**Griffin:** Boys, I have a sickness. Got an illness in this episode.

**Travis:** And the only cure is more cowbell!

**Griffin:** Well, screaming into the microphone most certainly is not the cure.

**Travis:** Coooooooowbeeeeeeeell!

**Griffin:** Whatever the opposite of a cure is, you just did that.

**Clint:** Feel betteeer.

**Travis:** The only cure is more ka-mowbell.

**Griffin:** So the end of that sentence that you cut off was, “So I won’t be able to put up with any shit today.” But the problem is that I already have.

[**Clint** chuckles]

**Travis:** Cowbull!

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** This is what the scientists and doctors would call immersion therapy.

**Travis:** You know how Patch Adams liked to make people laugh to make them feel better? I like to make people feel really frustrated and annoyed to make them feel worse.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** They call me Natch Adams.

**Griffin:** Thanks, Natch Adams. I hate you.

**Clint:** And I, as your father, have a natural nurturing need to just keep shoveling the shit on you.

**Griffin:** Thank you. I love it.

**Justin:** I love to steal things, so they call me Snatch Adams. [someone wheezes] [in a high-pitched Southern voice] Where’d my stethoscope go? Aw, it’s over here. I got your stethoscope.

**Griffin:** While we were on our DC/New York live shows for MBMBAM, you were - you did bring a red nose around with you. That’s not a joke, you had a clown nose on and you put it on like, while we’re on the subway just to make people think you’re a serial killer.

**Justin:** To make people laugh and brighten their day, yeah, great.

**Clint:** Make people happy.

**Griffin:** Let’s play Dungeons and Dragons.

**Justin:** You treat the disease, you win, you lose.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** You treat the patient, you win every time.

**Travis:** Step right up! Step right up and treat the patient! You win, you lose.

**Griffin:** Let’s find out if you guys can win or lose.

**Justin:** [laughing quietly] Swimming pool of noodles…

**Griffin:** So you have woken up - do you need a refresher of where you’re at, what you’re doing?

**Travis:** We got blasted with a time cannon into a time bubble. We were in, like, a time ball. There was an old lady and she said “It’s you, come find me,” and then we woke up.

**Griffin:** Thank you, Travis.

**Clint:** So yes.

**Griffin:** Man, you should be running this shit.

**Travis:** It would be a lot shorter. We would’ve gotten through Crystal Kingdom in half a session. “What, there’s a guy with the mirrors and the thing? Oh, it’s a skeleton man! It’s a robot lady! You win!”

**Griffin:** You win. Congratulations. Roll your dice? Yeah, that’s high enough. Um, you wake up out of this white space that you were just in. You wake up and you are supine. You’re laying on the ground, face-down. Got a face full of soft, red dirt. And wherever you are, it’s a little bit warmer than the part of the Woven Gulch that you were just in. The air feels kinda stale, and as you sort of look up and right yourself from the red dirt you’re lying in, you find yourself standing in front of a gate which has been constructed over a path leading into a small town.

[“Refuge” begins playing in the background]

**Griffin:** And, uh, the town - it looks fairly rustic, for lack of a better term?

**Travis:** Yeah! Finally!

**Griffin:** Yeah, your-

**Travis:** My rustic folk hero thing will work and people will like me!

**Griffin:** Yeah, I didn’t even think about that, but yeah, that’ll give you some advantages here.

**Travis:** [distant] Ah, my hospitality!

**Griffin:** Uh, this town, just to kind of give you an idea of the aesthetic, is very old western town. So the buildings are rustic chic, a lot of wood with some metal panels here and there. Yeah, that’s kind of what we’re going for in this town. And this gate over the town has a burned-in inscription. And it’s not the name of the town, unless this is the name of the town, which’d be crazy. It is a phrase, and it says on this gate, “By their sacrifice, our home is made safe.” And standing immediately underneath that gate, just a few feet away from you, is some person wearing a suit of armor.

[music fades out]

**Griffin:** And this person is as wide as they are tall, and they are a lot of both. The armor that they’re wearing is sort of plate mail. I’m kind of envisioning, like, the onion knight from *Dark Souls.*

**Travis:** Mhm

**Justin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Of course.

**Griffin:** Oh, sorry, Daddy, I forgot you’re a casual [pronounced “cah-zooal”], and you’ve not experienced the From Software brand of challenging roleplaying games.

**Clint:** Well, my birthday is coming up soon.

**Travis:** No, you probably wouldn’t be able to handle it. [crosstalk]

**Justin:** It’s where the real gamers play.

**Clint:** Oh. Gotcha.

**Griffin:** So this big, big, wide, tall person wearing this suit of plate mail armor - you see something kind of seeping through the joints of the armor. It kind of looks like really thick blood, and - you can’t see this person’s face, they’ve got a visor pulled down on its helmet, you can’t see inside. It has a massive halberd -

**Clint:** Ha! Braggart.

**Griffin:** What? Oh, gross.

**Travis:** I believe he was making a wiener joke.

**Griffin:** A wiener joke. Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful.

**Justin:** The first of the podcast, ever. [Clint laughs]

**Griffin:** You’ve broken the seal! Um, and around this armored individual, there is a faint yellow glow about it. It is-

**Travis:** And the glow seems to be coming from the individual?

**Griffin:** It’s kind of from the individual, it’s going around its armor, but it’s also going around this small red bird that is perched on its shoulder. So this whole thing is kind of encompassed in this yellow light. The red bird is - if you are a bird expert - is a vermilion flycatcher. [Clint begins whistling like a bird] I did a lot of research into the flora and fauna of canyon regions.

**Clint:** That was a vermillion flycatcher call.

**Griffin:** That was really good. What’s weird is that this vermillion flycatcher doesn’t do that little tweety-tweet. In fact, it talks in Common, and it says-

**Travis:** [gasps] Cool. I got - guys, I got this. I have a certain rustic charm.

**Justin:** It talks in Common, we’re fine, we can talk to it.

**Travis:** I know, but like, I haven’t gotten to do my rustic hospitality thing. Like, people like me. They give me biscuits because I paint their fences.

**Griffin:** Yeah, very Tom Sawyer sort of economy.

**Travis:** I haven’t gotten to do it, I've got like a down-home real charm.

**Griffin:** This - this thing says, uh,

**Bird**: Hello, visitors! Please identify yourselves.

**Griffin:** Kinda sounds like Angus, let me give that another shot.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Bird**: [now in a higher-pitched voice] Hello, visitors! Please identify yourselves.

**Travis:** More! That was *more* Angus.

**Griffin:** No, it sounds kind of like Angus. It’s not Angus, it just has a high voice ‘cause it’s a little bird talking, supposedly, it seems like it’s kind of talking for this armored thing.

**Travis:** Gotcha.

**Magnus**: Hail and well met, bird friend!

**Bird**: Hello. Please identify yourselves.

**Magnus**: Uh, I - I’m Magnus Burnsides. [pronounced similar to “birdsides”]

**Bird**: Was that a bird joke?

**Magnus**: No, that was I have a stuffy nose.

**Justin:** Can we talk about the insane leap that Travis just made that he would address the bird?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Like, we see a man in armor with a bird and Travis is like, “What’s up, bird?”

**Griffin:** Well, he has-

**Travis:** Well, the bird was talking, I didn’t wanna be rude!

**Griffin:** That’s a good-

**Justin:** The bird didn’t say anything yet!

**Travis:** The bird did!

**Clint:** You know he has a something proficiency.

**Travis:** The bird said “Please identify yourselves.”

**Justin:** Okay.

**Bird**: Who are your two friends?

**Magnus**: Well, this is Taako the wizard.

**Taako**: Word. Word.

**Magnus**: And this is Merle Highchurch, the… cleric?

**Merle**: How’s it going, bird?

**Bird**: Um, I’m not - this is confusing. I - please, I need you all to please stay calm and don’t make any sudden movements.

**Taako**: Okay.

**Merle**: Yeah, we’re good at that.

**Magnus**: You got it.

**Bird**: It’s been a while since we’ve had new visitors here. How did you find your way into our small town?

**Taako**: We got lost.

**Bird**: That’s…

**Taako**: Along the way.

**Bird**: That’s…

**Taako**: To somewhere else. And now we’re here.

**Bird**: You just got lost and stumbled in.

**Taako**: Ehhhh, I mean… does that make sense to you?

**Merle**: Is that something that’ll keep us from getting killed?

**Taako**: Yeah!

**Bird**: It doesn’t make a lot of sense. People don’t usually come here unless they’re brought here.

**Magnus**: Well, like, metaphysically lost, hm?

**Taako**: Mm, spiritually?

**Bird**: Well, I guess-

**Merle**: Geographically?

**Bird**: What is your intention?

**Magnus**: We’re here to help.

**Merle**: Yeah.

**Bird**: Help with what?

**Merle**: Your problem! The big, big problem.

**Magnus**: You got trouble. Right here in Bubble City.

**Griffin:** Um… why don’t…

**Magnus**: We’re here to make trouble in this bubble.

**Griffin:** Magnus, you’ve been doing most of the talking, why don’t you make a charisma check? I wanna kind of give you guys a heads-up, this is gonna be - this arc is going to require you guys to do a bit more legwork than other ones have. Like, you’re gonna have to talk to people and use your more charisma stuff to find out what’s going on and what you should be doing? It’s not going to be - my intention for this arc is to get away from putting this thing on rails, it’s going to be fairly open-world, so you guys will need to do a bit more talkin’. Greasin’ the wheels, so to speak.

**Travis:** Will do. I would like to angle for the fact that because I have well-established rustic hospitality, I should get advantage on these checks.

**Griffin:** Not on every check because this isn’t really a- this person’s not offering you hospitality. This person seems to be some sort of sentinel or guard that is checking you the fuck out.

**Travis:** [rolls dice] That’s a seventeen, plus… charisma?

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Plus one. So that’s eighteen.

**Bird**: So just to get the story straight, you guys saw a big bubble and you just walked right into it?

**Merle**: Uh, actually we were [singing to the tune of Bon Jovi’s “You Give Love A Bad Name”] shot through the wall and you’re to blame.

**Taako**: [singing quietly] But it’s not your fault, sorry about the mistake.

**Bird**: Hm. I’m gonna make a command decision here and I think we should wait to sort of let you guys run around free until you’ve been checked out by Sheriff Isaak. So if you wouldn’t mind, again, just - hands at the sides, just stay calm and come with me to the sheriff’s office. We’ll get this thing figured out.

**Taako**: Okay.

**Merle**: Sure!

**Magnus**: Sounds great.

**Taako**: I have no problem with that.

**Merle**: Are there refreshments?

**Bird**: Um, there can be?

**Taako**: Great. Even better.

**Griffin:** You walk into this town and it is… like I said, it is rustic chic. Parts of it are kind of shamble-y, and as you-

**Travis:** In disrepair, or-?

**Griffin:** Not, like, in a state of disrepair, it’s just like, it is a town that seems like it was, uh, people worked very, very hard and did a lot of intricate work to make it as livable as possible with not a lot of resources.

**Travis:** Got it. So it’s, like, cobbled together.

**Griffin:** It’s cobbled together but it’s charming. Even adorable, at parts.

**Travis:** How many outlets are there? What’s the paint scheme like?

**Griffin:** Um, brown.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Griffin:** So you’re walking through this gate onto this main road, into the town, and as you walk through this main road, I want to tell you about a few points of interest. Just as you go inside the gate there’s a large well, a large water well just inside the gate. There is - there are two rows of buildings lining either side of this main drag. There is a - what looks like a general store called Helpington’s to your left. [Justin and Clint laugh] Across the street from that is a large building with saloon doors on it - you intuit it’s a saloon - and the name of this building, according to an ornately-carved sign hanging over it is The Davy Lamp. There is a big bank that seems a bit more solidly built than the other buildings, some iron bars over the windows.

Behind that is a tall clock tower showing the current time, about 11:05, maybe 11:10? Yeah, it’s about 11:10 A.M. On your right, just down the street from that, is a sheriff’s office. Attached to that, made of clay and stone, is a jail, and then at the very end of the street is a large two-story manor at the end of the road. And beyond that manor you can actually see a thick curtain of pine trees behind it. To your left, behind the buildings on the left, you see this rocky plateau overlooking the main street and the buildings spiraling off of it, and to the right there is a tall wooden fence kind of running along the eastern perimeter of the town.

**Travis:** Uh, quick question, Ditto.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Is the clock moving?

**Griffin:** Yeah, it’s moving.

**Clint:** Hmmm!

**Griffin:** The thing that most catches your eye on this main drag is the statue. Directly in front of this large manor at the end of the street, right in the middle of the main road, is a statue, about eight feet tall, cast from some kind of brown metal. And this statue depicts three figures. The first figure is a small human girl, maybe about seven years old, and she’s wearing a knee-length dress. Her hair is done up in a bob. She is holding hands with a large, broad, bearded human man who is wearing a miner’s helmet with a torch on it and a big flannel shirt and big bulky pants. He is dressed up like a miner, and he is holding hands with this small girl.

**Griffin:** And standing behind - both of them have, like, some crude smiles on their faces. It’s a pretty well-made statue, that you can make out facial details. Standing behind them, with one hand on each of their shoulders, is another figure, smaller than the other man, still pretty broad-shouldered. This figure standing behind them is tall and muscular, a fact that you can make out even though this figure is wearing a robe that is covering their entire face and body. And the metal of this figure where the robe is has been stained or oxidized, turning it a bright crimson red.

[eerie background noise]

**Travis:** *Oh!* Like the bad guys.

**Magnus**: Harvey Birdman.

**Bird**: Um, I’m not - okay, I’m not a bird. Just - okay, yeah, what is it?

**Magnus**: What? Yes you are.

**Bird**: Okay, what’s going on?

**Magnus**: That’s a beautiful statue, I’m struck by the brilliant red of the robe. What is it depicting, if you don’t mind me asking?

**Bird**: Well, that’s - that depicts a very important event in our town’s history. That’s the Visitor, who came and brought the Father and Daughter to our town. And by their sacrifice, our home is made safe.

**Magnus**: Okay.

**Merle**: Aw, just like is written on the gate!

**Bird**: Yeah, kind of our - yeah, that’s our thing.

**Magnus**: And how long ago did this sacrifice happen?

**Bird**: Um, the sacrifice happened about a year and a half ago.

**Merle**: So was the guy in the robe real ugly or something, is that why they, you know, like, can’t see his face or anything like that?

**Bird**: Nobody really saw the figure in the robe except for Sheriff Isaak, so I don’t know. I’ve heard tale that he was big and broad and strong - I shouldn’t say “he,” I don’t even know. But whatever they were, they were big and strong.

**Taako**: What sort of danger were you in that he needed to save you?

**Bird**: Well, the danger of… you know, the world. I really shouldn’t -

[eerie background noise stops]

**Bird**: I don’t know you guys - this is uncomfortable. I really shouldn’t- I don’t know what you guys want, I don’t really know your intentions.

**Magnus**: Sandwich.

**Bird**: Okay. Well, we can take care of that at the sheriff’s office.

**Magnus**: Cool.

**Griffin:** He walks you into the sheriff’s office. As you walk in, you do see some - a few jail cells down on the far side of the room, and you see a big desk with a big, big, big chair behind it. Big, sturdy chair. In fact, you see a few smaller, broken chairs kind of piled up in the back corner of the room that have apparently been crushed underneath this being’s girth. And he says,

**Bird**: Sorry, we don’t really, um, I don’t wanna lock you guys in a cell because you haven’t really done anything wrong, so to speak– Can I trust you to just hang out here and not do anything?

**Magnus**: Yeah, do you want me to fix those chairs?

**Bird**: That would be wonderful.

**Magnus**: Okay, great.

**Justin:** I’m gonna do I guess investigation or perhaps perception - I’m gonna say investigation on the armor and the bird to see if I can figure out what the sort of relationship is there.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** [rolls dice] I’ve got a 19.

**Griffin:** So, with that investigation check I will tell you two things. First of all, you can tell that the red stuff that’s coming through the armor is not blood?, it actually looks like clay. Looks like red clay kind of like the stuff that is all around that is sort of inside of this armor. And the second thing I will tell you is that whatever this thing is - whatever is sort of animating it is magic as fuck. So that being said, maybe an arcana check would be appropriate.

**Justin:** So I’m looking at the - I’m looking at a - basically a big suit of armor, Onion Knight suit of armor with a little red bird on it. And there’s clay coming out of, like, what seem to be the joints, as if there was clay inside of it?

**Griffin:** As if it was full of clay, yeah.

**Justin:** Okay, all right.

**Travis:** Like a homunculus or like a, um, what’s the Jewish thing, the-

**Griffin:** The golem?

**Travis:** The golem, the-

**Griffin:** But we’re not gonna call it that, cause - the last arc was very golem-centric.

**Travis:** Mkay. Let’s go with homunculus, then.

**Justin:** G- golem-heavy - so I’m gonna run an arcana check on the homunculus.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** [rolls dice] Who I’m gonna call Homer.

**Griffin:** Has a name, you guys haven’t bothered to ask, you rude, rude boys.

**Justin:** Homer’s fine for right now.

**Griffin:** [muttering] Okay, not the name, but okay.

**Justin:** What?

**Griffin:** Not the name, but go ahead.

**Justin:** Oh, you’re saying I didn’t guess the name from whole cloth.

**Griffin:** Or ask it. That’s why - when you meet a person, sometimes you say, like, “What’s your name?” But you guys have been rude boys.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Come on, rude boys. Come and give it up.

**Taako**: Homer, what’s your name?

**Bird**: Uh, I’m called Roswell.

**Taako**: Ooh, great. Roswell, are you - is Roswell the name of you, the bird, or the big fella that you’re riding on?

**Roswell**: I don’t see why it’s important that you distinguish between the two.

**Taako**: Okay, well, that’s fine, I’m not into labels either.

**Justin:** So listen, I’ve got an arcana check. Adds… uh, 6. So seven… teen altogether.

**Griffin:** Thought you were gonna say seven. That would’ve been a pretty bad roll.

**Justin:** No, 17 altogether.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah, you can pretty clearly identify what is going on here. This thing, Roswell, is an earth elemental that has been animated. It is essentially living clay that is inside of this suit of thick metal armor, and somehow this spell that animated this clay, maybe this bird was standing on the clay when it got animated, but it somehow got caught up in this spell, and for all intents and purposes this is just one thing. It’s just one sort of thing. [**Justin:** okay.] And, like, the armor-

**Justin:** Am I able to discern if this thing is operating of its own volition, or under control?

**Griffin:** Yeah, it seems to have its own sort of sentience? So whatever created this thing is like, it must be-

**Travis:** Powerful as fuck.

**Griffin:** Very, very powerful. Yeah. Also, just between those two checks, you can tell if this was Everquest and you were to con this thing just to sort of figure it out, it would fuck you right up.

**Travis:** It’s like skulls all around?

**Griffin:** It’s bad, bad shit. Also, I should point out, I forgot to mention this in the general description of Roswell but you certainly figured out during the perception or investigation check, he’s wearing a little deputy’s badge.

**Travis:** Aw!

**Justin:** That’s cu- How’s it affixed?

**Griffin:** Poorly.

**Justin:** Okay.

[Clint laughs.]

**Travis:** Adorabubble.

**Magnus**: Okay, I’ll get to work fixing these chairs, I guess.

**Roswell**: I appreciate that. It’s hard to find a chair that’s good enough for my big body.

**Magnus**: You know, I bet if I combined the parts of a couple of these chairs, I could make like a bench or something.

**Roswell**: A super-chair! Great! You know, I think you guys are all right, I hope Sheriff Isaak agrees. I haven’t seen him today, but I can go out and try to look for him, just please-

**Magnus**: Well, can you tell us anything about him in case he comes back before you get back?

**Roswell**: Um…

**Taako**: We just wanna make a good impression.

**Roswell**: He’ll have a badge that says “sheriff” on it.

**Magnus**: I mean, that’s a good start.

**Roswell**: Just be yourselves and don’t be bad- just as long as your selves aren’t bad people.

**Magnus**: Cool.

**Merle**: No, not us!

**Taako**: Hey, Roswell, how long have you been here?

**Roswell**: Gosh, I can’t even - I don’t even remember.

**Taako**: Ballpark it.

**Roswell**: I’ve always lived inside the dome.

**Taako**: Okay, so you’re about a year old.

**Roswell**: Yeah, I’m a one-year-old! Goo-goo ga-ga.

**Taako**: Solid foods are on the way, my friend, hang in there. [Magnus laughs]

**Griffin:** There is a sound of disturbance outside. You hear some shouting. You hear - Taako and Merle, you would identify it, you hear the telltale sounds of spells being cast. You hear some shouting, you hear some stuff breaking, and he says,

**Roswell**: Oh, duty calls. I gotta go.

**Griffin:** And he storms out the door, leaving you in the office.

**Travis:** Are there any windows or anything, Ditto?

**Griffin:** Yeah, there’s one window facing out into the street. He runs out of the door and runs to the left so you can’t really see what he’s running towards.

**Clint:** I wanna go through the desk.

**Griffin:** Okay. Cool. Yeah, you can look at the desk. You don’t see too much of interest on top of the desk. There is a locked - there’s a locked shelf, what’s the word I’m looking for? There’s a locked drawer in the desk that you see. All the other ones as you open them up just seem to have some sort of paperwork. The other thing of interest is… a… map that is hanging up behind the desk. And boys, I spent a while making this map.

**Justin:** We can’t even see it.

**Griffin:** You’re about to, because I’m dropping it in Skype for you. [Skype fileshare noise] Enjoy the map. Sweet listeners, I’ll post this on-

**Travis:** Holy shit, Ditto!

**Griffin:** Sweet listeners, I’ll post this on… I don’t know, I’ll prolly post this on the Facebook group, maybe?

**Justin:** Hold on, Dad, I’m downloading it.

**Griffin:** I don’t know the best place to put this map. But looking at this map, now you get kind of a feel for this town which, as it is labeled, you now know this town is called Refuge.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Griffin:** You can see the circular barrier that is keeping everyone out. You can see the town that you’re in. And there’s some stuff behind the town, you see the forest of pine trees behind it. There seems to be a farm to the north of it. Up to the west, you see that rocky plateau. [Skype fileshare noise] There’s a little bit of stuff up there. And to your right, behind that fence, you see a quarry. So like I said, this is gonna be a fairly open-world arc, so keep this on hand if you can, if you ever need to know where to go next, where you wanna go next, where you wanna investigate. This is kind of the MadDog McCree overworld if you will.

**Travis:** Gotcha. I- what do I need to roll to fix the chairs?

**Griffin:** Nothing. You’re so fucking good at furniture, Magnus, you just, like, whip ‘em all together. Are you building a super-chair out of them, or are you building three chairs for you and your boys?

**Travis:** Before I do that, I wanna use my new sneaking skills and maybe pop my head out the door sneakily-

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** -to see if I can see what’s going on outside.

**Griffin:** Uh, yes, make a stealth check.

**Travis:** [rolls dice] That’s a 6 plus 10, 16.

**Griffin:** Uh, yeah. You barely poke - like in a cartoon, your eyeball grows real long and pokes out the door and turns around the corner.

**Travis:** Ahh! Kill me!

**Griffin:** But you see down the street - so now you have this map for reference, you guys are in the sheriff’s office. Down the street, outside of The Davy Lamp, you see one man wearing a purple handkerchief over - around his neck, he’s just, like, lying in the street. Just looks like a ruffian. And you hear, like, a *whump* sound, and another man wearing a similar outfit just goes flying DJ Jazzy Jeff style out of the front door, rolling into the street. And you see Roswell walking that way, and when he sees these two men he runs to chase them, but they sprint off away from him and out of sight.

**Travis:** Okay, now I’m gonna build a super-chair.

**Griffin:** Okay. Taako, Merle, what do you guys wanna do? You’ve already sort of turned over. The cells, I should point out, are unoccupied, save for the one on the end. There is a big, burly woman in one of those, and she is wearing some super ratty clothes. She looks soot-stained, for lack of a better term, and she is just kind of sitting quietly in the corner.

**Merle**: Why don’t you boys let me handle this one?

**Taako and Magnus**: [in unison] Oh, God.

**Clint:** I walk up to the cell and pull out my Extreme Teen Bible and say,

**Merle**: Hello, sister. Have you heard the word of Pan today?

**Woman:** No, what’s a pan?

**Merle**: Pan can be your best friend, m’lady.

**Woman**: Like using a pan, like you’d use a pan to pan for gold or diamonds! I get it, I get it and I like ya!

**Merle**: There are rewards in the afterlife that are just like gold and diamonds that are more precious, if you follow Pan.

**Woman**: Well, I like gold and I like diamonds, so-

**Travis:** I lean over to Taako.

**Magnus**: Admittedly, this is the best this has ever gone.

**Taako**: Yeah, I mean, we’re thirty seconds in, let’s not throw a parade.

**Merle**: Now, let’s-

**Woman**: Hey, hey, who the hell are you? I ain’t never seen folks like you before around this town.

**Merle**: Well, I’m Brother Merle Highchurch, and I’m just here to help you get back on the path of righteousness.

**Justin:** While they’re talking, I’m gonna cast Knock on the desk.

**Griffin:** Okay. Are you opening up that drawer?

**Justin:** Yeah, knock knock. What’s up. Magic.

**Griffin:** Does that - do you just do it or do you have to roll it?

**Justin:** Nah, it just does it. [Travis and Clint laugh] Nah, nah, nah nah nah. That’s magic, all right.

**Travis:** Don’t you worry your pretty little head about it.

**Griffin:** Uh, read me the description of what Knock does.

**Justin:** I’m gonna choose an object I can see within range. The object can be a door, box, chest, set of manacles, a padlock, or any other object that contains mundane or magical means that prevent access. Target that’s held shut by a mundane lock or that is stuck or barred becomes unlocked, unstuck, or unbarred.

**Griffin:** Yeah, okay, yeah. You hear a *click* come from this previously locked drawer in the desk.

**Justin:** I’ll go ahead and, um, what’s in it? What do I see?

**Griffin:** You opening it up and getting inside?

**Justin:** Yeah. I’m pulling it open.

**Griffin:** As you pull this drawer, you feel something snap, and you hear a *whoo-whoo-whoo-whoo-whoo-whoo-whoo-whoo* [siren noise] come from the desk drawer that you have just popped open. You see a set of - a ring of keys inside, though. But there is some sort of siren or alarm going off, and the woman says, uh,

**Woman**: Ey, what the hell’re you doin’ over there? Y’all ain’t misbehaving, are you?

**Travis:** You should close that.

**Woman**: Roswell’s gonna come kick your ass.

**Justin:** Is there anything else other than keys?

**Griffin:** Nope, just keys.

**Justin:** This is bad. [everyone laughs] This is a bad thing I did.

**Clint:** Can - could our semi-rogue disconnect the alarm?

**Travis:** Yeah, is there anything I can disarm, Ditto?

**Justin:** I mean, the ship done sailed. We can’t un-ring a bell, boys.

**Travis:** Well, they’re in the fight. Thieves tools? Can I shut that down?

**Griffin:** Yeah, if you’re - Magnus, if you’re putting your chair-rebuilding on hold, as you sort of poke your head inside you see it’s a trap. It is an alarm trap that activated.

**Justin:** Well, that’s just so irritating, because I used magic to get the keys that I could’ve used magic instead of whatever these go to.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Dang it.

**Justin:** Gosh dang it!

**Griffin:** As you - yeah, Taako, or Magnus. Magnus, yes. You see a trap in there that you can use your thieves tools on.

**Travis:** Okay, I’m doing that. [rolls dice]

**Justin:** Does that work on a trap that’s already been, like, trapped?

**Griffin:** For one that has sort of a sustained effect like this, I’ll allow it, yeah.

**Travis:** Okay, I rolled a 15, and then I’m proficient in thieves tools.

**Griffin:** Okay, you get a fuckton. Yeah, that’s good. You snip some wire inside of this little hockey-puck looking thing, and the alarm goes off. But while you have your hand in the drawer, like, unlocking it, you hear *ka-chunk ka-chunk ka-chunk,* and Roswell is standing in the doorframe of the sheriff’s office.

**Travis:** I sneak my hand out.

**Griffin:** Make a sleight-of-hand check for me? [rolls dice] It’s gonna contest his perception.

**Travis:** [rolls dice] Well, I got 15.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Plus two.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that’ll do it. Yeah, you pull your hand out of the cookie jar real fast and he says, uh,

**Roswell**: Okay, well, I gave you guys a chance, and you - to be frank, you blew it. So-

**Justin:** Bluff check! I wanna do a bluff check on Roswell. I’m gonna try and bluff Roswell.

**Griffin:** Okay. What are you fucking - [Justin rolls dice] You gotta tell me-

**Justin:** I got - my roll stays, I’m not changing the roll. I’m telling Roswell - let me try, before I-

**Griffin:** By the way, he’s got his weapon drawn.

**Justin:** Cool.

**Griffin:** And he looks like he’s in fuck-you-up mode.

**Travis:** Wait! Before you say anything, Ditto, can you describe - since we’re looking at him now, you said *ka-chunk ka-chunk,* is he a robot man?

**Griffin:** He’s not a robot man, just a big fucking dude.

**Travis:** Got it.

**Griffin:** As they - as they, like, ran up the stairs of this building to come greet you, they were making a lot of noise. Not a robot, wanna point that out. No robos in this one.

**Justin:** So just Roswell, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** The same Roswell we were - okay.

**Taako**: Those guys! They came by and they were trying to break into this desk, and we scared them off!

**Roswell**: Cassidy-

**Taako**: They tripped the alarm!

**Roswell**: Okay. Cassidy, can you confirm that?

**Griffin:** And the woman in the cell says,

**Woman:** Well, I didn’t see ‘em do nothing, but I didn’t see any other boys come in here. I wouldn’t trust them as far as I can throw them, and I can throw them pretty far.

**Magnus**: You know what, Roswell? I’m gonna shoot straight with you. We’re here to figure out what happened a year and a half ago. We’re here to help in any way we can. We haven’t been honest with you, and I feel like you haven’t been completely honest with us.

**Roswell**: I haven’t been honest with you ‘cause I don’t know anything about you. I’m - here’s what I’m just gonna ask. I’m not gonna hurt you, I’m - I’m not. I’m gonna talk to - we’re gonna let Sheriff Isaak figure out what to do.

**Magnus**: Got it.

**Roswell**: But now I’m gonna have to ask you guys to wait in a cell.

**Taako**: What about the guys -[sigh] they’re getting away!

**Merle**: [laughs] Yeah! [crosstalk]

**Roswell**: They’re gone. There was just a little - it was just a little barfight kerfuffle.

**Taako**: Not those guys! Different guys.

**Merle**: The guys that Taako was just telling you about.

**Roswell**: Okay.

**Taako**: Different guys.

**Merle**: Yeah, the guys that tried to steal!

**Justin:** Now listen, I don’t want to panic anybody, but I did get an 18 on that bluff check, so he’s, like, buyin’ it.

**Clint:** He did get an 18.

**Griffin:** That bluff check kept him from getting aggressive with you.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** This is about as good of a benefit of a doubt as you’re going to get. He goes to the desk and opens up that drawer that you hacked into and takes out this big ring of keys and uses it to open up one of these jail cells and says,

**Roswell**: Just wait in here, please. Please don’t make it any harder than it needs to.

**Taako**: Okay, I’m gonna be honest. Can I be honest? Can I tell you what happened? I shouldn’t have opened the drawer. I thought it would be locked, but it was unlocked, and the alarm just went off. There was no harm meant. I was just-

**Magnus**: He was just trying to find nails, because I was fixing your super-chair.

**Taako**: Just trying to find nails because he was fixing the chair!

**Justin:** Now I’m using that 18 to its full effect.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Now behold the full power of my 18. [Travis laughs]

**Travis:** As the glow emanates from Taako’s eyes!

**Taako**: Also, I should mention this is an 18 bluff.

**Griffin:** He puts his weapon away, and he says-

**Justin:** He’s loving it.

**Roswell**: Listen. I’m-

**Travis:** He says, “I love you.”

**Roswell**: This is - Sheriff Isaak will be back any minute. I don’t - I-

[“Roswell” begins playing in the background]

**Roswell**: Please just get in the cell. It’s comfortable in there, it’s cozy, look!

**Griffin:** He takes out a little puzzle from his pocket.

**Roswell**: Here’s a puzzle, work on that!

**Taako**: Yeah, fine, let’s get in the cell.

**Travis:** Yeah, we get in the cell, and I pull out my harmonica, which until now I have not done.

**Clint:** I can’t go back in the can, man. I can’t go back!

**Griffin:** Uh, tough shit, you’re in the can.

**Griffin:** You guys are in the fuckin’ slammer. Back in the pokey.

**Travis:** Can I tell you what, Griffin?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I actually feel more comfortable in here. I feel like this is the me I’ve grown to know at this point.

**Griffin:** Yeah, they’re not - you’re not locked in there with them, they’re locked in here with you.

**Travis:** Yeah, exactly.

**Griffin:** Uh, Sheriff Isaak’s-

**Travis:** I was born in here. You know?

**Griffin:** Sheriff Isaak has not rolled around. It’s just you three and this woman that Roswell identified as Cassidy in the other cell, who’s giving you the stankiest eye. Oh, man, the stank-eye that Cassidy’s giving you.

**Travis:** I - in thieves’ cant, I’m gonna say,

**Magnus**: Hail and well met, Cassidy.

**Cassidy**: What is this garbage talk that you’re speaking? Was that gob- was that gerblin?

**Magnus**: Yeah. [laughs] Sure was.

**Cassidy**: Hey, I think these three boys might be six gerblins stacked up and dressed up in human skins.

**Magnus**: Ah- wait- uh- at least seven!

**Justin:** The problem is, you used thieves’ cant, that’s just stinkin’ thinkin’. I’m gonna try to use thieves’ can.

**Travis:** Thieves’ Do!

**Justin:** Thieves’ Do!

**Griffin:** You do, like, an offensive version of thieves’ cant that she also does not buy.

**Clint:** Are we three in the same cell?

**Griffin:** Yeah, you’re all locked up in the same cell.

**Justin:** She’s talking common, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah, she’s talking common.

**Taako**: What’s your story, Cassidy?

**Cassidy**: I don’t think I should tell you guys this, you’re here to kill all of us and steal all my root beer barrels.

**Taako**: Good improv, Cassidy, way to say yes. Let me try again. So what’s your story?

**Cassidy**: Well, I’m glad you asked. [everyone laughs]

**Griffin:** She says, uh,

**Cassidy**: I’ve been falsely accused, boys. I’m locked up here. They said I blew up the temple. I don’t blow up any damn temples, I blow up the earth! I get out those diamonds from under ‘em. Best there ever was, that’s sure as shit true. That’s my story and I’m sticking to it.

**Clint:** [imitates the sound of someone spitting, and a little *ding*]

**Griffin:** Yeah, she did spit, how did you know?

**Clint:** Ah, just intuition.

**Magnus**: Oh. Well, can I tell you something, Cassidy?

**Cassidy**: Yeah.

**Magnus**: I believe you.

**Cassidy**: Oh, boy, I like you already. What’s your name?

**Magnus**: Cool. My name is Magnus Burnsides.

**Cassidy**: Marchus Burchins.

**Magnus**: Yep, nailed it. Got it in one.

**Cassidy**: I can’t hear very good ‘cause of all the ‘splosions.

**Magnus**: I feel you. Um. What-

**Cassidy**: In my line o’ business it’s ‘splosions noooonstooop!

**Magnus**: Can I tell you something, Cassidy?

**Cassidy**: Please.

**Magnus**: And I’ll speak up here. You seem like a woman who knows the truth of things.

**Cassidy**: Oh, I’m- a lot of people here think my big ideas are small dumb bad ideas. They say, “You got stink ideas, Cassidy.” But I tell them, “No I–no I don’t!”

**Magnus**: No, you do not. You seem like a woman who’s got her finger on the pulse and sees the truth. Cassidy-

**Cassidy**: Oh, fuck yeah, fuck yeah.

**Magnus**: What can you tell me about the visitor and the sacrifice?

**Cassidy**: You know, I kind of keep my head below ground. So I wasn’t here when they rolled up in town. I mean, alls I know’s, the bubble came here to protect us from the dangers of the outside world. Things’re getting really hairy out there.

**Magnus**: Yeah.

**Merle**: What can you tell us about the sheriff?

**Cassidy**: Aw, Sheriff Isaak’s a good dude.

**Magnus**: Cool.

**Merle**: Okay.

**Magnus**: Asked and answered.

**Cassidy**: I mean, you know, he keeps us safe. Um…

**Taako**: Is he a human, or what’s his story?

**Cassidy**: That’s a weird kind of racially-charged question but yeah, sure, he’s a human.

**Taako**: What’s your… sort of… persuasion?

**Griffin:** Let’s say that Cassidy is a half-orc.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** Mm, okay.

**Griffin:** I don’t know if that’s a thing or not, but it is in this universe. She appears to be a human of orc size. Just a very, very - a big ol’ broad, strong, strong-minded woman.

**Clint:** So half-orc, half-hillbilly, apparently.

**Griffin:** Oh, she’s full-blown hillbilly, yeah.

**Magnus**: Cassidy, who’s over yonder in that two-story manor we saw earlier?

**Merle**: [laughing] Yonder!

**Taako**: Nice.

**Merle**: Way to fit in.

**Taako**: Dialect, yeah.

**Magnus**: I got Rustic Hospitality, y’all.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that’s what that is. She says,

**Cassidy**: Well, that’s the sheriff’s. He’s also, you know, the mayor, the elder of the town.

**Magnus**: Gotcha.

**Cassidy**: And so I guess that means he gets to live in the biggest and best house. Never made much sense to me, but I’m not one to rustle the feathers.

**Magnus**: And we saw some fellas in purple bandanas when we came in.

**Cassidy**: Oh that’s just, you know, ruffians.

**Magnus**: Where are they? If this is a closed system, how’d you get ruffians in here?

**Cassidy**: That’s a fuckin’ good question. [someone snorts]

**Magnus**: All right.

**Griffin:** You - let’s move the clock forward a little bit. You guys feel-

**Travis:** [repeated whooping sound effect meant to indicate time travel]

**Griffin:** You guys feel - you haven’t been in here for that long at all. You’ve been in here-

**Travis:** Just *whoop-whoop-whoop.*

**Griffin:** You’ve been in here about twenty minutes.

**Travis:** Oh. *Whoop-whoop.*

**Griffin:** That’s the juggalo greeting! Uh, you feel a tremor. You feel what feels like a very light quake.

**Clint:** Are we hungry, is that what it is?

**Griffin:** And it lasts - well, maybe the earth’s hungry, ‘cause the ground below you is shaking. The building is shaking. You hear some concerned yelps coming from outside. You hear - in the distance, you hear the sound of glass breaking. In front of the sheriff’s office, you can actually see through the bars and through the window you see a lamp post fall over. And the glass enclosure at the top of it shatters when it falls. And you hear a horse get scared and-

**Travis:** Oh, no!

**Griffin:** You see it run down the street. But it doesn’t last very long, it’s just - it was just kind of a violent little short tremor.

**Magnus**: Cassidy, is that normal?

**Cassidy**: Uh… no? Not-

**Magnus**: Cool.

**Cassidy**: Not normal at all.

**Griffin:** And you hear *ka-chunk ka-chunk ka-chunk ka-chunk* as - sorry, it’s gonna take me a little while to memorize these names - Roswell goes charging out of the office.

**Travis:** Leaving us alone.

**Griffin:** Yep.

**Clint:** I think we oughta check and see if that quake did any damage to the cell.

**Travis:** Oh, good– yeah, ooh!

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh-

**Magnus**: Cassidy, can you see out your window… now?

**Taako**: Wait, do you guys wanna leave? If you guys wanna leave, we can just leave. Do you wanna leave the cell? [Griffin laughs] ‘Cause we can just - do you guys just wanna leave? I thought we were playing it cool, like we can just leave.

**Travis:** And - hold on, I’m gonna say this in Elvish to Taako.

**Griffin:** Oh, shit.

**Travis:** Yeah, forgot I could do that, huh? So did I.

**Magnus**: Um, all right, Taako, here’s the deal. Remember what happened when we popped the lock off-

**Cassidy**: Gerblins! Gerblin speak! I knew it!

**Magnus**: Remember what happened when you popped the drawer and she ratted us out?

**Taako**: For sure.

**Magnus**: Can you do some kind of distraction noise or something and then pop this lock and we’ll say it shook loose in the quake?

**Taako**: I can- I mean, listen. *Yes*, obviously. That’s - yes, I can do that for sure. I will say one thing, I don’t know how many more 18-plus bluff checks I’ve got in me, my dude.

[laughing]

**Griffin:** Let me help you guys out, because Cassidy, after she accuses you of being goblins, just - ‘cause that’s how she’s gonna be, I think, this whole arc - she’s actually looking very intently at the corner of her own cell facing the exterior wall, where a small crack has formed. A few cracks, actually. This wall has started to buckle a little bit.

**Travis:** Oh, shit.

**Griffin:** And she is kicking her way out of her own cell. She’s like,

**Cassidy**: Now, you boys aren’t narcs, are ya? I can’t-

**Magnus**: No, but you are.

**Taako**: You narced us!

**Cassidy**: I can’t spend another night in this cell! Yeah, well, takes one to know one, goblin narcs.

**Magnus**: Wait - wait, hold on!

**Griffin:** She’s kicking her way, she’s kicking.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Griffin:** She’s kicking and kicking. She’s like,

**Cassidy**: I won’t narc if you won’t narc. Looks like we’ve gotta get a little circle of trust between you boys and old Cassidy.

**Magnus**: Cool.

**Griffin:** So are you guys staying put, or are you gonna find your way out?

**Taako**: Well, let’s do one thing that we rarely do. Let’s talk to each other in character about our current scenario.

**Magnus**: Okay.

**Taako**: Merle, Magnus.

**Magnus**: Yup.

**Taako**: We haven’t even gotten the lay of the land yet. I’m a little nervous about going rogue before we sort of know what’s going on here. I don’t even know if we’re in danger.

**Magnus**: But it’s possible that if we help, we’re gonna really, like, win them over, whereas if we just stay here, someone could be in trouble while we stand by and do nothing. We need to make a big impression or else I’m really starting to think that these people - if they find out we’re anti-red-cloaks, they might not be big fans of ours.

**Taako**: Merle?

**Merle**: I say we help Cassidy escape and ask her to come back and help us later.

**Griffin:** Cassidy’s fucking gone. She just kicked her way out while you guys were talking.

**Travis:** Oh, we did great.

**Griffin:** Since you guys were talking in character, Cassidy definitely finished kicking her way through the wall. And she’s just fucking gone.

**Clint:** Mission accomplished!

**Taako**: I mean, if you guys wanna leave, we can just leave.

**Merle**: Well, maybe it’ll help the story along if we just kinda sit and relax.

**Taako**: Is that normally the way to keep narratives?

**Merle**: It seems to be working in this case.

**Taako**: Yeah, maybe we- you know what, that’s a great point. Sort of a meta point, I’ll grant you.

**Merle**: Unless the cell’s falling in on us.

**Justin:** Is there any - I’m gonna roll a perception [rolls dice] check of 4 to see if our cell is in any way damaged by this quake.

**Griffin:** Uh, you’re in a prison cell.

**Travis:** ‘kay, did great.

**Justin:** Anybody else?

**Travis:** I got a 10.

**Griffin:** You’re in a prison cell with bars on it.

**Clint:** [rolls dice] I got a 1!

**Griffin:** You’re in a, a- a cube-shaped place. [Clint laughs]

**Justin:** A hard box.

**Griffin:** No, you’re, you’re - I’ll give it for the 10. There’s no obvious signs of damage to your cell.

**Travis:** Cool. Let’s dip.

**Clint:** I wish we had some smokes to trade.

**Griffin:** You’re the only - you’re fuckin’ the only people here right now. So you would be trading with each other.

**Clint:** Well, what’s wrong with that?

**Magnus**: I vote we go help.

**Taako**: Okay. Well, let’s just go then.

**Merle**: Go help who?

**Magnus**: Wherever the noise was.

**Griffin:** Uh, it was an earthquake, so… everywhere?

**Travis:** Yeah. But listen, I’ve got a Lens of Creeping that we can follow Roswell and go help.

**Justin:** Okay, I’ll cast Knock on the door to this cell. Let’s get moving.

**Griffin:** It swings open, and you hear a [siren noise] - no, I’m just kidding. Yeah, it swings open. It opens up.

**Travis:** Okay, I use my Lens of Straight Creepin’ so I can follow where Roswell went.

**Griffin:** Okay. You step outside and catch a quick glimpse of the clocktower as you go outside. It is currently 11:40. And as you look through the Lens of Straight Creeping, you see these gigantic footprint impressions in the ground, and they are leading directly into Helpington’s, the general store, which is just down and across the street.

**Travis:** Okay. Follow. I follow.

**Griffin:** Okay. Other boys?

**Clint and Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah, okay. You make your way into Helpington’s and you see Roswell picking up some goods. There’s nobody else in the store except for Roswell. If there is a store clerk here they are not currently here, and Roswell is, like, helping clean up because there’s - there’s actually not a lot of goods here in Helpington’s. But whatever is here is on the ground, and Roswell’s helping to pick it up, and he says,

**Roswell**: Okay, seriously? *Seriously?*

**Magnus**: Listen, our cage - our cell popped open, and we didn’t want you to come back and think that we had escaped so we came to find you.

**Roswell**: This earthquake popped your cell open?

**Magnus**: If we can help- Yeah.

**Taako**: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

**Magnus**: And also sucked Cassidy out of her cell. Apparently.

**Merle**: [whooshing noise] Just sucked her right out!

**Magnus**: So if there’s any way that we can help and then we’ll return with you back to the sheriff’s office and turn ourselves in-

**Roswell**: Okay, no. I’m done waiting for the sheriff.

**Griffin:** Roswell draws its halberd and starts to step towards you, and you guys get saved by the bell. Not quite the bell, actually, it’s not a bell, it is an explosion. And it is coming down the street, but this is not-

**Travis:** I run towards it.

**Griffin:** Oh, that was quick. Roswell’s chasing you, then.

**Travis:** Yep.

**Griffin:** And can I assume the other boys, you guys are going too?

**Clint:** I kinda waddle.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** I don’t really run.

**Travis:** [quacking noises]

**Griffin:** This explosion doesn’t sound like the barfight from earlier, doesn’t sound like the earthquake. This was like the sound of a short pop and then like a fucking *explosion.* Very, very, loud. And as you make your way out into the street, you see smoke coming through the windows of the bank.

**Clint:** Hey, is it like this all the time in this damn town? There’s a lot of shit going on!

**Griffin:** Roswell says,

**Roswell**: You guys have been here for 45 minutes, what the fuck did you bring with you?

**Magnus**: See what we can do in an hour.

**Griffin:** Roswell is now paying you guys no fucking mind. He is charging - it is - they are charging for the bank, and you see them storm inside.

**Travis:** I mean, I’m going too, I’m right there next to him.

**Griffin:** This - Roswell outpaces you. I’m just sayin’.

**Travis:** What?!

**Griffin:** Roswell gets there first. Yeah, they got a long wingspan.

**Travis:** Ugh.

**Griffin:** You see a person who is on fire come out of the building kind of flailing, and they fall to the ground outside of the bank.

**Travis:** Okay. I run over and start rolling them around in the dirt.

**Griffin:** You’re stop-drop-and-rolling them?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Okay. Make a - what would that be? First aid check.

**Travis:** [rolls dice] Is that Medicine?

**Griffin:** Is that what it’s called?

**Travis:** I think so. I got a 14.

**Griffin:** Yeah, we’ll say it’s that. Okay. Yeah, you give them the medicine of them not being on fire anymore, but they are - they’re in really, really bad shape.

**Clint:** How about if I heal ‘em? Would that be a crazy idea?

**Griffin:** You can totally do that. Let me finish describing the scene because the situation in the bank is still very active. You hear, like, shouts and screams and you hear shit getting broke. You hear the sound of shit getting thrown around.

**Travis:** Still on fire and stuff?

**Griffin:** It’s still super fuckin’ on fire. So you can stop and help this person out, but the shit is popping off. As you put them out you realize that this person is wearing one of those purple kerchiefs and is dressed like one of those rowdy boys.

**Travis:** Still don’t want him to die. I’ve really turned over a new leaf.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Travis:** I switch my belt to fire.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** And then I rush in.

**Griffin:** Okay, cool. Uh, Merle, do you wanna heal this person or what?

**Clint:** Uh, nah. [Travis laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay. Saving those spell slots.

**Clint:** Nah, I’ll save it.

**Griffin:** Taako, yourself?

**Taako**: So what do we got here?

**Griffin:** You’ve got a burning bank and a bunch of people inside and it sounds like there’s fighting. Taako, what do - is there anything you want to do before you guys rush into this burning bank?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** Not!

**Justin:** Yeah, I’m gonna cast a new one. Ooh! New one. Hot, new, hot off the presses.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Called Cone of Cold.

**Griffin:** Oh, interesting, all right.

**Justin:** I’m gonna sort of - [clears throat] It is a 60-foot cone.

**Griffin:** That’s a big fucking cone.

**Clint:** That sounds good, though. Big sixty-foot cone. [slurping sound]

**Justin:** Yeah. Big sixty-foot cone of cold that I’m just gonna blast. I mean, the only stats that I have are in terms of, you know, damage. I’m not trying to do any damage, I’m just trying to put the fire out.

**Griffin:** Well, here’s the thing. If you are just sort of launching it into this building, there are some people in this building. And because you don’t have that spell-sculpting thing anymore when you changed specializations, like, you’re gonna make attack rolls on everybody in this place if you do that. I’m totally down with it, maybe you aim it at the ceiling. The ceiling is this-

**Justin:** That’s kind of what I was thinking, but at the same time it might not be-

**Griffin:** I’m totally willing to give it to you, I’m just saying there will be collateral damage unless you don’t roll good against each of the people inside.

**Justin:** You’re saying if I emanate a cone out-

**Griffin:** You’re gonna hit some people.

**Justin:** I’m gonna hit people that are caught in it, and I can’t sculpt around them like I used to be able to do.

**Clint:** Also it’s cold and it’s not-

**Justin:** It’s cold, it’s damaging.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** The cold would work on the fire, but it’s a damaging move.

**Clint:** So you could use it to protect Magnus as he rushes into the fire?

**Justin:** No, no, no. That would blast Magnus too.

**Griffin:** No. He can use it to kill Magnus.

**Clint:** And that would be bad, right?

**Justin:** That would be bad.

**Griffin:** Let me just, like, make this a straight up-and-down choice. You can do this to try to put the fire out, but you are going to potentially hurt people inside. You’re not in there yet, you don’t know how many people are in there, but you would have to make attack rolls on all of them.

**Justin:** I’m seeing if I have anything else that’ll help.

**Griffin:** You have Prestidigitation, which lets you put out a small flame. This is a big ol’ flame.

**Travis:** You have Stone Skin, right?

**Clint:** I can create up to ten gallons of water.

**Justin:** Can you?

**Griffin:** That ain’t gonna be enough.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Travis:** Juice, does Stone Skin grant resistances?

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah, Taako, you’ve still got Stone Skin on.

**Justin:** Hell yeah, I’m going in that building!

**Clint:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Yeah, you rush in and - God, I wish I had remembered that you had Stone - oh well. You rush into the building and, yeah, it is a scene of pure bad carnage. There are some bodies on the ground. You see the body of a dark elf woman-

**Justin:** I took off my shorts.

**Griffin:** What?

**Travis:** It was a skirt.

**Clint:** He didn’t wanna burn ‘em up!

**Justin:** I’m not gonna burn off my shorts, I just got these shorts.

**Travis:** I believe it was a skirt.

**Griffin:** Okay, so nude from the waist down.

**Justin:** I took off my skirt, thank you, Travis. Yes, of course I took off my Jared Leto skirt, and I’m nude from the waist down, because I’m not gonna, like - no, I’ve got MeUndies on. But, like-

**Griffin:** Fucking fantastic. Okay. Uh, let me describe this carnage scene, please, before you talk about your dick. [Clint laughs] There’s a dark elf woman who is lying on the ground. She is dead. There is a young man with jet black hair lying on the ground, he is also dead. There are two guards you assume were protecting this bank, they are dead. And then there are two of those purple kerchief ruffian dudes who are dead. There is also a dwarf woman who is near the back desk of this bank, the teller’s window, who seems like she is on her last legs, and then there are three of those purple kerchief ruffians who are alive, and they look really freaked the fuck out, and they are engaged in combat with Roswell.

**Justin:** So they’re - so Roswell is fighting-

**Griffin:** The three surviving ruffians who are not dead from this explosion. The explosion - the fire has not spread all throughout the room, it’s mainly actually towards the back of the room where there is a large vault that is blackened and charred, but closed, still. If this was their plan, to blast this vault open and do a good, good bank robbery, they fucked up completely. And this room is - the fire is spreading very, very quickly. It’s all over the ceiling, and ashes and cinders are falling down on this scene.

**Travis:** Are we in combat now, or can we act freely?

**Griffin:** You can be. But you are not engaged in combat. These - the three ruffians and Roswell are engaged with each other. If you wanna hop into this shit you can hop into this shit, but you’re not now.

**Travis:** I want to run to the dwarf woman.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Yeah, that would be my priority too. I’m not getting in the middle of Roswell versus the purple dudes, I don’t really care.

**Griffin:** Okay. All right, yeah, you rush to the- Merle, are you doing the same?

**Clint:** I’ll wait out here and heal.

**Griffin:** Okay. You’re healing who?

**Clint:** Whoever they bring out.

**Justin:** Yeah, we’re gonna bring out the dwarf woman.

**Griffin:** Okay. Now you do have time to heal that person that was on fire outside of the building. Are you gonna pop them off one, or…

**Clint:** Eh.

**Travis:** Yeah, do it, we might need to talk to them.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** No, I have my ways.

**Travis:** Oh, yeah, don’t you have the thing where if someone dies you have - did we get that?

**Clint:** Shh - don’t ruin the surprise!

**Griffin:** You go and check on the dwarven woman while Roswell is just fucking handily handling these three. They’re trying to mix it up with Roswell and encircle Roswell and give them a hard time, but Roswell is just cutting them down. Just shish-kebabing these dudes. And this dwarven woman is, like, out of it. If you could see an HP bar above her head, it would be at 1.

**Travis:** I pick her up.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** I’m just helping him to help shield her from - I’ll take out the - I’ll open the Umbra Staff.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** To prevent - to create a shield to protect her from any other falling embers or damage or anything that might be coming down her way in case there’s any other fire.

**Griffin:** Okay. Yeah.

**Justin:** Stray things, I don’t wanna take any chances.

**Griffin:** And you guys are just rushing out of the bank?

**Justin:** I’m sure that thing’s impenetrable.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah. You rush out of the bank and get this woman outside, and Magnus, as you’re carrying her, she’s like,

**Dwarven woman**: [breathily] Who… the fuck… are you guys?

**Magnus**: We’re here to help.

**Taako**: Just relax, we’re gonna get you outside.

**Griffin:** Okay, you get them outside. You get this one dwarven woman outside, set them down, and they are - they’re actually unconscious now. But alive.

**Travis:** I put her down in front of Merle.

**Clint:** So it’s just the two of them, the guy in the purple bandana that’s all burned up-

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Clint:** And the dwarven woman.

**Griffin:** Yeah, they seem to be the only survivors.

**Clint:** Okay. I’m gonna cast Mass Healing Word.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** This’ll heal both of them, they can regain hit points equal to 1d4 plus my spellcasting modifier.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** So I’m rolling the d4. [rolls dice] It’s a 4.

**Justin:** Nice.

**Clint:** And my spellcasting modifier is… somewhere.

**Travis:** I’m gonna tattoo it on the inside of your eyelids.

**Griffin:** That would be a shame because it does change.

**Travis:** Oh. Okay.

**Clint:** 16, right?

**Griffin:** That’s not your spellcasting modifier, that would be crazy.

**Justin:** Plus eight.

**Clint:** Okay, plus eight. So twelve. For both of them.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you bring them both back to life. The burned one is--seems pretty dazed, pretty out of it. The dwarven woman just kind of coughs and says,

**Dwarven woman**: Thank… thank you guys. Who--what happened?

**Magnus**: You guys talk to her and figure out what’s going on!

**Travis:** And then Magnus rushes back in.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** Can we get a description of the dwarven woman?

**Travis:** You creeper!

**Griffin:** She is a…

**Clint:** I’m just visualizing, I’m just trying to visualize.

**Griffin:** She is about middle age, she has--

**Justin:** Nice.

**Travis:** Middle dwarven age?

**Griffin:** Middle dwarven age, yeah, so like 150. She has long red hair. She has some whiskers. She’s wearing some nice clothes. She’s coughing a whole lot and seems - like the other dude she just seems, like, super out of it. Magnus, inside you see all three of the dudes that Roswell was fighting on the ground all dead, all fucked up, and Roswell has their halberd out, and they’re standing at a badass angle with their back to you and turns and faces you and says,

**Roswell**: This has been a really bad hour, and it didn’t start until you guys came in town.

**Magnus**: Great.

**Roswell**: I need to know what the fuck you brought with you, who you are, and what you’re doing here. It’s my job to keep the town safe, and this hour has kept me from doing so.

**Justin:** Hey, hey.

**Magnus**: Terrific. Can we talk about that outside the burning building, please?

**Griffin:** Did you have something, Juice?

**Justin:** How close are we to the--like, we woke up, right? We were knocked unconscious when we came in.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** How close are we to the edge of the bubble? Is that anywhere in our sphere of--like, can we see that?

**Griffin:** When you woke up you were right next to the bubble, yeah. You can see the bubble everywhere. The bubble’s--the bubble is in the sky.

**Justin:** Okay. Did we leave a hole?

**Griffin:** No, you didn’t leave a hole.

**Justin:** Okay, cool, alright. Just wanted to make sure we hadn’t created an exit.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that’s a good thing to ask. There’s no exit from what you can tell.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Unless there’s a big-ass cannon inside.

**Magnus**: We got the--Roswell, we got the dwarven woman out, are there any other survivors in here?

**Roswell**: Nope. There’s just me and you. And I actually - let’s put a little bit of pressure on the situation. Tell me where the fuck you came from, what you’re doing here, or I’m not gonna let you leave.

**Magnus**: Fine.

**Griffin:** And a beam falls from the ceiling and crashes to the ground in fiery splinters.

**Magnus**: Cool. We came from outside the bubble, we’re here to find a chalice, and now we need to get outside of this building.

**Griffin:** Roswell says,

**Roswell**: I have--a chalice? I have no fucking idea what you’re talking about–

**Magnus**: Neither do I!

**Roswell**: Just go, just go, just go, just go, just go!

**Griffin:** ‘cause another beam falls from the ceiling, very narrowly missing you. Roswell kind of buckles and says like--is letting you go.

**Magnus**: Okay. Let’s go!

**Merle**: Hey, bring one of the dead guys out with you!

**Magnus**: Okay.

**Griffin:** You run out and Magnus, just as you make it outside, the building collapses. And--

**Travis:** Is it possible for me to - well, we’ve got two living people, I guess.

**Griffin:** Yeah, there was nobody else alive that you could tell. Except--

**Travis:** Well, I was gonna grab one of the dead guys for Merle.

**Griffin:** Except for Roswell, who was inside the building when it collapses.

**Travis:** What?

**Clint:** Ooh.

**Griffin:** And you do not see - this thing very, very quickly goes bad and tumbles down and falls on top of Roswell.

**Travis:** And there’s nothing I can do?

**Griffin:** No. Roswell is gone.

**Travis:** Horseshit.

**Griffin:** And you actually - you can now see, as the bank has fallen, you see the clock tower behind the bank. The base of the clocktower is on fire and starting to climb up it. There are some people now who have come out into the street to check things out. You see an elf with a big bucket of water run up and throw it onto the fire and realize “that’s not enough water” and walks away. You see a few people trying to do the same, trying to help out, but the bank is gone, the clocktower is on fire, and the clock tower chimes. Because it has struck noon. And it chimes again, and again, and it chimes twelve times, as clock towers are wont to do when it has turned over to noon. And as it does, something absolutely horrible happens.

**Travis:** Ditto, did you base this on Majora’s Mask?

**Griffin:** There is another tremor. And this one is much more powerful from the last, and much longer than the last, and it doesn’t seem to show any sign of stopping. And as it picks up as the clock strikes noon, the residents of Refuge who are now standing in the streets start to scream and hold each other. And the buildings that they were standing in just start to fall over like they were made out of toothpicks, because the ground is shaking so much that it’s actually hard for you to keep your footing.

**Griffin:** And cracks slowly start to form and spread throughout the ground, but they’re not just fissures in the ground. There’s a bright and incredibly hot light coming from the ground. And you hear the screams pick up all around you, and the fissures go bright, and a plume of unbearable heat emerges from the ground. And the ground, this entire - the ground all around this town swells up beneath you, just toppling all the buildings that remained as the ground expands.

[“The Clock Strikes Noon (Apocalypse)” begins playing in the background]

**Griffin:** The clock tower snaps at its midsection as it chimes its twelfth chime, and it falls over into that large two-story manor at the end of the street with a loud crash. And the ground, as quickly as it expanded, it just falls out beneath your feet. And you’re falling. And you’re burning. And you’re being crushed by the shattered earth as it compresses down into the ground. And you hear an anguished scream come from something massive and furious, and all three of you have died.

[music swells and fades out]

**Travis:** Thus ends…

**Justin:** Taako’s--Ta--

**Clint:** Well!

**Justin:** Good run.

[Clint laughing]

[eerie background music begins]

**Griffin:** And there’s something about the dying that feels familiar. And then you’re back in that white space, and you see that old woman again. And she says,

**Old woman**: Oh, you’ll have to do much better than that, loves.

**Griffin:** And then you wake up.

[Travis, Clint, and Justin start clapping and laughing]

**Clint:** *Aw*. Awesome!