Oh, no. I've made too many bagel bites.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Rictus:** No such thing.

**Griffin:** All right, that's gonna be really clean, guys.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That was a good use of our time and Rachel's time and the listeners' time also. [chuckles]

**Justin:** Oh my god, I—wait, sorry, I just got a call from OSHA?

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Justin:** We're the first podcast to ever get in trouble.

**Travis:** Oh, wow.

**Justin:** Ever. [chuckles] That's so weird! Yeah, it's an unsafe work—okay, yeah!

**Travis:** Yeah! Okay.

**Justin:** No, she had to switch 'em ah—no, all of them. No, Bagel Bites. You see?

**Clint:** [chuckles]

[theme music plays]

[ad reads]

**Griffin:** The eight of you have gathered around the dining room table sort of set in the large studio space that Rictus lives in, in one of these gold-tier sort of manors. And morning light is pouring in through the windows. It is a lovely day outside, sort of betraying the horrible night that you all sort of just survived. The people gathered here, despite the one-hour sort of break since the trial, do appear to be quite exhausted. Time has been a bit strange here, you all slept, and then it was nighttime, and the trial happened, and now it is—it is the morning. But everyone here is sort of, you know, smashing these bagel bites, and appears to be a bit—a bit weary.

**Clint:** Hellgrammite wants to do a perception check.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Clint:** He wants to see if there are any mini corn dogs.

**Griffin:** Yeah, go ahead.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** 15? No.

**Clint:** Nope.

**Griffin:** Nope, just bagel bites.

**Travis:** I pass Hellgrammite a note that says "Cast Tiny Hut."

**Hellgrammite:** Oh? Excuse me for a minute. I guess I hadn't finished my... my bio break—

**Travis:** No, a—

**Hellgrammite:** I guess.

**Travis:** No like—yeah, go ahead. Around us.

**Clint:** He casts Leomund's Tiny Hut.

**Griffin:** Okay. Leomund's Tiny Hut, I know it creates a little hut. A 10-foot radius immobile dome of force springs into existence around you, and remains stationary. Let me see, the nine creatures of medium size are smaller, okay, that's fine. The spell fails, bah-bah-bah, that's fine. Creatures and objects can move through it freely. All other creatures and objects are barred from passing through it. Spells and magical effects can't extend through the dome or be cast through it. And the atmosphere is quite nice. You can also—

**Clint:** And Hellgrammite's running around inside the hut like kicking magazines under the—under the couch and—

**Griffin:** I don't think it's an action. [chuckles] Okay, maybe—

**Clint:** Fluffing up pillows and stuff.

**Griffin:** Sure. This is a dome of force, and maybe the dome has some hut-like sort of features about it. But okay, this—

**Hellgrammite:** Wasn't really expecting company. [chuckles] I just thought this—[chuckles] sorry.

**Griffin:** I thought this would happens, Scorpo sort of jumps up from the table, sort of—

**Travis:** No, hold on.

**Griffin:** In attack position.

**Travis:** Hold on. Once it's cast—Chris? Because the magical effects can't extend through it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure.

**Justin:** Yeah, that's true.

**Griffin:** Yeah, there is no response. Chris does not seem to appear from your grimoire.

**Rictus:** Okay, I think as much as we can on this island be free to talk, I'll lead off, right? To lay cards on the table. I don't want to win. My intention coming here was to win and become a member of the Octave, and be a shining example of the use of necromancy for good. And like I—before I came here, six months before coming here, my son was born. Same—all of us—right? All Ravenwoods has—he has the necromancy ability. And I didn't want him growing up with the same stigma, and I was going to do it.

But this is all fucked. And I don't think you can win through these trials and be good afterwards, with what it takes. And this is probably going to be a lot to digest, but I talked with Death when I was in a time bubble, and he explained to me that the whole thing the Ravenwoods do with like extending our lives and being ghosts is fucked and kind of messes with the whole natural order of death. And then seeing like you know, the Aspirants brought back to atta—I think that's all true. And my goals have shifted.

**Lorovith:** Will you soon be getting to the part where you have a plan for undermining the infinitely powerful beings?

**Griffin:** Scorpo says:

**Scorpo:** Or are you just sort of saying that you quit and that you're going to—

**Rictus:** No, no, no, no—

**Scorpo:** Lose on purpose?

**Rictus:** So, okay, I have suspected for a while that these trials and a lot of things that they do is like farming. Because we each individually, 64 magical spells, right? Came to the island, came up here. Right? And then as we have died one by one, they have gotten transformed into a crystal, and then kind of put into a pool to pull from. Right? And when we equip those crystals, tell me if I'm the only one, but we get flashes of memory, right? Of the people whose spells those were. Right?

**Griffin:** Everyone, Hasty Jane and Doober and Hippocrates and Pranklin and Scorpo all kind of like look at each other and nod in agreement.

**Rictus:** And listen, this is not me creating like a rallying cry or anything, I'm—you wanted to know if this is just me saying I quit. My goal has shifted. Right? There are still eight of us, and ostensibly one spot that's being replaced, right? And going into this next trial and the future trials, I think it is important that we all know where we stand. And that I don't think we need to like all bond and come together and decide which one of us is going to win or whatever, but all knowing what like plane, what level we're all standing on—if you have thoughts you want to share about this whole process, I think this is the time to do it.

**Lorovith:** I have a question, Rictus. What did—what contest did you think you were entering?

**Rictus:** I thought it would sort out the best of us. And now I'm starting to suspect it will sort out the most ruthless of us.

**Lorovith:** But you're still here?

**Rictus:** Yeah, and I don't want to win. So to your point, I don't like who I've been during this contest. I don't like what I became. I don't like how I saw myself. Especially all the shit I had with The Gentleman felt so... like it felt empowering, it felt so good to have that purpose of I'm competing against this guy that I think is bad, and I have to stop him. Right? And I put so much effort into defeating him, and now he's dead, and I don't feel better

about it. I don't feel more worthy than him now. I just feel like he's dead and I'm not.

**Hellgrammite:** Could I point out something? I have entertained similar thoughts, Rictus, but then I come back to the plain truth of the fact that your choice is either to win the contest and become a demigod, or die.

**Justin:** I'd like to do an insight check. When he said that, I would like to look around the room and see if I scope any reactions.

**Griffin:** Okay, can you give me an example of the reaction that you're sort of looking for?

**Justin:** I think that this room has to be about—there is a delicate thing that he is trying to balance, right? There's a sort of 12 Angry Men thing going on here. And I want to know if other people just clocked that he said there's a part of this where you get the powers of a demigod, and that's on one end of it. Like, that's a momentary thing, but that's a phrasing that he just used. And I want to know if anybody else clocked it.

**Griffin:** Right. Okay.

**Justin:** Perception? Or...

**Griffin:** Insight.

**Justin:** Insight.

**Griffin:** Definitely.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** Eh, 11 plus one.

**Griffin:** You are able to detect, because it is not particularly well-cloaked, nor has it ever been, Scorpo is sort of eyeing Hellgrammite as he is saying this.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** With like maximum trepidation.

**Justin:** I'm going to try to catch, let's see, let's use—

**Travis:** I will also, hey, I don't know if I—

**Justin:** Slight of hand to try to catch—can I use sleight of hand to try to catch Scorpo's eye? For charisma?

**Griffin:** I'll give you—I'll give it to you.

**Justin:** Charisma is like you're raising your eyebrows really big. [chuckles] Like so big. I'm using my charisma powers like, "Eh-eh-eh? Over here."

**Griffin:** If you catch him with the insight check and you clock that, I think you're looking at him, your eyes definitely meet.

**Justin:** Fair enough, okay.

**Griffin:** Did you have a reaction to that also, Rictus?

**Russ:** Yeah, I think with a 12, when he says you either become a demigod or you die, Rictus understands that as the only other option.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** All right. Sorry, go ahead, Hellgrammite.

**Hellgrammite:** I just think that... and maybe I don't... maybe I'm not as enthusiastic about becoming a demigod, as much as I am really enthusiastic about being alive. And I don't know how we extricate ourselves from that.

**Griffin:** Hasty Jane raises her hand.

**Hasty Jane:** Same. Hard same. Big same. If running away is an option, that would be great. I don't know if maybe we could take some of our bed sheets and tie 'em together to make a big parachute? Jump off... I would assume they would have a plan for that, but if not, you know, we could all just bail, right?

**Rictus:** Does anyone in this room—is anyone sitting here like, "I want to win?" And not just, "I don't want to die, but I want the power, that's why I'm doing it."

**Lorovith:** Why would any of us at this point? Why? Who is going to raise their hand and say, "Yes, I'm cock of the walk. I'm taking all of you bad boys out."

**Griffin:** Pranklin raises his hand.

**Lorovith:** There he is.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** He kind of shrugs.

**Lorovith:** So we can all agree, right?!

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Rictus:** I think we can all appreciate and respect that honesty.

**Lorovith:** Hey, Pranklin! Could you go? Is that okay, everybody?

**Rictus:** No! He's my dude!

**Pranklin:** [monkey sounds]

**Griffin:** Pranklin then kind of puts his hand down and kind of—[sniffs]

**Rictus:** Oh, were you goofing?

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Lorovith:** He's good, though. He is funny.

**Rictus:** Oh my god...

**Lorovith:** When he does the thing with the glasses, I love that. [chuckles]

**Rictus:** Yeah, he got us.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Scorpo says:

**Scorpo:** I will lay my intention bare as well. I do not care about winning either. My goal coming here was not to become a god, but to make sure the wrong person does not become one. And it would seem our goals are aligned. So, what... what do we do?

**Hellgrammite:** Wait, whoa, whoa, whoa! Back up! Back up! Are you talking about me?

**Scorpo:** No. What?

**Hellgrammite:** Oh.

**Scorpo:** No?

**Lorovith:** Huh?

**Hellgrammite:** Oh, all right. Because I mean that would—that would bother. Pardon the pun, but it would bug me a lot if you were here to keep me from winning.

**Scorpo:** There was a while where I saw your intentions also laid bare, Hellgrammite, when we bonded within the giant sort of kaiju we all created together. I know—

**Rictus:** Swamp Thing.

**Scorpo:** I know what you wanted. But then when we sort of went up on the tower and I saw you have your episode, I no longer feared that. I'm trying to trust you, Hellgrammite, and I'm hoping that—I'm hoping that your heart is truly in the right place. I mean, I know our hearts are like somewhere sort of in our thorax, not in the standard place, but you know what I mean.

**Hellgrammite:** If you can accept the fact that Rictus and Lorovith have changed during the course of this terrible, stressful process, surely you can accept that I, too, have changed?

**Travis:** Can I roll an insight check?

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's just fuckin' every—[chuckles] just clatter, clatter—

**Lorovith:** Objection. He's much—he's much worse.

**Griffin:** [laughs] I mean...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** 15. Rictus rolls a 15 on the insight check. Hellgrammite, I mean, the ball's in your court of how much you want to sort of expose here. A 15, I will say, as the DM, is a pretty good roll.

**Clint:** I think Rictus—I mean, Hellgrammite has definitely changed. Is that what the insight is?

**Griffin:** Yeah, I think that that is sufficient, you don't need any more than that.

**Travis:** Are you telling the truth?

**Griffin:** Doober says:

**Doober Sweetleaf:** I am perhaps, it will not surprise anyone that I wish for nothing more than to return to the foothills of my home. I... I want so

desperately to do so. If Hasty Jane's plan is sound, if there is a safe way off the island, perhaps we could just leave, but it would seem that the Octave with their infinite power would be able to find us. And if—

**Lorovith:** You all see it, right? We all see it. You hear it when he talks. We see it. There's only one way forward. We all know the right thing and we're struggling with it, but you look at the eight of us and there's only one decent being among us.

**Hellgrammite:** Thank you.

**Lorovith:** The only way forward is to prepare for the ascension of the god king Doober.

**Hellgrammite:** *What?*

**Lorovith:** You heard me. I don't trust a single other being in this room other than Doober Sweetleaf to take on the power that the Octave is offering. I would not trust a single one of us except for my son, Doober.

**Rictus:** I'm actually on board with that, for what it matters. I don't want to win, but looking around the room, no offense to anybody else, you're like— I've saved most of your lives multiple times. Doober's pretty chill!

**Lorovith:** Doober's the only decent one.

**Clint:** Okay. Hellgrammite runs off. Runs into—

**Griffin:** Whoa?

**Justin:** Fuck yes! Now we're going. Let's do a podcast!

**Clint:** Oh, wait, no, he can't. He can't. He can't.

**Justin:** Fuck!

**Griffin:** The hut would disappear.

**Clint:** The hut would disappear. The hut would disappear.

**Justin:** No, no—does it? Oh, does that make the hut disappear?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Well, why not? I think that's fun!

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Okay. Hellgrammite runs out of Leomund's Hunt.

**Griffin:** It instantly pop—the bubble pops. Everyone looks surpri—like Scorpo's like:

**Scorpo:** Are we done?

**Clint:** He runs across the street real quick to his place.

**Lorovith:** Shocking.

**Clint:** Comes running back in—

**Travis:** And Rictus announces:

**Rictus:** And that is how a bill becomes a law. Good talk, everybody.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Lorovith:** Nice.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Clint:** [sings] 'I'm a law!' He comes back in holding a toothbrush in his claws and says:

**Hellgrammite:** Remember the Truth Brush?

**Rictus:** Vaguely?

**Hellgrammite:** I made it earlier?

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Fuckin'...

**Hellgrammite:** On using the Truth Brush, you have to speak the truth after that.

**Griffin:** Scorpo says:

**Scorpo:** That is good for our discussion about—

**Hellgrammite:** I know!

**Scorpo:** How laws are made. Because what if one of us lies about how laws are made and the rest of us don't understand the civics lesson?

**Clint:** He runs the—

**Lorovith:** Mm-hm! The tooth of the truth is, I love bills!

**Rictus:** [yells out] Yes!

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Hellgrammite:** I'm a Conjunction Junction fan myself.

**Lorovith:** Uah! No!

**Clint:** He runs this brush over his mandibles or whatever and says:

**Hellgrammite:** I also support the bill we were discussing before.

**Griffin:** All right. It's a—I mean, so this is a—does the Truth Brush function exactly like Zone of Truth?

**Justin:** This is the thin—this is a question that I...

**Clint:** Well, surely you have the description of the Truth Brush?

**Griffin:** I do, I do, I do. Yeah, I mean, you can make a charisma saving throw to lie, right? But I think that... you see that Scorpo, at the very least, seeing this gesture says:

**Scorpo:** I'm truly relieved, Hellgrammite, to hear that you are—in this Model UN we've done that our interests are aligned. Hey—

**Lorovith:** Sorry, sorry—

**Scorpo:** Can you show me that cool hut again? Because it was so neat and it was fun—

**Lorovith:** No. No.

**Hellgrammite:** I don't want to—

**Lorovith:** Don't show the hut—

**Hellgrammite:** I don't want to—

**Lorovith:** Listen, let's just whisper—

**Hellgrammite:** Burn another spell slot.

**Lorovith:** Let's just whisper. Let's just whisper down here.

**Rictus:** What?

**Lorovith:** Let's whis—is this—is this okay, can we whisper down here? What are you doing with—

**Scorpo:** Hey, Chris, can you hear—

**Chris:** Hey! What's going on, Scorpo? Did you need something?

**Scorpo:** No, I... I forgot how to spell the word "sorcerer." And do you do spelling?

**Chris:** Sure!

**Griffin:** They go on, and then eventually—

**Travis:** Spell it, Griffin!

**Griffin:** Scorpo says:

**Scorpo:** [through coughing] They can hear whispers.

**Clint:** This episode of Schoolhouse Rock is brought to you by...

**Rictus:** So, feel free to take some bagel bites with you on your way out the door.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Lorovith:** Hey, I just wanted to say, sorry I made so many *bagel-bagel-bagel boos*.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rictus:** I get it, man. Everybody loves having *baggy bees* with their friends.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Hellgrammite:** I must admit that at first I was disappointed in no mini corn dogs, but I like the fact that you had *bagel bites*.

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Rictus:** Right. So, I'm going to go to sleep now, because we have a big day tomorrow.

**Justin:** Griffin, do the thing where you say like—

**Doober Sweetleaf:** But sir, it's—but sir, it's 10:30 in the morning?

**Griffin:** Doober says. [chuckles]

**Rictus:** Well, you know, pizza in the evening, pizza in the morning.

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Rictus:** Pizza at supper time. When you eat a lot of *bagel bites*, you can go to sleep anytime.

**Justin:** Is there—I would like to—now that the meeting has concluded, I would like to spend a little time reading up on illusory magic.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Justin:** Legitimately, I know nothing about it, and I want to go to the library and see if there's a book about it, because I need to.—here's what I—I want to go into this with a very base understanding of what illusory magic is capable of, while having no real mechanisms for defending myself from it.  
[chuckles]

**Griffin:** I'm glad that Lorovith understands what his potential weak points are. And I take that—

**Clint:** He's got to know his limitations!

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Right.

**Griffin:** Absolutely. Okay, yeah. So, give me—so, you, after everybody sort of breaks up and splits off and goes their separate ways from this—

**Clint:** Well, Hellgrammite's gonna stay and kind of watch over. Make sure—

**Justin:** Well let's all do the scenes at the same time?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I have a room?

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Lorovith, you make your way to the grand sort of sunken library. It's in the Ziggurat sort of main building. There's a rear exit from the foyer leading down. And then there's just sort of this spiral staircase leading downwards, just sort of, you know, wrapped in these long rows of books. And as you enter, you see a book—a set of books that are sort of floating through the air as if being carried by an invisible force, sort of plops down in front of you. And faintly through the sunlight kind of coming in through this top-level windows, you can see the figure of a sort of phantom librarian waiting for your request.

**Lorovith:** Hi! Yes, I... I've been looking at this book of illusory magic for something like a half hour now and still cannot make heads or tails of it. I don't suppose you have less of a librarian and more of a vibrarian that can just sort of give me the highlights of illusory magic? Just sort of the basics. I got about 20 minutes.

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Travis:** Maybe a highlights magazine with like a—like a Goofus and Gallant about illusory magic.

**Griffin:** Yeah, a Goofus—a Goofus and Glamour. And this is the—

**Lorovith:** First of all, the book, I keep losing it. That's hilarious.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay, give me a—what the phantom librarian does is vanishes. And then from below you, down the set of stairs, you start to hear a rustling. And you see very, very quickly a book sort of float off a shelf and then zoom up the stairs a bit to another bookcase, grabbing another book, adding it to the pile. And within a couple of minutes, the librarian returns and sort of dumps out several tomes that do appear to—

**Lorovith:** Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Okay. No, okay. [laughs]

**Griffin:** You can tell looking at the covers—

**Lorovith:** This is so many. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** There is—they are almost all illustrated. These do appear to be sort of—

**Justin:** How many are there?

**Griffin:** There's five.

**Lorovith:** Take four back. Please.

**Griffin:** You see the phantom librarian really sort of think about it and then—

**Lorovith:** Just like fa—just like one—if someone says, "Do you know illusory magic?" And you said, "I read an entire book on it," you would think that person knows what they're talking about. I just need one really good book. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Give me a persuasion check, please.

**Justin:** Can it be a religion check? Because I have a plus five in that. And I never get to flex it. [chuckles] Okay, persuasion check.

**Travis:** Be more religious, man!

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** 13 plus zero. 13.

**Griffin:** Okay, with a 13, the phantom librarian vanishes. And there is a stiff breeze that blows in here to the top level of the—of the library. It blows open the covers of the five books and appears to be turning them—opening them up to maybe the most salient pages.

**Justin:** Oh, nice.

**Griffin:** That are—that are present here.

**Lorovith:** What was your name again?

**Griffin:** [chuckles] You don't—you get no answer from the—

**Lorovith:** Well, my friend, I'm going to call you Cliff.

**Griffin:** Okay. You see the books—

**Travis:** I get it.

**Griffin:** Kind of dip up and down in a way of saying like, "Sure, man." And the phantom librarian leaves, leaving you to—

**Justin:** Cliff.

**Griffin:** Crack the books.

**Justin:** He has a name.

**Griffin:** Cliff.

**Justin:** Ass. [titters]

**Griffin:** Cliff vanishes.

**Justin:** Come on! [chuckles]

**Travis:** Cliff Vanishes is his name? That's a cool name!

**Griffin:** His name is Cliff Vanishes.

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** "That's right, I'm Cliff Vanishes, the phantom librarian."

**Griffin:** The phantom librarian Cliff Vanishes—

**Justin:** "I will bring you the sickest, dankest nugs."

**Griffin:** He hops on his invisible skateboard and ollies down, grinds the whole fucking spiral staircase—

**Travis:** And congratulates you on the A you got on your book report.  
[chuckles]

**Justin:** God, this is a—this is our best character in years! I love this guy, what's his name again?

**Griffin:** Cliff Vanishes, the phantom librarian.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's pretty cool. If one of you dies, maybe you could take up the mantle of Cliff Vanishes. All right, so you have gotten a sort of really, really brass tacks rundown laid out here by Cliff. It doesn't seem like—and forgive me if I'm, you know, making assumptions here, Lorovith, that this is something that you are practiced at. Cracking the books at the—at the library.

**Justin:** No, this is like completely out of my area of expertise. But I do—like just the nature of this magic specifically, because it is so intellectual, like it's a complete mystery to me. So I'm trying to just give myself like the base understanding.

**Griffin:** Okay, I would like an intelligence check from you, using your intelligence modifier. Just because studying is sort of a—is sort of a skill and—I'll give you advantage also on the roll, because you did get some help from the librarian to find the best stuff.

[sound of dice thrown]

**Griffin:** Wow! That's a 21.

**Justin:** 21 or a...

[sound of dice thrown]

**Justin:** 17.

**Griffin:** 17. We'll take the 21. Damn, dude. Have you read a book bef—like, what is your—what is your relationship with kind of like—

**Clint:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** What the fuck is wrong with you?

**Griffin:** I'm asking you a question, is—

**Travis:** Are you asking Justin or Lorovith?!

**Griffin:** I'm asking Lorovith if this is something—

**Travis:** It sounded like you were questioning Justin!

**Justin:** There are—

**Griffin:** What is your relationship to kind of like—

**Justin:** I don't think that—okay. So, the—I do not think that they would keep—I'm guessing about Goliath culture, maybe there's—this is written down. But my best guess would be for nomadic peoples that like tend to roam around the hillsides, it wouldn't make sense to have stored knowledge

in books. It's probably largely an oral tradition. So, I would imagine probably though, they're not—they have encountered other peoples. I like to think they probably have books, but they probably don't have libraries. So, that's what I would—that's my best guess.

**Griffin:** This being sort of a new thing for you at first, you know, I imagine there's a bit of discomfort that comes along with that. But you are very quickly surprised, I think, how easily this kind of—this kind of settles in. You start sort of reading through the pages that have been outlined here, and it lays out some like pretty basic stuff, right? Like everyone in this world, except for the Octave, has kind of one magic spell.

And sometimes those magic spells are based around sort of trickery or... you know, artificial creation, or some sort of magic meant to fool the senses of another living thing. And there are some rules to it, like if you—almost all illusions, if you touch them, you can usually tell whether or not they are real, because most, you know, minor illusions are intangible, right?

There's usually, even the better kinds of illusions, they usually are lacking in like one or two like sense categories, right? Even the ones that are like really, really, really powerful and maybe you can touch, they don't make any sound, right? So there's way—there are things to look for. There are deficits in kind of like sensory output that illusory things make.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And that is like a fairly... there are a few things you need to know to even understand that fact. But Lorovith, in sort of like going to the library for the first time and cracking these books, I won't tell you how you feel about it, but I will tell you that like, you're a natural. It's easy. You are—you are studying this stuff and you are learning a lot.

You are learning a lot more about magic than, you know, years of oral history, talking to people who have these sort of random abilities that they may or may not be able to do. This is a way more ef—just reading a book that compiles this stuff is really efficient. And you are—you are able to sort of pick up on that stuff with relative ease.

**Justin:** It's a completely new career for him. You know what I mean? He thought he was just one thing and then it's like, he's like also a brainiac too.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Who knew? [sings] Single dad who works two jobs—

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

**Justin:** [sings] Loves his kid and never stops. He's a survivor.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Fuckin' Cliff reappears, grinds up the spiral staircase, and then floats over the pages. The letters float up off the pages and begin to move before planting themselves back down in the book in front of you. And it says, "Great job, Lorovith. Books are power. Don't ever forget this moment."

**Justin:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** "Love, Ghost Rider."

**Justin:** No, no, Griffin, we have this fucking character already!

**Griffin:** "Love, Cliff Vanishes, phantom vibrarian."

[The Adventure Zone Royale theme music plays]

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