**Griffin:** We see a wheat field on the outskirts of Phandalin. And it’s about a decade ago. Long strands of wheat are blowing gently in the wind, and nearby, a family of halflings are doing some farm work. Barry Bluejeans falls from the sky and is dead before he hits the ground. And from behind the wheat, a bright red apparition leaves the body. He takes a moment to collect himself, losing his composure for just a moment, but not enough to alert the nearby farm. He bends down, collects some blood from his fallen form and then ventures away.

**Griffin:** It’s a few months later now and he’s followed some leads to an auction run by any number of dark necromancers and warlocks and sorcerers who deal in unsavory artifacts. He’s hoping to find one of the grand relics here, maybe even Lup’s, but he’s unsuccessful in that regard. What he does find is a lot with several pods that when fed a person’s organic matter, can regrow them a body within a few months. He decides to make the purchase since his old ways of revivification aren’t really accessible anymore. The bidding war is fierce but he comes out ahead. He feels a chill wind move through him as he leaves with his prize, and he’s felt this a few times now since his fall. She’s found him *again.*

**Griffin:** He stayed outside in this lich form too long, too easily detectable, and now she knows his whereabouts. He finds a crypt to camp out in until the chill subsides. Soon, in his new body, she won’t be able to find him anymore. He hopes. We see his lich form entering the chamber that you’re all in right now, only, at this point in time it’s inhabited by a small band of nasty looking gerblins. He *absolutely* destroys them, then gets to work setting up his chamber, warding it from magical detection, collecting his research on the relics’ whereabouts, unloading the pod and beginning the reformulation of his body and for *months* while it forms, he does not leave this cave.

**Griffin:** He works on his map, endlessly triangulating. And he’s lonely. He misses his friends horribly, but he knows that they wouldn’t recognize him now. His only hope is to find Lup. With her help, he can take back the ship that brought him here. It’s months later now, and Barry’s reconnoitering the foothills around Phandalin, searching endlessly for the location where Lup ended up. And he’s *alive* again, and following instructions he… he doesn’t remember leaving for himself. Because he can’t remember he’s a lich.

**Griffin:** He’s climbing a particularly treacherous craggy incline and loses his grip and falls and is dashed on the rocks below, and his lich form sits up from the body and screams a curse. It would be more months of waiting now. More hiding. More time away from his family. And we see this cycle a few more times: waiting, reviving, obediently searching, dying, raging, hiding. But his lich form never gives up. His living form never fails to obey, even though he doesn’t know who or what he’s searching for. And then, a breakthrough. A dwarf named Gundren Rockseeker is hiring a bodyman for his quest to Wave Echo Cave. It’s an ancient dwarven vault containing artifacts of immeasurable power. It is *exactly* where Lup would have hidden the gauntlet.

**Griffin:** He leaves himself a new command: find Gundren, and stick with him no matter what it takes. And the last thing we see is Phandalin, already a perfect circle of black glass. Still warm. In the sky above we see your sphere floating away, up, and into the Bureau. And this form rises with some effort up and out of the glass and he almost loses it. He was so *close* this time, close to the relic, close to his friends, close to finding Lup. Why wasn’t she with them? If they have the glove, where was *she*?

**Griffin:** He couldn’t do this alone anymore and he knew it. He could not do this without his friends, even if they don’t remember him, even if *she* vilified him. It would take some convincing and a *whole* lot of waiting, but… relying on these people, his family, was the only reason he was still here, half-alive as he was. And he sees no reason to stop believing in them now.

{6:20}

[Music fades]

**Griffin:** And now we’re back in present day, you can make the Lost noise now, Dad, if you want.

**Clint:** [Makes a whooshing sound.]

**Griffin:** And Barry Bluejeans is-

**Travis:** Now do a TARDIS noise.

**Griffin:** Oh what else-

**Clint:** [Very poorly imitates the whooshing noise of the TARDIS]

**Griffin:** You just sound like a sick cat.

**Justin:** So either the Doctor is arriving to save the day or my dad is having an asthma attack.

**Clint:** [Continues the noise, a little breathier and more forceful this time]

**Travis:** You also kind of sound like the Cowardly Lion.

**Griffin:** Um-

**Travis:** A lot going on there.

**Clint:** [imitating the Cowardly Lion] Put ‘em up! Put ‘em up!

**Griffin:** A naked Barry Bluejeans is in front of you.

**Clint:** [mildly disgusted] Ohhh!

**Griffin:** And he says, uh-

**Barry:** I’m… I don’t remember what I did last night, but I must have partied pretty hard to end up like, like this. Who are you guys and, um, also, can I have those pants that you’re holding there, dwarf guy?

**Clint:** Oh god yes.

**Merle:** Yeah, take em, here. Put em on, put em on. They’re still warm like right outta the dryer.

**Griffin:** He puts on-

**Barry:** Yeah it’s a magic chest, I guess? I don’t know why I’d know that. So, names? Who- who are y’all?

**Taako:** Uh, my name is Taako, uhhh, the little fella is… Merle, and the brawny one is Magnus.

**Magnus**: Well I’m actually a wooden mannequin now, so not - I’m not as brawny as I use-

**Taako**:[crosstalk] Okay.

**Magnus**: [crosstalk] Picture this but brawnier, you know what I mean?

**Taako**: Well, actually don’t waste your time with that! [laughing]

Because that’s no longer a going concern!

**Merle**:Imagine a pile of ashes.

**Taako**: Imagine a pile of ashes.

**Magnus**: Fair enough.

**Griffin:** He-he holds his head and he’s like,

**Barry:** I don’t...I don’t remember any of this, do I know you guys? Where are we?

**Magnus:** Well, Barold, we had uhhh, a run-in, uhmm, several, I guess months? I don’t know, I haven’t kept track of the time-

**Griffin:** It was-it would’ve been over a year ago, Phandalin--Phandalin was probably about like fourteen months ago or so.

**Magnus:** Over a year ago, uh, we-we worked together on a thing? It didn’t end *great* for you-

**Barry:** I don’t - I don’t remember - I don’t remember any of that.

**Magnus:** [crosstalk] I think you’ve got like-

**Taako:** [crosstalk] Just take our word for it!

**Magnus:** Yeah, you’ve got a coin? Or something, that I think is gonna talk to you.

**Griffin:** He reaches into his pocket and sure enough, there’s that coin. And he says,

**Barry:** This?

**Griffin:** And as soon as he like, lifts it to the sky, you all hear his voice. And it says…

**Clint:** Eggs. [crosstalk] Buttermilk, *beans.*

**Past Barry:** [crosstalk, laughing] Eggs, buttermilk, make sure to get the pinto beans!

**Griffin:** … Is this Barry’s voice? I don’t remember it sounding as like, [crosstalk] nasty mobster-

**Clint:** [crosstalk] It’s supposed to, he didn’t sound like - I thought he sounded like Tom Arnold.

[They all begin talking at once]

**Griffin:** There’s no way I can- [voice is covered up by the others’]

**Justin:** [voice is covered up by the others’] -*looks* like Tom Arnold.

**Travis:** [voice is covered up by the others’] No he *looks* like Tom Arnold.

**Clint:** So looks like Tom Arnold.

**Griffin:** Um, this voice inside the coin says,

**Past Barry:** Your name is Barry Bluejeans. You are afraid of the dark. Your very favorite thing in the world is swimming in very cold water on a very hot day. You get ill when you drink milk or anything with milk in it. Your- your father Gregor died when you were too young to know him. Your mother, Marleana, had soft gray hair when you were born, and was the most wonderful woman who ever lived. You remember them but *you* have forgotten so much. And right now, in this moment, you feel a dull weight in your chest. It’s the weight of a love that defined and redeemed you but you’ve forgotten who that weight belongs to. Barry, I’m *you*, just moments ago and I remember who that weight belongs to, and I can help you remember it too.

**Griffin:** And, Barry-

**Magnus:** Should we be here for this? [Clint laughs] This is - this is very intimate.

**Griffin:** Barry in his human form says:

**Barry:** Yeah, al-alright.

**Griffin:** And the coin addresses you and says,

**Past Barry:** Boys, this is my true form and now that you know that, your brains are gonna try to start to remember other things about me, and as much as you can you need to resist that urge; because for nearly a year now I’ve had to play a part that I’m uncomfortable with in order for you to *not* remember, in order to avoid raising someone’s suspicion. But believe me when I say I’ve been watching out for you the whole time.

**Magnus:** So you need us to not remember?

**Taako:** [crosstalk] Okay-

**Magnus:** Got it.

**Griffin:** So this coin can’t talk *back* to you? It is pre-recorded. Uh, which will be a [slight laughter] challenge, I think.

**Taako:** So, I only have one question, Barry. And I know you’re just getting your sea legs again. Why did you feel it necessary to remind yourself that you’re afraid of the dark?

**Magnus:** Yeah!

**Taako:** It seemslike that’s the anti-Secret. You’re doing reverse visualization right now. It seems like maybe you go to the dark and you just see how things go. I-

**Magnus:** Yeah, were you worried you’d get to the dark and be like “why do I feel this way?” [slight laughter]

**Taako:** “What is this feeling!?”

**Griffin:** So that was the coin trying to prove that it *is* Barry? Right- [crosstalk]

**Travis:** [crosstalk] Oh, I see.

**Justin:** [crosstalk] Oh, okay.

**Griffin:** Like the coin knows these intimate details and so it can trust that…

**Justin:** Got it.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Justin:** Got it.

**Griffin:** Um, the coin says,

**Past Barry:** On my desk is a map of the Bureau of Balance headquarters showing you how to gain access to Lucretia’s vault. It was incredibly difficult to obtain that information. I can’t step foot on the base in my lich form so I had to temporarily possess [Justin gasps] one of the Bureau’s members in order to do some reconnaissance some months back. It was… unfortunate collateral damage, but… it was necessary. Take me with you, follow my map, don’t raise any suspicions, and you’ll find what you need to fill in the gaps of your story. And keep me alive ‘cause if I go lich form up there I’m toast.

**Travis:** Uh-

**Clint:** W-Wait a minute. Wait a minute, w-w-w-w-wait. So now we’re gonna work *against* the Bureau of Balance?

**Travis:** Yes Dad, surprising *no one* on Reddit. We are now going to work *against* the Bureau of Balance.

**Taako:** [crosstalk] What - I-I–

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] I think - I think this conversation, this conversation should be happening [slightly lowering his voice] in the game.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Taako:** I’m not convinced-

**Justin**: Yes I’m trying. Um-

**Taako:** I’m not convinced by any of this. I mean, I was reluctant to help anyone, um, but the Bureau of Balance like…

**Magnus:** Boys.

**Taako:** I have no reason to - to distrust them.

**Magnus:** Barold, will you excuse us for just one second?

**Barry:** Um, this - I guess so. I think this is my cave but I can give y’all some space if you want.

**Magnus:** I mean we could just-

**Merle:** Finish puttin’ on your clothes.

**Magnus:** We’ll scoot to separate parts of the cave if you want. Um, Merle, uh, Taako, I wasn’t sure when to bring this up, but it in - in Wonderland the reason I was so… *keen* uh, to trust the Red Robe… well, I’ll - I’ll just show you.

**Travis:** And I pull out the rolled-up parchment that I got from June.

**Griffin:** ‘Mkay.

**Travis:** Or, yes, right? From June.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Um… and unroll it.

**Magnus:** I… at the end of it, in - in… in uh, [sighs] Refuge, June gave me this and this… this was the red robe that helped set up the town, save the town. I don’t *remember* any of it but-

**Griffin:** Yeah so you’re showing this to them and Taako and Merle, you’re seeing this parchment for the first time and you can see - It’s Magnus, in a red robe. But you are having sort of the same sort of cognitive dissonance where you just can’t… you cannot form the thought in your mind “Magnus is a Red Robe”. But you can see it, and it’s - it’s kind of - it’s kind of fuckin’ with you a little bit.

**Taako:** What am I looking at?

**Merle:** What is…?

**Magnus:** I *don’t know.* But--

**Merle:** Is this like one of those MAD Magazine covers, you gotta fold it together-

**Taako:** Oh yeah, let’s try that. [makes crinkle noises]

**Magnus:** It’s more, it’s more like a magic eye, you gotta unfocus your eyes and then you can see it.

**Merle:** *Oh*. I always sucked at those.

**Magnus:** But I-I don’t, I honest to god, honest to *Pan*, Merle, have no idea.

**Merle:** [scoffs] Don’t even bring him up!

**Magnus:** I don’t know what this means but it-it means… something, and-and I’ve been… *remembering* things. I - I can *remember* knowing Barry before now. I can *remember* being somewhere that had two suns.

**Griffin:** Well, uh-uh-uh, when you say that, Taako and Merle, you hear [static].

**Magnus:** I remember things… but I have no idea *why* or *how*? And…[sigh] all I know is that there’s… there’s so much *more* going on.

**Taako:** Okay, so here’s my theory. I think there’s another Voidfish. It’s not a big cognitive leap, when you were describing whatever it was you were just describing--

**Justin:** Which, can *he* hold it in his mind?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Justin:** Whatever he’s saying? Okay.

**Taako:** Um, when you were just describing what you were describing I heard the-the Voidfish crinkle-tinkles, my ASMR was going buckwild.

**Magnus:** Yeah. Uh, it-it makes complete sense because I… I swam with the Voidfish, and um… and they sang to me.

**Taako:** [singing] Under the sea!

[Griffin laughs]

**Magnus:** Yeah. Uh-

**Taako:** [singing] Under the sea, less than a sea, more of a tank, full of our filth!

[Griffin and Justin laugh]

**Magnus:** And, uh, and uh when the Voidfish sang to me, it sang two words. Egg, and babe.

**Merle:** Egg babe…

**Taako:** Baby caviar…

**Merle:** [crosstalk] Um… Easter…

**Magnus:** [crosstalk] I think it means that the Voidfish has a baby? I don’t think that this is an intricate, like, y’know-

**Griffin:** Yeah this is not, this is not a fucking puzzle, it is essentially a [wobbly voice] junior jumble!

[They laugh]

**Magnus:** Uh, and the one last thing that you should *probably* know, uhhhh, before we left [Clint laughs softly] the moon… [each word emphasised] I broke into… the Bureau of Balance prison to talk to Pringles.

**Taako:** Okay?

**Magnus:** Aaaaand found out that Pringles was there because something took over his mind, which I think all signs point to Lich Barry, uhh, and-

**Clint:** Which is a beautiful town in Connecticut.

**Justin:** [laughing] Yeah, you know it’s where uh, Gilmore Girls was based on.

**Clint:** Yeah, Lichbarry.

**Magnus:** -and used, used his body… to break into The Director’s vault. Uhhh, I should also probably say, as long as we’re uh, coming clean clean here, that I kidnapped the two guards to the prison, they were in our sphere when it got destroyed by the dragon so they’re totes dead, um-

**Griffin:** It was a chimera but that does not change the fact that [crosstalk] these two boys are gone.

**Travis:** [crosstalk] Sure.

**Magnus:** So uhh… the moon may be already uhh, very suspicious of *meee*, though they might have a hard time identifying me now so we might already, uh, have a bit of a difficult time getting in there. But one way or another, it does definitely seem to me that there’s something in that vault.

**Merle:** Can I offer up an idea? Why-why do we have to break in and sneak in? We have the bell, we have completed our mission, and we are supposed to report back, why… why make it a heist?

**Magnus:** I think one way or the other, the fact of the matter is I’m not gonna be able to walk in there with y’all.

**Griffin:** Um, you hear the coin chime in, actually, from across the room and it says,

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

**Magnus:** Ohhh.

**Taako:** Okay, that tracks. Listen, I have an update from Taako Central. Uh, I’ve updated my list of people I trust and things I believe to no one and nothing! Not a joke, I don’t trust you, half-pint, I don’t trust Jeff from Today’s Special, I don’t trust Barold whatever his name - nobody, I trust nobody, nothing. And I’m - I have, you’ve convinced me to add The Director and her crew, her coterie to that list, but it does not extend - it is no one. There is nothing and no one.

**Magnus:** Is it at least a sliding scale, Taako? Do you trust us like, a little less or a little more than The Director, where are we at as far as placement on the-

**Taako:** It’s a big ol’ void! All orbiting planet Taako, of non-trust!

**Griffin:** Um, I think at this point Barry has collected his supplies from the chest and gotten dressed and uh, sort of rolled up the map to the Bureau of Balance and tucked it under his arm and he says, um,

**Barry:** Hey uh, I - I don’t wanna rush y’all but the coin just said we should get the lead out so, uh, I know I don’t really know y’all but I feel like I… should? And I feel like I should trust ya, so I’m gonna chase that feeling for now and um, I’m ready when y’all are.

**Taako:** I just want everybody to know I’m convinced of nothing.

**Magnus:** Fair enough, Taako.

**Taako:** I - I, I’m on-board, I’m along for the ride but [slight laughter] just because I don’t wanna start my own podcast.

[They all laugh]

**Magnus:** Fair enough!

**Griffin:** Uh, the coin chimes in and says,

**Past Barry:** When y’all are ready, just step outside and summon a lift back to your base usin’ that bracer. Barry, usually I have you leave a little bit of blood behind in the tank in case, well, the worst happens but… that won’t be necessary this time because… well, this is our last chance.

**Magnus:** There was talk of a disguise?

**Clint:** [laughing] You are disguised!

**Justin:** Yeah, nobody’s gonna fuckin’-

**Clint:** You’re a wooden man!

**Magnus:** Yeah that’s not suspicious at all!

**Clint:** Well?

**Magnus:** What happened to Magnus? Nothing, don’t worry about it! Also, here’s our new friend!

**Merle:** What happened to Magnus? His body got destroyed.

**Magnus:** No, I can’t *be* there,Merle!

**Griffin:** Let’s talk-

**Justin:** Can’t be - can’t be Magnus.

**Griffin:** Yeah, let’s talk in - let’s talk in like… let’s come up with a game-plan. What-wh-, how, what’re you all doing, what’s your prep, what’re you doing, like I wanna get this - I wanna get this thing moving.

**Merle:** Okay. If - if Taako’s going along neutrally, I’m going along… pessimistically. I *don’t* like it, but… I’m pretty sure that without my invaluable aid, you won’t be able to pull off whatever it is you’re gonna pull off. So I will go along, for now.

**Magnus:** Fair enough.

**Taako:** Okay, fir-

**Merle:** But I’m not happy about it.

**Taako:** I gotta think through this.

**Justin:** I - I’ll unroll a big scroll on the table or something.

**Taako:** The first thing we need to figure out is we need a… plausible backstory for Not Magnus. Magnus died. Pretty objectively. This can’t be Magnus, this wooden - this wooden man. This - this Kim Cattrall [Griffin quietly laughs and hits the table] that we have tailing us. That’s it folks, by the way those are my two-

**Griffin:** That’s it those are the only two mannequin references you can make!

**Justin:** [laughs] The only two that I have!

**Griffin:** Legally! Legally, or the FCC will come shut us down.

**Magnus:** Point of fact: you got a pocket spa.

**Taako:** [laughing] You wanna live in my f- [cracks up]

**Clint:** [grossed out] Euahhh!

**Taako:** You wanna live in my portable Hilton?

**Merle:** Alright, how ‘bout this, how ‘bout this-

**Magnus:** I was gonna say, Barry and I could hang out in there, have a shvitz.

**Merle:** I got a - I have an idea. I have an idea. This mannequin is something that… Magnus carved along our travels. And then we knew we were gonna need somebody to pick up the bell without being affected by it.

**Taako:** [Intrigued] Ooh!

**Merle:** So Taako used his animate spell, so this is basically just like a servant. This is like a wooden bellboy carrying our baggage.

**Taako:** [Travis voice] That’s a lovely story and I’m actually gonna go along with you, but I do wish I had been there when we had discovered [laughter] fuckin’, Magnus just [crosstalk] carving a human man!?

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] Carving a full-scale man–

**Clint:** Well- I-

**Justin:** [mocking Magnus’s voice] Well this is a man I made!

**Clint:** No, that’s why he kept collecting arms! So he would have [crosstalk] a model!

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] Oh, that’s good. That’s - yeah. I’m into that.

**Magnus:** Well, I mean, The Director’s been to Wonderland, right? So she knows there are mannequins there. [laughing] I don’t think we have to make me super creepy to sell this story.

**Merle:** C’mon, tie in with the story, ties up threads.

**Magnus:** Okay, fine. Fine, fine, fine.

**Griffin:** Um, are you doing anything about Barry or are you just gonna bring him up there too?

**Merle:** Geez, we gotta do everything?

**Justin:** Ummm…

**Griffin:** Just wanna have this figured out before - before we roll.

**Merle:** Why not let him-

**Justin:** Yeah, no, we need a plan. I think the pocket spa could work for Barry, let’s do that.

**Griffin:** Mkay.

**Justin:** Barry, are you-

**Taako:** Barry, are you uh, comfortable with that? You wanna live in my pocket spaaa?

**Merle:** Cucumber sandwiches!

**Barry:** I was not-

**Taako:** Raoul is in there, he’s got firm hands.

**Barry:** Who was - I was not into that until I heard you got cukes. Let me at those green lil’ guys.

[Clint laughs]

**Taako:** Hop in.

**Griffin:** Uh, okay, he hops in your pocket spa which shrinks down pokeball-style and you now have a pocket Barry.

**Taako:** [snorts] Portable pocket Barry.

**Griffin:** Alright!

**Clint:** Which we’re gonna have to have a doctor look at.

**Griffin:** It sounds like you guys are - are ready?

**Travis:** Sure!

**Justin:** [crosstalk] Hell yeah.

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] Anything else, any other details you wanna iron out?

**Justin:** Can I actually, you know what - just for, just for shits and giggles, I’m actually gonna run a perception check, [sound of dice being rolled] I have a seventeen plus two, on the tank that um, Barry was in. Like, anything that I can pick up off of it? Investigation I guess should actually be the check.

**Griffin:** Um… I- I, arcana would be more appropriate? It’s just a very [crosstalk] super magical object.

**Justin:** [crosstalk] Okay that’s an arcana check.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it’s - it’s a, uhh, it’s necromantic in origin, it is uhh, uh, currently sort of expended and it takes some time to recharge, but essentially it takes a person’s biological material and can grow a new body out of it, um, but it’s not like a cloning machine, like that body is essentially a corpse. Um, and so Barry has been using this to grow new bodies that he can sort of pop into in his lich form, umm, to - to continue his quest.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Clint:** So there’s no magic in it that the umbra staff could absorb?

**Griffin:** No.

**Travis:** [crosstalk] I also - I also wanna-

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] The umbra staff absorbs defeats, uh, uh, absorbs when a magic user’s defeated. It absorbs their essence.

**Clint:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I also wanna scope up this this map that he’s been– laboriously working on, uh, to figure out the best path to get to the vault once we’re actually y’know-

**Griffin:** Uh-

**Travis:** In the moonbase?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure I - it’s pretty straightforward, it’s leading straight into the sort of central dome that the, like, the relic -

**Travis:** Disposal?

**Griffin:** Disposal chamber, yeah, then, and like, and the main sort of throne room type area leading into the Director’s office. It’s in that room and it gets a little bit more granular once you’re inside there but I think we should - I think we should just move in.

**Travis:** Yeah, as long as we can reference it later.

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure, you’ve got the map.

**Justin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Clint:** Mmkay.

**Griffin:** Um-

**Travis:** Let’s do it.

**Griffin:** Alright, you all step outside from the cave and, um, it’s kind of rough out here? The storm clouds are now overhead, uh, but again it is not raining, it is not storming and sort of weirdly these clouds are still, they are not blowing and moving they’re just kind of still. Another thing you, uh - everybody roll a uh, perception check.

[sound of dice rolling]

[Clint laughs]

**Justin:** Uh, twelve.

**Travis:** I rolled a nine plus something.

**Justin:** [laughing slightly] Nice.

**Clint:** Yup, my luck continues. [crosstalk] I rolled a one!

**Travis:** [crosstalk] Nine plus zero. Alright.

**Griffin:** Taako, it is very faint but you notice that like, [clicks tongue] the grass ain’t as green. And the - the trees nearby, they look like they are… kinda wilting, a little bit, like it looks like the color is… being drained from - from the world around you. Um, uhh, you are outside and uhh, if you want to summon a lift up to the - up to The Bureau, you know how to do it.

**Travis:** I don’t know, Griffin.

**Clint:** [crosstalk] Punch- punch-

**Travis:** Prime time is gonna - there’s gonna be an increase of like 200% cost. [three seconds of dead silence] It’s a joke about Lyfts?

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah I got you.

**Travis:** Okay. Okay!

**Clint:** Alright, I hit the Uber button on the, uh, on the bracer.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Magnus:** Before it gets here, I should also say, boys: one, keep in mind, you’re probably gonna have to explain the stones of farspeech being gone, two, I’m probably not gonna be able to talk. Uh, so I’m gonna just like, y’know, automaton it pretty hard, uhhh, y’know, wooden statue and all that, so you might have to do the talking for me.

**Merle:** Okay, one, you’ve done a pretty good job of not talking up to this point by [voice increases in volume] filling us in on all this crap! And two, okay.

[Griffin laughs]

**Taako:** Luckily–

**Justin:** I reach into my bag of necessity here, not my bag of necessity just my regular inventory, sorry, I reach into my inventory and pull out my band of telepathic thought!

**Griffin:** Mmmm, that’s good shit.

**Justin:** That lets me uh, communicate with uhh, uhhh, Mmmmmagnus - why, can we just– okay, listen, I know we’ve been doing this show for a couple years. Can I just like, tell you guys, fuck you for picking names that start with the same letter?

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] Yeah, it’s pretty -

**Justin:** Literally every time I talk about you-

**Griffin:** [crosstalk] It’s cruel.

**Justin:** I have to remember which one of you is which one, it’s really miserable for me. T! Taako! Tah-Taako! Easy to remember.

[Wheezing laughter]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Muh-muh-muh-muh, who knows!?

**Clint:** Point, you know what, we’re learning all kinds of stuff about each other today, aren’t we?

**Justin:** Just kills me. Okay. Sorry. But I don’t remember, Griff, that was something I bought at Fantasy Costco I think?

**Griffin:** [voice increases in pitch] Yuuuup!

**Justin:** Oh you know what, it was a Fantasy Gashapon, yes.

**Griffin:** ‘kay. Uh, let’s not - let’s not worry about it, you can communicate with Magnus telepathically.

**Justin:** But the other cats can’t.

**Griffin:** No.

**Justin:** Can we just make it so they can, because I think it’d be weird-

**Griffin:** No.

**Justin:** No, no, you’re right. You’re right.

**Griffin:** When you slip on the telepathic band, you hear a voice, and it is a very, very familiar voice and when you hear it, your heart swells up. And you don’t - you don’t know why, and again, you don’t know who it belongs to and you don’t even know where it’s coming from, um, but it’s close by and you hear this voice and it, it sounds like somebody is sort of whispering to you from a few hundred feet away in a cave, you really have to listen for it, but this voice says,

**Voice:** [in a higher-pitched voice unlike Griffin’s, echoing slightly] Trust Barry. Love Barry.

Those are the only words that you can kind of hear repeating, trust Barry, love Barry. It’s - it’s trying to communicate something to you more like, panicked now, um, but as it is talking to you you hear the Voidfish’s static. She’s - and you hear this voice say,

**Voice:** Taako, it’s - it’s me, it’s [static], it’s me, trust Barry.

**Justin:** Is it Kravitz?

**Griffin:** It’s not, no, it’s - it is a - it’s a woman’s, it’s a woman’s voice.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** It’s that same dissonance again where this voice is so special to you, like, and it’s like, infuriating, you can’t remember who it belongs to, you can’t remember why -

**Travis:** Is it like a sense memory where you like smell a smell and you feel positive and you don’t know why? Like you don’t know what it’s connected to?

**Griffin:** Yeah, it’s like that. Yeah.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Clint:** What about Merle? No, I tell you what, no, no, let me answer that.

**Merle**: If you two guys are going, I’m not gonna let you go without me. So let’s go.

**Griffin:** Um, the orb, you see it come down from that stormy sky very, very quickly but then its inertia sort of uh, slows down and it tumbles to a stop right sort of in front of you. Point of order, Magnus, you’re not wearing your bracer. It’s not - you *have* it, it’s in your inventory, but it - it, it’s not on your body. Um, which is not, I guess, of - of note, although it’s - it is kind of worth knowing. Your bracer was on your body and then when your body got ashed it was just sort of sitting in the ash and now you just kind of have it but you can’t really put it on ‘cause it’s still, like, closed-in.

**Travis:** Am I wearing my stuff? Or is it like, all wrapped up in like… a bundle in my bag?

**Griffin:** It’s up to you! Are you - are you wearing your stuff?

**Travis:** I think it probably makes more sense if I’m trying to sneak in and not look like myself if I’m wearing-

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Travis:** -whatever fancy elven armor the mannequin had on was.

**Griffin:** Alright, cool. We’re good.

**Travis:** But I’m still gonna keep it all with me, you know what I mean.

**Griffin:** Sure. Yeah, absolutely. The hatch on the orb pops open, there are four seats and the little control mechanism that you’ve used a couple times now to get back up - up into heaven.

**Travis:** We get in.

**Taako:** We pull the lever.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Clint:** And off we go.

**Travis:** It’s awesome.

**Griffin:** And up-

**Clint:** [begins singing the *Dance of the Hours*]

**Justin:** Griffin composes music for this program, Clinton.

**Clint:** Sorry, right, I forgot again. Sorry.

**Griffin:** No, that’s it, that was - he actually got it like, [Justin mutters over Griffin] note for note that’s exactly - I was gonna do some clown bullshit.

[“Reunion Tour” by Griffin McElroy begins playing at 31:40; it is decidedly not clown bullshit]

**Griffin:** I actually have it written down in my notes right here. It says uh, BPM 128 uh, 4/4 time, clown bullshit.

[Justin cracks up]

**Clint:** Oh, let me finish! [continues song]

**Travis:** I - I think that’s, I think the people got it.

**Clint:** Okay, good! Good!

**Griffin:** We see the Astral Plane. Just a few hours ago.

This scene is, no pun intended, dead. There are no lights below the surface of the endless lake, no movement from the water at all, no sounds of spirits drifting beneath, there's only the motionless storm, overhead. The thick layer of black ooze with ribbons of bright color sitting atop the water.

We see the Eternal Stockade, the prison in which ill-tempered souls are kept, where escapees from the Astral Plane are detained and rehabilitated. It is a large, cold fortress, hewn from stone and reinforced with steel, sitting on a solitary island on this dead black lake.

**Griffin:** And it is disquietingly still, and silent, for a long time, and then from far away we see a hand punch up through the oil-slick surface, sending the only ripples out from this scene for miles. Kravitz has thrashed his way out of the water, fighting through god knows what to break free. He hoists himself up and onto the island the Eternal Stockade is built upon, cutting strands of thick slime away from himself with his scythe, which he retrieves from the ether as he takes his reaper form. Hands attached to long, tenebrous arms materialize in the slime and fly in his direction--but he's too fast now, too aware. They won't catch him off-guard again.

**Griffin:** He clears a few with a decisive swing of his scythe, then dashes backwards, throwing open a door to the Stockade, and barricading himself inside. It's dark and still in here, too, but-- it's always dark and still in the Stockade. Kravitz had seen so much during his time as the Raven Queen's charge, things that most adventurers given ten lifetimes would never even dream of. Arcane cults worshipping dragons made of light, cities of vast machinery and towers of gilded iron, crystallized laboratories rescued by lovable doofuses...

**Griffin:** But this scene, the world made ink black and frozen. He's never seen anything that could do this before. And if it’s happening in the other planes, he knows he has his work cut out for him today. He raises his scythe and cuts a familiar slice through the air. But no gateway to the living world opens up. He tries again and then a third time, to no avail.

**Griffin:** He hurriedly falls to one knee, pulling a fistful of black feathers from a pocket inside his robe, he lays five feathers out in a circle, attempting to commune with the Raven Queen, seeking comfort and guidance… but for the first time since he joined her retinue, the Raven Queen doesn't answer.

**Griffin:** Kravitz does not know what's happening, but now, he knows two things, at least. He is trapped. And he is alone.

[“cutscene” ends] {42:36}

**Griffin**: You, uh, lift up into the hangar. Uh, and actually on your way up the coin chimes in um, and uh, actually I - I think Barry probably handed you all the coin, uh, before he went - before he went into the pocket spa.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Just, you can continue having this sort of line of communication with his spectral form.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And the coin - who’s got it? Who - who has the coin?

**Clint:** I’ll take it.

**Griffin:** You hear the coin-

**Clint:** Is there a mute button? Is there a mute button, ‘cause that could be a problem.

**Griffin:** There is… yeah, there’s not. The coin chimes in and it says, uh, you hear Barry say,

**Past Barry:** Now listen. You gotta trust me here. You gotta give over the relic if they ask for it. We don’t wanna raise suspicions - if we do this right, it won’t matter who’s got ‘em but- and this is very important: you can’t let the Director see me with you up here. Or else she’s gonna figure it out.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Clint:** [very nervously] Ohhhhh…

**Griffin:** Um, alright.

**Clint:** [in a shaky high-pitched voice, imitating Shaggy from Scooby Doo] I don’t like this, Scoob!

**Griffin:** You’re up in the hangar now and you pop up into sort of the, uh, uh, the launchpad and you pop up there and Avi is, like, gobsmacked to see you step out of the sphere.

**Merle:** [in a sing-song voice] Oh, wooden servant! Bring along our bags and be quick about it! [evil laughter]

**Griffin:** You, uh… Avi, Avi like runs to the front door of the hangar and he shouts, uh,

**Avi:** Guys, they’re back! They’re back! They’re - they’re all here!

**Griffin:** And he - he runs over to the three of you and he’s like-

**Avi:** Where have you been, we lost contact with you, we thought you all died! We - wait, where’s… what happened to Magnus?

**Taako:** No, he did die. That - you were one-third right, my man.

**Merle:** Yup. And at one point we both died, but we got better.

**Taako:** We got better. Um, yeah, it - it was very… Magnus didn’t make it.

**Merle:** Nope.

**Griffin:** He doesn’t - he’s, he’s like… he’s in shock. And the- [crosstalk]

**Merle:** [crosstalk, sigh] I know.

**Griffin:** -doors to the hangar get thrown open and you see uh, Killian and Carey- [crosstalk]

**Clint:** [getting progressively quieter] Oh shhhhit… shit… shit… oh…

**Griffin:** -and Noelle and Davenport walk in. Um, and Carey - Carey runs towards the three of you and says,

**Carey:** Guys, you’re back! I didn’t - wait, where’s Magnus, what happened to Magnus?

**Merle:** Uh… uh…

**Taako:** He didn’t… he didn’t…

**Merle:** He didn’t make it.

**Taako:** He didn’t make it.

**Merle:** [choking up] We lost him. He’s gone.

**Griffin:** Uh, she like-

**Merle:** [in a very awkwardly strained voice] He’s dead. He’s gone, turned into ash.

[Griffin and Justin try to hold back laughter and fail]

**Griffin:** This is very - this is such a sad-

**Merle:** [tearfully] He never knew… you know I loved him so much.

**Griffin:** Uh, she kind of like, she’s… aw man. She takes this really rough, she kind of like collapses and Killian kind of has to rush in and grab her and Killian looks up and says,

**Killian:** What - what happened, how did it… how did it happen?

**Taako:** He, uh… it was in the uh, we had to do battle with some pretty… pretty tripped-out liches and in the process of fighting them, Magnus, was it, he heroically-

**Merle:** Oh, it was so amazing.

[Merle and Taako get progressively more choked up]

**Taako:** Heroically died.

**Merle:** Yup.

**Taako:** With his whole body.

**Merle:** Yeah, every last ash.

**Taako:** There’s nothing - we couldn’t even bring him back.

**Merle:** Nope.

**Taako:** You know what? In retrospect we could’ve brought him back.

**Merle:** Yeah, maybe.

**Taako:** There wasn’t a lot to pick up.

**Merle:** You know, we really didn’t try.

**Taako:** We should have swept him up.

**Merle:** Yeah.

**Taako:** I regret this now.

**Merle:** [Voice cracking] We could have scattered his ashes somewhere.

**Taako:** [Voice breaking] Somewhere beautiful. He woulda liked that.

**Clint:** Is there an Academy Awards for podcasting? Do they have that?

[Griffin laughs]

**Griffin:** Or for - or for roleplaying. Um, Killian says:

**Killian:** Well, what happened to you - what happened to you guys? We lost contact with you. What happened to your - your Stones of Farspeech?

**Taako:** There was a - when we entered Wonderland there’s a lot of very strange, um, magics that the liches who run it were using, and one of the side effects was our, our stones of farspeech were, uh, basically made inoperable. At some point.

[Merle makes an exploding noise]

**Griffin:** Roll a, uh, roll a bluff check on that one?

**Travis:** But that’s true!

**Justin:** That’s, I mean that’s largely true.

**Griffin:** It is… fairly true.

**Justin:** [Snorts] Three.

**Clint:** Thirteen.

**Griffin:** Well you weren’t talking. Um, Killian says, Killian says uh:

**Killian:** Well, we were just trying to talk to you like a minute ago. What, what - why aren’t they working now?

**Taako:** We had to leave ‘em behind there.

**Merle:** Yeah, yeah here’s the thing. In Wonderland, they kept asking us to give things up and give things up and we just decided, ‘You know what? You guys would be there.’ All we had to do was hit our bracers at the end of the mission and if we were dead, it wouldn’t make any difference, so we gave up our stones of farspeech pretty quick because, well, we needed our weapons and stuff, right?

**Taako:** For sure, for sure, for sure, for sure, for sure.

**Merle:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Killian says:

**Killian:** Well it sounds like you all had a really– awful time, I’m so sorry about Magnus.

**Griffin:** Uh, and she, she kinda scoops up Carey and, and Noelle’s sort of helping Carey out too.

**Clint:** Aw.

**Griffin:** And it’s a - it’s sort of a, it’s a sad scene. And in the back of the room towards the door Davenport just kinda:

**Davenport:** [Clears throat] Daven-davenport. Davenport.

**Griffin:** And he is, he’s flanked by two guards and he’s standing next to a tray with one of those big lead balls on it, that you all have plopped the relics inside to be destroyed. And Killian says:

**Killian:** Oh yeah, they wanna get the relic blown away as quickly as possible. The Director’s really eager to get her hands on this one, so, um, let’s just get this taken care of and I guess figure out a funeral? Is that, I guess, next?

**Taako:** That seems about right. We could launch him into space like Spock.

**Merle:** Oh man.

**Taako:** That would be sweet.

**Merle:** That would be very cool.

**Taako:** I do have to warn you though, please be careful. This, uh, the mannequin you see, I reclaimed -

**Merle:** Woody! His name’s Woody!

**Taako:** Woody. Hmm… clever. I reclaimed him from Wonderland to try to study more of their magics and advance my own understanding. But please be careful and don’t touch him, there’s some very powerful, dangerous magics that this mannequin has been under the influence of.

**Griffin:** Now this is a fuckin’ big ole lie. Ah, is it, I mean it’s a, it’s a lie, so this is gonna have to be a bluff check.

**Justin:** It’s a semi-lie. And I got a… four-a-rino on that one. [laughing]

**Griffin:** Um, I think Killian kinda stands up and now sort of Noelle is helping Carey out, and she says:

**Killian:** You brought back some dark… wizardry… artifact back to our home? I-

**Travis:** I think telepathically to Taako:

**Magnus:** I’m holding the bell, and make it - make it something about, like, transporting the bell safely, it’s the most powerful thing, something.

**Taako:** Okay - okay that, listen, that makes perfect sense, but Davenport’s right *fucking* here. So as soon as we give them the bell, they’re gonna put you in the *fucking* furnace, okay? So I’m trying to have a little bit of a long game here so you don’t get turned into matchsticks, my dude.

**Magnus:** Fair enough. Uh…

**Griffin:** Davenport clears his throat again.

**Davenport:** [clears throat]

**Griffin:** And kinda points to the - points to the orb.

**Merle:** Well we knew - we knew that one of us couldn’t handle the bell. It’s just too strong. So, that’s why we, uh, that’s why we used the - Woody here.

**Taako:** Right.

**Merle:** And you know with his wood...ness and stuff, uh, he uh, you know he can handle the bell safely.

**Taako:** And-

**Merle:** And we’ve become quite fond of him too.

**Taako:** I am also a member of a coalition of wizards that is studying these sorts of poorly understood magics. Um, I’m the vice president of this organization.

**Griffin:** Bluff-a-fuckin’... bluff o’clock! What is this, persuasion? Ok it’s, it’s half past persuasion time. It’s -

**Justin:** Well, I know, but by pretending I’m in a position of authority within this organization I can use my plastic sheriff's badge and add three to these bluffs.

**Griffin:** Ok, ok, ok.

**Clint:** And I rolled a sixteen on mine.

**Griffin:** Ok.

**Justin:** So I’m gonna bluff on that one. And I’m gonna add three, to get eighteen!

**Griffin:** Ok. She says:

**Killian:** Ok, that all - that all makes-

**Travis:** [laughs] “Alright!”

**Killian:** No, that makes sense.

**Justin:** A double bluff! You rebluffed.

**Killian:** Sure.

**Clint:** [laughing] Undid the other one!

**Killian:** Well let’s just, let’s just, just load it up and, and hand over the relic and, um, I’m sorry, I’ve gotta… I’ve gotta go. Um, and - and Carey, let’s just - Carey, let’s get out of here.

**Griffin:** And they - they, uh, the three of them head out but Davenport is still there with his retinue and the orb.

**Travis:** I clunk my way over.

**Griffin:** ‘Kay.

**Travis:** Or wait.

**Taako:** Wait, are you sure? Magnus, are you sure this is a good idea?

**Griffin:** Is this telepathic?

**Justin:** It should be assumed that if I’m talking to Magnus-

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure, got you.

**Justin:** - just as a contrivance we’re talking telepathically.

**Griffin:** Yeah, okay.

**Magnus:** It- it… it’s the only thing we got. I- I- we have to play this out. One way or the other. And- and frankly Taako, at this point, we’re not at the point of no return yet. When we get there, we’ll have some decisions to make, but right now this is what we’d be doing anyways.

**Taako:** Davenport, can I ask you a favor?

**Davenport:** Davenport!

**Taako:** I get it. [Laughter] The, uh, I’ve always wanted to see where these bad boys go and since this is our last shot at it, can I follow you and see what happens to the, to the relics?

**Griffin:** He, uh, he sort of taps his foot, and he thinks for a second and he… hm… he… he shakes his head no.

**Davenport:** [Dejected] Davenport… Davenport.

**Taako:** Okay, well, you know you can’t blame an elf for trying.

**Magnus:** Taako? Taako.

**Taako:** Yeah?

**Magnus:** Tell him I am also a powerful artifact and need to be destroyed.

**Taako:** Are you sure? That’s… listen, uh, listen kitty cat, I don’t know how many more lives you got left in there, huh?

**Magnus:** Alright, well, hold on to that. We’ll save that if we need to get into that chamber.

**Taako:** Yeah, good idea though. Keep it on the backburner for sure.

**Griffin:** Um, Davenport like insistently, like:

**Davenport:** [clears throat] *Davenport!*

**Taako:** Just give him… give him the bell.

**Magnus:** Say it out loud.

**Merle:** Give him the bell!

**Travis:** I clunk my way over, and give -

**Griffin:** That was a good fuckin’ catch, Magnus.

**Clint:** Wow.

**Griffin:** Okay, uh, he just, he just points into the - right into the ball hole.

**Travis:** I wait.

[Wheezing laughter]

**Taako:** Put the bell in the thing!

**Travis:** I do it.

**Griffin:** Alright, and Davenport shuts the hatch on this orb and starts to wheel the cart out of the chamber with his two guards, and the doors close behind him. And uh Avi - Avi is like, Avi’s really bummed out. He’s the only person still in here with y’all. Um, he’s just kind of - he’s polishing one of the spheres, and he actually pops open a flask and he’s like a little bit weepy. And, uh, he raises it towards you all and says:

**Avi:** To Magnus! He was, uh… He was a good dude.

**Griffin:** And he takes a drink of it.

**Avi:** Do you guys want - do you guys want any?

**Merle:** Hell, yeah, yeah. [slurping noises] Ahh, good. Taako?

**Taako:** No thanks.

**Merle:** Oh, and, by the way, Avi, you know, um, we’d like Magnus’s share of the reward so we can make sure it gets into his - the hands…

**Avi:** I’m not the guy to talk to about that, you know that.

**Merle:** I know, but I figured you’d know who to talk to because, you know.

**Magnus:** Taako.

**Avi:** The Director or somebody, I don’t know!

**Magnus:** Taako.

**Taako:** Yeah?

[Crosstalk]

**Magnus:** I think it’s time to move on?

**Taako:** Okay? [To all] I think it’s time to move on!

**Merle:** I agree with Taako.

**Taako:** That’s what - that’s what Magnus would have wanted.

**Merle:** That’s exactly what Magnus would have wanted.

**Taako:** Trust me on this one. [laughing]

**Merle:** It’s almost - it’s almost like he’s here.

**Griffin:** Avi says:

**Avi:** You’re right, [voice begins to crack] he would want us to all move on.

[Laughter]

**Taako:** Um, that’s so sweet, little fella, but I’m actually talkin’ pretty literally in this case.

**Griffin:** Alright, um, you’re - you’re heading out?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** You step out to the main big grassy quad. Um, in the - in the middle of the bureau headquarters. There’s a few people milling about but most folks are actually inside, cause where you are, in the moonbase, you’re pretty close to the, to the storm above, and so I think most folks are just like “Oh, I don’t want to get rained on.” So they are - they are hanging out in their respective dormitories or wherever indoors. And, uh, following the map you are - you walk out of the hanger and towards the other end of the base. Um, and on your way there, you walk fairly close to the entrance to Fantasy Costco. And the doors slide open, automatically. Auto*magically*.

**Travis:** Ooooh!

**Griffin:** But the theme song doesn’t play. And it kinda looks like it’s been ransacked in there. And that’s all you can see from your position, of the Fantasy Costco.

**Taako:** What the hell happened in there? Let - can we go take a look?

**Magnus:** Yeah, let’s - let’s check ‘er out.

**Taako:** You…

**Merle:** Who said that!?

**Taako:** You’re just telling me.

**Magnus:** Yeah.

**Taako:** Perfect. Uh, I think Magnus would want us to look in the Fantasy Costco to see what’s happening.

**Griffin:** Um, ok, you uh, you head inside and you realize it hasn’t really been - it’s not like it’s been raided or anything like that, it’s just like - there’s nothing on the shelves. There’s big crates of stuff that have been sealed up, and there are some bags that have been packed up, and Garfield is just leaving. You can tell, like, Garfield is shipping out with all this stuff. And, uh, you see him sort of drifting to and fro....We’ve never described Garfield fucking at all which just explains why like most of the fanart of him is *literally* the orange lasagna cat.

**Clint:** [cracking up] Garfield.

**Griffin:** And I’m not about to start now, but he’s, uh, he’s drifting around and sort of getting things packed up. And he sees you three come in and he says:

**Garfield:** Oh, uh, we’re closed. Thank you for coming to Fantasy Costco though. [Singing, poorly] *Fantasy Costco, where all your dreams come true, got a deal for you.* Alright. See you later!

**Taako:** Uh, hold on just a second, kemosabe.

**Merle:** The sign says open 24 hours.

**Garfield:** Well… that doesn’t really take into account the… apocalypse, so I’m gonna- I’ve gotta hit the ol’ road, Jack. But, uh, the deals-

**Taako:** What- what’s happening- wait, what’s happening?

**Garfield:** I’m not, uh, 100% sure, but look outside! It’s clearly fucking pretty about to pop off in a pretty bad way out there. And it’s also, I mean what’s- also what’s the point of… damn it, Taako, the last time you came in here you thwarted me in a test of mercantile wits that I’ll never recover from, so my days as a shopkeep are over. I’ve been humiliated. I’m out of the game! I need to go hole up somewhere and just try to start a new life I guess, cause apparently vending isn’t my game.

**Magnus:** Taako.

**Taako:** Yes?

**Magnus:** I need my blood.

**Taako:** What?

**Magnus:** Garfield has my blood.

**Taako:** Why, what?

**Magnus:** I sold - remember, in the trade, he got some of my blood and my hair.

**Taako:** Okay. Hm, yeah, sure.

**Magnus:** I need it.

**Taako:** Okay. [To Garfield] Listen, uh, Garfield, uh boom.

**Griffin:** He turns, and says:

**Garfield:** Yeees?

**Taako:** Just one mome. Uh, can - listen, I need something from *you,* before -

**Garfield:** I told you, my trading and selling days are over. I’m a joke!

**Taako:** I know. I understand what you’re saying.

**Garfield:** I’m a *sham!*

**Taako:** I understand. Listen, I’ve gotten-

**Garfield:** [sadly]I’m a weiner boy.

**Taako:** [laughing] I’ve gotten beaten too, before, and I know it stings, but I’m gonna need Magnus’s blood. He died, and we would just really like something to remember him by.

**Griffin:** He jerks his - he jerks his head toward you as soon as you say that. And he says:

**Garfield:** You need… Magnus’s blood? *Hmmhmmhmmm*! Delightful!

**Griffin:** He, uh, strokes his chin and he says:

**Garfield:** Well, maybe we’ll do one last trade. What will you give me for it?

**Taako**: I… will give you something very special.

**Justin:** And I pull out a glossy 5x7, one of my portraits-

**Clint:** You couldn’t even go 8x10? [Laughs]

**Justin:** Well, no, no I was - I bought it on the cheap. This is all I had left.

**Taako:** Look at this! And guess what, I’ll personalize it with your first… name. Just to you! “To my friend…”

**Griffin:** He laughs.

**Clint:** “William H. Garfield.”

**Taako:** And I underlined friend here, you can see that so they know it’s legit.

**Clint:** Did you put a little heart, in the “I”?

**Taako:** I dotted the “I” with a heart. “Garfield, keep reaching for the stars. Nothing’s finer than eating in your diner. Sincerely, Taako.”

**Clint:** Wow.

**Griffin:** He grabs it, and he just kinda cackles. He’s like:

**Garfield:** You know you’re going to have to do much, much better than this. What am I gonna do with an 8x10 from a former cooking TV show host?

**Clint:** [Laughing] It’s not even an 8x10.

**Taako:** It’s a 5x7, first off. Former is-

**Garfield:** Oh, much better.

**Taako:** Former is very judgy, maybe you can see into the future but I certainly can’t.

**Griffin:** He says, he says:

**Garfield:** I’m disappointed, I guess. You so thoroughly out-out-vendored me in our last transaction, I thought, uh, I thought you were hot shit. I thought I’d finally found somebody who could stand up to my test of mercantile powers, but apparently I was wrong.

**Taako:** Ok… ok, um. I need a moment to myself, to really think about this. Give me just a second.

**Merle:** You weren’t even - you didn’t even react to him telling you that our buddy Magnus was dead. [Choking up] How about cutting us a little bit of break, you jerk.

**Justin:** Just so everyone knows, I have, I am using a 6th level spell slot currently.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Justin:** I have used a 6th level spell. Um, I don’t…

**Griffin:** You gonna tell - you gonna tell ‘cha boy what?

**Justin:** Yeah. I’ll tell ‘cha boy - yeah I guess it’s - it’s hard ‘cause you know you always want to keep that dramatic tension, but I guess you do have to say what spells you’re casting. That’s kind of the part of one of the gameplay issues. Uh, I’m casting Drawmij's Instant Summons on the Flaming Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom. Uh, it, I touch an object whose longest dimension is six feet or less, it leaves an invisible mark on its surface, and invisibly inscribes the name of the item on a sapphire I use as the material component. Uh, and at any time thereafter I can use the action to speak an item’s name and crush the sapphire, and summon it to me instantly.

[Laughter]

**Taako:** Ok Garfield, you win. [Snorting] Fine. Here is the Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom.

**Merle:** Nooooo! Taako, don’t!

**Taako:** I know. No, listen. I’ve thought this through.

**Merle:** You love that sword.

**Griffin:** His - his eyes light up. He’s like:

**Garfield:** My sweet! My love! You’re giving it back to me?

**Taako:** Yes, you can carry it for me.

**Merle:** Taako! Don’t!

**Justin:** [Laughing] I just conned this dumb son of a bi- hold on.

**Taako:** Let me finish and then I’ll gloat.

**Merle:** Okay.

**Taako:** Here we go. I am going - this hurts, ‘cause it’s just some blood. It’s probably coagulated, um, but here. Please, go ahead and give me some blood. Of his. Magnus’s blood. And you can have the sword.

**Garfield:** Sword first, please!

**Taako:** Okay, here you go.

**Justin:** And I hand it over.

**Griffin:** He smiles, and he says:

**Garfield:** You have no idea what I went through to get my hands on this priceless artifact.

**Griffin:** He says:

**Garfield:** A deal is a deal. The blood is yours.

**Griffin:** And he tosses you, Taako, a ring of keys. And he says, uh:

**Garfield:** You’ll find it in the back room. It’s one of those.

**Taako:** Fuckin’...

**Garfield:** Well I’m - I’m gonna go before you change your mind. Thanks, sucker!

**Griffin:** And he twirls his cloak around him, and in a puff of smoke he is gone, and all of these crates and bags of - of stuff also burst in a puff of smoke and are disappeared. And you are standing in an empty Costco with the keys to the place.

**Justin:** Nice fuckin’ customer service, Jesus.

**Clint:** No follow-up, no receipt.

**Travis:** Yeah, he didn’t offer like a five year protection plan or anything.

**Justin:** Okay, so, do I - I guess I’ll head to the back. Is there a back? Is that where this blood is?

**Griffin:** Yeah, there’s a, there’s a door. It’s just like a door, it’s just like a - like an office door, with a doorknob on it. And the doorknob has a lock.

**Justin:** Okay, I open it with the keys, I hope. I guess I try them until I find the one that works.

**Griffin:** Yeah it takes - on like, there’s about 30 keys on this ring, but on like the sixth one-

**Justin:** Well let me roll on that. Okay, I got a 12. So yeah that sounds about right.

**Griffin:** Yeah, about the sixth. And you open up the back room to the Fantasy Costco. And back here are some more emptied out shelves, um, and there are some freezers back here, uh some - some storage freezers. Uh, just a lot of different sort of storage things. There’s a desk with like an accounting notebook on it. Um, there’s a cash register that’s emptied out, there’s a safe that’s been open and emptied. Um, but then there’s a long table, and sitting on this long table are a few items that have not been taken out of here. And you see a battle axe, and you see a shield, um, and the shield has a little bit of blood on it, although it looks like some of it’s been scraped off. Uh, and there’s a deck of cheating cards sitting on this table. And then there’s some beakers, and a centrifuge sitting on this table. And, uh, next to this table with all of Magnus’s sold-back gear and lab equipment on it is a pod. And inside of it, you can see, through this green brackish fluid, you can see Magnus’s body.

**Griffin:** And then I think we get another cutscene, and it’s actually that auction cutscene, and we see Barry there, and he’s placing bids, and we zoom out just a little bit, and we see Garfield sitting immediately right next to Barry, also bidding on these items.

**Griffin:** And in front of you is a pod with a good, fresh Magnus body inside of it.

**Taako:** Well this presents some unique challenges. [laughing]

**Magnus:** Not for me! I want my body back! Do - is there a button we pu - like how does - I want. I want it? I feel like a kid at Christmas. At Candlenights. Please let me have my body.

**Taako:** Wait. Hold on, now wait a second. Magnus -

**Merle:** We’ve already said he wasn’t there.

**Taako:** Magnus, you’ve gotta think this through. Now hold on a sec, you’ve gotta think this through. You… you’ll lose everything. I mean, not your gear and your - your weapons and your items and Steven, but you’ll - you’ll be starting from scratch.

**Merle:** No memories.

**Magnus:** But I’ll have - I’ll have my body back.

**Taako:** Hey, remember this one?

[Singing] I want my body back body back body [**Merle** joins] back, I want my body back.

Remember, Chilis? No but seriously, you’ll lose it all. Is it the beard? ‘Cause I’ll draw a beard. [Clint laughing] I’ll even use some yak fur and spirit gum and get you a nice simulacrum.

**Magnus:** It’s…

**Merle:** And we have already explained that you’re dead - that you got turned into ash! If they see you the gig’s up.

**Magnus:** I can’t feel *anything*.

**Taako:** So you can’t feel sad that you don’t have a body, right?

**Magnus:** I’m- I’m not hungry. I don’t breathe. My heart doesn’t beat. Do you under- do you *understand*?

**Taako:** Mmmm. I do, I do understand, I see where you’re coming from. I mean, honestly-

**Magnus:** And that’s me! That’s me! Right there!

**Taako:** It’s - it’s sort of you. It’s your body, but is that really you? I mean, honestly?

**Magnus:** Those are the arms that have *held my wife*!

**Taako:** They—they’re a clone. It’s not you!

**Magnus:** I can’t fight, I can’t protect, I can’t do anything in this body.

**Merle:** Could we take-

**Magnus:** I have—I have worked all my life to be able to fight and protect and do good.

**Merle:** Could we take the pod with us? Could we put the pod in the Pocket Spa?

**Griffin:** It would be a - it would take a lot. I’m - I’m so in love with this that I’m not gonna interfere and tell you all-

**Merle:** Leave it up—leave it up to him.

**Taako:** It’s your call, man.

**Merle:** Really and truly, but really think about it, really and truly think about what’s the most important thing to you.

**Taako:** And honestly really and truly think about the potential of, uh, Taako and, uh, Merle being your, fuckin’, uh, uh, uh, John G here. Just - just trying to re-educate you about the world, there’s some pr- like you are coming back the A-number one fan of Taako and also my personal assistant *for sure*.

**Griffin:** Um, I, the only thing I wanna say here, and I want to sort of put this doubt in your mind, you guys are making some assumptions about what he will and won’t remember. It’s not like he’s gonna be like a newborn baby, you know what I mean?

**Taako:** I mean you’re running - I should clarify then - you’re running the risk of that for sure.

**Magnus**: Here’s what I’ve got. Seems to me, like what I’ve got, is an extra life. And it would be wasteful to burn that now. I have a perfectly good body sitting right here, and I’m in a bit of a disposable one right now. Am I wrong? Am I missing something?

**Justin:** No, that - that tracks. To me, as I understand it.

**Clint:** And, and- think about it. It’s to our benefit, for once, in this lousy podcast, we’re thinking about somebody other than ourselves. We’d much rather have Meaty-Beaty-Big’n’Bouncy Magnus around.

**Travis:** Got it.

**Magnus:** Boys?

**Clint:** But we’re trying to think about you.

**Magnus:** Boys. Head on to the Director’s office. Taako, you let me know when, and I’m gonna make a whole hell of a lot of noise.

**Taako:** Okay, but you have to think through this. If we’re not with your body, you’re going to wake up with no idea of what’s going on. You don’t have a fancy schmancy cool coin. You - you will wake up and have no clue.

**Magnus:** Leave me the map. Leave me a note. But I can help. This is something I can do with this stupid shell of a body. If I go in there with you now, as this mannequin, I can’t do anything. But this. This I can do for you.

**Taako:** Oh - Okay. Alright. Uh…

**Merle:** You know, next time you see us you won’t know who we are probably.

**Magnus**: I know.

**Taako:** That’s a - that’s a kind of a mixed bag honestly. [Laughter] That’s a little of Column A, little of Column B in that one.

**Merle:** Are - are we leaving? Are we gonna leave him here? Do what he said?

**Magnus:** It’s up to you.

**Taako:** I guess. Yeah, I think we have to.

**Clint**: Ok, I put my hand up, I gesture for the mannequin to bend over, and I look him in the eyes and I say,

**Merle**: See ya, good boy.

**Magnus:** Okay. Weird.

**Merle:** Yeah, a little bit.

**Griffin:** Why did you say that?

**Clint:** I didn’t really, I didn’t really - I didn’t really think that out. I really thought it would sound much more dramatic.

**Travis:** You could have just gone with, “That’ll do, pig,” and it would have been better.

**Clint:** Yeah, “That’ll do, pig.” Ohhh man.

**Justin:** That’ll do, pig.

**Clint:** Can I do it again?

**Merle:** That’ll do, pig.

**Griffin:** I think so.

**Travis:** Perfect. Ok go. Go go go!

**Griffin:** And I think in fiction, you just do both things. Back to back.

[Shrieking laughter]

**Taako:** Okay.

**Merle:** Okay. C’mon, Taako.

**Griffin:** Anybody - anybody else have a last thing they wanna say to each other, before you guys split up the party?

**Justin:** I, uh, will do this though. Just before we leave, uh, I leave a sapphire on the table next to the note.

**Travis:** Aw shit!

**Griffin:** What’s the note?

**Justin:** The note explains the situation and everything that he would need to know about the situation.

**Griffin:** What’s the no - gimme - I - this image is too good, ‘cause I imagine you had to write this very quickly. What does the note say?

**Justin:** The - it says, on there, it says:

*Trust the voices in your head, and open your mouth, and let the first words you speak be “Flaming Raging Poisoning Sword of Doom.”*

**Griffin:** Uh, and you leave that behind, and leave -

**Justin:** Oh, and then at the very - and it says:

*P.S.*

*(That means “Post Script” in case you learned that after you forgot. P.S. means post script.)*

*You’re gonna wanna smash that bad boy too. Smash that, smash that bad boy.*

**Clint:** And put some clothes on.

**Justin:** *And put some clothes on.*

**Griffin:** Uh, and the two of you walk out of the room and into the empty Costco, leaving Magnus behind with his body.

**Travis:** And as they walk out, I just want - this is what I want you to picture, for the mannequin body. I’m laying out all of Magnus’s armor and clothes, and goods, on the table, like laid out, you know like, “these are yours.” Um, I pick up the old shield. I pick up the old battle axe. And I start walking for the Voidfish’s chambers.

[Reunion Tour plays]

**Griffin:** We see the floating Bureau of Balance headquarters. And, it's now.

We see Magnus, laying out his possessions in front of his new body, his mind still addled with memories he cannot quite process or explain. We see Merle, the dwarven cleric and Taako, the elven wizard, departing a large, emptied out megastore and walking towards the main dome on the far side of the complex, still unsure in their stride. We see inside that dome, at the Director, making preparations to destroy the Grand Relic as Davenport delivers it. We see Angus McDonald, the world's greatest detective, watching this process intently, as he watches most things.

**Griffin:** And we see Carey, inconsolable at the unceremonious death of her best friend. She's in her private quarters with her girlfriend, Killian, and her robotic teammate Noelle, neither of whom know exactly what to say… What do you say? We see Johann, who just finished restringing a fiddle, which he plucks happily as he begins composing a new meal for the Voidfish, which floats nervously in its tank.

**Griffin:** And then we're back outside, and we pan up. And up. And *up*. Past the sky, past space, beyond the boundaries of the Prime Material Plane in which this story takes place. And we see more planes, now, the Astral Plane, the Plane of Thought, the Elemental Planes, all of them, all twelve planes that make up our Planar System, moving in perfect orbit, perfect synchronicity, sustaining each other in a meticulous, demanding dance.

**Griffin:** And then, we pan up. And we see a thirteenth plane, descending.

It is a disk, of shimmering, living darkness, crossed with ribbons of bright blue, red, green, gold, it is larger than the other planes *combined*. And as it lowers, slowly, bright, white eyes begin to open all across the underside of this plane. Millions of them. Burning with malice and… Hunger. All focused inward and down, back down, all the way, back down, on the floating headquarters of the Bureau of Balance. And somewhere inside of that living plane, we see a smile flash across someone's face.