**Griffin:** Let’s...roll initiative! That’s always a really exciting way to start a podcast, is, the sound of dice hitting some table.

[sound of dice hitting some table]

**Travis:** I wish I had wooden—

**Griffin:** And also the—and also the math, like people love it when it’s just like, [nasal voice] “Welcome to the story! Now let’s do math time!”

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Travis:** I wish I had wooden dice, that’d be very fitting.

[more dice sounds]

**Justin:** Nine.

**Clint:** Oh my god... Oh I have advantage, don’t I? On initiative. That was *one*.

**Travis:** [crosstalk] I have a thirteen.

**Clint:** That was a, my fifth *one*. [rolls dice] And a two! Awesome!

**Justin:** [crosstalk] Hey, much better.

**Griffin:** What’d you get Taako?

**Justin:** Nine.

**Griffin:** Uhhh, okay! So, before uh... Before we get into the fight, something happens. That, that black smog that’s all, like surrounding the ceiling of this gigantic, cavernous room that you are all, all in, standing on this catwalk in the middle of it, um, it starts to take shape immediately above the three of you. And it forms into a massive steel beam that, just after it takes shape, it becomes sort of affected by gravity and it starts to fall towards you, and just before you sort of reflexively prepare to leap out of the way—with varying levels of success, I’m sure—you hear a crash. And you look up and you see two human-shaped statues have also formed out of the smog, and their arms are held up over their heads, and they’ve caught this big, heavy beam that was about to fall on you. And all of you can see the Red Robe now, not just Magnus. Um, because Magnus, you don’t have truesight anymore because you don’t have your body anymore, but all of you can see now, plain as day, the Red Robe. And its hand is outstretched in the direction of these statues. And all of it, the statues and the beam, revert back into black smog that lifts up into the ceiling.

**Magnus**: Uh. Listen, uh, Taako, Merle, I know that’s a little weird, and you’re just gonna have to trust me on this one: He’s with us. I think. More or less.

**Griffin:** Uh, he—he gives you a big thumbs-up, with a—

**Travis:** I give him a wooden, like, a salute.

**Griffin:** Uh, Taako an—Taako and Merle, are you guys cool with that?

**Taako**: Yeah, I’ve watched TV before, I know how these things go.

**Clint:** [wheezing]

**Griffin:** Um, alright. Seeing this new entrant into the fight, and seeing that this, uh, this trap made out of smog didn’t land, Magnus, er, fake Magnus in—Edward inside of Magnus laughs and he says,

**Edward as Magnus**: Well this fight just got a lot more interesting.

**Griffin:** And then he reaches a burly arm up into the air and snaps.

[Wonderland: Round Three by Griffin McElroy starts playing]

**Griffin:** And suddenly the cylindrical chambers that are surrounding the central platform, they all start emitting these different-colored beams of neon light that shoot up and onto the ceiling of this massive chamber, and that outer ring of cylinders begins to rotate around the central platform, the floor of which has also turned into a checkered neon light. First in the order is Lydia, who is uh, she is floating up into the air, and... I think on her first turn she casts a spell...and she heals Magnus!

**Travis:** Aw, that’s—! Oh.

**Griffin:** She heals Magnus for thirty-eight points of damage.

**Travis:** Super cool. Not *me* though!

**Merle**: Waaaaaaaaaaaiiiit a minute I thought healing didn’t work in here!

**Griffin:** She says uh,

**Lydia**: Oh, that’s only a one-way street, dear!

**Clint:** [sighing] Wow.

**Griffin:** Next in the order is, um, real Magnu—er, er, yeah, real Magnus, mannequin Magnus. Now, manne—Mag—Travis, do you wanna tell everybody what I made for ya, I made you a little present!

**Travis:** Griffin made me a mannequin sheet. I would like to a read a little bit of it, just the right-side column. Personality trait: Is a mannequin. Ideals: To be a mannequin. Bonds: Very few, because is mannequin. Flaws: Splinters.

[stifled laughter from everyone]

**Travis:** And then under Features and Traits: Is a literal mannequin. Super great.

**Clint:** Fears: Termites.

**Griffin:** You’ll notice—you’ll notice under languages you can speak Common and Mannequin, so. We’ll see if that—

**Travis:** Then I turn to all the mannequins around the table, and I say,

**Magnus**: Hello.

**Griffin:** Um, yeah, I guess there’s a bunch of, uh—I guess there’s a bunch of mannequins in the audience and when you talk to them, they all start clapping and applauding, and—and cheering for you.

**Magnus**: Any help?

**Griffin:** They all shake their heads no. And shrug.

**Magnus**: Super cool! Got it, got it, got it, got it.

**Travis:** Y’know what? I’m gonna jump onto Magnus.

**Griffin:** Okay. Uhhh, let’s—what’re you trying to do? What’s your—what’s your goal here.

**Travis:** I’m trying to get the Chance Lance away.

**Griffin:** Okay, so, I think you’re gonna have to overpower him? Uh, I think that’s gonna take two checks. I think you’re gonna have to overpower him first, and—

**Travis:** That’s gonna be hard, I am very strong.

**Griffin:** Uh, yes, you are. You’re gonna have to overpower him first, and then I think, maybe… Sleight of Hand? To try to, like, get the, actually get the thing out of his hand.

**Travis:** Damnit.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Justin:** Is there any chance that Magnus’s body is having any sort of allergic reaction to healing magic? We, we wouldn’t know before this point, so.

**Griffin:** [laughing] What did you get on your Strength check?

**Travis:** I’m trying to think if there’s anything I know about my own body that would help me here.

**Justin:** [laughing] You have a, a fucking, a weak point.

**Griffin:** A-a trick knee?

**Travis:** Yeah, like I’ve never said it before, but like, I have a blind spot.

**Justin:** [imitating Magnus] “My—one thing about me is my soft spot never closed over. I hope no one ever finds out.”

**Travis:** “I’ve got that trick knee!”

**Clint:** “My adult—my adult fontanelle!”

**Travis:** I rolled a fifteen plus three? Eighteen.

**Griffin:** Okay, well I rolled a fourteen—

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But it’s gonna be higher because—

**Travis:** It’s like plus nine or some shit.

**Griffin:** He’s a strong boy. So you jump onto real Magnus, y-y-you jump onto—I’m just gonna use names, and not like, refer to body. That’s gonna—or else this fight’s gonna be garbage, but... You try to jump onto Edward inside of your body, but he very easily shrugs you off and, uh, I think you kind of—make a Dex save for me.

**Travis:** Uh, nine plus… three—[crosstalk] Twelve.

**Griffin:** Okay you keep your, you keep your footing as he brushes you off. You, you aren’t like, thrown, thrown to the ground. Next in the order is Edward. And he draws Railsplitter, and he says, uh,

**Edward as Magnus**: Let’s see what this baby can do!

**Griffin:** And he does a Goading Attack to you, Magnus. [dice rolling] That is a twenty-one versus AC?

**Travis:** I mean that hits!

**Griffin:** Yeah, so...

**Travis:** I will say, Griffin, I’m, I’m confused here. ‘Cause I don’t seem, as the mannequin, to have any advantages whatsoever.

**Griffin:** No, it’s almost like you’re a mannequin.

**Justin:** [laughing]

**Travis:** I don’t know what I’m supposed to do with this body to make this fight not one-sided.

**Griffin:** Um, work with your—work with your friends! Um, so I add a superior—a superiority die to the damage roll, so that’s...uh, sixteen damage, and you have to make a Wisdom saving throw!

**Travis:** [rolls dice] Oh that’s gotta be good, right? Seventeen plus...

**Griffin:** Yeah, that does it. Okay you are not—

**Travis:** Yeah, zero.

**Griffin:** You are not goaded. For my second attack—

**Travis:** There—there should be—I’m gonna make, just an argument here, Griffin, that because my body is made of wood—

**Griffin:** Mmm.

**Travis:** I should take decreased damage.

**Griffin:** [high-pitched voice] No, I don’t think so!

**Travis:** You would—you would think that, being wood, I would take less damage than a flesh body hit by an axe.

**Griffin:** Yeah, Merle, he’s gonna come after you with Railsplitter, um.

**Travis:** This is bullshit.

**Griffin:** And he got a, uh, eighteen versus AC?

**Clint:** [weakly] Yeah...?

**Griffin:** Mmkay.

**Travis:** And I just wanna remind all of our listeners, if you’re sitting there going, “But Railsplitter against wood!” That’s only against trees, this isn—it has very specific magic.

**Griffin:** Yes, yes, yes. Yes, yes. Uh, that’s only nine damage.

**Clint:** I’m dead.

**Griffin:** Woah, really?

**Clint:** Yep.

**Griffin:** Well we’ve had a lotta fun here with—no, that’s not how death works. But you are unconscious.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Merle drops to the ground as, uh, Taako this is probably pretty upsetting for you, and you, Magnus!

**Clint:** I’ve just been killed! Is nobody gonna be upset?!

**Travis:** You’re not killed, you’re unconscious, ya baby.

**Clint:** [stifling laughter]

**Griffin:** You just saw, you just saw uh, like, Magnus—and it’s not really Magnus but like, you saw your friend who you’ve been traveling with for a year just cut down your other friend. I imagine it’s pretty brutal, but yeah, Merle, you are down on the ground. Next in the order is Taak-o.

**Justin:** I am going to cast…

{10:24}

**Griffin:** Now, I’ve gotten—I’ve reached a point where when I hear Justin say, “I’m going to cast,” I assume the next words are like, “a thing that’s gonna break the sequence of the shit that you’ve written down.”

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Justin:** Um, no, I’m not gonna, no, that’s not gonna happen. Um. I’m gonna cast Animate Objects on—

**Griffin:** [groaning] Oh! ’kay.

**Justin:** I’m gonna cast Animate Objects on the mannequins. And I can animate up to ten of ‘em.

**Griffin:** Holy fucking shit, what?! Jesus, Fantasia! Jesus, Fantasia Barrino!

**Justin:** [laughing] Yeah.

**Clint:** [starts humming the tune from The Sorcerer’s Apprentice]

**Justin:** Yeah, I’m gonna animate all of them, and command them to just like. Tackle Magnus.

**Griffin:** Okay. Flesh—okay, yeah yeah yeah. Alright, alright. Um, so—

**Justin:** So they have—lemme tell you—

**Griffin:** Lemme—lemme do this first, lemme do this first, ‘cause th—fair play. They are also right now under the control of probably Lydia, since she’s like, in Lich form still. I, I will let you attempt this but I think this is like, I think this is a fucking, like, contest of wills, right? So I think we—

**Travis:** Can I give Taako advantage by speaking to my wooden brethren?

**Griffin:** Yes, absolutely, yeah, what do you say?

**Magnus**: Friends, mannequins—

**Clint:** [jokingly] Lend me your ears.

**Magnus**: Lend—help us! My wooden brothers! Join me in this fight against your captors! Your controllers, they have used you for evil and we shall use you-- we shall *free you* from their bonds. And after this, we’ll totally take you with us 100% guaranteed.

**Griffin:** Okay. They’re, they’re into it. Let’s do a straight-up-and-down Int. contest.

**Justin:** Okay, cool, um.

**Griffin:** [whispers] I got a five.

**Justin:** I got an eighteen, suck it.

**Travis:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** Ten of these mannequins are now under your control, and they kinda like shake their heads, and they climb up onto the stage, and you’re just having them just, tackle—tackle Magnus outright?

**Justin:** Yeah. They have—

**Griffin:** Er, Edward outright?

**Justin:** They have forty hit points—

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] Wow.

**Justin:** —thirteen AC, plus five to hit, two d6 plus one damage. Strength is ten, Dex is twelve.

**Griffin:** So wait you can actually—they’re, they’re all, wait, they’re all *attacking?!*

**Taako**: Wwwwwwhat’s up?!

**Griffin:** So this horde of—okay.

**Taako**: Go, my beautiful army!

**Justin:** I should clarify actually, upon further reading of the spell, if they’re Medium, I can only do five. So there’s five.

**Griffin:** Okay, ohhkay, so they—five—I’m gonna do five attacks then??

**Justin:** Five attacks against Edward, that’s right.

**Griffin:** Uh, uh, why don’t you roll em. Just roll...roll five d20, and we’ll do an average for damage and add it up like that so we get through it fast. Fuckin’ shit.

**Justin:** Eighteen, eleven, fifteen, five, eleven. Plus, plus five to hit.

**Griffin:** Oh. Well then...I think three of those hit?

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Um, so, yeah. Um, and what’s the damage?

**Justin:** Two d6 plus one.

**Griffin:** Just roll two d6, and we’ll…

**Justin:** Five, four.

**Griffin:** Okay, so ten, so fuckin’, thirty points of damage.

**Justin:** Yeah that sounds about right.

**Griffin:** Okay so five of these mannequins climb up out of the audience and just start bludgeoning Magnus, and he uses Railsplitter to fight off two of them, but three of them get the better of him. And that was a pretty good– that was a pretty fuckin’ good turn of events that just happened. Merle, you’re up next. Roll a d20 for me ‘cause it’s time for a death save. Have we ever done a death save in the two and a half years we’ve been making this show?

**Travis:** No?

**Justin:** I… do not think so.

**Travis:** I don’t think we have.

**Griffin:** Okay. You just roll—

**Justin:** We got knocked in Petals to the Metal, we got knocked out—

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] Taako got knocked out, yeah.

**Justin:** I got knocked out but I think, we got rescued, right?

**Griffin:** I think so, right before this had to happen. So roll a d20—

**Justin:** We’re—please—what we need—[stifling laughter] there has to be a competent woman somewhere! That’s what we always lean on! We’re in dire straits, is there a competent woman?

**Travis:** Where’s an adult!?

**Griffin:** Roll a, roll a d20, Merle, and you don’t add anything to it. You wanna roll good.

**Clint:** Fifteen.

**Griffin:** Alright, that’s one success. If you get to three successes, you’re stable at zero hit points. If you reach three failures, you are dead forever. Merle is gone.

**Justin:** Now what can we do to impact that scenario?

**Griffin:** You can heal him, but uh-oh. The other thing you can do is make a Medicine check, and with a roll of 10 in Medicine you stabilize him like he has had three successes, but it takes your action up.

**Clint:** Am I allowed to know what the number is I gotta beat?

**Travis:** Ten.

**Griffin:** Uh, it’s ten. Straight-up-and-down ten. If you roll a twenty, it counts as—if it count—if you roll a crit twenty, you pop back up to one HP.

**Clint:** [laughing] I am—I am as dead as dead can be.

**Griffin:** On her next turn, it’s Lydia’s turn… Actually something happens before her turn, a big iron wrecking ball swings out of the black smog, manifesting from the smog, and it starts to swing in your direction, Taako. And at the last second another one, another wrecking ball forms out of the, out of the smog, swinging in at a perpendicular angle. And it smashes into the other one, and it sort of sends them both sailing off-course like, splitting the uprights around you. And as they both sort of pass you, missing by a few inches, they turn back into smog.

**Justin:** Cool cool cool cool cool.

**Griffin:** So Lydia’s up next. She is going to cast on mannequin Magnus, uh, Ray of Enfeeblement.

**Travis:** Uh-huh. And then?

**Griffin:** “A black beam of enervating energy extends from your finger. Make a spell ranged attack roll against the target. On hit, the target only deals half damage with weapon attacks that use Strength until the spell ends.”

**Travis:** When’s the spell end?

**Griffin:** Uh, you make a Constitution save. That’s an eighteen versus AC.

**Travis:** Yeah, that hits.

**Griffin:** Alright so you do—

**Travis:** Ha-Half damage on attack?

**Griffin:** Uh, half-damage, save ends.

**Travis:** Got it.

**Griffin:** Uh, you are up, Magnus.

**Travis:** Okay. I—y’know, I never thought about this before, where does my body keep its items?

**Griffin:** All over, but as you just saw, it’s gonna be tough for you to get a weapon from your body.

**Travis:** Definitely. Definitely, definitely. I, I wanna run up and kind of like throw my arms around myself.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** And in doing so, I want to attempt to activate my Magnetic Charge.

**Griffin:** What does that do?

**Travis:** Magnetic Charge, I have never used it before.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** For a very specific reason, that I will describe now. It flings away metal objects from the owner of Magnetic Charge up to ten feet. [Griffin laughs] Metal objects like Railsplitter or the Chance Lance or the shield. Uh, “a fist-sized glass ball with a blue button on top. Once the button is pressed, the ball will begin to glow and produce a magnetic field. The field repels *any metal object* within ten feet from the ball. Take one day for enough charge to build up to use again.”

**Griffin:** Alright, cool. Um, yeah, so I think that instea—here’s what I’ll do for this, ‘cause I like it a lot. Instead of making you overpower him first, I think this is just a sleight of hand. Like almost like you’re pickpocketing him? Um, and—

**Travis:** That’s an eighteen, motherfucker!

[Clint guffaws]

**Griffin:** Yeah, do you have any, any bonuses to add to that?

**Travis:** Plus Dex, that’s three, that’s twenty-one!

**Griffin:** Yeah. That’s definitely a success. Okay. This is fucking cool. This is only a one-time use dealie, though, right?

**Travis:** Correct.

**Griffin:** So, I guess it’s all been—yeah, this is, this is, I can’t NOT let this happen, this is too good.

**Travis:** [crosstalk] It’s once per day, but yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, yeah, okay, you manage to sort of get within range and dodge—I think he’s at this point fighting off the other mannequins that Taako has sicced on him, and you sort of get around behind your body and see this, this clipped into your belt, and you manage to get your mannequin hand on the object and click down on that blue button. And sure enough, um, I think, I think this, his armor wouldn’t go flying off, it’s probably tied and secured onto him. Also if memory serves, it’s that cool… raven… armor… shit.

**Travis:** Yes, the feather leather, yeah.

**Griffin:** But, uh, yeah, the Shield of Heroic Memories goes flying off the catwalk and int—I think all this stuff goes flying off the catwalk and into the crowd. So the shield goes flying off, Railsplitter goes flying off, the Chance Lance goes flying off, and actually hits one of the mannequins in the crowd, which collapses. Merle, your eyeglasses go flying off.

**Clint:** Woo!

**Travis:** It’s only a sphere of ten feet so if Merle was th—yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah, and they are on the cusp of it, so it’s not as dramatic in effect, it kinda—you can see where they landed ‘cause they’re not corrective lenses, you can see there’s, they’re pretty close to you. And T—

**Clint:** I can’t see anything, I’m dead, remember?

**Griffin:** Oh that’s *right*. Uh, and Taako, the Flaming Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom falls off your back and skitters a few feet. There’s probably some other metallic stuff that I–

**Justin:** That’s heart-breaking, by the way, ‘cause it’s of no use to me if it’s not looking cool on my back.

**Clint:** Yeah, that’s the whole thing, it’s like...

**Griffin:** Next in the order—

**Travis:** And then using my real-ass voice…

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** I call Chance Lance to myself.

**Griffin:** Oh my god. Okay, are we gonna do a fucking, Star Wars Episode VII, like—

**Travis:** Fuck yeah.

**Griffin:** Alright so I think you’re both gonna do it. I think he’s—here’s the thing, he’s also going to try to call back the Chance Lance. ‘Cause he kind of has your voice also? Like we’ve had that in the fiction so it’s gonna be fucking both of—

**Justin:** How does he know that, there’s no fuckin’ way!

**Griffin:** Augh, it’s too good to not do it though guys!

[laughing]

**Griffin:** Make a, make a Cha-Charisma…? I think that’s what it is.

**Travis:** I feel like Charisma would remain the same no matter what body I’m in, but sure!

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Travis:** That’s a sixteen plus one, seventeen.

**Griffin:** That’s, uh, an eleven minus garbage ‘cause I don’t think Magnus’s body is very charismatic. Alright. You both reach your hands out and yours is the one that the Chance Lance flies into. And he looks over and actually smirks when he sees how things have gone. And it’s his turn—

**Travis:** Who does? Who does?

**Griffin:** Edward does.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Griffin:** It’s his turn. What does he do… Hmm. Oh my god, I know what he does! [gleefully starts clapping] This is so g—I’m so delighted by all of the, these things I didn’t even think about. For instance, Magnus- Edward is going to make a Strength check to try to rip off one of your *fucking arms*!

[gasps and “oh no”s]

**Clint:** [softly and in awe] Oh, that’s so poetic!

**Griffin:** Do you think that you—I’ll ask you, just to, fair is fair, do you think this would be a contest or do you think this would be, just he checks to see if he can do it? Like, would you use your own strength to like—I gu—I think you would, to fight him off from. I know this fight has been all contest but like, I kind of like the way it’s going so far. I feel good about my roll though.

**Travis:** Oh, no. Okay. [rolls] Whoop, off the table. [rolls again] Yeah, I rolled a 3.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah, he rips off your right arm. And he s—

**Justin:** Not, not his flesh bod, right? His wood bod.

**Griffin:** His wood bod, yeah, he rips off your mannequin arm.

**Justin:** Okay, okay. I had an image of him [laughter] like, ripping off his own arm!

**Clint:** “Ha! There! Take *that*!”

**Justin:** Take that.

**Travis:** Now, Griffin, how does that—if I don’t have blood and veins and stuff, how does that affect damage to me?

**Griffin:** Well, I’m gonna just roll some dice, and I’m gonna tell you the number.

**Clint:** I would say it wouldn’t.

**Justin:** That, you get—when you animate an object, it gets stats.

**Griffin:** Yeah. [rolls] That’s 21 points of damage.

**Travis:** For unarmed?

**Griffin:** Yeah. Well, it’s a special unarmed ‘cause he ripped a—he didn’t punch you; he tore your arm off.

**Travis:** [sardonically] I’ll keep that in mind, *every other time I’ve ever done it*, Griffin.

**Griffin:** Magnus.

**Travis:** Uh huh?

**Griffin:** Got something for ya.

**Travis:** Yes?

**Griffin:** You just got your ass kicked. And when that happens, you feel a vision sort of wash over you, and suddenly you are miles away from this fight.

**Travis:** M-meditating.

[“The Chalice” begins playing]

**Griffin:** Well, no, you’re r—you’re remembering? But this act of remembering is so like, powerful that you are, you are just like in another state. And, so you just got your ass kicked, and you remember another time where you got your ass kicked. And it was a time where you saved a dog from some bullies that were kicking it around. And you, you remember this memory really well, it was one of the things that you saw when you spoke to the Chalice in the last, um, in the last arc. But there were parts of it then that you remember were kind of foggy? Parts of this memory that just seemed a little off. And you didn’t realize it, what was off until this moment, and in this particular vision one thing that was kinda foggy was a big one: it was the sky. And as you look up in this memory, you’re like lying on the ground, and I think the, you’ve just like gotten beaten up by these kids, but you scared ‘em off, and I think the dog comes and licks your face before it also kind of ungratefully takes off. So you’re laying on your back and you’re looking up at the sky, and the sky is this… unnatural light purple color. And as you stop to think like, “Wow, that’s weird,” you realize that there are two suns in the sky. And they’re nearly overlapping each other right on the horizon. And you think, “Oh that’s… that’s weird.” But then you remember, “Oh, well, it’s not weird at all,” because that’s how it is *here*, in your *home*. This world that this memory is taking place in, this is your home. This world that you’re on now, this place you’re at and have been for a while, it is not where you’re from.

{24:47}

**Clint:** It’s Dagobah.

[snorting and laughter]

**Griffin:** It’s kind of Dago—well it’d be Tatooine but it’s not any of those, wonderful licensed properties.

**Travis:** HooooOOOLY SHIT!

**Griffin:** And just like that you’re back in the fight just having had your arm ripped off. Uh, next up is Taako!

**Travis:** So that was just like a fun memory, it didn’t help me in this fight or nothin’, just a fun little, “Huh, that’s weird! Anyways, back to where I’m getting my ass handed to me!”

**Justin:** Can you– Griffin, just so I, we—because I feel like a lot has been going on. Can you re-describe the, the scene?

**Griffin:** Um, there—you have a fleet of mannequins and—are the mannequins still going? Are the mannequins still attacking?

**Justin:** Uh, yeah, I got ‘em for an hour.

[clapping]

**Justin:** Or no, sorry, for a minute.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah, you still got ‘em then. Um, so three mannequins are fighting Magnus who’s just had his metallic weapons and shield thrown from him, uh, floating above him in the—uh, about ten or fifteen feet up is Lydia, who is casting spells down from the sky, you have a, uh, nearly dead Merle lying next to yo--

**Clint:** Oh, I’m dead.

**Griffin:** And you—oh you’re not dead.

**Travis:** [quietly]Mostly dead. Mostly dead.

**Griffin:** And you have Magnus standing in front of Edward with his arm torn off.

**Clint:** I’m not dead yet!

**Griffin:** Oh, that’s good!

**Justin:** Love that.

**Travis:** Now, Griffin, can I assume that he took the arm that didn’t have the Chance—like I was reaching for the Chance Lance—he pulled the other one?

**Griffin:** Yeah, you still got the Chance Lance.

**Travis:** Okay, cool. That’s something, I guess.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Go ahead and roll your D20s real quick for, um—actually, I, just to streamline this ‘cause I don’t know how long this fight is going to go and I don’t want you to have to roll like eighty dice, uh, every turn, um, I think just roll a D10 and we’ll knock the number in half and that’ll be how many mannequins hit.

**Clint:** You weren’t talking to me, the dead guy? Right?

**Travis:** You’re not *dead*. Clinton. You are *un*conscious. You are betwixt the state of live and dead.

**Griffin:** You know how you go to sleep every night? And you dream your dreamy-dreams? You’re not a dead man, you’re just sort of—

**Clint:** This is an ex-dwarf—

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** You’re *not*—

**Clint:** —who has passed beyond.

**Griffin:** Hey, Dad? Dad? We have a three Monty Python joke limit before you’re banned from the podcast.

**Clint:** Oh, right. Okay.

**Justin:** Great, I rolled ten. Out of ten.

**Griffin:** Oh, Jesus.

**Justin:** So all five hit.

**Griffin:** Okay.Uh, alright. Cool. Uh, go ahead and roll two D6 then.

**Justin:** Three… and five.

**Griffin:** Eight, so, fucking—

**Justin:** Plus one.

**Griffin:** Forty—forty-five damage.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Okay, Jesus.

**Justin:** And they’re *loving* it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, they’re—everybody’s loving it. That goes without saying.

**Justin:** Everybody’s loving it. The other mannequins are like, “Finally. It’s *our* time to shine.”

**Griffin:** Uh, alright, Edward is not looking so good, by which I mean Magnus is not looking so good, kind of, I guess.

**Justin:** I’m gonna cast…

**Clint:** If we kill his body…

**Justin:** Hm…

**Clint:** What happens… to Magnus?

**Justin:** Well, he won’t die right away.

**Clint:** Oh yeah, that’s true.

**Justin:** Should be fine. Man, this is about to become the Taako show starring Taako, eh?

[laughter]

**Justin:** Taako and his wooden buddy… No-Name.

**Clint:** Pinocchio!

**Justin:** Taako and his friend, Pinocchio.

**Clint:** The little wooden boy.

**Justin:** [laughing] And the ghost of their friend Merle. These three jokesters—um, this isn’t that cool but I wanna—I wanna try to do what I think would be the most practical, uh, and I’m going to cast Protection from Evil and Good on the, uh, mannequin Merle. The mannequin Magnus, mannequin Magnus.

**Griffin:** Um, okay, what does that do?

**Justin:** Uh, one willing creature is protected against certain types of creatures, aberrations, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and the undead. It grants several benefits. Creatures of those types have disadvantages on attack rolls against the target.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** Target can’t be charmed, frightened, or possessed by them; if the target is already charmed, frightened, or possessed by such creature, the target has advantage on any new saving throw against the relevant effect.

**Griffin:** Okay, cool.

**Travis:** Um, and just in the interest of being—I didn’t roll to see if I broke the enfeeblement, was I supposed to roll—

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah, go ahead and roll a D20, yeah.

**Travis:** Uh, rolled a fifteen.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you’re good. Merle.

[enormous die sound]

**Griffin:** Before you do your thing. I heard you just roll—I just heard you roll your fucking comical jumbo dice—

**Travis:** Did you just roll the giantest dice? What the fuck was that?

**Clint:** Yeah, that’s the massive D20 that they sent us.

**Griffin:** Merle, you, um see a small shape appear above you. Or rather I guess you’re just kind of—you don’t see, right? Your eyes are probably closed because you’re unconscious, but you, um, you feel a presence I guess and, uh, Taako and Magnus, you do see what appears right above Merle, um, and it’s Cam’s floating head, and he still looks really scared? Um, he doesn’t have a wand, he is completely unarmed, but he says,

**Cam**: Hey, Crimson Wonder, were you the one that cooked up that door earlier? I got an order for ya. Can ya make me up a Healing Game?

**Griffin:** And the Red Robe nods, and suddenly Cam’s pedestal from the healing game that you all played in the last round emerges from the floor in a column of black smoke. Uh, and, uh, Cam looks down at Merle, and then he looks up at you, Taako and Magnus, and he says,

**Cam**: I, uh, I thought of something heroic to do.

[“Wonderland: Round Three” starts]

{30:00}

**Griffin:** And a Mage Hand appears in front of Cam and slaps down on the pedestal, and just a beam of light shoots up from the ground beneath the pedestal, uh, consuming him and the pedestal, which disappears in a puff of black smoke, and Merle, you are healed for six hit points. And you’re back awake. [music stops]

**Clint:** Hey, awesome!

**Justin:** Cam! CAAAAAAAAAM!! I- in Merle’s defense, he didn’t see any of that happening.

**Travis:** Yeah, he doesn’t know what happened!

**Merle**: What the hell!?

**Griffin:** Merle, you are awake and you are prone.

**Clint:** Alright.

**Travis:** [laughing] Yeah?

**Clint:** I am—prone is, is okay. I am goi—now, go with me on this. For once, let me do something, in this game.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** You fucking summon Della Reese all the time, what’re you talking about, “for once”?!

**Clint:** And look, they bumped her off! It’s not like it was Roma Downey! Okay. I’m going to use the Ring of the Grammarian—

**Justin:** Yes.

**Griffin:** [palpable despair] Oh my god.

**Clint:** —to, to change Divine Word into Divine *Wood.*

[laughing]

**Griffin:** And you pop the most righteous boner!

**Travis:** [boisterous laughter]

**Clint:** And this imbues marionette Magnus…

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Clint:** … with divine power… and heals him for twenty points.

**Griffin:** And heals him for tw—ohh. How ‘bout roll, roll... Roll a, roll—roll a D20. And that’s how many you heal. Plus Wisdom.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** I’ll give you the rest of the shit and we’ll figure out what divine power is in a second.

**Clint:** I rolled an eleven plus three Wisdom, so that’s fourteen.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Clint:** So it gives him fourteen points and he is *divine*.

**Griffin:** Alright, and we’ll figure that out in a second. Um, we’ll get to that real soon, actually. Lydia’s up next. And she is going to cast Death Bolt at… Taako. [dice rolling] And that is a… seventeen versus AC, Taako?

**Taako**: [sadly] Yup.

**Griffin:** It’s gonna be...a bad hit. [more dice rolling] Pshew… That is...nineteen points of damage, Taako.

**Justin:** [singing] Been a good run, for your buddy Taako…

**Griffin:** Are you at zero?

**Justin:** [still singing] I’m at negative five…

**Griffin:** Aw my god… Okay. Taako goes down!

**Justin:** Adiós.

**Griffin:** Taako goes down, but this time his soul didn’t fire out of his body to go on a rescue mission. It’s still in there and it is asleep. Uh, Magnus you are up.

**Travis:** Okay, so. I am holding Chance Lance…

**Griffin:** Mm-hmmmm.

**Travis:** ...a weapon given to me by a goddess.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Travis:** And I am imbued with divinity.

**Griffin:** Yes?

**Travis:** I am going to channel that divinity into the Chance Lance and stab Magnus in the back.

**Griffin:** Okay. Alright, yeah, make an attack roll.

**Travis:** [dice rolling] Off the table… [more dice rolling] Fifteen plus nine… twenty-four.

**Griffin:** It wouldn’t be plus nine ‘cause that factors in your human… Fighter… strength. But it’s, uh, plus your—yeah, plu—I think it’s plus five ‘cause it’s plus three with your Strength, and then… umm, yeah. [indistinguishable]

**Travis:** Yes, so twenty.

**Griffin:** Yeah. That’s good! Yeah, that hits. Um… roll… 3d10 damage.

**Travis:** Okay… Ten… Two… Four. So sixteen plus… five, I think, for the weapon, right?

**Griffin:** Mm-hm. Okay. You rear back the Chance Lance and jab it forward, and before it even makes contact, a faint light emits out of the front of it, like you’re shooting a beam of—very faint, but it’s there—holy light out of the end of the Chance Lance. And *that’s* what hits Edward. And Edward flies forward, and because you were behind him, Magnus, he kind of lands almost perfectly in-between all of you. And you hear him say, he kind of gets up on all fours and he says,

**Edward as Magnus**: Huh.

**Griffin:** And then he falls over, and almost like a cartoon dead person, you see Edward’s spectral Lich form rise up out of Magnus’s body. And he says,

**Edward**: Did you really think—

**Griffin:** And before he finishes his thought, Taako, your umbrella has turned inside-out. And it’s pointing in Edward’s direction, because whenever you defeat a magical enemy, the Umbra Staff consumes the magic essence of- of that magic user and unfortunately for Edward, he’s *all* magical energies.

[laughter]

**Clint:** Only Taako could do away with an enemy while he was unconscious!

**Justin:** I just killed somebody while I’m dead, WHAT’S *UP!* TAAKO RULES!

**Griffin:** Yeah, so your fuckin’, your fuckin’ Umbra Staff like, rears up in your un—in your sleepy, sleepy hand and eats Edward whole. And, like full-blown fucking Ghostbusters style. And Edward is pulled into the mouth of the Umbra Staff and disappears into it, um, but he doesn’t go down quite as smooth as the wands and staves that the umbrella has consumed in the past?

**Justin:** A lotta body—a lotta body to that one, huh? Bitter—some tannins.

**Travis:** [laughs] It’s very hoppy! It’s a IPA!

**Justin:** It’s a hoppy spirit.

**Griffin:** It feels, actually, like he’s getting tossed around inside of there, like he’s banging against the walls of the Umbra Staff. And it actually goes flying out of your unconscious hand, like really really quickly, and is just kind of like bouncing around the floor as he is just getting like tossed around inside of it. And after about ten seconds or so, the Umbra Staff turns inside out again and shoots him out. And he slides about eight feet down the runway, and then disintegrates into ash.

{36:26}

**Clint:** Nice.

**Griffin:** And Lydia *screams* when this happens, and she drops down beside her fallen brother, and like immediately, you can tell, like something is, is wrong with her because, like, she’s losing shape, she’s losing like the clarity of her Lich shape, and these bolts of crackling black electricity are, like, encircling her as she’s losing her form. And she’s—right now she’s just back in her basic black robe form, like no fancy garments whatsoever. And she’s coming apart kinda like you saw the Red Robe fall apart once before back in The Eleventh Hour arc, only this time she is NOT pulling herself back up together. And she, she picks up some of the ash in her hands, and she says,

**Lydia**: I guess… I guess we still needed each other after all.

**Griffin:** And then she points a finger towards all of you, and she says—I don’t actually think she says anything. I think she just. Just screams. And there is a flash of- of- of darkness. And there’s this deafening roar, and you feel this like dark, crackling energy blowing around all of you like a sandstorm. And when it passes, she’s gone. And sitting in a pile of ashes, another pile of ashes at the end of the runway, you see a small, copper bell inlaid with a diamond pattern across its body where she lay. And you hear the Red Robe say,

**Red Robe**: Oh my god.

[“The Animus Bell” begins playing]

**Griffin:** And he points down at the ground on the runway. And Magnus, all your belongings, your—well, the belongings that you didn’t knock away are piled up on the ground where Edward fell… But your body is gone.

**Magnus:** My beautiful body!

**Griffin:** With her last, furious act, Lydia destroyed your body.

**Griffin:** Um, all of you are still on the catwalk. The bell is right in front of you, and you feel it sort of calling all of you. Merle, you’re up, but Taako is down, which, you may need to rectify.

**Clint:** Do we think our healing powers are back?

**Travis:** Can I—

**Griffin:** Um, you can give it a shot.

**Clint:** I have a spell called Raise Dead.

**Griffin:** I mean—

**Travis:** He’s not dead.

**Griffin:** —he’s not dead.

**Justin:** Not dead!

**Clint:** Not dead.

**Justin:** I’m only *mostly* dead.

**Griffin:** Oh my *god*.

**Justin:** See? We got Monty Python, Princess Bride, this show’s got it all!

**Clint:** [laughing]

**Travis:** ‘To blaaaaave. To blave!’ Wait.

**Justin:** So the—did we beat the Liches?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** [hums Final Fantasy victory fanfare]

**Justin:** ‘Kay. Taako’s dead, but somehow… there’s an amazing spectral… something... And he raises up, just enough, like just the energy of eating Edward gave him enough strength to say three words. And Griffin, does that sound right—

**Griffin:** [exasperated] Just l—have—ge—have somebody heal you before you do this fucking like, you are just revived by your cool catchphrase!

**Justin:** [crosstalk] Ju—but it wouldn’t—I sa—I can’t say hard-ass shit twenty minutes after we kill someone,

**Griffin:** Okay, fine.

**Justin:** and with the fuckin’ Marx Brothers here it could be upwards of thirty.

[laughter]

**Griffin:** Alright, go ahead, go.

**Clint:** A Marx Brothers reference!

**Griffin:** Yay. It doesn’t—it’s not a reference if you just say—

**Justin:** Don’t laugh so hard, you’re *Zeppo*.

**Clint:** [chortling]

**Griffin:** Taako, what do you say—what do you—what d—what do you astrally project in the atmosphere?

**Taako**: [sounding really dead] Liches… get… stitches…

[laughter]

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Justin:** And I then black back out.

**Magnus**: Now to be fair, Merle, I think we will both agree that Taako would want to die after making that joke, so we should just let him go peacefully into that good night.

**Travis:** The first thing I do, before we do anything else—

**Justin:** —is heal Taako!

**Travis:** —I check through, I check through my belongings—

**Justin:** Heal fan favorite Taako!

**Travis:** I check through my belongings to make sure Steven the goldfish is okay.

**Griffin:** He’s fine. Yeah, you got him. He’s just, he’s blubbing around.

**Magnus**: [huge sigh of relief]

**Griffin:** And you recover, everybody recovers the belongings that were knocked away by the magnets.

**Justin:** Except presumably me, because I’m unconscious.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Also in, also in my possessions are healing potions that I bought and never used. I give Taako a fucking healing potion.

**Griffin:** Okay. It heals him some hit points,

**Merle**: [passive aggressively] Thank *you,* pal.

**Griffin:** The number doesn’t matter, and yeah, he gets-

**Taako**: Oh thank—thank, thank god, I had...a...a dream that I said the coolest shit ever, that was—

**Magnus**: I actually said that. It—weird, but I was the one who said it, if I remember correctly.

**Taako**: Oh.

**Griffin:** Yeah so, the healing is, the healing worked. You are healed [pronounced “heelt”]. And you are, you are back awake, although you are still very bad off. And now you just have the, the Bell, laying in a pile of ashes. And the Red Robe is, is kind of pointing towards it.

**Justin:** Ugh. Okay.

**Magnus**: Should I get it?

**Justin:** Umm…

**Travis:** I’m talking to the Red Robe.

**Magnus**: Like, should I grab the Bell?

**Griffin:** Yeah, he nods.

**Taako**: Sh-should I get it?

**Griffin:** He shrugs.

**Clint:** Aren’t you still a mannequin?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Merle**: You’d probably be safest to pick it up.

**Travis:** Yeah I pick it, I pick it up.

**Griffin:** Okay. You hear a voice in your head as you pick it up with your one remaining arm, and this Bell says,

**The Animus Bell**: How would you like to live forever?

**Magnus**: I’d hate it. Shut the *fuck* up.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Well ya got, ya got other stuff, let’s just roll a Wisdom saving throw.

[sound of dice rolling]

**Travis:** That was an eighteen, plus whatever my… uh…

**Griffin:** It’s not good for your mannequin body, but the 18 is sufficient. You pick—

**Clint:** Well y’know all he needs is a coat of varnish and he is gonna basically live forever.

**Griffin:** [snorts] That’s not a bad point. He, uh, you hear the bell say,

**The Animus Bell**: [hurriedly] Uh, oh! Okay!

[Travis chuckles]

**Griffin:** As you shut it down. And you have reclaimed the sixth grand relic, the Animus Bell. I—

**Travis:** Just to make that clear, I’ve been thinking about this a lot since Magnus almost died, and like his great reward is looking forward to being with his wife—

**Griffin:** Yeah sure!

**Travis:** —after like living a g—so like the idea of living forever is like, the *least* interesting thing to Magnus ever.

**Griffin:** [talking over Travis] Yeah, absolutely, that all totally tracks. As soon as you pick up the bell, you f—

**Justin:** And also you *did* die.

**Clint:** Yeah can we point out—

**Justin:** I mean, I don’t wanna get technical about it, but you... you are dead.

**Clint:** Yeah your body got destroyed, so you’re dead!

**Justin:** You’re dead!

**Clint:** I’m sorry!

**Griffin:** As soon as you grab the bell, you feel a– all of you feel this fierce wind blow through this big chamber that you’re in. And it, it knocks over the mannequins in the audience, Taako, it knocks over your friend mannequins. These mannequins also were kneeling by you as you were unconscious, like checking on you, making sure that you were all right.

**Justin:** [imitates mannequins communicating frantically and worriedly in mannequin language; it sounds like high-pitched blubbering]

**Griffin:** Yeah, uh, and this big, this strong wind knocks over a light hanging from the ceiling, and you see some black smog get caught up in the wind storm, and it’s just whipping off the walls and off the floor that you’re standing on. It’s sort of, of pulling, it’s absorbing the cylinders all around the room which are all turning into black smog. And this smog in the wind is now just so thick that you can’t see anything, you’re just surrounded by this deafening black windstorm. And then the wind shifts directions! It just starts going straight upward, and the smog is lifted and Wonderland is just… gone. You’re all standing back in the middle of that circular clearing in the Felicity Wilds and those billboards that were lining the path into the center here? They’re just gone. And it’s just the three of you, and the Red Robe, and about [laughing] twenty other folks who are all standing in this clearing. And everybody looks understandably pretty confused, a lot of folks look understandably pretty… miserable? Um. And Taako?

**Taako**: Yeah?

**Griffin:** You feel a hand on your shoulder and you’re healed for thirty-six hit points.

**Taako**: Nice!

**Griffin:** And standing behind you is Antonia! Your elf friend, one of the three folks that you met in the woods on the way in. And she has a sash tied around her eyes and her hair is now streaked with white, and she says um—I don’t remember these voices, I apologize—but she says:

**Antonia**: Rough day?

**Taako**: Yeah… yeah... It’s been a hard one… I died twice… I guess… So I’m—and um… that’s been all the things that have happened.

[Clint wheezes with laughter]

**Travis:** That’s about it!

**Taako**: I didn’t push, pff— [he exhales heavily, lost for words] How was your thing?

**Clint:** And to help ya out, Griffin, she talked like Eva Gabor.

**Griffin:** Mmkay, I don’t think that’s true, and nor could I replicate that. She says, uh,

**Antonia**: My day was pretty shit.

[Taako makes a high pitched note of sympathy]

**Magnus**: Are you a *mannequin*?

**Antonia**: Uh, no, n—oh my *God* is that *Magnus*?!

**Magnus**: Yeah! Yeah, so, maybe like, keep your shit to yourself unless you’re a *fucking mannequin.*

**Travis:** And I storm over to the Red Robe:

**Magnus**: ANSWERS. NOW.

**Justin:** Hey, I do have a question.

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Justin:** Amongst the retrieving our belongings did Magnus… did get himself an arm, right? He got his arm back?

**Travis:** Yeah, plugged it back in like a GI Joe!

[giggles]

**Griffin:** I think Magnus has his arm, but it’s not attached. I think that would take some time to fix.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Travis:** I hit the Red Robe with it!

[Justin laughs]

**Griffin:** He catches the arm as you swing it at him. Let’s finish this first, we’ll get to that. You—Antonia says, uh,

**Antonia**: Well, you, I take it that this was all your guys’ doing? Saving all these people, getting us all out?

**Merle**: Uh, you mean destroying the entire building? Wipin’ out a buncha—yeah that was us.

**Magnus**: [simultaneously] Yeah. That was us.

**Taako**: [simultaneously] Sounds like us!

**Griffin:** She says,

**Antonia**: I think that no matter what you did in there, I think this is all that matters. Really. You saved all these people—they wanted us to believe that we are who we are when we’re at our worst but… you know that’s not true, don’t you, Taako?

**Taako:** [biting back laughter] Yeah! I guess I… really did save the day!

**Merle**: At the end of the day!

**Taako**: [barely keeping together with laughter] At the end of the day! I guess it doesn’t matter *who* pushed what buttons [Clint wheezing with laughter] and who… betrayed who, really. The important thing! Is that we’re all… family! We’re all part of this thing called life.

**Griffin:** As you--

**Taako**: By the way, you’re welcome!

**Merle**: Hakuna matata, to you!

**Griffin:** As you’re saying that, Sterling approaches you, Merle, and he—it looks like he looked when you saw him in that screen, he’s in like his late thirties with this early silver hair and he looks gaunt, and for like, he’s silent for just a moment and then he drops to a knee in reverence and he says,

**Sterling**: [in a nasally voice] Merle, I—I made a terrible mistake—

**Griffin:** Maybe he sounds cool now actually—

**Sterling**: [in a low voice] Merle, I made a terrible mistake in that place, and it’s what I’m gonna have to live with for the rest of my days. I was the one who chose to forsake you in the first round. I-I knew I was sending you all to certain doom and I didn’t care. And… well, that’s not very lordly of me, was it?

**Merle**: [not in character voice] My son…

**Travis:** [hinting to use the right voice] What?

**Merle**: My son! My son! Say… three Hail Marys, and six push-ups, and all is forgiven.

**Griffin:** He says,

**Sterling**: I’m so sorry for you, for what I did to you, Merle, in there. And I vow to you that someday I will use my considerable power to make it up to you.

**Merle**: Oh, I didn’t know you had considerable power!

**Sterling**: Yeah, I’m the Lord of Neverwinter, I’m the most powerful man in the world—I don’t like to brag, but.

**Merle**: And you were a giant douche before! That’s awesome!

**Travis:** Hey, hey Griffin? Can we deal with the Fullmetal Alchemist situation I find myself in now, please?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure, your buddy Rowan is there too. Um, and uh—

**Travis:** My jerky buddy, it’s great. I’m so happy to see him.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay—

**Justin:** You used to have to eat food, do you remember that?

**Travis:** I used to be able to enjoy food, yes, I do remember that! Yes!

**Clint:** Now you live on sap!

**Griffin:** He actually started to approach you Magnus, and when he heard you like, having a fit, and bein’ all angry—

**Travis:** [high voiced and indignant]“*Having a fit*,” Griffin?!

**Griffin:** I think—yeah—

**Travis:** I lost my damn body!

**Griffin:** I think he’s—

**Travis:** Oh, just havin’ a real *hissy*, gettin’ all up in a *tizzy…*

**Griffin:** [overlapping, drowned out by Travis] I think he’s stayin’ away from you.

[laughter]

**Clint:** You didn’t just lose an arm!

**Griffin:** Magnus, before you have your conversation, you approach and you swing the club at the Red Robe. You swing your other arm at the Red Robe, um, and right as he like kinda catches it and keeps it from hitting him, you have another vision.

[Voidfish-like music begins playing]

**Griffin:** It’s another memory that you are remembering so like powerfully and vividly that you just aren’t here anymore. And this one’s not like the other one where it was just like kinda fuzzy and it cleared up. This one is just static until it isn’t. And, you are walking through some badlands. It’s this arid landscape of cracked red rock and clay as far as the eye can see, with a few shrubs poking through. And you are lost, you are so lost in this unforgiving environment. And, you came here to… hide something? Like, that part is still a little bit foggy. You’ve made something and you’re *terrified* of it. And so you came to this place to hide it but you got lost and now you’re *so* thirsty. You’ve removed the jacket of your uniform, which you’ve kinda sweat through. It is a bright, crimson-red uniform with an insignia patch over the left breast pocket. You’ve taken that off because it’s just too hot to have a jacket on right now. Um. And you’re just stumbling through this badlands and you see a stranger. You actually see two strangers in the distance, a man and a small girl. And they approach you and they offer you a drink, and they offer you kindness, and hospitality. And they’re really good people. You spend some time with them and they’re just really *good.* And so you decide that you’re gonna hide your creation with *them*. Because they’re gonna be the ones who are gonna be able to keep this cup safe.

[beat]

[music fades out]

And it takes you a while to come to, and you’re just sort of in this like fugue state because you’ve been quietly walking with the rest of the group. You’re all walking with the Red Robe back through the Felicity Wilds following him. And, uh, he stops you all in the Wilds, and he says,

**Red Robe**: I don’t blame you for not trusting me right now, but I promise everything’s gonna make sense real soon.

**Magnus**: I literally have nothing to lose. So like, *sure.*

**Griffin:** You all hear uh, a crackle of like uh, uh, of what sounds like static. And the Red Robe goes quiet, and he really quickly puts a finger up to his hood and uh, he, he extends a finger and an illusory object appears and it is in the shape of your Stone of Far Speech, and he holds out a palm. Uh, he is requesting your Stones of Far Speech. And you can hear the voice of Angus on the Stone of Far Speech. He’s saying,

**Angus**: Sirs? Sirs, are you there, you’ve been out of—sirs? You’ve, you’ve been offline for a while, are you there?

**Griffin:** And the Red Robe is requesting your Stones of Far Speech, and even though you can’t see his face, he seems, like, urgent.

**Travis:** I give it to him. I look at Taako and I look at Merle and I say,

**Magnus**: Do it.

[Clint sighs and groans]

**Merle**:I want a receipt. I *want* a receipt. All right, here’s mine. [laughing as he talks] I didn’t wanna talk to the kid anyway.

**Griffin:** Taako?

**Taako**: Yeah.

**Griffin:** Okay, you all hand over your Stones of Far Speech, and he… crushes them in his hand.

**Clint:** Oh.

**Taako**: Hell yeah, goin’ rogue! Been waitin’ for this the whole time! Fuck yes! Off the grid!

**Justin:** I pull out my credit cards and shred ‘em.

**Taako**: Fuck yes!

[uproarious laughter from all]

**Clint:** I move to Portland!

**Taako**: Taako’s always ready for this! I’m ready to go off the grid at any fuckin’ moment!

**Griffin:** Um, Angus’s tiny voice is drowned out as these stones are shattered. And right as he shatters them, something like thunder roars overhead and only then do you notice that the sky above is… It looks like it’s storming, but it’s not raining? Like it looks like it’s storming in terms of like, the look of it, but it’s not… it’s not actually… there’s no precipitation. And the Red Robe says,

**Red Robe**: That was close, I—forgot about that. About… your stones. Listen, there’s not much time. Night’s gonna fall soon, and we need to make some headway before it does because… Well, tomorrow’s going to be… fateful.

**Griffin:** And he looks at you, Magnus, and he says,

**Red Robe**: Oh, I forgot something else.

**Griffin:** And he conjures up another object. This one’s not illusory though. It is a small coin-shaped object that appears in his hand. And you hear him whisper into it and he says,

**Red Robe**: You’ll need to disguise Magnus, obviously, and… don’t let anyone touch him, or we’ll be discovered.

**Griffin:** And then he waves his hand over the coin and it disappears.

**Travis:** Wait am—am I now, like, am I cover—am I… disguised?

**Griffin:** No, no, he just m—he just like, took a note. Or something. Into this coin. And then it disappeared.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Um, make a Survival check, which is fun ‘cause I don’t think we’ve ever done this one?

[dice rolling]

**Travis:** I mean not great. [pause] Five?

**Clint:** [triumphantly] Nineteen.

**Justin:** Hell yeah, Bear Grylls. Uh fifteen.

**Griffin:** Um, Merle, with your Survival check, you are sort of leading the party through the Felicity Wilds. You are making your way towards sort of the main road to the east, and—

**Clint:** And I’m eating rotten rabbits that I find on the road.

**Griffin:** God, Jesus, what? No!

**Clint:** Hey, listen, life’s tough.

**Griffin:** Listen, you-

**Magnus**: We’ve been walking for *two hours*, Merle! There was no need to resort to that!

**Merle**: I have appetites!

**Magnus**: Dark, dark appetites!

**Griffin:** With your really good roll, you—when it comes time to make camp, you stumble across a clearing, and it has a really well-crafted fire pit in the middle. And there are three stumps carved into surprisingly comfortable-looking chairs. And you know this place, because this is a campsite that the three of you made a little over a year ago on one of your first nights together. And you realize that you’re really close now to the road that connects Neverwinter and—well, the ruins of Phandalin. And you’re close to the gerblin hideout and Wave Echo Cave. You’re close to all that stuff. And you make camp quickly in your familiar campsite, and all of you get a, well a good—a hard-earned good night’s rest.

[mysterious music]

{1:04:23}

**Griffin:** Magnus, you dream… some wild shit. Too many things actually to remember all of the next morning, but there are two visions that stick out, and they are just as like, powerful as the ones that you’ve experienced so far. And the first is, you’re standing on the deck of a silver ship. And there are some other red-robed figures standing around you, although you can’t quite make out their faces. And this ship is soaring into the sky, and it’s flying away from a land that is being consumed by this wave of darkness, with these ribbons of bright green and red and blue inside. It’s just being swallowed up. And the other vision that you can recall is really simple: It’s the Voidfish. Floating up into its tank is a thick book, bound in blue leather and silver trim.

[music fades]

**Griffin:** And that’s—

**Clint:** Is it the *Noid* fish??

**Griffin:** It’s, the Voidfish’s brother, the Domino’s pizza-ruining Noidfish.

[snickering]

**Griffin:** And you, all—the next morning, the next morning, you all make your way through the woods past the main road—

**Travis:** And I don’t recognize the book at all? I just know like, “hey, book.”

**Griffin:** No, yeah.

**Clint:** I have a question. I know you’re on a roll, and I don’t mean to interrupt, but these visions he’s having, are they from his point of view? He doesn’t see his own—

**Griffin:** They are first-person, yes.

**Clint:** He do—has not seen his own face in this vision?

**Griffin:** Yes. And also, he is—he, you don’t know—Merle doesn’t know about them, these are just-Magnus visions.

**Clint:** Well this was your dad asking.

**Griffin:** No, yes, yes, yes, yes, I know.

**Travis:** Who? I’m just so wrapped up in the fiction.

**Clint:** It’s me, Larry Burnsides!

**Travis:** I forgot we even HAD a dad, you know what I mean? Like I’m just so deep in this story.

**Griffin:** Y’all, I’m sorry, my heart’s racing ‘cause this next shit is like shit I’ve been wanting to get to for a year.

**Travis:** Go, go!

**Clint:** Go! Go!

**Griffin:** The next morning you wake up and you finish your journey through the Felicity Wilds. You go past the main road. You’re actually not far now from where you found those, those dead horses where, where Barry Bluejeans and Gundren were attacked. And you go past that road and you go through more woods, and you follow the Red Robe now, as he leads you towards your destination. And he leads you to the mouth of a well-hidden cavern carved into—actually the very same stretch of foothills where you found that gerblin compound, where Klaarg was. It’s a few dozen miles from that cavern, but it’s the same, the same foothills, and there are some similarities.

The Red Robe leads you into this cavern. And through a winding, narrow path deeper into the cool depths of the foothills. And after a few minutes of spelunking you find yourself in a room cleft into the stone. And it’s obviously the lair of something that has been cleared out by this Red Robe, which is its current occupant. This room is lit by several dozen candles all arranged on a desk piled with magical tomes and maps. And behind that desk is a large, wooden board displaying the whole of Faerûn, with strings connecting images and diagrams at certain points on the map, in towns like Phandalin and Armos and Greenhold and Rockport and Goldcliff and Neverwinter… And it’s the board of somebody who has been tracking the Relics and the Bureau intently.

And there’s another source of light in this room: There is a six-foot tall, glowing pod on the opposite end of this room from the desk. And it’s full of a swirling green fluid, and inside we can see something... growing? Or rather, some*one*? There is a body being created inside of this pod, but the liquid is too opaque for you to see who it is. And on the desk there is a scroll unfurled and held in place by several candles, and it is an incredibly detailed map with a route drawn through it in red. And it’s a map depicting with perfect accuracy the headquarters of the Bureau of Balance. And there’s another thing in this room that catches your eye: a small, plain, wooden chest. And draped over that chest is a red robe. Like an—like an actual, tangible red robe, not the personification that you’ve been talking to. And sewn into its breast you see a familiar sight. You see a circular patch, with a design containing twelve multicolored circles, and a sort of like… shifting, imparsable text in the middle of it. Only Magnus, you can read that text as plain as day. It’s an acronym, and it says: “I.P.R.E.” And the Red Robe speaks and says,

**Red Robe**: Events that’ve been in motion for over a decade are about to reach critical mass. There are gaps in your stories that are unimaginably massive. But before the end of this day, I promise you they will be filled.

**Griffin:** And he drifts over to the tank, and says,

**Red Robe**: I- I acquired this invention years ago, and I’ve used it to recreate my physical form several times now in pursuit of my goal. I’ve come close, but I’ve never reached that goal. It’s because once I’m in my body, I’m gonna forget all of the truths that I know now in my Lich form. And I can try and convince myself to follow my own commands…

**Griffin:** And he shows you that coin-shaped object that you saw him speaking into earlier, and he says,

**Red Robe**: But, well… I can be pretty stubborn. And I also don’t have any of my potent magical abilities inside of my body ‘cause I’m not gonna remember the fact that I’m a lich at all.

**Griffin:** And he looks at you, Magnus, and he says,

**Red Robe**: Magnus, I see your wheels spinning but I’m, I’m sorry, it takes months for this device to grow a new body, and… we don’t have months, fellas. We have *hours*.

**Griffin:** He says,

**Travis:** [quietly] I see.

**Red Robe**: I’m gonna, I’m gonna go into that tank and into my body, and then the four of us are gonna head back to the Bureau of Balance and we’re gonna get the truth that we deserve. And it’s gonna be… uncomfortable here in a bit, perhaps, ‘cause you’re gonna recognize me but I’m not gonna recognize you, so…I apologize in advance for my rudeness.

**Griffin:** And he drifts towards the tank and he says,

**Red Robe**: If we all follow my commands, we *will* be successful. I have been planning this for some time and I believe wholeheartedly in my preparations.

**Griffin:** And he sinks into the tank, and you see one last time the cowl of the Red Robe poke out of the tank, and he says,

**Red Robe**: Hey Merle, would you be a bud? I’m uh, I’m gonna be naked as a jaybird when I come outta here. Can you fetch me a change of clothes from that chest?

**Merle**: Be glad to, buddy.

**Griffin:** And he lowers down into the tank. And at this time, Magnus, you’re struck with one more vision, and this one’s a *doozy*. You have your back up to a cliff’s edge, axe drawn, an army of shadows approaching, and the sky is pitch-black. So black that the sky can’t contain it all? It looks like there are columns of tar illuminated with streaks of red and green and blue, just falling, just dripping out of the sky and ploughing into the ground. And in the distance you see a silver ship weave between those columns and fly out of sight. And when you see it fly away you feel this sense of immense relief. And next to you, you see a human man. And he is wearing the same crimson uniform that you’ve got on, with the same patch… Only instead of a jacket, he’s wearing a full robe. And he looks at you as this horde is about to overrun you, and he drops the wand that he’s holding,

[Disrobed starts playing]

**Griffin:** And a black spike shoots from out of the horde and into his chest, and he staggers but he stays on his feet. And he turns, and he looks at you, Magnus, and he *smiles*. And he says,

**Unknown man**: [same voice as Red Robe] Well. We’ll get ‘em next time.

**Griffin:** And Merle, you crack open the chest and retrieve the clothes within. A white cotton shirt, a studded leather belt, and a pair of pants. Sturdy. Denim. And *blue*.

**Clint:** [starts laughing uncontrollably and clapping for the rest of the episode]

**Griffin:** The membrane encasing this pod splits, and green, brackish fluid splashes out and onto the floor. And a stout, naked human man steps out of the pod. And you recognize his face instantly. It’s the face of a man who you quite reasonably—

**Justin:** [gives in and starts laughing too]

**Griffin:** —assumed you would never see again because the last time you saw this face, it was being swallowed up in the righteous fire that destroyed the town of Phandalin. But here he is.

[final chord of the music plays]

**Griffin:** Barry’s back.