

Grizzly

Days and days traveling through the currents to the next location where you hope to be the Luxbris Clam. Three out of four of the remaining leviathans, at least the ones that you have sought. This one, Gillion, with the shard from the pearl, you received an inkling, a small message, a twinkle of light that its intention read as help. You travel through what you assume to be the twilight zone as there is nothing but dark ocean around you until after some time, time, immeasurable in the sea here. Hundreds [doof, doof, doof, doof] of these glowing yellow eldritch eyes [wshhhh] in almost this straight line that curves at the edges open in front of you. And as it does, you are perceived.

Condi

Can I—I don't wanna be perceived.

Charlie

Okay, oh, I think I actually have the Amulet of Non-Detection. So maybe they don't see me.

Grizzly

I need all of you—

Condi

Okay.

Grizzly

To roll intelligence saving throws.

Charlie

Oh, shit.

Milo

Oh wow.

Charlie

Is this a clam? Do clams have eyes or is that like potatoes?

Condi

No, wait, do they? Yeah, they probably have eyes.

Milo

Mollusks—

Condi

They have—

Charlie

Because potatoes have eyes.

Milo

Oh, you know—

Condi

They do.

Charlie

But you don't know they have eyes.

Milo

Mollusks have—

Bizly

No, they don't.

Charlie

Yes, they do.

Milo

I believe—

Bizly

Potatoes?

Charlie

Yeah.

Condi

Yeah.

Milo

They don't have—

Bizly

You're making stuff up.

Milo

Not eyeballs, the little holes in potatoes are called eyes.

Charlie

Wait, why did I think they could see?

Milo

Are you insane?

Bizly

I think you're stupid.

[laughter]

Bizly

He automatically failed the intelligence save.

Condi

I mean, I don't know what to say to that like...

Grizzly

Wait, are we arguing about if clams have eyes?

Milo

Yeah, they do.

Bizly

If they can see!

Charlie

Yeah, but I was arguing that they do because potatoes do and I didn't think that potatoes would.

Grizzly

Imagine in our world, a tiny giant clam handheld the eyes, now [pfft] big, lots of them.

Charlie

No way.

Grizzly

What did you guys roll on your intelligence saves? Let's start with Jay.

Condi

Fifteen.

Grizzly

Fifteen.

Charlie

Six.

Grizzly

Aurora.

Milo

Twelve.

Grizzly

Twelve.

Bizly

Fourteen.

Grizzly

The last thing you see, hundreds of these bright glowing yellow eyes, and then its form begins to reveal itself, so bright, so colorful, so magnificent. Glimmering, shimmering pearls and shining treasures that stick to the hard shell of this titanic mollusk covered in different multicolored glowing bioluminescent moss and algae. But that glow, those eyes, you almost stare into them and you feel yourself lose yourself, your consciousness within its own gaze and everything for one second [pfffft] goes white. When you open your eyes, when your sensibility, your self, your mind returns, you are standing amongst black sand.

Bizly

Goddamn it.

Grizzly

But it is not this empty, endless, lifeless expanse of black sand that you remember from the Abyss. But it's similar in how it feels underneath your boots, your sandal, your feet if you don't wear any. And there are, on the horizon all around you, you see coral.

Condi

Mmh.

Grizzly

Massive coral trees, coral structures of all different types covered in the same multicolored moss, bioluminescent kelp and seaweed that wave from the ground and float through the air. You feel some sort of gravitational pull despite still being in the water. You walk on the surface of this seemingly small but dense village of coral. You see a coral figure [pffft] lumber towards you.

Milo

Whoa.

Grizzly

Out of the sort of coral trees to the side.

Condi

Would this be familiar at all to Gillion, who was inside the Luxbris Pearl for a period, I believe.

Grizzly

I'll say for Gillion.

Charlie

Yup.

Grizzly

If you'd like to roll insight, you may.

Charlie

Yeah, this place reminds me of what I've seen looking into the shard and maybe where I've been. I'll try and roll insight, sure.

[laughter]

Condi

Oh man.

Grizzly

I'll also allow you to do arcana.

Charlie

Ah, well then.

[laughter]

Charlie

I appreciate it, DM. Would've been a three.

Condi

Yeah, now it's...

Charlie

It's gonna be a one now.

[laughter]

Grizzly

You didn't have to choose arcana.

Charlie

It doesn't matter.

Bizly

Great boon from our god.

Charlie

Thank you, thank you oh benevolent DM.

Condi

Thank you great Grizzly.

Grizzly

With such a low roll.

[laughter]

Bizly

What a way to start that.

Condi

What a way to...yeah.

Charlie

Yeesh.

Grizzly

I'll just say that it's not necessarily that you don't recognize or it doesn't feel familiar. It's just that as this coral figure person creature walks towards you, followed by a few other different types of coral, different shapes, one slender, this one a bit larger, a bit more bulkier, one shorter and stubbier, sort of wider, and they all represent different shapes and colors of coral. The fact that you hear a voice in your mind in a language you don't understand.

Coral Keeper 1

Blamblamblam, blablabla, blamblablabla?

Grizzly

Do any of you speak Aquan?

Condi

No.

Milo

Probably not.

Bizly

I didn't even know...

Charlie

I didn't even know that was a language.

Condi

That's a language?!

Milo

I did want to ask, you described all this coral. Does this look like the same crystallized coral we saw at that museum or does it also hold these kinds of memories or information?

Grizzly

Without even having to roll, it is entirely similar.

Milo

Okay.

Grizzly

It's much more diverse than what you've seen, than what you saw at the Crystal Depository, which seemed to be a coral building of itself, carved, created, magically enchanted to be this sort of like storage. They use the power of the coral. They use the power of nature to store their information. This is more natural. It just sort of grows. And it seems like these figures, as they walk out, this is their home.

Milo

Mmmh.

Grizzly

No one speaks Aquan?

Charlie

Don't have Aquan.

Coral Keeper 1

Blahblahblah.

Charlie

But...

Condi

But...

Charlie

It asked for help. So I go into my mind palace and it looks like a male living space.

[laughter]

Charlie

And I open my eyes. I reach down and in the black sand I draw three markings. One small hole, one small hole, and one curved line facing them.

Condi

Smiley face.

Charlie

Happy face.

Milo

Aww.

Condi

What if that means something completely different in their culture?

Charlie

Could be bad.

[laughter]

Charlie

Could be really bad. I will look at them with my kindest eyes and give a very soft smile.

Grizzly

Go ahead and roll for me persuasion with advantage.

Charlie

Got this, got this. Hope doesn't mean something different. That is a 22.

Grizzly

As it approaches, it stops before the smiley face drawn in the sand. It observes, looks at your smile, and then you feel some sort of slight click in your skull, and do you speak Primordial?

Charlie

Yeah.

Milo

Ooh.

Grizzly

You hear,

Coral Keeper 1

What does this mean?

[laughter]

Condi

I also speak Primordial.

Charlie

Yeah, is everyone else hearing this in Primordial in their heads too, or just me?

Grizzly

Oh yeah, their language morphs to Primordial.

Charlie

Oh, okay, cool.

Grizzly

So you understand, you also hear it.

Milo

I also speak it.

Coral Keeper 1

What does this mean?

Gillion

It means we're here to help. We heard your call.

Coral Keeper 1

Not here to attack?

Gillion

No.

Jay

No.

Aurora

No.

Gillion

No, here to protect.

Jay

Have you been attacked recently?

Grizzly

It looks around. It doesn't have eyes. It is this sort of hulking bright orange mass, and its head is just these layered shelves of coral with slight indentations on the edges. Almost kind of looks like a really intricate layered top hat, the way that it's shaped.

Coral Keeper 1

Many times, the shell cracked, broken. The pool still safe. The clam energy diminished, weakened by the onslaught. Many of mine lost, few remain. Come.

Grizzly

And it begins to [pshhhh] lead you deeper into this coral village, the Coral Conclave.

Charlie

I was just going to ask how big these guys are. Are they like our size or are they like towering?

Grizzly

Their size larger than you are. The lankier one that I described is like a bright purple coral, but its head is this sort of wiggly tubes, if you will.

Charlie

Ooo, I see.

Grizzly

The shorter one more reminiscent of like brain coral. It's got like polyps that come out of its, basically its shoulders. It's just this one round mass.

Bizly

As he starts walking away, I just wanna look up,

Chip

Where are you going? None of us can understand you.

[laughter]

Grizzly

With advantage, roll persuasion.

Bizly

Natural one. So 26.

Grizzly

Twenty-six??

Milo

What?

Condi

Reliable talent.

Grizzly

Right, right. That's so funny, I just wanted an opportunity to do something if you failed to talk to it, but you pass.

Bizly

Unless that's an auto fail, natural one could be an auto fail.

Grizzly

This is ability check, and I have ruled that ability checks don't auto succeed, fail or auto crit.

Bizly

I pass every time, I'm allowed to fail this once if you like.

Grizzly

Eh, it's okay, don't worry about it. You hear in Common,

Coral Keeper 1

Please proceed.

Chip

Oh, okay.

Coral Keeper 1

To the Coral Conclave.

Chip

Finally, right guys?

Gillion

Uh, happy face.

Grizzly

Following these coralites, you become surrounded almost by like a canopy of coral and flora in here. Protected almost, a home, simple. It's very reminiscent of how like simpler-minded fish will live in like the natural growths and habitats that occur in the ocean, like the, you know, anemone and etc. But there are hollowed-out coral that have like sections, like a hive that they can enter, and that's a hut for one of them or a family of them. And they continue to lead you deeper into this small village. And as you walk through, Jay, roll perception.

Condi

Probably the worst I could possibly do, but still 15.

Grizzly

You notice only one, but there are figures that are sitting motionless on the ground near these tree-like structures or coral benches, just slumped, and they look your size. You can almost get a glimpse of white clothing, flesh, coral growing out of it and around it. These humanoids in a state of transformation.

Condi

Mm.

Milo

Hmm.

Condi

Would I be able to do a follow-up check?

Grizzly

If you want to go and inspect it, break off from the group and get closer, sure.

Condi

Can I do it stealthily?

Grizzly

Yeah, I don't mind.

Condi

Okay, yeah. I'm going to just like sneak off and like try to regroup and check super quickly.

Grizzly

I will say that everyone else around you, like your group will notice, so if you guys want to follow.

Condi

Okay, I got a 30 stealth.

Grizzly

Anybody like to join Jay on this?

Charlie

I think I want to add in just to that.

Gillion

Jay, what's wrong?

Jay

Just have to check something quickly. I want to make sure we're not gonna die and turn into coral people.

Gillion

Is that—can that happen?

Condi

I kind of nod my head towards the tree, the coral tree you mentioned where there's...

Grizzly

Yeah.

Condi

Small figures, yeah.

Gillion

Let us know what you find.

Jay

Yeah.

Milo

I want to know if it looks like this area is still mostly full of life or if it maybe looks like these people are generally dying as well. What is, what is like the color of this coral? Is it like fading to like a white?

Grizzly

Gotcha.

Milo

Is it bleaching?

Grizzly

Yeah, roll insight or nature.

Milo

Okay, that is 24.

Grizzly

You do see, I guess, whatever stages you have researched of coral that is decomposing or broken, there are coral structures that could have been buildings that have been, that have crumbled or been destroyed. Normally there would be regrowth, like a cycle.

Milo

Mm-hmm.

Grizzly

But something, whatever nourishment would allow that to happen, is diminishing. And that seems pretty clear to you as you walk through, just observing and knowing what you know. Jay, as you stealth closer, easy enough, you feel as if you are hidden and you approach these bodies. Go ahead and just roll investigation.

Condi

Twenty-three. I'd just like to know, I think right now, if these are R.A.F.T.

Grizzly

Underneath these steadily growing coral shells, You see R.A.F.T uniforms.

Condi

Yeah.

Grizzly

A number of them all around this space. You also see some undersea species, undersea-born citizens much further along in the process, a bit older, but fewer of those.

Condi

With the investigation, I'd like to get one more thing if possible. I'd love to know what kind of tactics maybe they were using or like how they were attacking this clam or these people?

Grizzly

You can roll flat intelligence.

Condi

Sure.

Charlie

Hmm.

Condi

That's a plus four, surely. 14.

Grizzly

Something about the way you entered here, something about the way that telepathically they speak to you, something about the way despite being so quiet and stealthy, you still feel like something over your shoulder is watching you at all times. Being inside the clam, it has a power over you, a presence. But that's all you get with a 14.

Condi

Okay.

Grizzly

You rejoin the group.

Condi

I go back.

Grizzly

And they have been led inside of this pretty much more of like a central building for a leader of some kind, this leader. As they lead you in, you enter in like a coral-shaped dome. There is not any sort of elaborate furniture, but there is bioluminescent flora that hangs from the ceiling, giving this a calm and dull glow of a lighting scenario. It turns to face you with two of its left and right hand to maybe, you're not sure how the structure works of this small society. It looks at all of you.

Coral Keeper 1

You have come to help.

Gillion

Yes, can— can we still?

Coral Keeper 1

Unsure. The clam, so weak. We guardians of the pool, guardians of the clam's trial.

Gillion

What would become of you if the clam faded?

Coral Keeper 1

We...unsure. Live in clam long time. Leave we don't want.

Gillion

We are here to undertake the trial if you'd permit us anything to be closer to it, to be able to speak with it, to see if there's anything we can do. And if that requires a trial, then a trial we'll take.

Coral Keeper 1

Passing the trial, the Oracle Atrium awaits. Failing the trial, become one with tribe.

[all the players] Ooh.

Charlie

Okay.

Coral Keeper 1

Clam energy low. Trial for one or trial shared. Power greater for one, power less shared.

Charlie

I turn to the others.

Chip

Gillion, I think you should do it.

Gillion

Dude, I would have died in all those other ones.

Chip

I know, I know.

Gillion

Like instantly.

Chip

I know.

Gillion

Instant evaporation.

Chip

I think you can do this. Not only that, if you can get the most out of this on your own.

Gillion

We're in this together.

Chip

I know, and we'll be right here.

Gillion

Jay, what do you think?

Jay

Actually, I guess to contribute a little, would you be able to enlighten us on the nature of this trial?

Chip

Yeah, that actually might help this.

Gillion

Yeah, is there an answer key? Or like any studying we can maybe do for this one, or...?

Jay

I just like don't want him to turn to, like, I want him to stay with us, not be part of the tribe, you know?

Grizzly

Sure. Yeah, and you would probably assume that like anyone can seek out this Leviathan and take its trial.

Condi

And that's probably why there's like other—

Grizzly

Undersea citizens that have failed.

Charlie

Yeah.

Grizzly

You know that Elder Celeste gained her blessing from this trial, and a different voice, one originating from the left, the sort of smaller coral,

Coral Keeper 2

The trial of the clam is one of the self. All who enter the pool of nacre.

Gillion

Do I have to—can I do it clothed though?

Coral Keeper 2

Enter with edges rough, leave smooth.

Grizzly

Aurora, nature or history, if you'd like to roll.

Milo

Nature. That is going to be 31.

Grizzly

Nacre is, I believe it is the fluid that clams produce to create pearls.

Charlie

Oh!

Milo

I see.

Charlie

I see.

Grizzly

And you know that, and you can say that in your head, and when you say it in your head, everyone will hear.

Milo

Yeah.

Charlie

Cool.

Grizzly

You are all currently mind-linked.

Condi

Awesome.

Charlie

Oh!

Milo

Wow.

Jay

You know, I think I kind of agree with Chip. I feel like this one should be you.

Gillion

Aurora?

Jay

I don't want you to feel like you're alone in this, but I also feel that this is for you. We'll be right here when you're done.

Gillion

Would you guys still love me if I was a coral?

Chip

Of course, man.

Jay

Yeah.

Aurora

Of course.

Chip

Absolutely.

Aurora

You've got little ones growing out of your head right now.

Jay

You already have some, yeah. What's a couple more? I mean, unless it means he'd die, 'cause those other guys were definitely dead.

Aurora

It does seem like a bit of a zombification.

Chip

And we wouldn't love him if he was dead? That's fucked up.

Jay

No, I'd still love him.

Aurora

We'd probably love him.

Jay

If he was dead, it's just like he wouldn't be—

Chip

They always love you more when you're dead.

Jay

It'd be more like a mourning kind of love, and not like a—

Gillion

Man.

[laughter]

Gillion

I think I understand.

Coral Keeper 1

Hours. Hours remain.

Gillion

Hours? Okay. Will I still be able to share this mind link with my friends while I'm in there?

Coral Keeper 1

I cannot say.

Gillion

If this is how the trial is meant to be taken, this is how it's meant to be taken. Thank you for trusting me. Guess I'm gonna go get smoothed now, like that one episode of SpongeBob. You know the one where he turns around?

Chip

Of course I know the one.

Coral Keeper 2

I love that one!

[laughter]

Charlie

Okay.

Gillion

All right, I'm ready.

[laughter]

Charlie

Yeah, if this is what everyone wants and if everyone puts their trust in me, I think after everything we've been through...Gillion is nervous and afraid, and every time he's ever taken a trial by himself, it has not gone well. But seeing that everyone is putting their faith in him and so willing to let him do this, trusting to let him do this, He will shake that off and keep his eyes forward and nod to the guardian.

Grizzly

You guys make this decision together. You nod to, we'll call him the Coral Keeper, and he begins to lead you out of this coral hut by yourself.

Condi

Before he leaves, I just pat him on the back.

Jay

Even when we're not with you, you know we're with you.

Gillion

I know. Thank you.

Jay

You've got this.

Gillion

See ya in a bit.

Grizzly

You follow the Coral Keeper. You walk through a very narrow path of tall algae moss covered coral trees until it breaks into a very small sanctuary. Glowing underwater mushrooms, glowing

underwater plants of all different kinds surround it. And it is just a dark pool, but it's not like the Black Sea where it's just colorless and lightless. It shimmers and sparkles and there are swirling sort of bubbles at the top. It's a bath bomb.

[laughter]

Charlie

It's a bath bomb.

Grizzly

It's like a galaxy of this black liquid and there are just moss-covered steps that the sand [pffffff] parts and depresses to form.

Charlie

Okay, gonna dip a little toe in, get a little temperature check.

Grizzly

It's warm.

Charlie

Warm.

Condi

Mmh.

Milo

Mmh.

Charlie

I look at the guardian suspiciously.

Condi

What does that mean?

[laughter]

Milo

You implying they peed?

Condi

That's what I was thinking, yeah.

Bizly

I also thought that.

Grizzly

You hear in your mind,

Coral Keeper 1

Great blessings I sense in thee. Last to take the trial you are. Believe in oneself.

Gillion

Thank you for allowing me to be its final taker.

Charlie

And after hearing him say, 'believe in myself' I start to go to slowly descend the stairs and I stop.

[there's a pause]

Gillion

Gillion!

Charlie

Then I do a gainer. I do a gainer into the pool.

Bizly

Yeah!

Condi

Let's fucking go!

Milo

Wooo!

Bizly

I haven't heard that in so long, dude.

Condi

It's been so long.

Grizzly

Acrobatics, advantage.

[gasps from players]

Charlie

Wow, that never happens.

Condi

Wow.

Charlie

Well, I only have a minus one. That's a 16.

Grizzly

Sixteen.

Condi

Can I see it?

Grizzly

Can you see it?

Condi

Can I see it?

Grizzly

You guys—

Condi

Can I see the gainer?

Grizzly

Would you like to access the mind link?

Gillion

[holding his head] I'm doing a gainer!

Jay

Whoa, I gotta watch this!

Condi

And I use Flash of Genius on him so he does a really cool gainer.

Bizly

Okay, okay.

Charlie

Thanks, thank you.

Condi

Dirty 20.

Charlie

Nice, that brings it up to a 20.

Grizzly

Flawless gainer.

Charlie

I don't mean to power game, but can Aurora cast Guidance as well?

[laughter]

Aurora

It is written in the stars!

Grizzly

Yeah, yeah, of course.

Charlie

That's another two.

Charlie

Twenty-two.

Charlie

So 22. Do you have anything?

Bizly

Not that helpful.

Grizzly

Okay.

Charlie

Okay, 22 on the most important check.

Grizzly

Sure, glorious gainer.

Charlie

So was that it?

[laughter]

Grizzly

You do a gainer, and as soon as your limbs touch the pool, it almost like, the momentum of the flip slows, and you steadily, gracefully slide, gliding into this pond. As he takes this trial, the trial of the Clam, I'm going to have all of you except for Gillion leave the table.

Bizly

Ah.

Milo

Okay.

Charlie

Fuck, dude.

Condi

Good luck.

Charlie

Yeah.

Jay

You got this.

[all the players, including Charlie start to get up from the table]

Milo

Where are you going?

[laughter]

Charlie

Oh, I just really have to pee.

[bubble transition]

Grizzly

So, Gill, you descend into the clam.

[lights change to a pink-ish purple color]

Charlie

Whoa.

Grizzly

This feels familiar. You have at least experience trials inside of one of the pearls this clam produces. Filled with the dense magic and otherworldly knowledge, these pearls— everything this clam knows, sees, creates— beautiful polished stone. But this is not just a trial of one of the pearls. This is a trial to reach this Leviathan's heart. Anyone can seek great knowledge, blessings, affirmations, reassurance from this being worshiped as a god. So few actually get a chance to speak with it. And one fewer has the chance to speak with it for the last time. The darkness of the pool you have jumped into begins to sort of transition from weightless liquid into solid ground. Again, you are standing in an endless space of dark sand glittering, but there's

nothing except for a cone-shaped bowl in the center floating. It rests on nothing. Okay, do you approach?

Charlie

Yes. I think I'm going to think about what Chip and Jay and Aurora would do, and I look for druidic, and I look at the bowl kind of shifting side to side, trying to see if there's some kind of secret mechanism or way that it's actually not a bowl.

Grizzly

Go ahead and just roll perception or investigation.

Charlie

I'm so bad at everything. Which one?

Grizzly

You tell me.

Charlie

DM, you want a one or a three?

[laughter]

Grizzly

With a three, I mean, you see symbols, but you can't read them unless you speak.

Gillion

Aha! Druidic!

Charlie

Then I continue to move forward.

Grizzly

When you approach this bowl, you look inside.

Charlie

Yes.

Grizzly

And it is filled with a purple sand and writing begins to [pfffft] move in grooves. Words you do know. It's written backwards so that you can read it.

[laughter]

Charlie

Man. It's okay, you don't have to do that, alright? It doesn't have to be canon, but it is, and you can write it regular and I'll just flip the bowl upside down.

Grizzly

Actually, I have to put my jacket back on, it's so cold.

Charlie

Sorry.

Grizzly

A question written in the sand. Is everyone worth saving?

Charlie

Oh. I look at the question in the sand for a long time. I think about everything that's happened.

Gillion

Yes, but I can't save everyone.

Charlie

And it takes him a long, long time to say that.

Grizzly

The sand, like shaking one of those, you know, like doodle boards, the sand vibrates [shh] the bowl, and as it does, the question clears. You continue to look down. New writing begins to form. Why couldn't you?

Charlie

Oh my god.

Gillion

For some, because I wasn't strong enough. And for some, because they didn't want to be saved.

Grizzly

The bowl, slight rumbling. A new question appears. Are you sure about that?

Gillion

No. No, but I'm— I'm sure that I've tried.

Grizzly

Is there more?

Gillion

I can't ever be sure. But I am sure, I am sure that I've tried, and even if I'm late, I'm here.

Grizzly

You speak this. You're sure that you've tried. You reflect as the bowl begins to rumble on its questions about who is worth saving, pressing on if you're sure. And a new question begins to form. [foooooof] It says, are you worthy?

Gillion

Like in general, Great Clam, or like of what?

[laughter]

Charlie

Nothing?

Grizzly

[He shakes his head]

Charlie

Okay.

Grizzly

Nothing.

Charlie

Yeah, I figured.

Gillion

[sighs] I'm trying to be.

Charlie

That's what I give it.

Grizzly

I want you to roll insight.

Charlie

Sixteen.

Grizzly

I'm going to ask, as the bowl rumbles, it takes a minute for anything else to appear. And that time, that extra time that passes, there could be uncertainty. I wonder, the answers you've given,

this is more of an insight into you. Do you believe everything that you've said, or are you saying what you think is the right thing to say?

Charlie

I think—

Grizzly

Truly, how honest?

Charlie

Yeah. For all of the questions except the last, I think he has been truly honest. The last one wasn't a lie. I think he thinks that maybe he'll never feel or truly know that he's worthy, but that the act of trying to be, that that's where any sense of worthiness comes from, knowing that even if he doesn't feel worthy, he will keep trying to be no matter what happens.

Grizzly

More writing appears in the sand, saying, "Can you save yourself?" The first word disappears, and it rewrites, "Will you save yourself?"

Charlie

Gillion thinks back to all of the times that he's jumped in front of Jay's gun or blown something up he was in.

Grizzly

Mm-hmm.

Charlie

Or grappled onto a tiger and turned himself into an ICBM missile and all of the times he's sacrificed, tried to sacrifice, himself for someone else.

Grizzly

With that insight,

Charlie

Yeah.

Grizzly

The connection between the questions of is everyone worth saving and are you worthy become clear.

Charlie

Yeah.

Grizzly

You stare down at this question, "Will you save yourself?", you think back to all the times where you wouldn't.

Gillion

Oh, I've never tried. I can't—I can't protect any of them if I don't protect myself, can I? I will, so that I can, so that I can keep protecting others, so that I can be better and let this hate go.

Grizzly

This clam, it is connected to all things that are inside of it. It is connected to possibly all things like it. Hundreds, thousands, millions of eyes everywhere in every small mollusk or shell, or being that holds a shell, or uses a shell for protection, or fashions a shell into armor. It sees, it knows the truth. So I'll ask, whatever you believe, you can either roll persuasion with advantage if this is truly honest or deception with disadvantage.

Charlie

Yeah.

Grizzly

If you're still lying to yourself.

Charlie

Gillion isn't lying, but he's not saying everything.

Gillion

So that I can let go of this [his voice breaks] hate. This hate that I thought, that I convinced myself it was for the elders, for everything they put me through. For every day of failure, for every day of pain, for every day of not being good enough. But it's not. It's not them I hated. It was myself. It was always myself.

Charlie

That is not a lie.

Grizzly

With advantage.

Charlie

Okay, 22.

Grizzly

The bowl stops trembling. It is smooth and writing forms a final time. To save oneself is to know oneself. You are worthy. And it swirls until the ground, sands around you begin to shift and you find yourself, the sand beneath you falling, you yourself falling to the next trial.

Charlie

Damn, there's more? Well, shit.

Grizzly

When your feet make purchase in sand once more. You see ahead of you an endless tall mountain of sand and a massive black round boulder of a pearl.

Charlie

No! Sisyphus?

[laughter]

Gillion

Ah, well, all I got to do is get this to the top of the hill, right?

Charlie

So I—

[laughter]

Charlie

Grab the pearl and immediately start rolling it up the hill.

Grizzly

Make—

Gillion

This one's way easier than the last one.

Grizzly

Make athletics.

Gillion

I could do this forever.

Charlie

Twenty-five.

Grizzly

It takes, psh, it's heavy.

Charlie

Yeah.

Grizzly

You said 25, right?

Charlie

Yes.

Grizzly

Good, okay. You just barely meet the DC. It's so heavy.

Charlie

Holy shit.

Grizzly

You push. It takes quite a bit of time. By the time you get to the top, your muscles are tight and naturally it rolls all the way back down.

Gillion

Hey, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. No, no, no. Well, second try is the charm.

Charlie

I jog back down the hill.

Gillion

Okay. [claps hands together]

Grizzly

Make a just a general perception check before your athletics check.

Charlie

Eleven.

Grizzly

Eh, might be a little bigger than before.

Gillion

Hey, big guy. Did I get smaller? Here we go.

Grizzly

Roll athletics.

Charlie

And I'm going to do the same thing again.

Grizzly

Okay, yeah.

Charlie

Fifteen.

Grizzly

Now, as you push—

Gillion

Eurgh, eurg. It's just you got to grab low. You grab low and you scoop high. That's what it is.

Grizzly

You take 18 points of psychic damage.

Charlie

Oh, holy—

Grizzly

As it doesn't budge. Not as easy as it was before.

Gillion

Oh!

Grizzly

It's almost like, you know how when you exert yourself so hard you get like a tiny migraine?

Charlie

Yeah, you get like lightheaded.

Grizzly

Yeah.

Gillion

Whew! Okay. That's all right. It's a little harder this time around. But they're all counting on me. I have to do the trial right and bring this big boulder to the top of that hill.

Charlie

And let's see if there's anything I got here that can help me. Got something. How big is it, like?

Grizzly

The boulder?

Charlie

Would you say it's a large object?

Grizzly

Probably, it's pretty large. Maybe give it about like 10-foot radius right now.

Charlie

Okay. 10-foot radius?

Grizzly

If you need a—

Charlie

Holy.

Grizzly

A visual representation, I'll put your mini and the boulder on the table.

Charlie

That's a big fucking boulder.

Grizzly

I can also hold it up near my face. [holding mini and a circle up to face] Mini, boulder.

[laughter]

Charlie

Big boulder. Was it always that big? Okay.

Grizzly

Not even slightly.

Charlie

Okay.

Grizzly

It was about half the size.

Charlie

Well, it's really big now. Let me figure out what I can do. Okay. Rub my hands together and [whoosh] a gust of wind shoots forth. And I'm going to use that gust and push it at the same time.

Grizzly

Okay. Gust of wind plus pushing. That's cool.

Charlie

Yes.

Grizzly

Does the gust of wind travel with you or does it stay affixed?

Charlie

It's affixed to where I am.

Grizzly

Right, right, right, right.

Charlie

Imagine that it's blasting out of me and I'm pushing it at the same time. So I've got kind of like the wind at my back doing this.

Grizzly

With this, you get like maybe a little over a third up the mountain as the air, the gust of wind, this—I believe it's—

Gillion

I am worthy, I am enough, I am wet, I am wet.

Charlie

I start doing affirmations.

Grizzly

It is a 60-foot line of wind blasting at this humongous black pearl.

Charlie

Yeah.

Grizzly

And it does help you roll it at least a little over a third. Go ahead and make another athletics check.

Charlie

Yes! All right, it's a two-timer, it's a two-timer.

Grizzly

What's your athletics score?

Charlie

Plus ten.

Grizzly

The first DC 25.

Charlie

Okay.

Grizzly

With this, you don't know how much it was when you were pushing it without the wind, but with the wind's help, it'll be DC 20.

Charlie

Holy! All right. That is a 19 plus ten, 29.

Grizzly

Okay. In no time at all, you take it all the way back up to the very peak of this mountain made of sand, and you get up there. It rests for a while.

Gillion

Ah!

Grizzly

You notice that the sand itself at the top is still pouring down moving and as the weight of the boulder shifts onto it, it shifts the sand—

Gillion

Wait! No no no no no. Fuck!

Grizzly

Rolls all the way back down.

Charlie

Does it look like as it's rolling away from me, it's getting smaller as things do when they get further away?

Grizzly

Like a camera trick pulling the camera while zooming in.

Charlie

No.

Grizzly

It seems to expand.

Charlie

No. No.

Grizzly

[holding up mini and an even larger circle] New boulder.

Charlie

No. No.

Grizzly

That is a huge, huge pearl.

Charlie

Ah. Okay. All good things come in three, so I jog back down.

Gillion

Okay. It's a little bigger. It's all right. I think I understand now. Trial is about getting the pearl up to the top, no matter what. Of course. It's really big.

Grizzly

I mean, are you gonna try and push it physically or?

Charlie

Does anything new happen?

Grizzly

No.

Charlie

I think I know what Gillion would do, man.

Grizzly

Yeah.

Charlie

I think he's gonna keep fucking pushing it.

Gillion

Okay, all right. I see the problem. It's not about brute force. It's just that no matter what, you have to get the boulder to the top of the hill!

[laughter]

Gillion

The pearl, wisdom. Yeah.

Charlie

I put my head, I look inside of it with my eyes.

Grizzly

You look inside.

Charlie

Yes.

Grizzly

And you get closer and closer to your own reflection until the nose of yours and your reflection's touch, so you're just looking into your own eyes. Roll insight.

Charlie

That's a 20 on insight.

Grizzly

You rush up to your own reflection. You try to look in. You can't actually see past your own eyes. It's just dark within the pearl. With that roll, what can you think of that feels as heavy as this boulder, this pearl? And what else feels so heavy and just seems to get heavier and heavier?

Charlie

There's a few things. There's that choice I made in the Black Sea. There's the guilt that comes with it. There's the guilt of never living up to the expectations and a preemptive guilt that I never

will. There's this thought in the back of Gillion's mind, or this pain, that no matter how much he tries to make other people happy or proud or save them, that it will never be enough to justify what he was supposed to be. And there's this heavy weight that despite all that burdens and that pain of not being able to be there for his gods as they died, the one thing he was charged with protecting, that he was supposed to protect, there's this deeper weight that is this overwhelming guilt for just wanting to live and just wanting to be happy. That's the boulder.

Grizzly

You are someone who throughout all of the years of your life have incessantly shouldered burdens that multiply as much as you can find them. And for the first time, I think, in your life, you see your eyes and your face, and you notice the weight, the pain. You see how you're older, stress has creased lines in your skin. It is hard to see the sadness behind your irises. It's something you have ignored, but in a pearl so polished, it's clear.

Gillion

[starting to break down] Goddamn it, why? Why can't I...push it? When did it get this big?

Charlie

He's gonna try and push it again.

Grizzly

All right, athletics.

Charlie

Thirteen.

Grizzly

It's not budging. It's just pushing sand in front of it, making it harder to push.

Charlie

Yeah.

Gillion

Gah.

Grizzly

And 36 points of psychic damage.

Charlie

Yeah.

Gillion

I just—I just have to get you to the top of the hill. I just have to keep you there. I just have to hold you there. Why can't you just let me push you? Why can't I push you? Why can't I leave you? I don't know who I am without you, so just budge! Please!

Charlie

After, like, minutes of trying, he just slides down on the side of the pearl and puts the back of his head to it, sitting down on the ground next to it, like sweaty, exhausted.

Gillion

I know what you want. I knew what you wanted from the moment, from the moment I saw my own reflection. I get it. I get the trial. But how? How am I supposed to let it go? It's all I have. What if I'm a bad person without it? What if I'm a bad person if I don't hold all of this? I can't—I can't carry it. I know I can't. I've known for so long that it would get this big. But I just thought if I kept getting stronger too, I could keep pushing it. No matter how big it got. And then even if I failed at everything, gods know, I do. Even if I kept failing and fucking up, at least the guilt would make me worthy. At least carrying it with me would make me worthy. How am I supposed to be worthy without it? I don't know how to let it go. I've never let it go. 'Cause it's not just my guilt, is it? It's that hate for myself that keeps me pushing. I'm tired. I'm really tired. I'm really tired of hating myself. But I'm so scared of who I'll become if I don't.

Gillion

I'm so scared that that hate makes me worthy, that that hate— is what makes me help other people. But it's too heavy. I can't do it while I carry this, can I?

Grizzly

You sit among this heavy, silent boulder, this pearl. The only ear, your own, reflected in its surface. You look up the hill, it even looks taller. You look down, you can only really see all the things you carry on your person, the armor, that guards you, the armor you throw in front of others to protect them. What would you like to do?

Charlie

I sit with it for a long time, and I weep to it, and eventually I turn my face towards it again and stand up.

Gillion

I think I have to go now. For a while, you were all that kept me going. That guilt, that pain, that regret. You were all that kept me going. I can't keep growing with you anymore. I let you get too heavy. I need to have a new pearl now. I have people I care about, people I want to protect, not just because— not just because I want to prove myself. And because hopefully if it was a great sacrifice, people would say, oh, remember Gillion, he finally did good and then he was gone. I wanna protect them because they're good people, because they believe in me, 'cause they care about me. I wanna shoulder their hopes. I don't want to shoulder you anymore because I will never, I will never be worthy if I don't let you go.

Charlie

And like he's saying goodbye to an old friend, Gillion presses his head to the pearl. One last time, he remembers every time that he failed, that he wasn't enough, all of the people he couldn't save, and all of the times he chose not to protect himself because he thought that if he just took on a little more pain and made the boulder a little bigger, that eventually it would be big enough to tell him he was worth it. And for the first time, he's going to stop trying to push the boulder. He's going to leave it at the bottom.

Grizzly

You want to walk up the hill yourself?

Charlie

Yeah.

Grizzly

When you pull your head back, You see your reflection, and it almost seems to give you a nod before both of you turn around. You hear the boulder moving away, and you move up. Tell me, when you get to the top, by yourself, what do you see on the other side of this massive mountain of sand.

Charlie

I see not the people that put that pressure on me, not those times that I fell. I get to the top and it is still a long walk. The whole time, a part of Gillion wants to look back. For just a second a thought crosses his mind and he trips and falls towards the top of the sand. When he looks up, holding out their hands is everyone who did believe in him. Chip and Jay at the front, and then they part. A third hand reaches down, an armored one, and he holds it for a second. He looks up and he sees himself reaching down to try and save him. And he gets back up.

Grizzly

Like surfacing in an ocean, thick and heavy, breathing after suffocating so long. You stand up, pulled by your own hand, and you see in front of you those that stand by you and rows shoulder to shoulder. They slowly transition into these silhouettes, various builds, various walks of life, these people, these shapes, just shadow. You are in a hallway of very polished dark stone. At the end, there is a pearl. Dull purple glows in the distance. You walk by countless people to your left and to your right. And as you walk, hands touch your shoulders. They gently touch your back. You stand at the heart of the Luxbris clam in the Oracle Atrium. It is you and this heart. [sighs] You hear in your mind,

Luxbris Clam

I am the Luxbris Clam. Before me, all things are illuminated. Beyond me, all things in light, enlightened.

Gillion

Hello, Luxbris Clam. I am a fish.

Luxbris Clam

You have passed my trials. For what do you seek?

Gillion

Is there a way to save you, or is it too late?

Luxbris Clam

I am both beyond saving and in no need of saving.

Gillion

I understand. Thank you for what you showed me.

Luxbris Clam

It was not me that needed assistance. It is all those who come to me.

Gillion

Then I won't ask how to save you anymore. I thank you for showing me that who I needed to save was myself. I seek power to protect others, to protect myself, to try and save who I can.

Luxbris Clam

Of my younger siblings, you bear their blessings and their forbidden knowledge. Secrets given to us long ago to protect, to give to one, to those we would deem worthy in a time of desperation when it is needed the most. You bear the blood of my oldest sibling and you have passed my trials. I can offer you power, but you alone, I could offer you more.

Gillion

Then Luxbris Clam, let's see what's behind door number two.

Charlie

What you got there?

Grizzly

This pearl [he pulls out a fushigi ball] begins to float in front of you.

Charlie

How is that possible?

Grizzly

Light is really ruining the magic of this.

Charlie

You can do maybe—yeah.

Grizzly

Look how it never moves.

[laughter]

Charlie

God, what I wouldn't give to spend 25 american dollars on such a thing. Completely fair price for such magic.

Grizzly

It floats up and it rests in your hands. You may have—[hands fushigi ball to Charlie]

Charlie

No way. [he starts to play with it]

[laughter]

Grizzly

We've got more back here.

Charlie

Impossible.

Grizzly

[he pulls out another fushigi ball] Oh, this one looks sick. What the hell?

Charlie

That's not even possible.

Grizzly

Impossible.

Charlie

I play with it for 20 minutes. [he almost drops it] Oh, shit.

Grizzly

You are holding the heart of the Luxbris clam.

[laughter]

Charlie

Oh, sorry.

Gillion

Yes.

Grizzly

As you hold it, you begin to feel the rest of the life and the power it can give glow warm in your hands as it is suffused with you. Two polished beings, but still with room to grow. And your vision begins to go white, pure white. There is a message that it's not like you see it, you can't read it, but it enters your mind, something you just feel. All these voices speaking together.

Charlie

Yeah.

Luxbris Clam

We shall aid the future from the past. Each of us growing more and more from the last. A tree that is cut will still grow if its seeds have been sown.

Grizzly

The third line in this map guarded by these Leviathans.

Charlie

Yeah.

Grizzly

This poem, this guide.

Luxbris Clam

See what cannot be seen.

Grizzly

Gill, not only do you receive a blessing of power, making you a bearer of three, this clam trusts you with a wish.

Charlie

Oh, fuck. Oh, fuck. A wish? Do I have to make it now?

Grizzly

No.

Charlie

Okay.

Grizzly

No, you don't.

Charlie

Okay.

Grizzly

There are limits.

Charlie

Of course.

Grizzly

Of which don't really need to go over, but it is not a burden that it gives you, but a gift. You come to outside of the oasis. The trees of coral, slowly they begin to turn white. There is little time remaining inside of the clam before it passes.

Charlie

Then, I'll keep walking and I won't look back.

Grizzly

This is where we switch over to the others. So we'll bring them back to the table and see what kind of things they found while you took your trials.

Charlie

Okay.

[bubbles transition]

Grizzly

We switch over. Gillion disappears, not for the first time, not in a sudden and terrifying way.

Charlie

Yeah, right-o.

Grizzly

It's like the feeling that I would assume washes over the group is like when someone goes in for surgery.

Condi

Little antsy.

Grizzly

While you guys have some time, is there anything you'd like to do among the people of the Coral Conclave or the Coral Conclave itself?

Milo

Could I walk over to maybe a piece of coral that looks healthy? I just want to touch it. I'm trying to see if I can pull any kind of memory or thought out of this thing.

Grizzly

Arcana.

Milo

Yeah, it's a natural 20.

Condi

Wow.

Bizly

Damn, again?

Condi

You're on a fucking roll this week. Holy.

Grizzly

What information are you trying to pull out of it? Or what information is Aurora looking for?

Milo

I think Aurora looked around at all of these fallen R.A.F.T soldiers and undersea folk that definitely biffed it. And I think she's just kind of looking for confirmation that it was the right choice to not go with Gill.

Grizzly

You get the sense that these coral, they store info like experiences and memories and they absorb what happens around them or what is placed in them. They don't carry a sense of foretelling the way the stars do for you. You would get with that a sense of there's no way to know until it happens.

Condi

Would it be clear on Aurora's face that she's like worrying?

Milo

She's very visibly anxious.

Condi

Okay.

Grizzly

I'll also say natural 20, you can pull more out of this. Anything else Aurora would be looking for?

Milo

Could I maybe pull a memory, like a good memory before this town kind of started bleaching and slowly decaying?

Grizzly

You can see a much more vibrant and just a more number of coral structures and trees and plants, and there are smaller coral that aren't made from necessarily the failure of trials or the deaths of enemies, but just small coral people that naturally they grew, naturally they were birthed. You see just a community that has yet to be hit by in no easy way to say, a force of selfish and just people that don't understand what they're destroying, only the why. And it is nice, it is magnificent, the fact that just a colony lives within this leviathan clam. And like the tiny hermit crabs, guard its greatest treasure, its heart, its knowledge, its power. And they themselves, whether they know it or not, live among so many stored memories that they will cherish themselves alone. And it's beautiful that it exists even if it isn't shared with the world.

Milo

I think Aurora would just kind of sit there and keep replaying it.

Condi

I would approach you eventually.

Jay

Hey.

Aurora

Hello. Hi.

Jay

You nervous?

Aurora

Oh, when am I not?

Jay

Yeah, I guess. He's going to be okay.

Aurora

I appreciate it. I don't know why. There's no guarantee ever.

Jay

No, of course not, but I think us staying out here and him going in alone is the right choice. Gillion, I think for his entire life he's kind of been shaped and molded by what everyone else sees in him, and I think right now he just needs to be alone there and maybe see how he can shape and mold himself for once.

Aurora

You're probably right. I just can't shake the thought of what might happen if we're not there with him.

Jay

I mean, those thoughts never really go away. Just recently I had to make a really hard decision to leave both of them in the Black Sea alone and go do what I thought was best in the moment. That entire time until you pulled us out, I was wracked with so much fear and guilt about everything that could go wrong without me and what I could have done to change it if something went terribly. But in our time together, the one thing that I've tried to keep in mind whenever those thoughts creep in is that they're both capable and I need to be able to trust them to do what's best. It's not easy though. It's so not easy. I am very worried too. In a weird way, I think right now we're all where we need to be.

Aurora

Thank you for being there with me.

Jay

Of course.

Condi

Yeah, I mean, I guess I would just sit there with you in silence for a bit.

Milo

I think Aurora's just gonna keep watching this memory just over and over.

Grizzly

As you watch it, roll perception.

Milo

I rolled a 20.

Condi

What the fuck?

Milo

This is 25.

Grizzly

Twenty-five and natural 20 to connect. You notice something you don't think anyone else, even the corol of this time, might not notice what you do. It's such a small detail on a small little piece of maybe it's a scroll or a twig. It's hard to tell, but you can see two symbols, Druidic symbols. It means big sacred tree and it is called Veritas.

Milo

I mean does this strike me as something familiar? Big tree.

Bizly

Big tree.

Condi

Big tree.

Bizly

Big sacred tree.

Condi

Big sacred tree.

Condi

That could be the—

Condi

The big, big tree, the world tree.

Milo

This is connected?

Grizzly

The story that we were told about of the world tree that wraps around Mana. The connection, all of that information, that knowledge, it's passed down through the druids. It's something that, as a concept, that you believe in and you know. It's sort of corroborated by the fact that Jay's mother mentioned it before. But because it is an information or a belief that is confined to small groups of people that get smaller and smaller throughout time. You haven't ever once come across the name of this tree.

Aurora

Jay?

Jay

Yeah?

Aurora

Do you see that?

Condi

Am I able to look at the memory at the same time?

Grizzly

She can show it to you.

Condi

Okay.

Jay

Yeah.

Aurora

Those symbols.

Jay

You're gonna have to translate. I don't—looks like a big tree, maybe?

Aurora

Yeah.

Grizzly

Big sacred tree.

Aurora

Big sacred tree.

Jay

Big sacred tree. Yeah.

Aurora

But this name is unfamiliar to me, but it's new.

Milo

Okay, yeah, okay. All right.

Condi

What was the name?

Grizzly

Veritas.

Aurora

Veritas. This is something. This is more. This is—

Jay

We have time. Maybe we ask the locals about it.

Aurora

Yes.

Jay

I mean...

Aurora

Good idea.

Jay

But a big sacred tree, that could be like the world tree, the one that gives all the druids powers, the one that's connected to your moms and my mom.

Aurora

And your moms and—

Jay

Yeah, singular actually, I do have a dad.

Aurora

Oh, sorry.

Jay

He's a little angry. But—

Bizly

I'm in the back like [eyes bugging out]

[laughter]

Milo

I mean, Aurora's just fucking furiously noting down ideas, this new name. ways that she might be able to find it and I would take the rest of this time—

Grizzly

Absolutely, I think it's something that you can research. If you guys wanna ask around, you can. Just roll two of you investigation.

Condi

Absolutely.

Grizzly

Or one of you with advantage. Chip. Anything you're doing here?

Condi

Nineteen plus nine.

Bizly

Kinda just wanna check in on something really more than anything. Do we have a callInch?

Grizzly

Yeah.

Bizly

Yeah, I wanted to try and call Lizzie and see if she's recovered at all.

[brrring]

Lizzie

Yo.

Chip

Yo.

Lizzie

What's up? Where are you?

Chip

Clam.

Lizzie

What?

Chip

It's a long story. Where are you? How are you doing? You sound better.

Lizzie

I'm as good as one can be with the shit that's happening.

Chip

Yeah, same.

Lizzie

It is chaos in Allport.

Chip

What?

Lizzie

Absolute chaos.

Chip

Wait, what are you talking about?

Lizzie

There are fights, there are protesters, there are monsters. There's this eternal rain. Whatever the fuck you guys did fucked things up beyond fucking repair.

Grizzly

And she's like...

Lizzie

We're fine where we are. But I guess our attack, it did we— some good came out of it. We got through to some people. But where the fuck—clam?

Grizzly

She's like,

Lizzie

What the fuck do you mean, a clam?

Chip

We're in the Undersea right now. Gillion's undertaking the trials—

Lizzie

I don't know anything about that.

Chip

And he's gonna be super fucking powerful after that. All you need to know is he's kind of— he's awesome and he's gonna be even awesome-r.

Lizzie

Good. Yeah, we need that for sure.

Chip

Yeah. I'm also the champion of death.

[laughter]

Bizly

Did she laugh?

Grizzly

Yeah, spit take. She was drinking.

Lizzie

The champion of what?

Chip

Death.

Lizzie

No, you can't just say some shit like that.

Chip

No, I know. It was—listen, I'll explain it all to you later. Got some sick tattoos now. I just, I wanted to make sure you were okay. It sounds like not really, but were you able to find Gryffon, find Arlin?

Grizzly

She pauses for a sec.

Lizzie

No, and I haven't seen the other members of your crew either. I can't, I don't wanna say much that isn't in code, but we're safe. We're in the west. We're finding more allies. We're regrouping and coming up with our next steps. Power is what we need for sure. We need more, especially with the way things are going and shit, I don't know. Meeting back up with you guys as soon as possible would help.

Chip

Just hold out for a little longer, okay? We're doing everything we can and we will be—we'll have to find our crew, we'll have to find everyone, and we'll be there.

Lizzie

Good and I'm looking for him.

Chip

I know. You said you were gonna do it. I take that to mean you've done everything you can. It's not gonna be easy.

Lizzie

Yeah, we got Roofus and his wife out of Allport. So they're with us.

Bizly

Who else do we know in All-Port?

Condi

We still have Earl, right? We didn't leave him back in Allport again. He came with us?

Grizzly

Earl's with the crew.

Condi

Yeah.

Grizzly

Yeah, he's probably still on Canella with Ollie.

Chip

Thank you. Just—

Lizzie

Yeah, whatever.

Chip

Just hang in there. Hey, how attached are you to your eye?

Lizzie

Uh—

Chip

The cool one.

Lizzie

Why do you ask?

Chip

The Champion of Death stuff.

Lizzie

Very.

Chip

Okay, good to know. Well—

Lizzie

You owe me a deep, elaborate explanation.

Chip

Yeah, I will—

Lizzie

For everything.

Chip

I know. I know. I'm sorry.

Lizzie

Just hurry up with whatever you're doing under the ocean and get over here safe.

Chip

Will do. [there's a pause] See ya!

[laughter]

Grizzly

What was your investigation rolls?

Condi

Thanks to the advantage, I got a 19 plus nine, 28.

Grizzly

What kind of questions or information you guys trying to figure out?

Condi

Oh, god. What do you—what do you think? You got anything?

Milo

What I'm most curious about is like, if there's mention of it here, could this kind of almost be like a root in a way? Like, this is part of where it draws power from. Like, this is a significant source of power.

Grizzly

I think Aurora would get the sense that the roots of the tree are on the surface of the planet itself.

Milo

Right.

Grizzly

Those giant colossal walls that split the oceans. If you're inside a clam right now, It's possible that the tree and the Leviathans connect in some way.

Milo

Yeah.

Grizzly

Maybe they share power. Maybe they give and they take and it's some sort of recycling of magic. It sounds right. But as far as drawing power from inside the clam here, likely not.

Milo

So not like a significant, like, source at all.

Grizzly

No, no, no. The Leviathans dying, you don't think is going to—

Milo

It's not contributing.

Grizzly

It's not contributing.

Milo

Okay.

Grizzly

But— I've explained before that it does contribute to the survivability of the ocean itself.

Condi

Yeah, the way I'm interpreting—

Grizzly

The ecosystems and the people.

Condi

What you're saying is almost like the leviathans are trees taking the CO2 and pumping out oxygen in a sense.

Grizzly

It's a very good way to interpret it.

Condi

Yeah.

Milo

Yeah.

Grizzly

If the CO2 was magic.

Condi

Yeah.

Grizzly

Pure magic.

Condi

My other question would be if there's any like maybe legends or tales about how to reach the tree.

Grizzly

Asking around about the tree by name, you get the attention of the leader of this colony of coral. Most of these, these guys, these coral creatures, they're not super like savvy or they don't recognize it super well. They are all linked by mind and that leads you to the leader and they describe stories from ancestors of instructions with basically this power split and guarded by

Leviathans, sort of like a deal made between them, the druids of the undersea specifically, and a way to find the other ones. They don't know how to climb the tree. They don't know too much about legends or or details about the tree specifically, but the Druids called it the Tree of Many Truths.

Milo

That's still great information.

Condi

Yeah.

Milo

Can I ask just like specifically where I saw those markings in the—

Grizzly

Yeah, it was like—

Milo

Like carved on something or—

Grizzly

I said it could be like a scroll or a stick, but it could also have been like— it's just very hard to tell.

Milo

Yeah.

Grizzly

But it could also be like a little statue or something that was carved out of wood or like a gift or a trinket, an heirloom, and it had those carvings on it.

Condi

Just a clarification question. You said there's instructions to find the other powers, like—

Grizzly

The Leviathans essentially have power for a weapon split as well as directions to the next one split.

Condi

So there's, okay—

Grizzly

It's in both.

Condi

So there's another weapon basically.

Grizzly

Yeah.

Milo

Okay.

Condi

Okay. Yeah, if that's the bulk of the information, I think I'm happy with that.

Milo

I think that's all I got.

Grizzly

You re-enter. You emerge back into the small village. How would you approach your group of friends and what do they see?

Charlie

Gillion looks lighter. Did I—did it give me like a pearl or its heart, or was that like I just kinda got to hold it for just a second?

Grizzly

No, you hold it.

Charlie

Like I still have it?

Grizzly

That is the last pearl this clam will ever make.

Condi

Wow.

Charlie

Then I'm holding that close to my chest, and I—yeah, I'll walk into the clearing or building where everyone is. He looks like—he looks ragged but relieved. I guess if I had to describe it. It's not like he's taken any physical damage or blows or anything, but as he walks towards you, he does take the cloak that he's been wearing and unfasten it and let it fall to the ground.

Bizly

Dude, I'm full sprint headed straight for him. I like show up and kind of almost like half tackle you and like stand back.

Chip

Dude.

Gillion

[sighs] Dude.

Chip

Dude?

Jay

Dude?

Gillion

Dude.

Aurora

Dude?

Gillion

Dudes.

Bizly

I'll hug him.

Charlie

I'll hug him. I'll bring everyone in.

Condi

Yeah, group hug.

Gillion

I think I needed to do that alone. Thank you.

Chip

Yeah.

Jay

Yeah.

Chip

What happened?

Jay

Yeah, what went on in there?

Gillion

Well, I don't know. I feel as if a great myth could be written about it. There was this big rock.

Bizly

No.

Condi

No way.

Bizly

No fucking way.

Gillion

And this big hill and

Condi

No fucking way.

Milo

I was joking about that!

Bizly

We were talking about it in there.

Condi

We were talking about that in the green room.

Bizly

She literally said this.

Charlie

I probably pushed it up and watched it fall down six or seven times.

Condi

No shot. That's so funny.

Milo

I was literally in there going, he's doing the trial of Sisyphus.

Charlie

I did the trial of Sisyphus.

Grizzly

It continuously got bigger. [holding up circles for other players to see]

Milo

Wow!

[laughter]

Charlie

I did the trial of Sisyphus.

Milo

That is so funny.

Condi

That is actually so funny.

Charlie

Fishyphus.

Milo

Fishyphus.

Charlie

Fishyphus.

Grizzly

But thematically...

Condi

Yeah.

Charlie

There was more to it.

Milo

Absolutely.

Charlie

There was a little more to it.

Gillion

But I stopped carrying the boulder.

Chip

I'm glad.

Jay

Yeah.

Condi

Just a smile, kind of like—

Chip

What did you get? Did you get like— every other time we got a blessing of some kind.

Gillion

I got this.

Chip

Whoa.

Gillion

One last pearl.

Chip

Is that a magical gravity ball?

Gillion

No, it's the final pearl of the Luxbris Clam. [starts to play with it]

Jay

You sure you should be playing with it like this?

Gillion

Conducts all sorts of magical energies and is able to do things that are completely incomprehensible.

Jay

How are you doing that?

Aurora

I'm sorry, what did you repeat what you said?

Chip

I can't hear you right now. I really—this makes me really want to buy one and spend \$40.

Jay

Yeah, is there like a gift shop?

Aurora

Plus shipping and handling.

Chip

Yeah, of course.

Gillion

The trials were not against Leviathan they were against myself.

[laughter]

Gillion

And that's what I got.

Jay

Huh.

Gillion

A rock.

Jay

A cool rock.

Gillion

A cool rock. A polished rock.

Charlie

Am I like physically smoother or like, I actually have no idea. I don't think I know yet what else I got.

Grizzly

It is called the Boon of High Magic. You have a 9th level spell slot.

[all the players] What? What? What?

Charlie

What the hell am I going to do with that?

Condi

I guess upcast a spell. Upcast a spell, dude.

Charlie

A 9th level spell slot?

Grizzly

And you can increase your intelligence score by two.

Condi

You're smarter??

Milo

It sucked some of the juice out.

Condi

It sucked some of the—does he get taller?

Charlie

Oh my god. My intelligence goes from eight to ten.

[laughter]

Milo

That's a flat zero, baby.

Charlie

That is a flat standard guy. Maybe even still a little less, but it's good.

Jay

Were you there with it in its final moments?

Gillion

Indubitably.

Chip

Gillion, you seem smarter.

Aurora

Wow.

Jay

That's a big word.

Gillion

Indubitably.

Grizzly

You guys would also notice at this point the rest of the coral structure is still vibrant, now slowly they start to fade.

[all the players] Oh.

Bizly

Fuck.

Grizzly

Oh, it's getting darker. The bioluminescence is getting dimmer. This clam is going to pass, and inside its shell it will just be darkness.

Milo

What are the— these coral people...

Charlie

Yeah.

Milo

Look like right now? Are they also kind of slowing down?

Grizzly

Yeah, almost calcifying in a way.

Charlie

No!

Bizly

No!

Charlie

Oh my god.

Grizzly

But you guys are all mind-linked. You can feel their feelings.

Bizly

Oh my god.

Charlie

Oh no.

Condi

No.

Grizzly

They're happy to rest here.

Charlie

Okay. That's better than what I thought it would be.

Grizzly

They protected as they were meant to do. Protected this clam's greatest power and final wish.

Milo

I think Aurora would just kind of be trying to send the signal of just like, thank you.

Condi

Yeah.

Milo

Over and over again.

Grizzly

You get a signal back, one of friendship. It's not like a tearful farewell, but just a togetherness.

Chip

Hey, Gillion.

Bizly

I say as we're watching him die.

Charlie

Okay.

Chip

He has to die, Odelath.

Gillion

Is that what you think?

Chip

Yeah. I mean, look at everything we've seen. Look at what's happening right here. I mean, god, who would do this?

Jay

Not to advocate for death, I guess, but my grandma did also say that this wasn't their plan. That only really leaves Odelath.

Gillion

It's okay.

Chip

There's something else. When I took the deal—

Gillion

Champion of Death.

Chip

Champion of Death.

Gillion

Yeah, yeah.

Chip

I got nam—a name, I know who, I have to kill someone.

Gillion

Oh, great.

Chip

Well...

Gillion

Who's the name?

Chip

I have to kill one of the elders of the Undersea.

Gillion

Ah and what happens if you don't?

Chip

I fight for my soul every night.

Grizzly

Mm.

Chip

I know I told you I didn't get any names.

Jay

I was about to ask about that.

Chip

Yeah, I know. It just— it didn't seem like the right time.

Jay

I trust you.

Chip

But—

Gillion

There's no forgiveness for what he's done. He has committed crimes against the world. But please, even if it's just a moment, I have to try. I have to try. And I have to hope that a part of him knows that what he's doing is wrong and that a part of him wants to atone because maybe then something as unforgivable as this all is, something good could come out of it. And you know what? He'll probably say no.

Chip

That's what I was thinking.

Gillion

So honestly, like, you might be clear. But Chip, I just ask in some way you let me try and get through to him. And if I can't, we can cut his head off together.

Chip

Okay, that's awesome. That's all I was looking for.

Gillion

3, 2, 1 it.

Chip

3, 2, 1 it. See, I was really worried. I'm actually surprised to hear you say that after everything we've seen, just 'cause I didn't think you'd want to show any kind of mercy to someone like that.

Gillion

It's not mercy. He's going to carry the weight of what he's done for the rest of his life and part of me wants that to be long. Part of me wants him to spend the rest of his days understanding how much of a mistake he's made. I don't want to show him mercy, but the world needs what it can get right now. And if there's even a chance that I can show him that this is a failure, then maybe there's a chance that he can get back up and do something right for once in his life. But again, probably not gonna happen. Probably not. But I have to try.

Chip

I understand, and I won't—I'm not just gonna go do something.

Gillion

I know. If it was just a choice between you and him, Chip, I'd choose you every day of the week.

Chip

You kinda chose me over the world.

Gillion

Yeah.

Chip

A little bit. So like...

Jay

That's so romantic.

Chip

Whatever.

Gillion

I didn't think about it that way at all.

Gillion

No, I really I thought it was super—

Chip

Super platonic.

Gillion

Like, platonic love. Indeed.

Milo

Nate and I looked up at each other and just locked eyes.

[laughter]

Gillion

But he is a very, very powerful elder and he knows a lot. If there's even a chance.

Chip

I know, I understand, and no matter what, I think more important is that we do what's best for the world anymore. We do what we can to help.

Gillion

I agree. But again...

Jay

Probably not gonna happen.

Chip

Yeah, no, totally.

Gillion

If he's not into it.

Chip

Yeah, and—

Gillion

Ooh boy!

Chip

Yeah, we'll 3, 2, 1.

Jay

Well, if we want to give you that chance, our focus should probably be trying to get that collar on him, yeah? I don't think he'll listen if he can fight back still.

Gillion

I think that's our best shot.

Jay

Okay.

Gillion

There is also a plan B.

Grizzly

[he pumps his fists excitedly] Yes!

Gillion

The 'B' does stand for befuddlement. Befuddlement, what a word. Befuddlement.

Chip

Four syllables.

Gillion

Something's changed. I feel smarter than any baby.

[laughter]

Grizzly

With the mention of a plan 'B', you hold the vial of befuddlement.

Charlie

Stupid juice!

Bizly

Yeah.

Condi

Yay!

Grizzly

The moss collar of muting.

Condi

Mm-hmm.

Grizzly

And you find your way, led by the leader, the Coral Keeper.

Charlie

Oh man.

Grizzly

Opening up the clam for a final time, you exit the Luxbris Clam.

Condi

Yeah.

Grizzly

It's part of your journey for almost the entirety of it.

Charlie

Yeah.

Grizzly

Now you hold its last one, its heart, and [ooooooooooh] Ursus swims back around, picks you all up. You traverse the current to where you hope to find Pelagus.

Charlie

The last one.

Condi

Maybe it won't be too late.

Grizzly

In time to interrupt whatever Odelath is planning. And that is where we're going to end the session.

Condi

Ooo.

Charlie

Ooh-wee!

Bizly

If you wanna watch the next one, it's already available at jrwishow.com. You can go watch it right now. J-R-W-I-S-H-O-W dot C-O-M. Fushigi!

[Charlie and Condi together] Fushigi!

Grizzly

And now we find ourselves at the end of the episode. Still, the whole cast hasn't seen this episode, so this session is kind of a moment that only you and I have shared with Charlie/Gillion. And I'm really proud of him, and I'm just really proud of this episode. So hope you guys enjoyed it. But, uh, now I'm gonna jump into thanking our \$50 tier members on our website and our Patreon. Big thank you to Nyx, Actual Soap, Slumby Doc, Trench Voidwater, AceHSG, Jorb3334, Isaac, Celio Slime, Raxoid1109, The Fox Named Trinket, Alfred Deerly, Nervous Leg, Peeber, Jinko, Ash Has Left, Apathy, Staxolotl, StrongBondCosplay, Vivyainou, Sunny.q.light, IdakySensei, Condi-Non-Fiction, FallenBeck, Crangaelious, NodeTheToad, CanonicalJRWIJesus, Mr Nacho, Iluvia, Reedodeedo, rovarok, Mini Big Boy, GhandiSharma, AsteriaNix, JamVolker, F8Breaker, GingerMallow, Almajor, Titan Storm, Roober, SpeciousBroom23, Hentologist, Pezza, Bobo the Jackalope, StealthyBre, Grey Gaston, Hersheturdurduruf, Domo, MoonsAlibi, melmel, Shilohs shhh, Expoogaloo, Lauren Rose V, DarlingSongbird, Slimecicle, beans, Jackbytheway, cinnabunny03, Mr_Cee-Grizzly Why the Whale, Frogonaut1618, Inigo_Devilin, Crankymarten, Calz, InsomniaDraws, AraTheKing, It_Demo, ElvishCyborg, Skylabber, Bazzozo, Firefox1292, AWE50MEMAN, TooniLooni, NoraNightly, bluealienfox, Wildjames, DJ1001, AerynMoment, Bebs0n, Caffeine Connoisseur, Bran_Nyan, UnstableKha0ticCracker, Alien Corginator, RedStatic, TheJame, Sumpfe, ItsAlbert, Teenie_Ghosts, Stinkyman, jasonthefricker, Joshua Mills, MewDragonLord101, Tired Eldritch Horror, Mylern, NoctecPaladin, Anna, I'm Rollin' Cuh, Narwhal Shellfish, MarioCraft6000, Hiibiskus, KatusBatus, Caspians-BF-Rhydian, thelootgoblin, Jordan Darlin, Alistair Susi, TheRetrolizer, JoJoJordan123, Avi_E, Kronus513, vaporslash, MrMustelid, Dev the Dolphin, and finally, CHEESUS.

Grizzly

Alright, moving on to the patreon. Austin, Norimi, LukaToni71, Chief, Just a Guy, Basic Blurr, Psycho Pyro, R the King, Fiber Hypnotic, I'm just a birb. Lightning Deathbringer. Oliverlollie., Mr. Cee_if you hear this, you drink Stupid Juice. It's CFr3sh. Me4everM8. Dylan McNally. Mr. Nacho. And Jay Newell. Well, that's it for this one. I truly hope you guys enjoyed, and I'll be

interested to jump in the comments and see what everybody thought. So take care, everyone.
Bye-bye.