**Travis**: At what point, Griffin-- we haven’t um, solidified the structure of the episode, now, 33 in-- what point do we get to talk about, like our theories about what is going on, and like, fan theories-- is that in the after-show?

**Griffin**: Yeah, that’s uh, after the final... roll. No wait-

**Justin**: In “The Adventure Zone” Zone.

**Travis**: Uh huh.

[Clint laughing]

**Travis**: Hosted by Chris Hardwick [host of the Talking Dead].

**Justin**: The ‘The Adventure Zone’ Zone.

**Griffin**: Yeah, uh, we’ll talk about him there, we’ll get some like, famous guests that love the program, I’m talking about people like, David Duchovny, I’m talking about people like-

**Justin**: Flava Flav.

**Griffin**: Flavors...

**Travis**: Like Fla-vid Duchovny.

**Griffin**: Flavid Duchovny.

**Justin:** Flavid Duchov-a-ny!

**Griffin:** Yeah, when they both stepped into the teleporter experiment that was at that high school, but something went terribly awry, and they became one sort of slime man.

**Travis**: The whole gang.

**Griffin**: No, you know, the whole gang of people who like and listen to and enjoy our show.

**Griffin**: Um, so yes, uh, the-- the room has just been crystallized, this, uh, the central pillar is, uh, this white light has moved into it, and it has started to groan, and these large cracks are starting to form in it. Uh, and it’s starting to make some pretty... gnarly, uh, noises? Just to give you a reminder, this room that you’re in, uh, there’s the-- the door into the uh... shit, what was the last room you were in?

**Travis**: We went to-- okay, we were in Lucas’s bedroom.

**Griffin**: Uh, right, so there’s the door to Lucas’s bedroom, there’s the door to the room you came through from Hodgepodge, and then there’s the door leading inward. Um, into the--

**Travis**: [crosstalk] And isn’t there a mystery door?

**Griffin**: Oh, yes, and there is a fourth mystery door that you could not get through because it was inactive.

**Travis**: Even if I chop it real hard?

**Griffin**: Um... I mean, you can certainly try, you can do whatever you want. I was accused of railroading-- viciously in the Reddit.

**Travis**: [smugly] Was that on the train episode?

**Justin**: [“why would you do that to yourself” voice] Why are you reading the Reddit?

**Travis**: Well, I read the Reddit so I can figure out what’s going on.

**Justin**: Yeah. [chuckles] Yeah, if everybody could just--

**Travis**: That’s where I get all my theories from.

**Justin**: Yeah, stop giving us all your really smart fan theories.

**Travis**: I figured the whole thing out now.

**Griffin**: But folks, it makes nobody feel worse than me, because they’re so much better than my own shit. [Travis laughing]

**Justin**: Yeah. But then, people suggest-

**Travis**: [crosstalk] I think of Griffin going, “Oh yeah!,” and then writing that down.

**Justin**: But then people suggest things that they think I will do, and then I read them and I think I should do that, and it turns into this stranger-than-fiction, self-fulfilling-prophecy.

**Griffin**: Yeah, exactly.

**Travis**: [crosstalk] I love it-- Okay, I would like to, before we run out of the room, try and chop on the mystery room.

**Griffin**: Okay.

**Travis**: Just so I can feel like I’ve done *something*.

**Griffin**: Yeah, sure, uh, the, yeah, sure.

**Travis**: [crosstalk] What would it be?  
  
**Griffin**: Well, the door is-- it would just be a melee attack-- the door hasn’t been crystallized, um, because it’s-- it’s protected by the airlock seal, um, so yeah. Uh, it’s just like not, it’s not active, it’s not-

**Travis**: Well, I rolled a 12 plus 7, so 19.

**Griffin**: Okay, yeah, that’s a-- that’s good enough to uh, to wedge your axe in there, make a lil’-- make a lil’ hole. Um, and through that hole, um, you can see through the airlock, um, the --it’s, it’s open, actually, on the other side, and through that hole you can peek into what looks like, another sort of private residence. Like another sort of private sleeping chambers, much like the room, um, that you were in just before, in Lucas’s room, only it’s not lit up at all, um... it’s uh, it’s a bit... it does look derelict, but it is definitely a, um, a dormitory of some sort.

**Justin:** Like did…

**Travis**: Okay, great, let’s get out of here.

**Justin**: Did the nurse ‘bot see that?

**Griffin**: Uh yeah, she said, uh:

**Noelle**: Hey, can you *not*? We should get the hell out of here, c’mon! This is like, a li-

**Griffin**: Carey-- Carey Pietsch who does all of the wonderful art for our show, did this amazing, uh, drawing of her? And her sort of, uh, like, uh... I, um, I’m just going to say it, scrumbled-together nature--

[Clint laughing]

**Griffin**: And there is a great-- the best thing about it, there’s a little, a lil label on her that says, uh, N-O period, like number, one-thr- no, 3113. Like NO.3113 (Noelle).

**Travis**: Very good.

**Griffin**: It’s fucking perfect... like that’s fucking canon. Anyway, yeah. You’re in this room, this central pillar is starting to crack.

**Travis**: [crosstalk] Yeah, let’s skedaddle.

**Griffin**: Okay.

**Travis**: Should we do a skedaddle check?

**Griffin**: Uh, if you want.

**Travis**: Ohh, critical mi-- no, I got a 17 skedaddle.

**Griffin**: Uh oh, you skedoople.

**Travis**: [laughing] Oh no!

**Griffin**: You fall over.

**Travis**: I skedoodled.

**Griffin**: Uh, where are you going-- what are you doing?

**Travis**: At the airlock, like, the one place we’re supposed to keep going, right?

**Griffin**: Okay.

**Travis**: Like, my other option is back into Lucas’s room, take a nap, and hope that it doesn’t collapse? Is that an option?

**Griffin**: Yeah, so you-- you’re making your way in towards the middle of the lab.

**Travis**: Yeah.

**Justin**: Yes.

**Griffin**: Okay, so you make your way into that airlock leading into the centre of the lab, um, and as you sort of clear that airlock and get inside of it, the, uh, the central pillar in the middle of the room just kind of explodes, sending shards of crystal shrapnel, uh, all over the room, um, although they just kinda stop in mid-air, right in front of the airlock that you came through, um, and the curious thing about like, the shards as they’re stuck in mid-air, is they form almost a perfect, like, dwarf shape, um, as if they were all targeting, uh... Merle... when they-- when they flew in your direction.

**Travis:** Man!

**Clint**: That’s just ridiculous, what?

**Travis**: These-- these gemstones, they done hate Merle.

**Griffin**: Um, and as they-- as they sort of fall harmlessly to the ground, uh, you see that light pass through another rift, uh, and disappear.

**Travis**: Hey, Griffin, I don’t wanna derail it, but, is this the gems targeting Merle or you targeting Dad? Is there something you need to talk about? [Griffin laughing] Are you mad at Dad for some reason?

**Griffin**: Uh, I’d rather not get into it. I don’t wanna--

**Travis**: --[crosstalk] Okay. We’ll save that for The “Adventure Zone” Zone.

**Griffin**: [chuckling] Yeah. We’re gonna go into The Adventure Zone Untucked, we’re gonna get into it.

[Travis and Clint laughing]

**Griffin**: As that white light sort of disappears in through the rift, uh, you see Noelle has her little satellite dish that she has on top of her head that was pointing at her, and she says:

**Noelle:** Hey, I just wanted to let y’all know, I-- I scanned that thing, just to like, try and figure out what it is, and it’s definitely, it’s of undead origin. But it’s got traces of divine energy, all around it. I’m trying to figure out-- do you guys know what’s going on? I don’t-- I’m not a big fan of that thing.

**Magnus:** Well, I mean, I’ve got some theories, but I don’t think this is the time and place.

**Taako:** Besides, he read ‘em all on Reddit, so…

[all laughing]

**Griffin**: Um, Angus actually chimes in through your Stone of Far Speech, and he’s like:

**Angus:** Argh, this is killing me! This all sounds so familiar but I just can’t place it.

**Griffin**: You hear him flipping through some books and he’s like:

**Angus:** I’ll keep digging into it, you guys just keep on moving in, and just regroup with the rest of the team.

[everyone talking over each other]

**Taako:** It may be familiar, but it’s not *too* familiar because I’ve never heard anything like it.

**Travis**: But not too *not* familiar because it seems like [Clint starts laughing] something I would know about.

**Griffin**: So, you’re in this airlock that’s in one of these branching pathways, and it’s leading towards two doors, uh, and they are labelled as follows. Um... the one going to the left is labelled the “Death Laser Calibration Chamber”, and the door on the right is labelled, “Large Humanoid Species Behaviour Modification Testing”. And then that sign is actually scratched out, and underneath it, uh, in sort of crude handwriting, is the word “hugbears”.

**Travis**: [gasps]

**Griffin**: Um, and uh, Lucas says,

**Lucas:** Now, by my calculations, um, I think I know where you guys are. And you definitely-- trust me on this one-- you gotta go to that death laser calibration chamber.

**Magnus**: Hugbears!

**Justin:** Hugbears!

**Merle:** Hugbears!

**Lucas:** No, tr-- trust me. You guys-

**Magnus**: Hug B-b-bears.

**Lucas:** It’s gonna be- it’s gonna be way too dan-

**Magnus**: [cuts him off] Hug-a b-b-bears.

**Merle:** Hugbears!

**Lucas**: You’re just yelling “hugbears” at me and I--

**Magnus**: [crosstalk] Bug. Hares.

**Lucas:** … What?

**Magnus**: What?

[muffled laughter]

**Magnus**: What did *you* say?

**Merle:** I say we go to the hugbears.

**Griffin**: Mmkay. Um, as you pop open the room labelled “hugbears”, you, uh, enter into a pretty curious scene, and it’s unlike any room you’ve been on in Lucas’s lab so far. It’s actually a pretty cosy-looking living room. Uh, and there’s a lit fireplace, and some-- uh, a mantle, with some family photos on it... but this room has been turned over, it almost looks like. There’s a couch that’s been overturned in the middle of the room, uh, with some scratches on it, there’s some smashed tea cups and spilled tea on the ground. There are a few potted plants that have been upended, that are weirdly like, writhing on the floor, um... and then right in the middle of the room, is basically just a giant hairy mass.

**Travis**: *Yes.*

**Griffin**: And, uh, you can make out in this mass, four bugbears, uh, of various shapes and fur colorings, um, and they are all asleep. And one of ‘em actually has a really bad cut on his head, it looks like. But they are sleeping fairly soundly.

**Travis**: And uh, Ditto, just so I can get a full picture-- is Noelle still with us? [crosstalk] Or is she like--

**Griffin**: Yeah. Noelle is with you.

**Travis**: Oh, okay... I’m going to whisper to Noelle:

**Magnus:** [whispering] What’s uh... what’s all this then? Noelle, what is this shit?

[crosstalk]

**Noelle**: I don’t-- What happened to them? Hey, can y’all check and make sure they’re okay?

**Magnus:** [whispering] Um, what-- what is this testing room for? What were you testing?

**Noelle**: Well it’s not really a testing room, it’s just where the hugbears live.

**Magnus:** Oh, cool cool cool.

**Noelle**: Oh, I shouldn’t call them that-- The, the- I forget what I’m supposed to call them-- I just call ‘em hugbears.

**Travis**: Cool, cool, cool. Great, great, great.

[crosstalk]

**Taako:** What’s the story with hugbears? I’m not familiar--

**Griffin**: Hold on, I’ve got a truck passing.

**Travis**: Like a fart?  
  
**Griffin**: No, like a truck.

**Justin**: “I’ve got a truck passing” is a pretty good podcast slang for “I have to fart”.

[all laughing]

**Noelle**: I mean it’s kinda an experiment I guess, but mostly they’re just like-- they’re just like buds. They just hang out and help us out, and, and y’know-- [crosstalk]

**Justin**: Oh okay.

**Travis**: That sounds cool.

**Noelle**: They do some-- a little bit of work here and there, around the lab, um, yeah they’re just... they’re good folk! I’m worried about ‘em.

**Travis**: That sounds great.

**Taako:** I’m sayin’ like, take us in from the ground level on hugbears. What are hugbears?

**Griffin**: As you say that, Taako, this-- this hugbear pile starts to sort of rustle around, [crosstalk] and you hear some groans coming from it.

**Travis**: I am chuggin’ for some huggin’, let’s do this. I wanna get *in* there. I wanna *hug* these bears.

**Justin**: So you’re just hugging them then.

**Travis**: Well not yet, but I’m definitely gearing up for it.

**Clint**: You’re not saying Huggybear, like from Starsky and Hutch, right?

**Travis:** [crosstalk] Good question, Dad.

**Griffin**: You’re doing your pre-hug stretches.

**Travis**: That’s correct.

**Griffin**: You don’t want to tear something.

**Travis**: No.

**Justin**: I wanna do a…

**Clint:** Attack?

**Justin:** No, um, I wanna do a nature check, to see if I know anything about hugbears.

**Griffin**: Okay.

**Justin**: Or, or can assess anything about the situation, about these creatures here. Uh, we got a... [dice rolling] 18.

**Griffin**: Okay, uh-- [crosstalk]

**Justin**: 14 plus my 4 in nature.

**Griffin**: Yeah, I mean there’s no such thing as a hugbear, there is such thing as a bugbear, um, you’ve met one, um, Klaarg--

**Justin**: Klaarg.

**Griffin**: Um, uh, and the only thing you really know about bugbears is that they are giant, and super strong, and like, unswervingly violent. They are just little furry balls of-- of violence, and hate, and bloodshed.

**Taako:** I’ll be outside.

[laughter]

**Griffin**: They’re irredeemable kill monsters.

**Taako:** Taako’s good out here.

**Clint:** [crosstalk] So not our friends...

**Magnus:** But Noelle said they were fine! That they were good folk.

**Taako:** Cool. Cool, cool. Glad we all agree.

**Griffin**: This hugbear pile is now rustlin’ and rufflin’ a little bit more.

**Magnus:** Okay, so we should sneak past them.

**Merle:** I want to heal the one with the cut on his head.

[Magnus hisses air between his teeth]

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Taako:** Cool.

**Travis:** [crosstalk] Great, good for you.

**Clint:** Y’know, it’s like the whole *Androcles and the Lion--*

**Justin**: I’m staying-- like literally, I’m not joking, I’m, I’m outside of the room. I’m not goin’ in.

**Clint:** [crosstalk] --pull the thorn.

**Griffin**: You’re in the airlock, like watching.

**Justin**: Yeah, I’m watching like, “what are they doing?”

**Travis**: I’m whispering to my shield about that time I fought a hugbear.

**Clint:** [crosstalk] I have a big--

**Griffin**: Okay, that’s a lie-- oh, no, you really did.

**Travis**: I rolled an 18 by the way.

**Griffin**: Okay.

**Clint**: I have a big fake smile on my face, you know like Ralphie-- [crosstalk] in A Christmas Story.

**Griffin**: Yeah, yeah sure.

**Clint**: And I’m walking up very slowly, and I find the adorable, sweet, open-minded...

**Justin:** [laughs] [crosstalk] super aggressive!

**Clint**: --sweet, demure hugbear with the cut on its head, and I cast Prayer of Healing to heal his cut.

**Griffin**: Okay.

**Justin**: Alright.

**Travis**: He devours you.

**Griffin**: You’re devoured.

**Clint**: Oh.

**Griffin**: You heal-- you heal him from inside.

**Clint**: Uh... I’m willing to do that, that’s how much I care.

**Travis**: Oh wow.

**Griffin**: [trying not to laugh] Okay.

[dice rolling]

**Clint**: Okay, so it’s 12-- [crosstalk] so that’s--

**Griffin**: Okay-- 18.

**Clint**: 18!

**Griffin**: So you heal him for 18 points of damage, and this-- this bugbear with the cut on its head, who looks like-- sort of like the most grizzled of the bunch, uh, that wound starts to fade a lil’ bit. And uh, he wakes up, and the whole pile kinda wakes up, and uh, very quickly sort of gets to their feet, um... and the smallest of this bunch, uh, runs up to you, Merle, and grabs you, and screams, terrifyingly, in your face.

**Merle:** Awwww.

**Griffin**: And uh, one of the bugbears, says, uh,

**Bugbear**: Christy! Christy, stop. Christy! Stop! This is a different- this is a different batch, of folks, this is-- these aren’t the folks that came through, these are different.

**Griffin**: And Christy’s like:

**Christy**: I don’t care! I’m still just gonna-- I’m still just gonna- I’m gonna start bitin’!

**Magnus:** [fake cheerfulness] Hi, everybody!

[Clint wheezing]

**Bugbear**: Who are you guys? What are you guys doing here?

**Magnus:** Well, my name’s Magnus, um... *big* bugbear fan by the way, from *way* back--

**Merle:** *Love* your work.

**Magnus:** Love it.

**Merle:** [crosstalk] *Love* it!

**Magnus:** Um, we’re looking for Lucas, we wanna help him, uh... there’s a lot of scary, hinky stuff going on, we got Noelle with us, say hi Noelle.

**Noelle**: Hey guys. These-- these guys are cool, they’re with us, you don’t need to-- Christy, you can set Merle down, he’s good people, he’s good folk, he healed your grandpa, so...

**Taako:** And I’m not really with that crew, I’m-- they call me-- Taako’s my handle, and I’m kinda more with the airlock crew [Clint laughing], which is me, out here in the airlock.

[Clint giggling]

**Griffin**: Uh, Christy sets you down, Merle, and says, um,

**Christy**: Sorry, I just thought-- I thought you were part -- we just got into kind of a skerfuffle and I thought you-- I thought you guys were a party to that.

**Magnus:** No, we don’t party.

**Justin**: [crosstalk] Sorry… Quick check, uh, skerfuffle?

**Christy**: Yeah, I, yeah, that’s what I said.

[Clint laughing]

**Magnus:** All right, listen.

**Merle:** [crosstalk] Look, scrumble-bot!

**Magnus:** We’re sorry that we walked into your country bear jamboree. We’ll keep moving on along.

**Grizzled bugbear**: No, it’s fine, you didn’t interrupt nothin’, we were just takin’ a nap, we got hit with some sort of sleepin’ dust and uh--

**Magnus:** Ugh. That’s the worst.

**Grizzled bugbear**: Yeah, no it’s not a good-- not a good night’s sleep,

**Magnus:** [crosstalk] Who were these other people?

**Grizzled bugbear**: We should introduce ourselves.

**Magnus:** Please.

**Griffin**: And one of the other bugbears goes:

**Bugbear**: Oh yeah, let’s, um, I guess we should go down the line. We’re-- so we’re bugbears.

**[MUSIC: “The Hugbear Family” by Griffin McElroy (on SoundCloud)]**

**Magnus:** Uh huh.

**Bugbear**: You probably figured that out already.

**Magnus:** Yep.

**Aaron**: We’re sorta... the help here-- we kinda help out around the place, and, uh... my name’s Aaron Styles.

[Travis snorts]

**Aaron**: I do-- I help with Lucas’, y’know, fashion, and help get him dressed, and, you know, barber stuff, shavin’, you know, that kind of thing.

**Magnus:** Yeah, basic-... gotcha. [crosstalk] You’re his valet [pronounces the T at the end]

**Griffin**: The older, grizzled one says, uh,

**John**: My name is John Cook, and I do all the cookin’, and I guess I do all the Johnnin’

**Magnus:** [kinda unimpressed] Uh huh. [sarcastically] Ahahahaha.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin**: He’s the funny one I guess.

**Griffin**: And another one-- another one speaks up and goes, uh,

**Jamie**: Oh, my name’s Jamie Green, and, uh, I help tend to the plants and the stuff like that. I got kind of a green thumb, that’s sorta my joke that I do.

**Griffin**: And Merle, the one that attacked you says,

**Christy**: And my name’s Christy Kilgore. And I’m sorta in charge of maintenance around here, but couldn’t think of like, a clever last name for maintenance so... I just went with-- I just kept my original name. My bugbear name.

**[MUSIC FADES]**

**Magnus:** Is this like a Jellicle Cats kind of situation, where these are the names Lucas gave you, but you have your own names for each other? Like these are like oddly human-ous names.

**Aaron**: [crosstalk] -Yeah sure-- we’ve got our original names-- we have our bugbear names-- but we choose not to, sorta, remember that part of our lives ‘cause it was pretty... we used to do some pretty bad stuff out there out in the wild.

**Magnus:** Yeah.

**Taako:** Do you guys-- or perhaps did you guys-- depending, I’m not really sure-- know Klaarg?

[muffled wheezing]

**Griffin**: All four of them look at you, Taako, immediately. Um, and Christy runs over to the airlock door, uh, and shouts,

**Christy**: Wait you-- you know Daniel? You saw Daniel out there?

**Magnus:** If that’s Klaarg, then... yeah..?

**Griffin**: And Aaron walks over and sort of pulls Christy back, and is like,

**Aaron**: S-- you’ll-- I’m sorry, how did you meet-- Klaarg was his original name, but when he lived here with us his name was Daniel, he’s my son, and... jeez. We’re all-- we’re all family here, y’know, we were a family tribe of bugbear that Lucas found and sort of adopted--

**Magnus:** Uh huh.

**Aaron**: What... how did you meet Daniel? How--

**Magnus:** Well-- [crosstalk]

**Taako:** Wait, was he Klaarg originally? And then he came here and switched to Daniel and went back to Klaarg, is that what’s up?

**Aaron**: It’s hard to explain, you might-- you may wanna ask Lucas about it, it’s kinda-- the specifics-

**Magnus:** We totes will, he’s our buddy, I hugged him once, he gave us some Oolong, then he joined in a wacky racers thing with us, it was great--

**Aaron**: Is he safe? Is he alright?

**Magnus:** [crosstalk] He’s totally fine.

**Taako:** He’s totally fine, he once saved my life.

**Magnus:** He’s a good guy.

**John**: That sounds like our Daniel.

[crosstalk]

**Merle:** Well, he’s actually the ursine formerly known as Daniel.

**Taako:** No, he’s fine!

**Magnus:** We saved him from some bad dudes, [choruses of agreement] he saved us from some stuff.

**Jamie**: Gosh, we sure do appreciate that. We miss Daniel a lot around here.

**Magnus:** [crosstalk] No problemo!

**Merle:** And we didn’t kill him or anything. Didn’t fight with him.

**Magnus:** [crosstalk] He’s fine.

**Merle:** Nope. Didn’t kill--

**Taako:** Okay, we need to check, he’s *not* dead.

**Griffin**: No, he’s not dead.

**Merle:** [defensively] No... he’s not dead.

**Travis**: No, Dad, this is us telling you. He’s not dead.

**Clint**: [defensively] Yeah, I know he’s not dead!

**Justin**: Wha-- okay, now listen--

**Griffin**: Why do you keep saying that he is?

**Justin**: Here are the two ways people say that someone’s not dead: [normally] “Oh, he’s not dead” [exaggerated] “He’s not deeaad!” You’re doing the second one.

**Travis**: You’re falling into that second category, hard. You’re leaning into that category.

**Justin**: He’s not dead, he’s very much alive.

**Clint**: He’s not [with strange inflection] *dead?*

**Travis**: You’re so bad at inflection.

**Justin**: I like that one ‘cause it betrays the actuality of the situation, which is: I don’t know. It was ten episodes ago, I don’t remember.

**Clint**: We did fight him though!

**Travis**: No! He fell off the back of the car!

**Clint:** No, the first time!

**Travis**: Do you even listen to our show? Like we check back--

**Griffin**: And then you met him again!

**Travis:** [crosstalk] and then we saw him again!

**Griffin:** Did you think you killed him and that was a fucking bugbear ghost? That helped you out in--

**Travis**: We record these! You can listen to these again.

**Justin**: He’s fine. Klaarg’s fine.

**Travis:** Klaarg’s fine.

**Merle:** Yeah. [exaggerated] Klaarg’s... *fine.*

[Justin and Travis laughing]

**Griffin**: Um-- [crosstalk]

**Magnus:** Alright. Bugbears. Tell us about this other group you encountered before us.

**Aaron**: Aw, yeah, they were really rude! They came through, and we offered them, y’know, some tea, and we just... y’know, we asked how they were doin’ and they wanted to get by, and head inward-- towards the inner chambers in the lab. And we’re like, we can’t let that happen, of course, so we had sort of a disagreement--

**Magnus:** Oh, pardon?

**Aaron**: Uh, sorry?

**Magnus:** We, um... totally gotcha, why- why can you not let-- hypothetically, a group of people pass by to get in?

**Aaron**: Oh, well that’s, like, sort of our thing, y’know-- we do our jobs around the place, but we’re also... we *are* still bugbears.

**John**: Yeah, so we’re like, really big, so we also do some light security work, um, for the lab as well. Y’know, we can’t really let folks--

**Magnus:** Well, what if Lucas said it was cool?

**John**: Um... I guess that would be fine? He-- he didn’t tell us it was cool with this last group though, so uh--

**Magnus:** Oh, okay. Well I… [crosstalk]

**John**: There was sort of a kerfuffle? There was a lil’ dwarf guy that attacked us, so we gave him a lil’-- a lil’ piece of our minds, there was a lizard lady, and she threw some sort of smoke bomb at us-- and we all went to dreamy-dream town.

**Magnus:** They sound like dicks. [mumbled agreement from Merle]

**John**: Yeah, I hated ‘em.

**Magnus:** Hey Lucas? Can you hear me? Come in, Lucas--

**Lucas**: Yeah. Yeah, okay, I guess you’ve sorta found out about one of my less ethical sort of experiments. Um...

**Magnus:** It *sounds* fine. They *seem* great.

**Taako:** [crosstalk] Yeah, they’re really sweethearts.

**Lucas**: No, they really are-- they’re great-- they have these, um-- these inhibitors-- these inhibitor chips, in their brains, that I... I was trying to come up with a way to like, have people that would do some help for me around the lab.

**Magnus:** [crosstalk] Ohhhh.

**Lucas**: But also protect the lab from attackers, so I…

**Merle:** Slavery, right?

**Lucas**: Well, [sighs] I guess, kind of, yeah a little bit, but they-- I mean, they seem genuinely happy, and y’know, they didn’t like being... all violent--

**Magnus:** [crosstalk] So this is why we couldn’t charm Klaarg again.

**Lucas**: Yeah I saw, I watched what you guys did with Klaarg-- when I watched you on the races, and when I saw him pop up, I was a little bit surprised-- I gotta know, what did you guys do to him down there?

**Merle:** [slowly] We *charmed* him.

**Magnus:** He’s our buddy.

**Lucas**: You used, like a charm spell on him? Klaarg, or as he was known here, Daniel Butler-- he was my butler-- he, um--

**Magnus:** Lucas, you gotta get better at that. C’mon. A little subtlety.

**Lucas**: [crosstalk] Aw, no, I thought it was-- I thought it was cute. Anyway, um, he ran off-- he got into a little scuffle with his sister, and he bumped his head, and I think it disabled the inhibitor chip, and he had a freak-out. And he-- he ran off and escaped, and all I can think is that when you charmed him, somehow the wires got crossed in his brain? As it turns out, if you, like, inhibit all the aggression in a bugbear, they’re actually very sweet. Um, and so I that think he’s a bit on the fritz, Taako.

**Taako:** Oh, right! Yeah, okay, now I remember-- I charmed him the first time we met him, to turn him into like, Kelsey Grammer?

**Magnus:** Mhm.

**Lucas**: I think the odds are actually pretty good that he’s, maybe gonna be charmed by you forever, kind of like... on and off.

**Magnus:** Cool!

[crosstalk]

**Taako:** He can join a nation of podcast listeners, [laughter] in that particular affliction.

**Magnus:** Alright, so, Luco-- need you to pass on to these, uh... these hugbears, that it’s totally cool for us to continue on our way unmolested.

**Lucas**: Yeah sure, uh, hey guys, you just gotta let ‘em pass, okay? They’re trying to get in-- into the middle.

**Merle:** Before we go, will you tell us just just a little bit more about the scuffle? Was there a problem with the scuffle?

[crosstalk]

**Jamie**: Oh yeah, like, we were-- we don’t wanna be rude, we try to be real nice here, as-- as much as we can, but yeah these-- these three, um. Honestly it was just the dwarf guy that was mostly sorta causin’ all the trouble, honestly reminds me of back in my day, um, one time a guy came into my cave and I just killed ‘em!

**Magnus:** Yeah. We’ve all been there.

**John**: Yeah, I definitely killed some guys who came into my cave, too.

**Magnus:** I just feel like if that happens, you throw ‘em right off a cliff? And it’s usually fine.

**Jamie**: Oh yeah, I’ve thrown plenty of people off cliffs,

[Several “yeah”s]

**Aaron**: That’s uh, cliff-throwing is what bugbears do best, really.

**Magnus:** We should compare notes-- so we need to keep on movin’.

**Aaron**: It’s all about the angle. The angle --

**Magnus:** I think it’s about the dangle, but that’s just me.

**Aaron**: Well I guess I-- I guess we can let you through, if Lucas has vouched for ya. So can ya tell me what’s goin’ on in this lab? ‘Cause I’ve heard lots of crinkle-tinkles--

**Magnus:** Oh yeah, you guys need to get *movin’*. Uh...

**Taako:** Yeah, this is not a cool scene, you need to move on out.

**Magnus:** Yeah, do you wanna come with us?

**Aaron**: I guess we could, but like--

**Taako:** [in a deep voice] *SWEAR FEALTY!*

[laughter]

**Magnus:** [in the same deep voice] Swear to me!

**Taako:** [normally] Sorry, I don’t know where that came from.

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] It seems like--

**Taako:** -you’re welcome to join us, but you just have to [deep voice] *swear fealty!*

**Lucas**: I... is he okay?

**Magnus:** He’s fine.

**Taako:** [crosstalk] I’m fine.

**Magnus:** You should just do that, though.

**Griffin**: Noelle says, um,

**Noelle**: Well, hold on, it might be kinda dangerous ‘cause it’s all crystallized out there.

**Magnus:** That’s why I’m saying they should come with us, ‘cause they can’t go out that way, they have to keep moving inward.

**Noelle**: Yeah, but there could be other parts of it-- why don’t you-- I’ll tell you what, you four just lock yourselves in the airlock when we leave. You’ll be safe in there, until we, we can come get ya.

**Magnus:** Okay.

**Travis**: I think that’s Griffin’s DM way of not having to do six voices for the rest of the campaign.

[Justin and Clint laughing]

**Griffin**: Yuuup. Well actually, at this point it’s like 8 voices, cause you got also like, two different radios.

**Travis**: That’s true.

**Griffin:** This whole thing’s gotten wildly outta hand.

**Justin**: We’re gonna elect one of us to speak for the others.

**Griffin**: I’m gonna have like, the... I’m gonna write in a story element where they all like, merge into one,

**Travis**: Oh, like Sliders?

**Griffin**: Well, like David Slime-covny.

**Travis**: Okay.

**Christy**: Uh, can we get y’all anything? Before we-- before you go?

**Aaron**: Yeah, can we get you a tea or somethin’? Can I give you guys a quick shave, or--

**John**: Yeah, I can cook you up a nice meal. I can make y’all a -a ham steak?

**Magnus:** Y’all have been lovely. Um, we have *got* to mosey. Uh… Farewell, we’ll never forget you.

**Merle:** We will never forget our time--

**John**: I guess you don’t wanna know where the Bugbear Treasure is buried.

[sounds of protest]

**Magnus:** Wait, where is the bugbear treasure?

**John**:Naw, just kiddin’. I’m just playin’.

**Magnus:** Hey wait, I have a question real quick. Why is there a second dormitory out there, do you guys know? If you’re like, doing the day-to-day stuff. There was Lucas’s room, and then there was like an empty room.

**Aaron**: Oh yeah, well that was... well that was Maureen’s room.

**Magnus:** And Maureen...?

**Jamie**: Maureen. Y’know. Lucas’s mom?

**Magnus:** Gotcha.

**Jamie**: Yeah she’s, um. She’s-- she’s not with us anymore unfortunately.

**Magnus:** Where is she?

**Jamie**: Um... I should probably, uh--

**Merle:** [whispering] I think she’s dead.

**Jamie**: You should probably ask Lucas about that, when, um. You know, like, later on. You guys, um, should probably get a move on.

**Magnus:** Uh huh.

**Jamie**: I get this feeling that the base is sinking, and we all don’t wanna die.

**Magnus:** Yeah. No, I feel ya, feel ya, feel ya. Um... did Maureen die?

**Aaron**: Yeah. God, how indelicate can you be, bud?

**Magnus:** Well, I didn’t know her--

**Merle:** Well, he could’ve asked Lucas.

**Lucas**: Yeah. Um, I can talk to you guys about that later, let’s just-- can we get this show on the--

**Magnus:** Oh, Lucas can hear. That’s right. Sorry dude! We keep going.

**Lucas**: Cool. [Griffin trying not to laugh] Cool talk. Pretty cool day I’m having with you guys, my three friends.

[Magnus laughing nervously]

**Merle:** C’mon Noelle!

**Griffin**: Okay, yeah. You guys say your goodbyes to the, uh, to the bugbears, to the hugbear family. And as you leave the hugbear room, uh, you pass through an airlock that is just like a straight tunnel. Um, and this one, uh, this-- this single door is labelled, “Hugbear supply room”. Um, and uh, it’s where all the hugbears’ cleaning supplies, cooking supplies, all of the supplies they need to do their work around the lab, uh, are. And as you enter into it, you realize that this room has already been crystallized. And there’s some shelves, with supplies all over, it just looks like a big storeroom. Even through your suits you can feel, uh, this room is actually really cold. You realize it’s actually because there’s a small vent to the outside of the lab in this room, and there’s some snow blowing into the room, that’s actually instantly crystallizing and uh, falling to the ground, so there’s like a crunchy layer of crystallized snow--

**Travis**: And how cool would you say that looks?

**Griffin**: It looks pretty neat, actually. It’s like a little crystal confetti cannon, coming into the room. Unfortunately, right underneath that window, you see a crystallized figure. And it’s pretty small? And it’s wearing a null suit, only the helmet is open in that null suit, and you see a dwarven figure with a cigar in its mouth.

**Magnus:** Oh god, it’s Merle!

[sad music starts playing]

**Griffin**: And it’s Merle from the future.

**Taako:** [chuckling] Twist.

**Griffin**: Uh, no, you actually recognize this crystallized figure as Boyland. The dwarf that came in with Carey and Killian.

**Travis:** No… Boyland is closed for good.

[Clint guffaws]

**Taako:** The sad thing is he’ll never get to be Manland.

**Travis**: Why did he take off his helmet? He was always so stupid.

**Justin**: We probably just high-fived, by the way. In fiction. I don’t know if that matters.

**Griffin**: Yeah, okay.

**Griffin**: So here’s a crystallized Boyland, um, he has his helmet open, and he has a pretty grim look on his face

**Clint:** [laughing] yeah!

**Griffin:** And he’s got his cigar in his mouth that he had when you guys first came in through here. When you guys first crash-landed into the laboratory. And he’s sitting right under the window where the snow is coming in.

**Travis**: I wave my hand and see if his eyes move.

**Griffin**: [chuckling] No…

**Travis**: Oh, okay.

**Griffin**: [chuckling] … No…

**Travis**: I thought maybe I could get him out!

**Clint**: [crosstalk] His cigar- is the cigar covered with crystal?

**Griffin**: Uh, yeah. All of this man is covered in crystal.

**Travis**: How covered?

**Griffin**: Completely covered.

**Travis**: Like, what’s the thickness of the crystal?

**Griffin**: Pretty damn thick.

**Travis**: Okay. Well, I feel nothing about this.

**Griffin:** [laughs really hard]

**Clint**: And yet you have so much to say...

**Travis**: But is it weird? I feel no emotional connection to this crystallized man.

**Griffin**: That’s fuckin’ savage, Travvy.

**Travis**: Well. I barely knew him before, and I won’t even know him now.

**Griffin**: He volunteered at the Boys and Girls Club. The Boys and Dwarves Club- every single weekend. He, um... What else can I say- he had a gigantic family. Oh my god. He was the father of four hundred sons and thirteen daughters, which is weird.

**Clint**: That’s why he’s called Boyland.

**Griffin**: Yeah, ‘cause they spring from him. Fully formed. And boy, was he just a great dad. He had a big old camping trip for all 413 of his kids planned for actually *next week*.

**Travis:** Euuuugh.

**Justin:** Oh, shit.

**Travis**: And he was two days away from retirement.

**Griffin**: And, he was--

**Justin**: Are the tickets non-refundable or?

**Griffin**: Uh, for camping?

**Travis & Griffin**: The camping tickets?

**Griffin**: No, that’s a good point. You would have to rent out like a whole forest to get all those kids up in the mix. Um, anyway, he was the sweetest guy, sorry I did a bad job sort of storytelling, I guess, for him. In this, in his brief eulogy it’s a shame that only now--

**Travis**: Do I have a marker or something with me that I can draw like a smiley face on his face?

**Griffin**: Yeah sure.

**Clint**: Does he have anything worth stealing that we could take?

**Griffin**: Hey!

**Justin:** It’s all covered in crystals, right?

**Griffin**: No actually, he has a weapon. It’s kind of a small handaxe that he’s got.

**Clint**:I take it.

**Travis**: Why would *you* take that?

**Griffin**: It’s just a one-handed axe, it doesn’t look like anything special but it was coated in the null-suit juice when he got sprayed down. So, yeah, that would be protected, but him... he’s all froze.

**Clint**: That’s too bad. I take the axe.

**Griffin**: Okay.

**Travis**: Alright, so we move on.

**Clint**: I should say something, too, right? I’m a cleric.

**Travis**: Well, and a dwarf. Maybe is there like a dwarven rite?

**Clint**: Oh yeah...

**Travis**: Some kind of passage you wanna read from your dwarf bible?

**Clint**: [crosstalk] Yes. I have to say it in ‘dwarf-ese’. Is that alright with you guys?

**Travis**: No, please.

**Clint**: Okay. [clears his throat]

**Justin**: Hold on, lemme get comfortable.

**Clint**: *Meka leka hi...*

[crosstalk]

**Travis:** I fucking knew it!

[general noises of disbelief while Clint cackles]

**Travis:** I could have shot-- I could have written it down in an envelope, held it to my forehead, and said that’s what you’re gonna say. I fucking knew it!

[Clint laughing]

**Clint:** Long live Jambi.

**Justin:** Long Live Jambi, but short live Boyland.

**Clint:** Yeah, Boyland, he always had, uh, a big cigar in his mouth.

**Travis:** [crosstalk] Yeah. And a story to tell.

**Clint:**--and not even in a Freudian way. I mean--

**Taako**: And at least half the time I knew him, he was covered in crystal.

[Laughter]

**Travis:** He always had a crystal to share with you.

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Travis:** [Snickers] A Pocket full of Crystals, he had, and he loved root beer barrels. Okay, so… let’s move on.

**Clint:** But wait! There’s gotta be some significance to the window. I mean, why would he be right under the window?

**Travis:** Because it’s-Because it’s a no-smoking lab, and he wanted to, like, he had to blow the smoke out the vent.

[Griffin laughing]

**Clint:** I think that makes a lot of sense!

**Justin:** That makes a lot of sense to me, I think that’s what happened.

**Clint:** He took his helmet off, so he could have him a smoke, and bingo bango bongo--

**Justin:** That’s it!

**Travis:** He don't wanna leave the Congo.

**Clint:** He got turned into a big decanter.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you could, you could roll an investigation check, but circle gets the square, that’s exactly what happened.

**Travis:** Booooooommm.

[Laughter and a snort]

**Justin:** I roll an investigation check, just to be sure.

**Travis:** Just to make Griffin feel useful.

**Clint:** Alllright. I make an investigation check.

**Justin**: Oh my god, he’s really doing it.

**Clint:** Alright.

**Griffin:** No, I’m literally telling you.

**Clint:** Yeah. Go ahead and tell me, but I rolled a 14.

**Griffin**: Yeah, yeah no you- [Crosstalk]

**Justin:** Hold on, that’s- that’s 14 with a 0 modifier, Griffin.

**Griffin:** Ok.

**Clint:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Is that enough for you to tell him what you just told him?

**Griffin:** Yeah, he was standing next to the window, and tried to vent his smoke from out of his suit, like you saw him do earlier, and some of that crystallized snow got on him. A single flake.

**Justin:** In-in our team, in our time with Boyland, did he seem like a total ding dong?

[Laughs]

**Travis:** Four hundred sons and 0 brain cells.

**Griffin:** Ain’t that how it go?

**Travis:** Yeah.. Don’t it always seem to go...

[Crosstalk]

**Justin:** Well that’s very sad, but I think we should-oh! The Bugbear supplies! Is there anything that would be salvageable? That might be useful to us, or is it all just pretty common material?

**Griffin:** There’s a can of Crystal Beans.

**Travis:** I’ll take it.

**Griffin:** M’kay.

**Justin:** What?!

**Clint:** Is there any Wonder Glue? ‘Cause I’ve been looking for that stuff all over the place.

**Justin:** In Fallout 4, you mean, That’s not--

**Clint:** In Fallout 4. But I mean, I’ve been-- found myself walking through the grocery store and I see duct tape and I go, “Oh I should buy that because I need it in Fallout 4!” [laughing]

**Travis:** Dad, you can feed that into the port in the back of your XBOX.

[Chorus of “Yeah, that’s how it works.”]

**Griffin:** Um, no, there’s nothing really salvageable in this room, it’s been-it’s been crystalled--

**Travis:** Is the axe that dad took any good? Should I fight him for it? Do we need to roll need?

**Griffin:** No, it’s not especially great.

**Travis:** Ok, you can keep your shitty axe.

**Griffin:** It’s just that it has, ah- every single one of his children's names is carved into it.

**Travis:** Oh yeah. Please, I don’t want that.

**Clint:** God, it's probably falling apart now.

**Griffin:** All right, you moving on?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Yeah, let's go.

**Griffin:** So, you’re in another white chamber, another airlock. This one is a little bit different from the ones you’ve been through, um, because the two doors on either end of it are kind of in a state of disrepair, um. One of them is labelled “The Gravity Augmentation Chamber.” And… this actually looks like an older version of the airlocks that you’ve seen so far. The door just kinda looks not as futuristic, I mean it’s still--

**Travis:** [Interrupting] It’s, like, made of planks of wood?

**Griffin:** [Laughing] Yeah, basically, it is a… wooden airlock. It looks… no, not quite that old, but it- you know, it looks pretty… agéd. The other airlock is labelled “The Temperature Augmentation Chamber,” and this door actually has, weirdly enough, like a layer of ice around it. Like it’s been completely iced over.

**Travis:** Do we need to go find a Plasmid to get through it?

**Griffin:** Oh shit that is kind of like what that is.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Well, no.

**Travis:** Okay. Dad, which way do you wanna go?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Um, well, let’s see. We have a door we *can’t* go through --

**Travis:** Uh huh.

**Clint:** -- and we have a door we *can* go through?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Seems pretty obvious to me. We wanna try the door we *can’t* go through.

**[At the same time] Justin:** Yeah. Uh huh. **Travis:** Yeah, I’m there too.

**Clint:** We gotta do the frozen one.

**Travis:** You know what? I say we just let it go.

**Justin:** That’s actually not a big deal. Yeah.

**Clint:** Let it go?

**Justin:** Um, I would actually like to, cast, uh, uh.

**Taako:** Before we go through all the rigamarole and because my spell fingers are gettin’ a little rusty.

**Justin:** Um, I’m gonna cast, uh, Clairvoyance.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** So I can see on the other side of the, uh, on the other side of the door there to try to get some sort of inkling of where we’re going here. Or whether or not this is, like, worth the certain-to-be fifteen minutes of audio --

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Justin:** -- that it will require for us to get through this fuckin’ thing.

**Griffin:** Okay. Which, eh, which door are you checkin’?

**Justin:** The one…

**Clint:** The frozen one --

[crosstalk]

**Justin:** The one that would necessitate magic to see what’s on the other side of it.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Uh, it is, uh, I create an invisible sensor within a range in a location that is familiar to me--

**Griffin:** Oh, no, I know what’s up with Clairvoyance.

**Justin:** Okay, cool.

**Griffin:** You don’t have to -- you just don’t have to make any rolls or anything?

**Justin:** Uh, no. Just concentrate.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh, yeah, you conce--

**Justin:** I’m choosing seeing, by the way.

**Griffin:** Sorry?

**Justin:** I’m choo-- I can choose seeing or hearing. I’m choosing seeing.

**Griffin:** What, you can fuckin’ taste the room?

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** No. I just. It’s just the two there. I can see or hear…

**Travis:** You can smell it. Smells like *cold*.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah. You, um, you…

**Clint:** Well, he’s gotta concentrate first. He’s gotta concentrate.

**Justin:** Hold on. I’m concentrating.

**Merle:** Hey, I’m not touching you. Hey, look. I’m not touching you. I’m not touching you.

**Griffin:** All right.

**Merle:** [cont.] I’m not touching you.

**Griffin:** Are we sure we’re not Dad’s dad?

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Griffin:** Uh, who’s the dad?

**Clint:** Wait wait wait. Let me describe this: Justin’s eyes are tightly cinched together. He has like a grimace --

**Travis:** He put a belt on them?

**Clint:** -- on his face. He has one finger extended. I can’t tell from this distance what he -- Oh! Okay.

**Griffin:** Okay, Taako, you pass through this icy door. Um, and you’re actually -- once you get through, the whole airlock tunnel is just a giant, solid sheet of ice. Um, and as you make it into the door, even that ice is sort of extending into the room. Probably a good, uhhhh, eight feet or so of just solid. Just solid ice. Um. Inside of that room, though, you see, um, two figures in null suits, battling what appear to be sort of, like, ice-covered robots? Almost?

**Travis:** [excited gasp] We have to get in there!

**Griffin:** This room looks like a, like a winter wonderland. And these two figures are just taking these ice robots to fuckin’ fool school. Um, one of them is, uh, running up a wall and, like, hanging off the ceiling and just, like, throwing down daggers. Um, that are just, like, cutting these things apart. Um, the other one is using a crossbow to just, like, blast, blast ‘em to little pieces. Uhm, uh, but yeah, in this winter wonderland scene, uh, you see Killian and you see Carey just merc’ing some robots in there.

**Travis:** So they’re, like, holding their own.

**Clint:** They’re really better than we are at this stuff.

**Travis:** Super better at it.

**Taako:** Um, well, guys, it’s empty.

**Travis** and **Clint:** [laugh]

**Taako:** Let’s try the other one.

**Magnus:** Are you sure?

**Taako:** No, I’m positive. It’s empty.

**Magnus:** ‘Cause I heard-- I saw your eyes twitchin’ a lot.

**Taako:** Empty as hell.

**Merle:** If he says it’s empty, it’s empty.

**Taako:** And when you heard me say, “Aw, shit, sweet flip!” That was just a, a childhood rhyme I use to help focus myself.

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Magnus:** So you didn’t see anything? It’s just a frozen room?

**Griffin:** You’re just like, your mother would swaddle you, young Taako, baby Taako, and just sing to you, [singing] “Oh, shit, sweet flip--”

**Travis:** When you were just a taquito.

**Clint** and **Griffin:** [laugh]

**Taako:** [picks up melody] Aw dip, sweet flip, my lit-tle nugg-et.

**Travis** and **Griffin:** [laugh]

**Griffin:** [singing] Hot stunts, cool knights… [talking to self] Hot stunts, cool knights?

**Taako:** [singing] Are those ice robots? Oh, dunk…

**Magnus:** Wait, there’s ice robots in there?

**Taako:** That’s part of the rhyme.

**Griffin:** No, that’s just part of the song.

**Taako:** That’s just part of the song.

**Magnus:** [to self] It’s oddly appropriate…

**Taako:** No, but yeah, it’s em-pty.

**Magnus:** Because I can, I think I can hear fighting?

**Merle:** Like clanging.

**Taako:** You don’t hear shit. There’s eight inches of ice between us and the ice robots.

**Magnus:** ... There’s ice robots?

**Taako:** Son of a bitch.

[*Laughter*]

**Taako:** Yeah, there are ice robots. Fine. Fuck.

**Merle:** Do they have arms?

**Taako:** Not, well -- Currently. Yeah.

[Clint laughs]

**Magnus:** The ice. Can you melt it?

**Merle:** I cast-- How ‘bout if I cast sacred flame, just to see if it’ll open if we thaw it out.

**Taako:** But it, it’s empty.

**Merle:** Okay.

**Taako:** That ship has sailed, hasn’t it.

**Merle:** Yeah, you’re not gonna be able to pull it off.

**Taako:** [sighs] okay. Kidding aside, I don’t, I, there’re people- I wasn’t kidding, it’s lying, they’re-They’re in there, Killian and, umh, Carey are in there. And they’re handing a couple ice-robots their metal asses. But they have it *un-der con-trol*. By no means do I think we need- they are in need of our, uh, specialized services.

**Magnus:** Gotcha. So let’s check out the fizzy lifting room.

**Taako:** Cooool.

**Griffin:** Okay, as you- as you open up, uh, the door to the gravity augmentation chamber, umm, you see a large spherical chamber, uh, that is pretty dark and pretty dirty. It looks like nobody’s been really in here in awhile. Umh, and things in this chamber are just... Floatin’. Just floatin’ in space. Um, there’s a lot of just sort of flotsam and jetsam. And it almost looks like Lucas has just kind of been throwing his trash into this room. Um. Because there’s like a refrigerator floating around and, like, some just panes of glass flying around and some, some cages flying around. And some microscopes and, and, uh, some, some just industrial equipment and crates and barrels just kinda floatin’ around in this, in this chamber. Um. Without the effects of gravity on it.

**Magnus:** Hey, Lucas?

**Lucas:** Yeah, what’s up?

**Magnus:** What’s, uh, with your trash room?

**Lucas:** Oh, bless this mess, right?

[Laughter]

**Lucas:** Yeah, um, I, uh, yeah. So I’m not especially great about, like, gettin’ rid of my, my junk. Because I might need it again some day. And also I guess I don’t really know where you throw away industrial waste? So, um. That, that chamber actually, um, Maureen, my mother, she actually worked on it, um, to sort of master, you know, gravity, anti-gravity technology. It’s actually helped make our labs. And your headquarters, so.

**Magnus:** And you made a weird, shrinking elevator-thing. Cool, cool, cool.

**Lucas:** Yeah. It’s pretty sick, right?

**Magnus:** Well.

**Lucas:** Do you remember when you went down there?

**Magnus:** Your mom made anti-gravity.

**Lucas:** Okay. Yeah. She had --

**Merle**: Shit’s pretty cool.

**Lucas:** She had some stuff going.

**Merle**: Was that before she died? That she made…?

**Magnus:** Well, I would have to assume.

**Lucas:** Cool. Cool and neat. Anyway, yeah. Just get through there. Come on. You’re gettin’ close.

**Travis:** I jump.

**Griffin:** You jump into the anti-grav room?

**Travis:** Yes!

[“Zero Gravity Trash Ball” plays faintly in the background]

**Griffin:** Okay. You’re in there. And sure enough, you’re just floating now. Through the room. Uh.

**Magnus:** [singing] It’s everything I dreamed it would be!

[Laughter]

**Magnus:** [singing] I feel aliiiiiiive! For the first timmmmme!

**Griffin:** You’re experiencing the magic of flight.

**Travis:** Uh huh!

**Griffin:** Uhm, and it’s pretty -- well, you’re actually havin’ to like, scoot some trash out of the way as you fly through the, through the garbage room.

**Travis:** Still pretty good.

**Griffin:** Yeah, if it weren’t for all the garbage this would be, like, the most miraculous experience basically ever.

**Clint:** Okay. Now. Taako takes my hand, and we leap out together. And I look at him and I say:

**Merle:** Can you read my mind?

[silence]

**Travis:** Is that a reference?

**Clint:** We’ll see who gets that joke later.

**Griffin:** Okay. ‘Cause it’s *not us*. The people on the show you’re doin’ it with.

**Justin:** It was Superman, right?

**Clint:** It was a Superman reference! Thank you, son.

[crosstalk, self-congratulatory Justin, disbelieving others]

**Justin:** At least I paid attention when we sat, sat at your lap. Your fatherly lap.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Last year.

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Justin:** Your fatherly hearth.

**Griffin:** Your thr-- your weird three laps that you have.

**Travis:** That you had installed.

[Laughter]

**Griffin:** Your dorsal--

**Clint:** Ah, that’s gonna get some fanart.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Your dorsal lap. Uh. Uh. Yeah. Noelle follows you into the chamber, too.

**Magnus:** Noelle, look at me!

**Noelle:** Yeah. No. Yeah. You’re doin’ great.

**Magnus:** I’m a angel!

**Noelle:** Yeah. You’re-- You’re a beautiful angel. And you’re floatin’ around. And you’re doin’ such a great job.

**Magnus:** Are you proud of me?

**Noelle:** I’m real proud of you. Uh, do a--

**Magnus:** How do I get down?

**Noelle:** Hey, hey, Magnus. Do a stunt!

**Magnus:** I do a stunt.

**Noelle:** [wonderingly] Oh, man.

[dice roll]

**Travis:** Oh, that’s a eighteen on stunts.

**Griffin:** Uh, yeah. You-- You don’t really have anything to push yourself off on. So you just kinda, like, twist around. But it, she’s ju--

**Noelle:** Oh, wow! That was real good, Magnus!

**Magnus:** Am I the best at stunts?

**Noelle:** You’re the best at flipping and spinning.

**Magnus:** Thank you!

**Noelle:** You’re so great.

**Travis:** All right.

**Noelle:** Taako -- Taako and Merle. You guys do a, do a duo stunt.

**Merle:** [flatly] No.

**Noelle:** Okay. I thought you’d have fun in the zero gravity room but that’s…

**Merle:** This isn’t about *fun*.

**Taako:** I can fly whenever I want so it’s like, pshaw.

**Clint:** [laughs]

**Magnus:** Yeah, I, I can, like, just standard not do magic, so this is, ike, the best I’ve ever felt, ever.

**Taako:** Yeah. It’s pretty good, I guess.

**Merle:** Do you wanna stay here?

**Magnus:** [disappointed] No. I just signed a lease on a condo.

[Laughter]

**Griffin:** Y’all hear somethin’. Coming from a, a pretty big ball of, uh, of rubble. Um. Below you, towards the center of the room. And uh, emerging from that ball of rubble, you see three shapes… um, sorta push themselves off the bottom of this, spherical room. And start to move upward toward the three of you very slowly. And it, you can’t really get a beat on what these three figures are? They’re, they’re, they’re, they got these, like, pink, weirdly shiny, like, bubblegum skin, almost? And they have these eight, like, padded feet. And these circular snouts, with this row of sharp teeth all around them. Uhm, and they got these eight legs that are ending in these, like, gross, wispy, tendril-fingers. And they start--

**Travis:** And they seem friendly?

**Griffin:** Uhm, they’re just. They’re not making any noise and they’re not really animating very much. They’re just kinda floatin’, floatin’ up in your general direction.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Magnus:** Hey, Lucas. Me again.

**Lucas:** Yeah, what’s up.

**Magnus:** What’s the--

**Lucas:** You guys having fun in my trash room?

**Magnus:** What’s the weird, bubblegum, octopus things?

**Lucas:** Weird, bubblegum, oc-- what are you talking about?

**Magnus:** Yeah, they’ve got, like, a snout. Griffin described it better. Were you listening? Were you listening when he described it?

**Lucas:** Well, I mean, there shouldn’t be anything in that, in that room.

**Magnus:** There’s, like, three of them. They were in broken cages. They’re floating to me, in a very threatening manner…

**Lucas:** Oh the tar--! Oh, they’re just tardigrades! Well, they shou-- they’re just little guys.

**Magnus:** It’s pretty big!

**Lucas:** They’re microscopic. We were doin’ experiments on zero gravity, like, animals, how they thrive in it. Yeah, no, tardigrades. They’re microscopic. Quit bein’ a-- quit bein’ so dramatic.

**Magnus:** No, these have thrived. Thrived is a good word.

**Merle:** They are thrived as hell.

**Lucas:** Wait, what?

**Magnus:** It’s like the size of, I don’t know. How would you describe it, Griffin?

**Merle:** Uh, a car engine.

**Griffin:** Yeah, they’re about the size of a car engine. Uh, he says, uh,

**Magnus:** That could be anything.

**Lucas:** That’s not possible. Tardigrades are microscopic creatures.

**Travis:** I hold the necklace up.

**Magnus:** Look!

**Lucas:** Oh, shit! I can’t see, but, uh, now I believe you.

**Magnus:** Thanks.

[Laughter]

**Lucas:** Uh, you guys need to get out of there!

**Magnus:** Yeah!

**Lucas:** Tardigrades are -- we call them unkillable waterbears! You gotta get the fuck out of there!

**Magnus:** You call them that?

**Merle:** Is everything a bear here?

**Griffin:** Um, uh.

**Travis:** I push off some garbage towards the door.

**Magnus:** Byyye! [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Uh, okay. As you push off some garbage to start floating away from the door. Um. The three, uh, tardigrades-- which is a real animal. I was doin’ some googlin’ around, guys. This a neat animal!

**Justin:** They’re one of Syd--

**Griffin:** They do zero gravity environments on ‘em! Do a quick google search!

**Justin:** They’re one of Sydnee’s favorite animals, actually. She thinks they’re adorable.

**Griffin:** They’re adorable, but these three--

**Travis:** What-- how do you spell it?

**Griffin:** Tardi-- like ‘TARDIS’ and then ‘grade’.

**Travis:** Uh huh. Oh. Okay. Uh huh. I don’t like that.

**Griffin:** Yeah. When they’re you -- when they’re you size, they’re definitely less adorable.

**Travis:** It does look like a super fat, angry manatee, though.

**Griffin:** Yeah, these three super fat, angry manatees, uh…

**Travis:** [exaggerated, puffed up voice] Like it prob’ly sounds like this.

[Laughter]

**Travis:** [cont.] I’m a tardigwade! I’m gon’ eat you ‘cause I’m angwy! Yom yom yom.

**Taako:** The bad thing about tardigrades is that they basically will eat anything.

**Griffin:** Uh, just as you--

**Taako:** Some waterbears have been known to eat entire live organisms. Like rotifers. And other tardigrades.

[Murmurs of assent]

**Griffin:** Or elves, human, and dwarves. Because all three of these, um, stick out these -- shoot out these long, fleshy, pink probiscuses. Well boy, that’s a fun, pleasant mental image. Uhm, at all three of you. Um, and I need, all three of you guys to make dexterity saving throws, with disadvantage because you don’t really have anything to move off of.

**Travis:** Even though I said I *pushed off some garbage?*

**Griffin:** Alright, *you* don’t have disadvantage.

**Travis:** Yeah. [dice roll] Nineteen!

**Clint:** Eighteen!  
  
**Justin:** [dramatically]Twoooo!

[laughter]

**Griffin:** Uh, Taako, you don’t really need to roll again, uh, Merle, you do, ‘cause you have disadvantage.

**Justin:** Well, let’s see if I can get a one.

**Clint:** Wait a minute-

**Justin:** [interrupting] Disadvantage means you do- you roll twice, and-

**Griffin:** [at the same time] -you take the worse-

**Justin:** -you take the lower of the two.

**Clint:** Aah. [dice roll] [dramatically] Eeiiiight.

**Griffin:** Mmkay.

**Travis:** Did you guys know that tardigrades were first discovered by a German pastor named Johann August Ephraim [struggles with pronunciation] Goeze?

[laughter]

**Griffin:** Thanks, Siri!  
  
**Travis:** You’re welcome! Just a little thing I learned from the tardigrade wiki. Knowledge is power! [pause] I’m just looking for something that’ll help me beat them.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah, uh, yeah, that’s definitely- I definitely wanted to send you on a fuckin’ science- science hunt, that’s the key to winning this battle.

**Justin:** [talking over Griffin] You literally told him to google them. You *literally* said that.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I guess that’s- I guess that’s true. Um, yeah, now that you’ve spoken the name of their discoverer [Travis laughs], all three just disintegrate. [players laugh] Well done. You’ve- [deep, sarcastic tardigrade voice, with hints of Droopy] You’ve figured out our secret. [disintegration noise]