

Dice & Pizza

Guide: Derek Aiello (he/him)

Zaba: Mya Worrell (they/them)

Driftwood: Justin Ricafort (he/him)

Ernie: Kyla Worrell (they/them)

Season One, Episode Two | *RICE FOR THE ROAD*

START

Mya: Dice & Pizza contains descriptions of peril, natural disasters, and kaiju. Content warnings can be found in the episode description.

[theme music begins]

Derek: Hello, hello wayward listeners! Welcome back to Dice & Pizza, a Quest show that follows a band of ragtag strangers - Zaba, Driftwood, and Ernie - who just unleashed an ancient dragon on the world of Mirios, by accident!

My name is Derek, he/him pronouns please, and I will be your guide for today's adventure. For those unfamiliar with Quest or tabletop role-playing games, Quest is a game system that uses one 20-sided die. A 1 is a catastrophe and a 20 is a triumph, with a gradient of successes and failures in between.

Instead of skills you have abilities that you spend adventure, or AP, to activate. The game focuses on character and world building. That's about all you need to know for the mechanics. And now, let's meet our players.

Mya: Hello hello, I'm Mya Worrell, they/them pronouns please. I play Zaba, the party's naturalist. He's the masked guardian of Kokoru, chosen by the god Bainon at birth. This responsibility makes him serious, but behind the mask, you sense a curious individual.

Justin: Howdy, my name is Justin, he/him pronouns. I'll be playing Driftwood, they/them pronouns. Driftwood is the party doctor. People notice their seafoam skin, tattoos, and luxurious dark blue pompadour. Driftwood is an offbeat nomad from the island village of Noro looking to travel, and learn, and eat too much food.

Kyla: Hi, my name is Kyla. My pronouns are they/them/theirs. I play Ernaeus, or Ernie for short, a skilled spy having some difficulties in their career path of choice. They go by they/them pronouns and sport a pair of red lens goggles and a long flowing cape that drapes over one shoulder.

[theme music fades out]

Derek: Last time our ragtag band of strangers went inside of an ancient temple and broke a glass orb that unleashed an ancient golden dragon known as Tang Kai, who presumably - not presumably - *announced* he was going to destroy the world, and flew off into the sky leaving everything in a train of rubble. And now all of you sit amongst the rubble of what was this lost temple. Starting with Zaba, go ahead and describe yourselves in the rubble as you come to.

Mya: Yeah. Well, we are all dusty, for one. But as Zaba kind of is brushing himself off, he has spiky black hair, from what you can see of it, behind his full wooden face mask, which doesn't have, it only has openings for the eyes. And there's, it's just, this kind of square wooden mask. Unlike Ernie who's wearing a half shoulder cloak, Zaba is wearing a full shoulder cloak which can also function as a scarf or as a belt. That kind of covers most of his outfit. He is wearing a mix of dyed red and green cloth.

Justin: Uh, Driftwood landed on their butt and their well coiffed pompadour is not so well coiffed. There is rubble and like loose sticks and twigs hanging out where they don't belong. Knees are scuffed, like road rash a little bit, sucks. And their, their wonderful mercantile, luxurious battle apron is completely folded up and wrinkled. It's bad. Driftwood's also wearing geta sandals -

Kyla: Not the wrinkles!

Justin: - Not the wrinkles. They're like wooden sandals and one has completely flown off. And Driftwood comes to, gets on their feet with one bare foot, and is searching through the rubble for their other sandal.

Kyla: Ernie stands shakily up. They're somehow still holding the hilt of their sword which is now, there's nothing left on that sword. It was already, it was already in bad shape when they hit the orb, and it's now just, it's just a hilt. I think they look at it and kind of just set it down on the ground. *[Mya laughs. Kyla laughs.]* But, so they still have their - surprisingly - their shoulder cape is still intact. So they have this red shoulder cape that kind of drapes down.

Their clothes are looking a little better, they could look a little better, they're a little worse for wear. But they're wearing a kind of, kind of like, vest, I guess, with like kind of poofy, poofy sleeves. A belt, some nice loose pants, all very, very, very nice quality. But not nice enough quality to survive like a, a blast and getting flown through rubble. So a little worse for wear. And then their hair, which is, usually their hair, which is like really long, and it kind of drapes down their shoulders, is a little unkempt. Their goggles are perfectly fine, though. It was like nothing happened to them.

Mya: So actually in comparison to the two of you, Zaba's clothes are actually in much better condition because they are made of this - *[laughs]*

Kyla: *[laughs]* This so rude. *[laughter]* I can't believe you're like, 'umm, Zaba looks better than you both. Zaba looks, Zaba. You all are dusty, and Zaba? Flawless, immaculate.'

Mya: - Um, I didn't say that. But, Zaba, Zaba's clothes are made out of a much thicker linen, and so they're, they're sturdier. So they're not, they're not, they're made for a lot of wear and tear. So in that sense he's just as dusty as the two of you, okay, I will have you know. Again the first thing you notice

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is his full wooden face mask that you can only see yellow eyes through, spiky black hair with like little bits of, like, stones kind of fall out as he shakes his head, and he wears a full green, full shoulder cloak that also can double as a belt or as a scarf. And he is barefoot.

Derek: Very nice, very cool.

Kyla: I love that you have to, you specify that, thank you.

Mya: No!

Kyla: Ernie's wearing slippers, by the way -

Derek: It's ok.

Kyla: - I think one of them is also, was blown off, so.

Mya: You're both -

Justin: None of us have the right footwear.

Ernie: - I think Driftwood and Ernie are both looking for our shoes.

Mya: I have no shoes. I'm just standing there.

Derek: Wow, no shoes crew. Driftwood, go ahead and roll me a 20-sided die to search for your sandals.

Justin: Oh, okay, all right. Fun.

Derek: First roll of the, of, of the episode.

Justin: Sandal roll. Obviously a D20.

Derek: Yes.

Justin: I'm gonna find a treasure trove of sandals. An eight.

Derek: An eight. An eight is a tough choice. *[laughter]*

Kyla: *[laughs]* Not your shoes!

Derek: You find, you find your, your geta sandal, and it is wedged between two rocks with another slipper. You can choose between your sandal or this other slipper that you've found.

Kyla: Just take, just take -

Derek: - That you don't recognize.

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Justin: *[stammers, laughs]* So, okay, okay, okay. Somehow this is a whole to do with Driftwood, with these two sandals. I - is there any other identifying factors of this other sandal?

Derek: Ernie, go ahead and describe what your slippers look like. *[laughter]*

Kyla: They're these nice, these nice like, blue slippers. It has a little bit of like, gold embroidery on them, but they're also very fragile. They don't, they don't look like they could survive in the rubble. *[Mya mouths "what?"]*

Kyla: Mya's like, "What?"

Justin: Driftwood looks. Okay. Driftwood so, so this is, this is Ernie's slipper? Yeah. Okay. So Driftwood sees both footwear in the, in the rocks of what used to be the castle. And, sees - what was, it was blue? The blue slipper?

Kyla: It was. Was is the keyword.

Justin: Oh, was. Gags a little bit and takes the geta sandal. *[laughs]* Resumes composing themselves. *[laughter]*

Mya: Gags?!

Kyla: Gag? *[pause for laughter]* Ernie does not see this, otherwise they'd -

Mya: Does Ernie's slipper tear?

Derek: Yeah. So as you pull it out, Ernie's slipper gets torn on some of the rubble as it crushes down and puffs more dust up into the air, as you gag and cough.

Kyla: I'm glad Ernie didn't see this.

Zaba: "Have you two found your, your footwear?"

Ernie: "Mm, no."

Driftwood: "I found mine. I think we're -"

Ernie: "Have you seen mine, Driftwood? I've been looking at, I haven't seen it anywhere." *[Mya laughs]*

Justin: So, okay. So Ernie is wearing one of the other, right, Driftwood realizes.

Derek: As you look down at Ernie's feet, yeah you, see the -

Justin: Driftwood gags, like, even deeper. *[laughter continues]*

Zaba: "Are you ill?"

Ernie: "Are you OK?"

Driftwood: "Uh there's dust everywhere. I, this soot, I'm just not -" *[feigns coughing]* "- Oof. OUGH! *[Derek laughs]* I just, no, uh, I didn't see, I didn't see anything."

Ernie: "Okay."

Driftwood: "I'm sorry but, but maybe we can go to the, the shops or something and then get you something more -"

Ernie: "Yeah my grandma hand-embroidered these, so." *[Mya laughs. Kyla laughs]*

Driftwood: "- Oh. Well, uh. Was, I'm not sure if -"

Ernie: "Yeah it's okay."

Driftwood: "Okay. Yeah, yeah." *[Justin laughs]*

Ernie: "Just, just the last, the only thing I have -"

Zaba: "Are we quite done?" *[laughter]*

Driftwood: "Yes. I, uh, I, mean -"

Ernie: "Yeah."

Driftwood: "- I'm a bit rattled, if I have to be truthful. But what, where we - what are we, what's our, what's our plan? I'm, ugh I'm so hungry."

Zaba: "I think we should return to the village, and you two will get your meal that we promised you. Alright, let's go."

Derek: The three of you make your way out of the sort of crater that is formed in this, in the ruins here. You notice that the only things that have appeared to have survived within the *[inaudible]*, besides yourselves, the canoe has been blown away down river and in pieces.

The only thing that's in condition there is a couple of green onions that have survived at the base of the river, which, they don't look particularly great. They look a bit crooked. But you can walk the way back to the village. It'll take most of the day.

Mya: Okay. Zaba picks some of the green onions.

Justin: Driftwood eats them out of the ground.

[pause for more laughter]

Derek: Zaba as you're, as you're picking up the green onions, you just see Driftwood get on the ground and start eating the green onions.

Driftwood: "These weeds are mighty tasty around here, Zaba, I have to tell you."

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Mya: How much, how much water is left in the river?

Derek: So there's still water in the river, but it's not, it's not high enough -

Mya: Right.

Derek: - It's not very high. Like, like you could probably wade through the river to get back to the village if you wanted to -

Mya: Okay. No, I was just asking because it's like, I was -

Zaba: "Driftwood, you could have washed those. There's water...there's water right next to you."

Driftwood: "I just assumed that this, this is a facet of your onions here. I didn't realize there was, you wash and do things with these. I mean, they're in the ground, like, why waste any time at all."

Kyla: It's fast food, I guess.

Zaba: "Okay." *[Mya laughs]*

Driftwood: "Kind of tastes better with the, with this dirt on it, actually."

Ernie: "What are you both doing?"

Zaba: "We're going back to the village on foot. Let's go."

Ernie: "Oh, okay."

Driftwood: "Do you want some Ernie, there's like one left over there. That one that's, like falling over." *[laughter]*

Ernie: "Is that dirt on your mouth?"

Driftwood: "Mm, yeah. You want some?"

Ernie: "Please stay away from me."

Driftwood: "Alright. To each their own."

Ernie: "I'm covered in dust just as it is."

Justin: Driftwood feels a little better -

Kyla: For now.

Justin: - A little centered. Psychic damage to everyone else. *[laughter]*

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Derek: So the three of you walk down on a sort of grassy path on your way back to Kokoru village. And not only have you noticed that sort of, the clouds have all been blown away in the, in the, in the sky, it's the bluest it's ever been. You, you can't help but also continue to just gaze and see, like, in the, ever so slightly in the distance, you see the thin river of gold in the sky as Tang Kai flies Northwest. And every time you kind of, every time it kind of catches your eye, it's, a feeling of dread comes over you.

After a couple hours walk, the three of you arrive back in Kokoru village. Everyone is outside and sort of staring up into the sky. And when the three of you walk in, they all slowly turn their heads towards you and are like,

"Oh, *[gasps]* they're alive! Zaba, Zaba is alive!"

And, the people seem a little bit relieved despite what you can assume they've just seen. You know, you hear things like,

"Zaba! Zaba will save us! Zaba will protect us from whatever is up there."

So yeah. The three of you enter town and you're hearing all these things. What do the three of you do?

Kyla: I look at Zaba.

Mya: I'm not looking at you. I'm, I'm gonna walk up to my villagers and greet them and, you know, check to make sure that they're doing alright, there was nothing, asking,

Zaba: "Has anything happened while we were away, besides....?"

Mya: I gesture to the sky.

Zaba: "Is everyone doing all right?"

Mya: And kind of like, apologizing for, for, for being away for so long. I'm going to ask where Goro is, but I'm wondering what other people are doing.

Justin: Driftwood's not impressed. Again. Driftwood's like,

Driftwood: "We're alive too! We saved your savior, so. *[Kyla laughs]*"

Kyla: Ernie, Ernie takes a couple steps away from Driftwood so as to not be associated with Driftwood. *[laughter]*

Driftwood: "Ernie! Ernie helped -"

Ernie: "Stop"

Driftwood: "- Ernie can back me up."

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Ernie: Driftwood pulls me back.

Derek: The villagers are kind of like, taking note of this. Zaba, the village sort of, like, the local wood carver and repair man Torg, he says to you, Zaba,

Torg: "Besides the river of gold creature thing that took off into the sky, nothing really. We all stopped work because of that, you know. There isn't, not really much we can do today. The river isn't high enough for us to flood the rice fields. But if you're looking for Goro, he's in his hut as usual. He's been praying."

Zaba: "I see. Have you been introduced to these two?"

Torg: "Not specifically. I know that they were the two volunteers that were, that Goro hired to find you. So, clearly they did their job, and we will get started on preparing food for them."

Zaba: "I see -"

Driftwood: "Will that be soon?"

Zaba: "- All right." *[Mya laughs]*

[pause for laughter]

Kyla: So rude.

Derek: Torg just smiles and says,

Torg: "Well, we had other things planned, but I'm sure we can find something -"

Ernie: "Please wait. No, please no, don't, don't feel, don't feel any stress on our behalf. We will be fine."

Driftwood: "Mm."

Mya: From what you can see with Zaba's face, you see his eyes squint as he looks, well, at Driftwood, and then says to both of you,

Zaba: "You two, follow me."

Derek: The three of you make your way to Goro's hut. Driftwood, on the way inside of Goro's hut, you see a small kid holding a rice ball, nibbling at it. He's just watching you, staring at your pompadour.

Justin: Hmm. I kneel down to the kid.

Driftwood: "What is that?"

Kid: *[kermit voice]* "It's. It's a riceball. My mom made it." *[Kyla and Mya are stifling laughter. Derek laughs]*

Driftwood: "Looks good."

Zaba: "Driftwood, why are you talking to that child?"

Driftwood: "What is that, I'm trying to figure out what that thing is. I've never seen that thing before. What is rice?"

Zaba: "You will have some at the feast today."

Driftwood: "Looks good."

Zaba: "Yes."

Derek: The child attempts to reach for your pompadour while nibbling on the snack and nodding.

Driftwood: "I'll let you touch my pompadour if you give me half of that rice ball."

Derek: With wide eyes, the child takes a second and thinks, and then reaches down to the rice ball and tears off a tiny chunk of the rice ball, and extends a hand. Just like a dime-sized, a quarter-sized chunk of the rice ball.

Justin: Driftwood reaches their hand out to receive penance and pops it in their mouth, looking into the child's eyes, letting them pet their pompadour, as Driftwood chews the rest of the rice ball away.

Zaba: "I apologize, Driftwood." *[Mya laughs. Justin laughs]*

Driftwood: "Fun village you got here, Zaba."

Derek: So Ernie's like, inside of the hut. Zaba you're like, halfway in and you're just like, and Driftwood, just right outside the door of the hut.

Justin: I think I'm gonna hang out, out here. Can I, can I -

Driftwood: "What is your name, child?"

Tau: "My name? My name is Tau."

Driftwood: "Tau, do you just want to like, hang out? Shoot the sh - uhh, tell me what's going on in the village. I'd love to know your perspective."

Tau: "Yeah. I might know some people." *[Justin laughs. Derek laughs]*

Derek: And he, he starts to kind of waddle off towards like, as you look up into the distance, you see like, like a group of other kids *[Justin continues to laugh. Kyla laughs]* like, toting around sticks and stones and just like hanging out, loitering, and he starts to lead you in that direction.

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Justin: I follow without, without any hesitation.

Derek: Alright. Back inside Goro's hut, Goro is sitting cross-legged in front of a small fire. Goro has a bag of bones next to him that you can assume he has been tossing into the fire to read the cracks of them.

Zaba: "What have the bones told you, Goro?"

Goro: "Ah. Well, it is good to hear your voice, Zaba."

Derek: And he opens both his eyes and stands up, and, to greet you, gives you a very formal, formal like, handshake, almost like a, like a blessing -

Mya: Like both hands.

Derek: - Kind of deal. Yeah, like both hands. Yeah. And he, he says,

Goro: "The bones do not bode well. It appears something old, and something ancient, and something that has not been around that hungers for whatever our land has to offer has come. The village thinks the river of gold is a sign of wealth, but I do not have that same feeling."

Zaba: "The bones have spoken true. I, I and my two others -"

Mya: And Zaba looks behind, is like,

Zaba: "- Oh. Ernie, where's Driftwood?"

Ernie: "Where is, yeah where's Driftwood?"

Zaba: "Ok."

Ernie: "I wasn't paying attention."

Zaba: "Well. Myself and one other person are, are here to, we, we must give a report. Please take a seat, Goro."

And I think, we all, like, sit, sit down, unless,

Zaba: "Ernaeus, wait say that again?"

Ernie: "Should I get Driftwood, do you think?"

Zaba: "If you think that Driftwood has important things to tell, then yes."

Ernie: "Whoah, what a, *[laughs]* that's a loaded way to say that, Zaba. You know I, I think we should give Goro the information as quickly as possible -"

Zaba: "Alright."

Ernie: " - We can fill Driftwood in later."

Zaba: "Fair enough."

Mya: And I think we proceed to tell the story of how the, the dragon, what we know of the dragon, and how the dragon was released by our hands.

Derek: Goro, at the end of your tale, you know, recounting the adventure, the orb, the water going into the orb, the painting of the four gods and this other, like serpentine creature, recounting what Driftwood had communed with, with the spirit inside of the orb, and, and through all that, unleashing Tang Kai, Goro takes a long deep inhale.

Goro: *[breathes in, then exhales]* "Tang Kai.. That is not a name I am very familiar with at all. I've been around a long time, but I guess not long enough. The magic you speak of is, well, quite different than the magic you've seen or used here in, in the village Zaba, it sounds very, very different, very...like what was keeping him there was weakened, or something, or, misused.

I'm glad that you and the two people we sent to find you are alive. I fear that wherever this Tang Kai is going, it must be some sort of other similar place. There is a lot of history about this world that even I do not know."

Zaba: "And do you know where we might find that knowledge?"

Derek: Goro sits up and begins to pace around the fire, and he says,

Goro: "Well, there are a lot of lost things across the land of Mirios. Back when the Ruuk carried more weight, there were old temples, old kingdoms. Perhaps if you follow the the coast up North and follow the trail that this dragon is leaving, perhaps you will find another temple of his or some other person who might know in, in one of the bigger cities. Perhaps you will find answers there."

Zaba: "I see. I will ask Bainon about this. I trust your judgment as well. Ernie, I think we should find Driftwood."

Ernie: "Thank you, your honorable elder Goro for your insight."

Goro: "Of course Ernie, of course..."

Mya: What knowledge has the village kids been teaching Driftwood?

Derek: Yeah, so as the two of you exit out of Goro's hut, you look to your left. When you look to your right, you see - Driftwood, go ahead and roll me a 20-sided die for this trial.

Kyla: Trial by child.

Justin: I rolled a one.

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Derek: You rolled a one, okay. *[laughter]*

Kyla: These kids are beating you up. I'm joking, I'm joking.

Derek: It's a catastrophe. *[more laughter]* You automatically fail and you suffer a severe setback. So the two of you walk out to seeing Driftwood with, like, four kids climbing on, trying to like grab the pompadour.

Kyla: I run over like,

Ernie: "Look, let go! Let go of - have no, has noone ever told you not to touch strangers' hair?"

Kid: "We're playing a game."

Ernie: "No you're not, no you're not. Where are your, where are your parents?"

Zaba: "Mara, Tai, *[clicks tongue]* Kabu -"

Mya: and, um - I, I don't remember the last one's names - but I-I-I start shouting out names and being, and I'll repeat - I'm trying to grab one of the kids and, and pull them off of Driftwood.

Derek: The instant that Zaba, you shout the names of Mara -

Mya: Tai

Derek: - Kabu, Tai, and Tau, they, they all stop, freeze, just go,

Kids: "Awww..."

Mya: I'm like, *[crosses arms and looks stern]*

Derek: And they start to slowly climb off.

Justin: Driftwood goes,

Driftwood: "Awww."

Ernie: "Never do that again. Don't aww them! Driftwood don't aw them!"

Justin: Driftwood gets up off the ground, even more dirty. They're like clearly kind of bruised, their face's a little bit bruised, their, their pompadour is like, grubby from kids. And I was like -

Driftwood: "Well, we were, we, we were just playing"

Justin: - And then Driftwood spits out like, a wad of blood into the dirt. *[laughs]*

Derek: The kid - all the kids are like,

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Kids: "Eww."

Ernie: "You did this. Look at that - you did this. Are you going to apologize?"

Derek: They're completely ignoring you, Ernie.

Zaba: "Ernie - it's not, it's not your place. Thank you, but it's not your place."

Mya: And I walk up to them -

Ernie: "Ok."

Mya: - And like,

Zaba: "So is this how, is this how I taught you to play with strangers?"

Kids: "No..."

Zaba: "What do you, what do you say when you hurt someone?"

Derek: And in unison they all say,

Kids: "We're sorry, Driftwood. Thank you for playing and being very kind, and we're sorry we took advantage of you."

Zaba: "Very good."

Driftwood: "Well, no need for an apology, kids."

Justin: Driftwood kind of, like, chests up, and is like,

Driftwood: "It was - we were just playing, just, just having fun."

Justin: Spits out a tooth.

[pause for laughter]

Zaba: "Oh lord. Oh my gosh."

Driftwood: "They grow back, don't worry."

Zaba: "They what?!"

[more laughter]

Ernie: "Is that a tooth?"

Driftwood: "The teeth, so, yeah our village, we - our teeth, we grow pretty, pretty actively. So you know, it was gonna come out anyway. You know, it's not, it's not a big deal. Just hanging out with the kids, you know. They all went through the trauma of looking at the sky."

Ernie: "You just spit out blood."

Driftwood: "Yeah, you know. We spit out blood."

Mya: Does one of the kids grab a tooth?

Derek: Yeah, one of the kids - like, you, you like, glance and you see one of the kids, like, trying to like sneak the tooth like into their pocket.

Kyla: Do I notice this?

Derek: Yeah, you, you notice it as well, Ernie.

Kyla: Okay, I'm gonna, I'm gonna kick the tooth away.

Mya: *[laughs]* Out of the kid's hands?

[laughter continues]

Kyla: Oh wait, did they already pick it up?

Derek: It's, it's like, in the kid's hand, and they're like about to put it in their pocket.

Kyla: Oh, no, I'm gonna, I'm gonna try and take it out of the kids hand.

Derek: Okay, roll me a twenty-sided die for this trial. *[laughs]*

Kyla: Well, that's a seven.

Derek: You managed to grab the kid's hand, pull the tooth out, but now the kid is upset and crying, and as you look at the kid that's crying, you look at the other three kids that are glaring at you - and you can choose between talking down the other kids, or trying to comfort the kid that you've just made cry on accident.

Kyla: I'm gonna comfort the kids. I'm gonna take out one of my earrings and I'm gonna hand it to the kids. But I'm gonna, I'm gonna snap off the the piece that's, the metal piece that's inside my ear, like, you know, that's the sharp piece. But I'm gonna hand the - it's like a little wooden, it's a wooden fox face.

Derek: Do you say anything to the kid as you exchange the tooth for the earring?

Kyla: I'm gonna say,

Ernie: "Hey, no, it's okay. It's just, you know, this isn't, this isn't yours, okay, and you need to ask permission before you take it. But I'm gonna give you, I'm gonna give you this. They're both, they're basically shaped the same, and this one's prettier, so."

Kyla: *[laughs]* Gonna hand the earring, the earring to the -

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Derek: - The kid, like, wipes some tears, and then like looks at it, is like, really enamored, and all the other kids kind of like, gather around to like, look. They're all like,

Kids: "Whoa! This is really cool. The Fox Tailed Trickster!"

Ernie: "Oh my goodness, oh you know the, the Fox Tailed Trickster? You know of Eridus?"

Derek: Yeah - the kids start just talking about,

Kids: "Yeah, we know about the Fox Tailed Trickster, stole, stole, stole you know lots of things -"

Zaba: "Even stole the moon one time."

Ernie: "- But always, but always gave to those who needed it, always gave to those who needed it most."

Driftwood gets a little defensive with the kids,

Driftwood: "Ay, like - they, kids need an outlet! Kids need to have fun!"

Ernie: "Is that not your blood on the ground? Did you, when you were a kid did you, did you knock the teeth out of strangers?"

Driftwood: "Yeah."

Ernie: "Okay. Never mind. *[chuckles]* Never mind, forget I, forget I said that."

Zaba: "I have, Driftwood, we have much to talk about."

Justin: Driftwood grabs a tooth, stuffs it in one of the apron pockets.

Kyla: You just grabbed it out of my hand?

Justin: Yeah.

Driftwood: *[stiffly]* "Thank you."

Ernie: "Of course."

Zaba: "Perhaps we can go to the kitchens - perhaps there's a little something we can eat while they're preparing and we can talk."

Derek: The, the three of you make your way down to the communal kitchen. It's sort of like, like a hut and house with like a, like a fire grill, and a place for like, hanging fish, and a place for boiling rice and making other sort of foods. And there's like a small little table with two benches that you all sit at. Emerelda and Torg are there preparing food.

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They bring out several several rice dishes - they bring out some more rice balls, they bring out some rice waffles, they bring out some rice porridge, they bring out some vegetables, they bring out some things with green onions, some, some pork jerky - they're, they're just kind of like, slowly bringing out like, each plate, like one at a time as the three of you begin to munch.

Ernie: "Thank you. *[takes a plate]* Thank you. *[takes a plate]* Thank you. *[takes a plate]*"
[laughter]

Kyla: As each, as each dish gets presented.

Justin: Driftwood is eating without any sense and, Ernie's like thanking for Driftwood too. *[laughs]*

Kyla: *[laughs too]* Yeah, yeah. Yeah, as they hand the dish to Driftwood I'm like,

Ernie: "Oh, Thank you. Thank you so much."

Mya: *[laughs]* I have not taken my mask off, and so I - I'm like, you can see chopsticks like going under the mask, moving. *[laughter]*

[The party pantomimes Zaba's mask]

I want to add one more detail to this scene. I want to say that the the kitchen - this, this building with the kitchen, is right by the river, and so you can hear the soft trickle of the river behind, behind us.

Derek: That's very pleasant. It's very, this is probably the most relaxed that the three of you have felt in the last day.

Kyla: We're still covered in dust.

Derek: Is there anything the three of you would like to discuss, or...

Mya: We're going to update Driftwood on what happened, and on I think the dilemma of going, following the dragon to the Northwest?

Derek: So, Driftwood, Zaba and Ernie catch you up on how Goro talked about how, like, there might be other ancient temples or more knowledge in, in bigger cities. Where they have more history logs of sort of what's happened in the world, perhaps following Tang Kai, who is going Northwest, might lead you to more temples where there's potentially followers or other people that might know.

Justin: So through the retelling process, Driftwood's like scarfing down and is like,

Driftwood: "Huh? What? Ohh..."

Justin: Like in the middle of mouthfuls of bites. So Driftwood like, just wipes off their mouth and *[Driftwood audibly inhales and exhales]* takes a deep breath, then starts combing their hair, finally.

Kyla: Pieces of just, little, little pieces of rubble just start coming out.

Justin: Yeah it starts like, landing and then I like deflect asteroids.

Driftwood: "Well. You know, it might have seemed like I was just like fooling around, but I needed to calm down, y'all. If we're looking for vast archives of knowledge, I can tell you that Noro also has a pretty big and substantial ancient library, and I know that's South of where we want to go, but I think that at some point we should go back - and I, this is something I would like to discuss with my village.

I don't think we have a competent guardian either - I mean, um, I don't, I don't think we, you know, are - we need the full, we, I need to retell the full scope of exactly what has occurred. So yeah. But we can go ahead. If the plan is to go North, that sounds like a good idea to me.

I am pretty concerned of what folks have been seeing. As I was spending time with the children, I was trying to, you know, think about what it might have been like to see an event like this unfold from the eyes of a child. And they were just like, 'Oh big dragon, lizard, sky!' and - you know, we have to be cognizant about if, we, you know, decide to travel together, what our burden is to bear of witnessing the events.

Justin: And I whisper,

Driftwood: *Potentially being culpable.* But, Zaba, Ernie, have you told anyone that this may be our fault?"

Zaba: "Goro knows."

Driftwood: "You told Goro?!"

Zaba: "Of course I told Goro. If you had had been there with me, with, with me and Ernie while I was telling this tale, perhaps I would have known to have some discretion."

Ernie: "Honesty behooves us as warriors."

Driftwood: "Well, what are we being honest about?"

Ernie: "If we cannot be honest about our role in this, how can we hope to, to stop it?"

Driftwood: "I would just say that the world isn't as pleasant as you may think."

Justin: It's at this point that Driftwood -

Kyla: I point at the scars all over my face. *[laughter]*

Ernie: "You think I know nothing about - I, I may not have left the walls of my city for much of my life, but yes, I know what you speak of -"

Driftwood: "All I'm saying -"

Zaba: "Are you calling me sheltered?"

Driftwood: *[Justin laughs]* "I, all I'm saying is that this specific information seems beyond the bounds of what we would regularly discuss. I didn't confess to you about my practicing in the magical realm.

I'm, I'm a junior doctor of our village and, you know, communing with the spirits is not something that is, is easy and simple to do. And so if we come across anyone who has any similar knowledge, I just would want us to be aware that they all don't have our best intentions at heart."

Zaba: "Of course."

Ernie: "Ok. That, that I can understand."

Zaba: "I, I trust Goro with my life."

Driftwood: "And I would also want to say that I particularly feel guilty for not being able to assess that we would be tricked in this way, and I need to think about this further. But who knows. We can only hope for the best, I think, in this regard. And if we get to learn more and travel and meet new people, then that is something that I do want to accomplish in my personal and professional life."

Zaba: "It's not just your burden to carry. We, we all three attacked the orb. We all three bear that burden. But hopefully it's a burden that can be evenly distributed"

Justin: I look to Ernie and I take something out of my front pocket and - in between the time of eating and when we had left, I fashioned my tooth in an earring to replace Ernie's.

Driftwood: "We're friends now."

Kyla: I, I think Ernie just wordlessly takes and looks at it in wonder. Just,

Ernie: "How did you? Have, I didn't even see you carving. Thank you."

Driftwood: "I, you know, just, just a little thing."

Ernie: "Okay. I will, I will put a post on this -"

Kyla: Or did you? I'm assuming, yeah, you couldn't have carved a little post in it, so.

Justin: No, it's just, it's just, yeah -

Ernie: "I will fashion - Thank you. I will, I will, I'll fashion this into an earring as soon as possible. We may have had our rough starts, but I trust you as well my friend."

Mya: Well, I guess we'll finish eating and, while they're eating can I slip away and do some prayers to Bainon?

Derek: Yeah, yeah. It's pretty easy to, to sneak away from, from the two of them as they converse and eat.

Ernie: "See you, Zaba!" *[laughter]*

[Driftwood waves while munching on food]

Zaba: "I'll be back. You two can stay here, or wander. It's a small village."

Driftwood: "Don't get lost in a castle."

Zaba: "I won't."

Derek: All right. Yeah, do you go back to your place of living, your residence?

Mya: Yeah, I go back. It's been, it's been a long time since I've been back here. I mean, two or three days? But it's undisturbed, and I, I have a fireplace and, like Goro, it's a place where I also do divination. There, there isn't a like, a door but there is like a, a sheet of cloth that covers the door, and so no one can see inside. Though, occasionally - it's heavy enough that the wind doesn't really rustle it, The fire is out, obviously. What embers I left have died. And so I set about starting another fire.

I take off my mask and I set it down besides me, and I begin to light, light some leaves and stare into the smoke. I want to know whether or not I should leave the village with these two individuals to follow the trail of the dragon that we have unleashed.

Derek: Go ahead and roll me a 20-sided die.

Mya: Okay. 17.

Derek: As you stare into the smoke, you can't help but notice the smoke transform into a wisp that travels among what appear to be clouds. You get a sense in your, in your, in your stomach that as guardian, it is your duty to protect the village - not just the village itself, but the idea of what the village is. And that in fact means leaving with these two.

Mya: I see. When, when I light this fire, the fire is strong, but the smoke is weak. And so - I feel the heat, the warmth of the fire. It reminds me of the warmth of the hearth, of the warmth of this village. And the smoke, it, like it did once before I left, the day I left, it, it turned - it's a thin wisp following that trail of, mirroring the trail of that dragon. And as you say, I also see puffs of clouds and I know that I must leave.

Zaba says, "Thank you," smothers the fire, smothers it for good, doesn't leave embers for tomorrow, and puts the mask back on and leaves to go find Ernie and Driftwood.

Derek: You head out and leave and return back to the same table where Ernie and Driftwood have continued to eat food as they've brought out more various offerings and other food. *[soft laughter]*

Ernie: *[taking plates]* "Thank you. Thank you so much."

Derek: Now there's actually a lot more people, like the rest of the village after sort of the end of a long day's work, everyone's kind of here having this sort of communal dinner. Even Goro walks down slowly - Zaba, you actually see Goro sort of walking down slowly and you're able to kind of keep pace and walk with Goro up to the place where everyone's eating down by the river.

Goro has no words but gently pats you on the back as he continues to walk. For a day of many decisions, in a day of much dread, once again this sort of communal dinner, you know, lit by candles and torches, as the evening as, as the evening sun sets, it's quite, quite relaxing, and you all feel a little bit at ease.

Justin: Driftwood and Tau are having a rice ball eating contest.

Mya: Neither of you care about the fillings. Like there's, like all sorts of, there's like pickled herbs and there's like little bits of fish and there's like also roasted vegetables like inside, but no it's just, down the gullet, *ba-ba-ba-ba*.

Justin: I give Zaba a thumbs up.

Derek: Ernie, is there anything you're doing at dinner right now?

Kyla: I don't, I don't have metal for, so I think that I, I've found like a little stick and I'm making a little post for the earring. I'm gonna put on to, the, the tooth that Driftwood gave me.

Derek: Zaba, Goro sits with you as the two of you begin to eat dinner. He says,

Goro: "Have you thought much, have you managed to pray to Bainon today, Zaba?"

Zaba: "Yes. I talked with them. The answer was, I must leave. I will start telling the villagers tonight."

Goro: "Very well. Your friends are welcome to take whatever offerings the villagers may have. I have prepared a couple of things for you all to take tomorrow when you leave, after getting a night's rest and cleaning off some of that dust. But before then, I actually have something for you, Zaba."

Derek: And he procures a small charm, something that could fit around like your ankle or wrist or, like, on a spear. It's like, it's like an animal like sort of wood carving, and he says,

Goro: "This was with you when, well, you were a child. I'd been holding on to it until a day like this. It's yours to have."

Mya: Zaba gingerly takes it and exa - and looks like,

Zaba: "It was, *[pause]* it was with me when I was a child? Mm. Thank you. This is precious."

Goro: "May it protect you."

Zaba: "May it protect."

Mya: And yeah, it'll go, I'll put it around my ankle.

Derek" After a long night of eating and partaking in games and hanging out and talking with the other villagers, you all get a wonderful night of sleep. For the first time in a long time you've slept on beds, not hard ground. *[Driftwood stretches and yawns]* You all have opportunities to bathe and clean. *[Driftwood puffs their pompadour]* You notice that some of the villagers have patched, your, your clothes, Ernie and Driftwood. They, they've even pulled out a, a pair of like boots for you, Ernie, to, to wear, or of shoes -

Ernie: "Thank you, thank you."

Derek: They present you options. Shoes, boots, sandals, whatever you prefer.

Kyla: I'll take the sandals.

[Driftwood continues to stretch]

Derek: Nice. They have laces on them, they're really comfortable, really air, really breathable. And come morning, as the three of you get ready, you notice that the villagers have each left sort of like bundles of like food and supplies for each of you. And I guess everyone take a second and describe how you get ready in the morning. Let's start with Ernie.

Kyla: I think Ernie spends like a good amount of time brushing their hair in the morning, or just like, brushing their hair, putting oil in it. I think today they, they tie it back, or. Every morning they, they make sure that their goggles are clean, yeah, they shake their, their clothes out outside, like their cape, outside. Yeah, wash them, you know, general things, wash their face and all of that. Yeah, they put on their new earring. They got some wood glue and they put the post in. They have the new earring on.

Justin: Driftwood slept great. Driftwood was very full, fullest they've been in a while, even more so than one of the biggest celebrations in their village. Excited by the prospect of all this new food. Driftwood woke up very early and did laps around the village as everyone was opening up, did stretches, it was pretty good. Pleated their apron, picked out the rubble out of their comb, had a solid hour to comb their hair, totally styled it, and felt good, felt generally good. Last thing they did was, they went over to the river and just held their hands, just to feel the water and remind themselves of home.

Mya: Yeah, Zaba had a late night. He personally went to every, every house to give the news of his travels, and so he stayed up late giving like reassurances and talking with people, dividing up his tasks to other people, we - because Zaba does a lot, *[laughs]* contrary to, contrary to what Driftwood might say. But so yeah, he had, he had a very late night. Went to bed and had poor sleep. I'm thinking about what, what Zaba would pack or would do, but I think that's his main responsibility

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is to his villagers first and he'll pick over what, what things the village can provide in the way of food and the way of equipment you know right before he leaves.

Ernie: Ernie also gets up really early. It's just a one of their habits, so I think when, if or when you all trickle into the place to get breakfast, they're already there like, drinking tea.

Derek: Yeah. You all kind of meet, meet up, you know, as freshened as you can be, as prepared as you can be, in the sort of breakfast area where they've prepared also a variety of, sort of packed food for all of you to take on your, on your, on your quest. There are 10 rice balls that everyone is given. Goro is also up early, and he meets the three of you there and he presents some things to the three of you. He hands some hempen rope to to all of you. He hands you like a bamboo container, Driftwood, of what appears to be rice porridge. He hands you a new spear, Zaba. For you, Ernie, he says to you,

Goro: "Already, unfortunately we do not have much in, in the way of weapons. So instead I've gathered all the Ruuk I could find in the village. So hopefully you can find something suitable in the next town or city over to purchase a new weapon."

Ernie: "Do you need - I know, I know I've mentioned money quite frequently, but do you need some of this? Especially since Zaba will be leaving."

Kyla: I - I take, I take half of the Ruuk. *[laughs]*

Derek: Okay, write down that you have nine Ruuk in your inventory.

Kyla: Okay. *[laughs again]* That's still a lot of money.

Derek: Yeah, it's a lot of money. Goro's like,

Goro: "We appreciate your generosity, Ernie."

Ernie: "I'm - you are giving me, you are giving me half of your, your, your town's wealth. I hope it is, I hope you receive that same wealth many times over. Thank you."

Goro: May the gods watch over you all."

Derek: He turns to you, Zaba and he says,

Goro: "Zaba, we have another canoe down here. Some of the workers managed to put something together, repair one of the old canoes. Or you can travel by foot however you see fit."

Mya: I, well, I, I'll glance to Driftwood and Ernie.

Zaba: "Do you two trust me to arrange our transportation?"

Driftwood: "Yeah. Yeah, whatever Gordy says - I mean Goro."

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Zaba: "We, we will take a canoe. I think it would make our travel quicker."

Goro: "Very well. You may leave when ready."

Ernie: "*Psst psst*, Driftwood. I, Driftwood."

Kyla: I hand you five of the Ruuk.

Ernie: [*whispers*] "As we agreed."

Driftwood: [*gasps*] "Okay. Do you want these -"

Justin: I, I look at the rice balls.

Driftwood: "- You want some of these?"

Ernie: "No."

Driftwood: "No?"

Ernie: "You're going to ask us for them back eventually."

Driftwood: [*unconvincingly*] "No...I wouldn't."

Justin: Like, a drip of sweat goes down Driftwood's face. [*laughter*]

Ernie: "I will be fine, thank you."

Driftwood: "Just, out of sight out of mind. If you keep them and hide them I will pretend I never - this, you, they're yours."

Ernie: "I will, I will be hearing your stomach grumbling through the night."

Driftwood: "Oh. So you're saying I'll do you a favor by keeping these?"

Ernie: "Yes."

Driftwood: "Well then I'll do you a favor then."

Ernie: "You can, you can pay me back later." [*Kyla laughs*]

Driftwood: "Alright."

Ernie: "Yes that, that is the, yes."

Driftwood: "Sounds, sounds good."

Derek: So the three of you make your way down to the river and one by one get into the canoe. The village kids sit, come down and sit and wave goodbye with their parents, who wave goodbye as well. [*river waves sfx starts*] And the three of you begin to row and row upstream, and as you row you see

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the sort of, wild, the waning wildlife and sort of the, the water level has, that has already been dropping and, when you come up to the fork of the ruins you go left going Northwest.

Zaba, you are rowing, and as you row, you hear the sound of a, *whoosh* as an arrow whizzes by you and sticks into the side of the canoe. The three of you look, look around and see from the brush that several vagabonds reveal themselves covered in furs and brush. *[river waves sfx fades out]* One of them points a blade at you all and says,

???: "Hand over everything you own - your boat, your weapons, your Ruuk, or else this is gonna get nasty."

Ernie: "I love nasty."

[laughter]

Zaba: "Why?"

[theme music fades in]

Derek: Dice & Pizza is Mya Worrell as Zaba, Justin Ricafort as Driftwood, Kyla Worrell as Ernie, and Derek Aiello as the guide. Cover art is by Jean Young, music is by Itamar Ben Zimra, featuring original sound effects by Brian Kim.

You can follow the show on Twitter and Instagram @diceandpizza for updates about the show, and you can check out the video or audio version on Youtube or wherever you get your local podcasts. We hope you enjoyed listening to episode 2 of this adventure, and if you hadn't already noticed, episode 3 is already in your feed, so, what are you, why are you still here? Wh-why are you still here? Go-o-o, go. *[laughs]* But in all seriousness we appreciate you taking the time out of your day to watch or listen to our show. Thank you so much, and we will catch you next time.

[theme music fades out]

END