

## [Autumn in Hieron 26: Why Are You Here, Again?](#)

Amaya/@adawnundarked

AUSTIN: Let me, let me get my... wait one second, let me recapture Chrome...

NICK: Time dot. Time dot easy. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughs) That's, that's how you pronounce that.

DRE: Ah, that's. That's what that new Public Enemy, uh, doc is about. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: Time dot Eazy. (Nick laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Where - where are we -

DRE: -E.

AUSTIN: Right, I got it. That's also N.W.A., Dre.

DRE: Yeah. (intently) Oh, shit!

AUSTIN: You said - you said Public Enemy.

DRE: Yeah, alright.

AUSTIN: I'm not gonna - I won't -

DRE: Listen (laughs) I had a late night. (laughter)

AUSTIN: That's a late night! Okay. At...

DRE: I was out till 4.

AUSTIN: 55, let's say?

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: Okay.

ART: Sure.

[Out of sync clapping]

AUSTIN: (laughs) Uhh. And again, at 05.

NICK: Okay. (laughs)

[Slightly less out of sync clapping]

AUSTIN: He'll work with it.

NICK: That was closer.

ART: Oh, um -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): It was closer. It was an improvement.

ART: Am I, am I like -

NICK (overlapping Art): That - that first one - I think we all clapped at completely different times.

AUSTIN: Compl- I heard four distinct claps.

DRE: We did. Mmhm. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (jokingly) When the police interview me, I'll - there were, there were four claps, I'm *sure*. (laughter)

DRE: (laughing) Jesus christ.

ART: Do we wanna - try one more, maybe?

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: I reloaded my time.is.

AUSTIN: Sure, let's go at 40. I just keep time.is up now, just in case. God, I might need to clap in five seconds, who knows! (Nick laughs)

[Slightly more out of sync clapping]

AUSTIN: (resigned) Alright. That second one was the best!

ART: Yeah, sorry, we suck.

DRE (overlapping Art): That was the best.

NICK (overlapping Dre): That second one was better (laughs).

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah. We peaked. (Dre laughs) Alright. Ready?

DRE: Yeah!

ART: Yeah.

[MUSIC: AUTUMN NOT WINTER]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast, focused on critical world-building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. We are, as always, presented by streamfriends.tv, and runbutton.net. We're going to be continuing our game of Dungeon World today. Dungeon World's a game by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel, it's a hack of a game called Apocalypse World, which was originally by D. Vincent Baker. Our agenda in Dungeon World is to portray a fantastic world, to fill the characters' lives with adventure, and to play to find out what happens. My name's Austin Walker. Joining me today, let's go from east to west...? Andrew Lee Swan?

DRE: Hey! You can find me on Twitter, @swandre3000, and of course I'm part of StreamFriends as well, at streamfriends.tv.

AUSTIN: Nick Scratch?

NICK: Hi, my name's Nick Scratch, you can find me at nickscrat.ch.

AUSTIN: Ooh! I didn't know about that.

NICK: (pleased) Yeah.

DRE: That's a new... that's a good one.

AUSTIN: You got that - you got that .ch.

NICK: Yep!

AUSTIN: Is that Czechoslovakian? What h- what has .ch?

NICK: Uh... I forget now, actually.

AUSTIN: Switzerland, it says.

NICK: Yes! Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: That's good. And Arthur Tebbel?

ART: You can find me on Twitter @atebbel. Please tweet at me and tell me why at ch makes sense, for Switzerland.

[MUSIC ENDS]

AUSTIN: (reading) The domain ch derives from... Confœderatio Helvetica, the Helvetica Confederation. The Latin name for the country.

ART: That's some sort of font, conglomeration?

AUSTIN: No.

DRE: Yes! Font party.

AUSTIN: The Latin - (laughs) font party's a different website, don't -

DRE: (mimicking Keith) Font party! (laughter)

AUSTIN: Do *not* g- (laughs) yeah. Ooh, font party! (laughter) Uh -

DRE: Aw, somebody bought breedingcowboys again! (mock angrily) Ahhh.

AUSTIN: I'm really mad, that Switzerland, in Latin, is called H- the Helvetic Confederation! Why don't we call it that? That's a dope name!

DRE (overlapping Austin): I - yeah that's - (laughter) that's pretty good!

AUSTIN: Man. We done goofed!

DRE: Start a #campaign after we finish this episode.

ART (overlapping Dre): Oh I bet - who got sw?

AUSTIN: Yeah who did get .sw?

DRE: Uh, Star Wars.

AUSTIN: Yeah (laughs) right. The Star Wars (laughs).

ART: Yeah Lucas...

DRE: The nation of Star Wars.

ART: Lucas got it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Weird. Okay! So the last time we played, was, for us, again, a couple of months ago. Though for the listeners, it will only have been two weeks since they heard the last game. And in that last game, you all did a whole bunch of stuff. You started off at the Ordennan Manufacturing Mine... section of this *massive* tower. You're in this massive tower. It fell over. Each of the districts seems to be a window into a different world. Uklan Tel, who is a, a semiotician, and an Archivist, explained to you that sometimes, weird stuff happens and... possible futures, and possible other timelines, fall into this one. And that seems to be happening a lot, here. You... so it's, from the top to the bottom. You ran into a different dimension, where there's a different Hella, and Ordenna had taken over this tower, it seemed? (amused) And then Fantasma dispelled that entire universe? Causing a huge collapse. You all fell into different sectors, of this, tower? Hadrian got caught in a weird, like, just like, pure magic realm, realm of pure rupture, where, where, things were... happening all over the place. Were the books in it again? I think the books showed up again.

ART: The books did show up again.

DRE: I think they did, sounds right.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: They're following me, and they should stop. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: Throndir wound up in a world, where, what we know, as players, is a sector where... the Disciples of Fantasma had taken over. We know that because the symbol, that has shown up in past episodes. But your characters have no idea about that. We call that dramatic irony. We use that a lot here! (Dre laughs) It was like a weird, like, wizard... town. Where, there were just all of these storefronts, where you could just go and get dope stuff, for free, I guess? And you happened to find a weird, magic ball? #00:05:00#

DRE: Yep.

AUSTIN: That, makes you, that gives you like an extra boost of energy? Then, you all... kind of, got rescued, more or less, by Fantasma, and... wound up in this district that was dedicated to five different gods, five different... you don't know if it was five different aspects of the same god, you recognized some of the icons, but you couldn't put them all together. And, while there, were captured by a group of, what you would come to learn were called pala-din. Which seemed to be some sort of... some sort of soldiers, that are... automata, basically? I guess? Stone automata? And you were guided down to the south end of this map, the bottom of this tower. Where, you met Tabard Alon, who... seems to be the person in command of this group. I think maybe it was there that you found the map. That's what happened. You found the map *there*.

ART: That is correct.

AUSTIN: Of, of... his expedition, where he was travelling to *here*, from the City of First Light. Which, for, for friends following along at home, are... is down in this, the kind of south end of this, of this... of Hieron, the little tear-drop shape. That's set off, from the rest of the, the continent. And... while there, you also saw, a bunch of soldiers in cages, I just remembered? Tabard gave a huge talk about what it means to be pala-din, which was very complicated, but, wrapped up quickly, is like. Hey, don't, don't do this, you don't want to be this. You lose some of your own will, and he demonstrated that by flexing his arm, and making Hadrian's arm flex. He then told you all to bounce, to, just leave, and sent you on your way. With some water, I believe. So, I think at the start of this game, you are all back? At the campfire? Is that right, did you go back?

ART (overlapping Austin): What - um...

NICK: What's this thing?

ART: Yeah, I think so.

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Oh, is this visible?

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That shouldn't be visible. That's weird.

NICK: Oh.

AUSTIN: Oh well.

DRE: (laughs) Whoops!

NICK: I'll ignore it.

AUSTIN: (sheepishly) Bop! Oh no no,

NICK (overlapping Austin): I will - I don't -

AUSTIN: Actually, wait, you know what? That was visible. Because, when you were marched down there, you did see a strange light coming from over that way.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: That was visible, you're good.

NICK: Okay. (laughs)

ART (overlapping Nick): Hey Keith sorry for this, this little burst of noise I'm about to do. Also you guys, but whatever. [muted whirring noise]

DRE: Are - what?

AUSTIN: Are you in an elevator? Are you...

DRE: Yeah.

ART: No...

NICK: Are you rewinding your VHS (Austin laughs) to take it back to the store?

DRE: Have you - have you taken over... the episodes of Will This Blend? (Austin laughs) Is that what - is your blender warming up? (Nick laughs) Don't blend that, Art.

ART: I was adjusting my, my desk.

DRE: Oh.

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): It sounds like the start of a Streets of Rage boss fight. Like.

DRE: Yeah! (loud laughter)

AUSTIN: (imitates whirring siren sound that starts the boss music, continues singing in background)

ART: Yeah also like, like a dude just burst in with a kangaroo? (Dre laughs) And I have to fight him real quick.

AUSTIN: (laughing) I'm throwing out Dungeon World, we're just gonna play Streets of Rage 2 the RPG from now on! (laughter)

DRE: Uh, yeah? No, I'm - I'm good, let's, let's go!

AUSTIN: (laughing) There's a guy with a jetpack and a guy on a motorcycle, go. (laughter) What do you *do*?

DRE: Jump kick!

AUSTIN: Good, that was the right answer. (laughter)

NICK: I - (laughter) I'm gonna roll a search check for pipes?

AUSTIN: You found a pipe, good! (laughter) Take a +1 to damage (trails into laughter). The next trash can has an apple in it, do you eat the apple? You should, it gives you your life back! Shrug.

DRE: Yeah, no, absolutely.

AUSTIN: (laughter) Okay!

DRE: I wanna take all the money pickups before anybody else can do that.

AUSTIN: (imitates item pickup sound) Alright. (Dre laughs) Streets of Rage 2 is a video game that came out on the Sega Genesis console, in nineteen ninety... something! (laughter)

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Oh, I think it was like nineteen eighty something.

AUSTIN: (sighs) Streets of Rage 1 was probably eight something, right?

DRE (overlapping Austin): No, no no. No.

AUSTIN: (typing) No Streets of Rage was '91...

DRE: Streets of Rage 2... was definitely in the nineties.

AUSTIN: '92... for Streets of Rage 2. (enthusiastically) Anyway, what are you doing! You're around this campfire, you come back. Sunder Havelton, who... is a former colleague, of, of Fantasma's, is there, and Uklan Tel, who is a... a semiotician, and an Archivist, from the New Archives, is there. And he's still resting, I think. I imagine Sunder is kind of picking over notes that she and, and Uklan have taken... you know. Drawing and redrawing that map, because that map keeps erasing itself. And, is generally like... I think Fantasma, you notice that... she's in a more serious state than she normally is. I've kind of described your relationship together a bunch as colleagues, and, and how kind of like, you're the studious one and she's the one who like, goes out into the world. #00:10:00#

NICK: (echoey) Sure.

AUSTIN: But like... she's capable of being an academic, you know?

NICK: (more echoey) Right.

AUSTIN: You're really echoey right now, Nick?

NICK: (echoey) Oh am I?

AUSTIN: (pauses) Yeah.

DRE: Oh, whoa!

ART: Oh, yeah, super.

DRE: Yeah, you are.

AUSTIN: Is this like a new bit? (laughs) Is this the new voice of Fantasma?

NICK (overlapping Austin): No... (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: Cause it's pretty good.

ART: (jokingly) Tremble at the sight of seven Fantasmos! (laughter)

NICK: (not echoing) Uh - okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, way better.

NICK: Is that better?

DRE: Yeah, you're good.

NICK: Alright.

DRE: Yeah, you're better.



NICK: I had accidentally clicked on the... apparently clicked on the, the voice meter thing that makes me echoey like this.

AUSTIN: Oh, weird.

NICK: (very echoey) Whoaaaa.

AUSTIN: That's... a useful trick!

DRE (overlapping Austin): Yeah, no.

ART (overlapping both): Is that a button we have on voice meter?

DRE: Whenever you're -

NICK (overlapping Dre): Yeah, you can -

DRE: Whenever you're invisible from now on, you need to use that voice. (Austin laughs)

NICK: (laughing) Okay.

AUSTIN: (pause) Alright. So... so yeah, so yeah, so you're familiar with that like - you know. When push comes to shove, she can do this, but. It's almost a sign of anxiety, I think, for her. Like - you know. She wears it on her sleeve that she's super capable, and can kind of take things as they come, and re-rolls with the punches, like that's her whole character, that's her whole thing. So when it's time for her to really like, sit down and work through stuff? That's like a sign that maybe she isn't confident about what's happening.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: What do you all do?

DRE: (pauses) I mean at this point, like (hesitates) we no longer have the luxury of time.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

DRE: Between, like, this army, of like, automatons, that... we can't hurt, or at least we haven't figured out how to hurt, knows we're here.

AUSTIN: I -

DRE: And actively wants us gone.

AUSTIN: Have you fought them yet, at all?

ART: (semi-confidently) I think I can hurt them.

DRE: We - we haven't -

ART (overlapping Dre): Yeah we haven't - we haven't fought them.

DRE: The first time we ran into them I had the vision from Kindrali of he shoved a spear into it, and the thing was just like, oh that's interesting, you did that to me, okay.

AUSTIN: Right. At the same time remember that Art - or that Hadrian found an arm of one of them, *ages* ago.

DRE: Yeah. That's true.

AUSTIN: *Way* back in the day. I think he's since lost that. I think, I think the people, (sarcastically) the good folks at Auniq took his (laughs) pala-din arm away. (Dre laughs)

ART: We're coming for you Auniq.

DRE: Um.

ART: I'm coming for you.

DRE: I mean Hadrian's arm... thing? Isn't getting any better?

AUSTIN: Nah, it isn't!

DRE: I - at this point, I think we just need to get what you all came for, and we need to leave. Plus we're like - we're using rations that...

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

DRE: We have to also think about using to get back.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Um.

NICK: Yeah, that's true.

ART (overlapping Nick): I understand what you're saying, and I, and I respect, (Dre laughs) I respect your input. But / think we should stay, and, and, and press on.

AUSTIN: Well what - what are you here for, again? (laughing) I remember, but I'm asking *you*. To tell me.

ART: Like - like what did we come here for?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: Or what - what is Hadrian looking for, now?

AUSTIN: Those are both - good questions.

ART: (pauses) *Hadrian* would really like to see the other part of the throne room.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: That's what Hadrian would feel good leaving.

AUSTIN: (pauses) And... what were *you* here for? Like, as a group? What was the party sent her for, from... Velas?

ART: (hesitates) That's an excellent question.

AUSTIN: (amused) Does anyone remember?

ART: And I haven't... (Dre laughs)

NICK: Uh. It was a... quest.

AUSTIN: It was, it was a quest.

NICK: We got a quest, and then uh... we went on it.

ART: My *divine* quest. Uh. Is to uh. To discover the, the, the... s- the... secrets! Of the, the Mark of the Erasure. (pauses) Which I guess I would also like to know before leaving, because I promised, I promised Samoths that that's... that's what I would do in exchange for these powers.

AUSTIN: Mm.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: So I think I'm stuck here, guys! I don't know that I can go. (laughs)

AUSTIN: The big thing too, was just like, the Velitian council was sending you to recover... to investigate, and, and potentially find... more of what you found in that first, tower.

ART: Oh, the, the plumbobs.

AUSTIN: The plumbobs... Well the plumbobs, (laughs) again, for the people who are (laughs) who are listening and very confused. (laughter) Uh, The *Sims* (laughs) series uses these little crystals (loud laughter) to indicate where characters are? What Art means is these little, these little kind of cylindrical... like, diamond - like *long* diamond crystals, basically. Diamond shape.

ART: But - was there actually a diamond crystal at the last one, or is that just the notation on the map?

AUSTIN: No there were actually a bunch of little diamond crystals on that map.

ART: Oh okay.

AUSTIN: But they're - that, that is actually not what they were sending you here for. They were sending you here for... (pauses, sighs) I'm trying to remember if they actually *told* you this or not... (pauses) I think - so like -

ART (overlapping Austin): We got much less like pre-quest narration than Boat Party?

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Well... Boat Party had like -

ART (overlapping Austin): Like Boat Party had like, oh well like this is precisely...

AUSTIN: Yes. (laughs)

ART: Where they're just kind of like *go*. Get uh, get in the woods. #00:15:00#

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): They wanted you to come investigate this, and, and hopefully bring back something as powerful as what you found the last time, which was that book.

ART: Yeah.

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: That book that... (questioningly) Fantasma has...? Still...?

NICK: (pauses) Yes. Yeah! Wait.

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): You, you're like, officially, they *own* it. But you *have* it. I believe.

DRE: (pauses) Keeper of the book.

AUSTIN: Yes.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm pretty sure you ended up taking possession of it...

NICK: Bring to Life Book.

AUSTIN: Right.

NICK: I have noted in my inventory. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Right, that is a spell that you have. From that book.

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: Too. Which is that you can bring anything to life. (pauses) It is -

NICK (overlapping Austin): Oh.

ART (overlapping Austin): And this golden sword I got, a couple, couple times ago, probably isn't it? (sheepishly) That's, this probably isn't as powerful as that book?

AUSTIN: (indecisive noises)

ART: +1 close one-handed? It, it's lighter than a normal...?

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): You detected magic on it, and it doesn't have any magic, I believe, I *believe*...

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Fantasma, detected magic and there wasn't anything, so, yeah.

NICK: Yeah.

ART: I, I believe that's true as well. (hopefully) But it's made of gold? And like, gold's a really soft metal, but this is a pretty good sword? (Austin laughs) Like, maybe, maybe this is just enough?

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: And there's some - there's a pretty cool metallurgy going on here.

AUSTIN: (laughs) You - you just go back and say...

ART (overlapping Austin): Isn't that the real magic? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Hey I found out there's a city down here named *this*. And... there are these things called pala-din, they're pretty bad. And... I got this sword!

ART: I might be one.

NICK: Yeah, look -

ART: It's, it's a bit scary, really. Existentially.

NICK: Knowledge is - knowledge is power.

AUSTIN: Right!

NICK: Like. (pause, laughter)

AUSTIN: We've all played Mortal Kombat! They - that told me that. So... (jokingly) so yeah! You can go back now.

ART (overlapping Austin): So we - wait, we -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Alright, game over! Good job, uh. Take XP! (laughter)

DRE: Ah, yeah. Wrap credits! (laughter)

AUSTIN: Um. So no I think -

ART (overlapping Austin): I guess that's -

AUSTIN: It sounds like you still have reason to be here, at this point.

ART: (pauses) But I'm also afraid of being murdered.

AUSTIN: Mm - good.

DRE: Or turned into a... robot.

ART (overlapping Dre): Yeah.

DRE: That would be bad too.

ART: Or -

DRE: Should we cut off your arm?

ART: Or a statue. Statue's also in play. (laughs)

DRE: Yeah.

ART: How - how statue am I, right now?

AUSTIN: (pauses)

ART: What percent statue would you say I am?

DRE: How tanuki are you?

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): I think your - I think your hand is a statue. (pauses) Your -

ART (overlapping Austin): But it *moves*?

AUSTIN: It moves. For now.

ART: That's creepy.

AUSTIN: It is. It's, it's, it's... a nice like... pale white marble. And, I think probably up to your wrist, like it's moving up your wrist, a little bit. It looks like... so like, the visual image of this in my mind, is that... is that it's not like your hand is being encased? In, marble? It looks like -

ART (overlapping Austin): Okay.

AUSTIN: it's already marble under the skin. And it - as the skin is peeling away, there's marble underneath.

DRE: (horrified) Ahhh!

ART: (grossed out) Oh, this is especially creepy because I just did Baby Foot! I know exactly what that would feel like.

AUSTIN: (horrified) Ahhh!

DRE: (horrified) Ahhh.

AUSTIN: (grossed out sigh) So yeah.

DRE: Blehhh! The official noise of Friends at the Table (laughter).

NICK: So next -

ART (overlapping Nick): Okay, so -

NICK: (pauses) Next Fantasma is going to find... a race of stretchy people called the (exaggerated accent) wiz-aard.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yes, exactly.

NICK: And then uh, Throndir's gonna find a bunch of people that are *a/ways* on fire.

DRE (overlapping Nick): Oh no, I - I already know my people are assholes. They're already - they, well no. My people are just *jerks*. We - we've already covered this. (laughs)

NICK: Well -

AUSTIN: Well you still need a fourth, though.

NICK (overlapping Austin): I was trying to make a -

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): You need a -

NICK (overlapping Austin): I was trying to make a Fantastic Four joke.

AUSTIN: Well who's your fourth gonna be, though? That's -

ART: Great Fantastic Four joke, loved it. (Austin laughs)

NICK: Uh -

DRE: Oh! Okay, I saw where you were going. (Austin laughs) Gotcha, perfect. Okay. (laughs)

ART: Well I think - I think, I think you messed up though, I think you're - you'll be, you're -

NICK (overlapping Art): Throndir's dog is gonna get the... invisibility. (realization) Oh wait no!

ART (overlapping Nick): You're the stretchy rubber, but -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Yeah, here's the thing though, you're -

ART (overlapping Austin): Yeah, you're the invisible one, come on! (laughs)

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): You're the invisible one already! (laughter)

NICK: I'm the Invisible Woman.

AUSTIN: And you can make things float! You already have all of the powers (laughs).

NICK: That's true.

ART: Yeah. (Dre laughs)

NICK: Alright! Whatever.

AUSTIN: I don't know who this - yeah, I don't know.

NICK: Invisible - Invisible Woman's great.

AUSTIN: She's so good!

ART: (pauses) She's so good. Okay, so -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Sooo good! Uh.

ART: So we have to - (pauses) Things are getting, things are getting dire.

AUSTIN: Things are getting dire, in the sense that you have this pressure from the south, from, the pala-din. You have the pressure, the internal pressure, of like, Uklan Tel is hurt, and also you don't have infinite rations. And... you have the pressure from like -

ART (overlapping Austin): I sorta do.

AUSTIN: The far outside, which is like, it's *freezing*. Like. It's... not good out there. So.

DRE: Yeah, it's bad.

AUSTIN: It's not like you can like -

ART (overlapping Austin): Yeah I think it's -

AUSTIN: go forage, easily outside. You can - I, I should remind you, that you can kind of forage here, though? (clears throat) Part of the way the system works, is that you can do a move that I



called Search and Scavenge, which is 2d6 plus wisdom, when you explore the ruins of the fallen tower.

DRE: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: You open yourself up to harm, but you potentially find something useful. On a 10 or - 10 or more, you get to choose three of the following, on a 7-9 you get to choose one of the following. Something to eat, which is +2 rations, a useful tool or weapon, useful information or long-lost knowledge, or medical supplies. So that's - that's kind of like what you... the way the system is working, to remind you, is like, every day you pick one of the spots on this map to go to. You can break up and go to multiple if you want to do that (laughs) if you want to take that risk (laughs). And, you can, I'll automatically give you a bit of narration about each spot on the map? And then if you want more, you can do the Search and Scavenge r- roll. That's kind of like the, the structure of this, part of the game that we're doing.

NICK: I like the little laugh, when you -

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): Quick - quick question -

NICK: suggested that we could break up. #00:20:00#

AUSTIN: (laughing) You *could*! Right? But we've all played games.

NICK: You could - you could break up, and do something... that will totally probably kill everybody. (laughter) I mean, you *could*.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Yeah.

ART: Think of how much more ground we'd cover. (intently) Is Uklan Tel one name, or is that a first and a last name?

AUSTIN: It's a first and a last.

ART: And where does it stop?

AUSTIN: It's a first and a last name, it stops at -lan. It's Uklan... Tel.

ART: (pauses) Tel. Got it.

AUSTIN: Tel is his - is his -

ART (overlapping Austin): I think we have to have like a really frank conversation, with, Uklan and Sunder.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ART: About like - cause I don't think they, they might not know how bad things are! I mean - Uklan probably has an idea, cause he's uh, he's *really hurt*. (Austin laughs)

DRE: Something - how bad things are internally, for him.

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): (laughing) Your - your d- your delivery on that was very Norm Macdonald. I just want you to know, that was a good... (laughter)

ART: Like, he probably, yeah, he's probably like, yeah! We're, things aren't great. But like... but like maybe everything, we should put all our cards on the table, perhaps.

AUSTIN: Mhm. (pauses) That's fine.

DRE: (overlapping Austin): Yeah!

ART (overlapping Austin): And Hadrian starts.

AUSTIN: Good.

ART (as Hadrian): Uh - look. I - we appreciate, so much, the, the help and the guidance you've given us... here. Uh, I hope that we've, we've more than pulled... our weight? But things are reaching a crisis point, for us. (pauses) We were just held -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): I think Sunder... okay.

ART: Oh, sorry.

AUSTIN: No, go ahead.

ART (as Hadrian): We were just held prisoner, briefly. By, by a group of soldiers, to the... you know, to the east and south. And, and we have reason to believe, that, that they... they're a, they're a... a strong military force, that could, that could come and, and... and take our position.

AUSTIN: (breathes deeply) Uklan Tel is... seated, kind of like up against a, a, a... backpack, like kind of a travel pack. Not lounging, necessarily? But... reclining. And is like, playing with some pebbles, and putting them in different order, and like, occasionally ripping grass out of the ground? Uh... while, while you talk. He's making eye contact, and nodding. Sunder is... had been looking at books, and, and kind of tosses them aside as you start to talk, and, and... stands up and goes over to the fire, and pokes at it a bit with a stick, to keep it... to keep it going. (pauses) She nods.

ART: I - I guess I'll continue, with, uh -

ART (as Hadrian): These, these men call themselves pala-din. And I have reason, and they, and their, their leader... was able to, briefly, control, my, my... my arm.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Well that's no good.

AUSTIN: - she says.

ART (as Hadrian): Also.

ART: And, and I, I like. Take my, my... my hand out, and kind of like. You know, move it and flex it a little bit.

ART (as Hadrian): This is - this has gone from, from troubling to, to, to an emergency, perhaps.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (sighs, resigned) How are you all on supplies?

DRE (as Throndir): (pauses) Well -

ART (as Hadrian): I'm - (quietly) I'm fine. (Austin laughs)

DRE (as Throndir): I have enough food for maybe... three days? But there's also the matter of leaving. And how we leave safely through the weather, how we leave safely through... a hostile city, and then how we... make the trek, assuming (laughing) we get through those *first* two things. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (slowly) Yeah.

AUSTIN: She -

NICK (as Fantasma, overlapping Austin): (matter of factly) I have... no more rations. (loud laughter)

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (sighs)

AUSTIN: She shoots Uklan a, a glance, that is like - (pauses) it, it, it's, kind of communicating a, a sort of a... it's as bad as we thought it was? Or like, this is, is this as bad as it - this is as bad as it could be, I guess sort of like, welp, we're here now. And he says, he says,

AUSTIN (as Uklan): Hm, yeah, I. Hm. (Dre laughs quietly) I've - I've already begun a contingency plan. You know, we should - hm. (sighs) If you can - give me another two days, we shouldn't need to worry about... rations.

ART: Oh it just occurred to me that. My rations are probably back, uh. Back... back where all my other stuff is, huh.

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): (laughing) Yeah, they took everything from you. Yes.

DRE: (groans) Oh, no!

ART: Oh, no I, I had, I had ten rations, but I'm immune to hunger or cold (Austin laughs), so. (laughs) I'm fine, but I can't help anyone.

DRE (overlapping Art): I mean I ha- I have six. So I can split with Fantasma until... Uklan's... got... something?

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: (doubtfully) Up his sleeve?

ART: I mean - so we're not gonna starve to death in the next two days, we were told to clear out of here in the morning. And taking... two *more* mornings might, might draw the ire, of, of the camp.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (sighs deeply) Do you have what you need here?

AUSTIN: Sunder asks. #00:25:00#

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Or... (sighs) Or are you looking to stick around?

ART (as Hadrian): (pauses) We would, we would like t- I would like to stay.

AUSTIN: She looks at Fantasma.

NICK (as Fantasma): (laughs quietly) I suppose I could find a couple more realities to dispel. (laughter)

DRE: (laughing) God.

AUSTIN: (laughing exasperatedly) She la- she chuckles and shakes her head. Raises her eyebrows.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (snorts) Oh, old man. You're gonna get yourself into a lot of trouble one of these days. (pauses, Nick laughs) Alright, well -

ART (overlapping Austin): And that day is definitely in the future and *not* several weeks ago. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Well you know time, you know how time is (laughs). PI-

NICK (as Fantasma, overlapping Austin): (severely) This is why I - prefer to never leave my study.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Well (sighs). If I remember your study's in about as good a shape as this tower is, so. We all have to come out of hiding sometimes. Here's what I think, I think we give this another two days, and we leave. (pauses) Maybe we move camp today even, I'm not sure.

DRE (as Throndir): I - yes. We *should* relocate.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): We could move into the - the throne room.

ART (as Hadrian): (pauses) That might - that might at least work temporarily, right? They could, they could not... they might not assume we would take camp in the, in the structure.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Right.

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (resigned) That's not a bad idea.

NICK (as Fantasma): And a - a structure is potentially more easily barricaded.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): This is all true.

NICK (as Fantasma): Then - (breaking out of character voice, into laugh) being out in the middle of nowhere! (laughter)

NICK: (weakly, laughing) I guess.

AUSTIN: Yes.

NICK: I don't know - (laughs) I don't know what I meant by more easily.

AUSTIN: Alright (laughs).

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (sighs) Then how bout this. (pauses) Tomorrow -

AUSTIN: (pauses) Actually what - what time is it now? How did all this shake out, what time was it when you left his camp? This is me, Austin playing.

ART (overlapping Austin): I thought we were - I thought it was night, when we got back.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

DRE (overlapping Austin): Yeah, yeah.

NICK: Yeah he was giving us dinner.

AUSTIN: Right. Right! And she says -

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Alright. Hm... if we start moving now, maybe we can get there... in the next hour, and, and set up camp. Leave the fire burning, and keep them... off our trail. (pauses) Sound good?

ART (as Hadrian): Sure. Great.

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah.

NICK (as Fantasma): Indeed.

AUSTIN: Uklan stumbles up to his feet, and starts to put on his pack, which is - which is too heavy for him in this... case. And she goes over and like, shakes her head at him, and shoots you all a glance. And she says,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Let's get this camp packed up, quick. I'd appreciate some help.

ART (as Hadrian): I'll carry Uklan's stuff.

ART: Apparently I'm not carrying anything anymore.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Well you have that gold sword!

DRE (overlapping Austin): Yeah.

ART: (laughing) I - I have a, I have a sword, and the clothes on my back, and... nothing!

AUSTIN: That's - that's pretty good. (breathes deeply)

ART: Yeah, it - it could be worse.

AUSTIN: Alright, you manage to - I think it probably, I mean I said it probably takes an hour, or so, but. Y-

DRE: (doubtfully) Can Uklan walk?

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: With, with a little extra... with a little help from his friends.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: He does manage to... get there, and it takes you, that's kind of why it takes you so long? He leans on his, he leans on his staff to walk, but... but he does it, he manages to make it happen. Whoop! Uh oh. Oop - wait - one second. (typing) I just goofed. (someone laughs) Just this.

NICK: On the - on the way there, Uklan asks us... what we would do, if he sang out of tune. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: That would be bad! He would be - it would be a bad... (laughter) Like, Orcish out of tune singing, is bad.

DRE: (horrified noise)

ART: The way the world ends. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: Okay, so everyone's back in the throne room, and you get a night of sleep. (distracted)  
It's - I should actually just leave the fire down here, that's where it was...

DRE: Mmhm?

AUSTIN: You don't - you're not bothered that night. You don't get a *full* night of sleep, but - but you can take a rest, and recover spells, and all that. If you, if you consume, if you do the Rest move, and consume a, a ration.

DRE: I - I will do that, and I'll give a ration to Fantasma.

AUSTIN: Okay. And Hadrian, again, does not need to, because he's special. Because of his *quest*. (laughter)

ART: I think I also don't need sleep, but I... it's been, it's been so long, and for some reason this move isn't on my move list.

AUSTIN: (amused) You should - you should put it on your move list. That's.

ART: I know! (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) Good... *good* talk! I'm just double checking -

NICK (overlapping Austin): Fantasma thanks... Thrandir, for the ration. Sort of sheepishly, but sincerely.

AUSTIN: That's good. That's good of him! (pause, Dre laughs) So yeah. When you settle into rest, consume a ration, if you're somewhere dangerous decide the watch order as well. Which you should do. If you have enough XP, you may level up. When you wake from at least a few uninter- uninterrupted hours of sleep, heal damage equal to *half* your max HP. (pauses) So, if you're - if anyone's hurt, do that. (pauses) And tell me what your watch order is. #00:30:00#

DRE: I'll take first watch.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Okay.

ART: Um... (pauses) I'll go second.

NICK (overlapping Art): I'm gonna order a calculator watch? (Austin laughs grudgingly) Sorry.

AUSTIN: (sarcastically) That's fine. You - (laughs) you get third. (laughter) And Sunder is going to be, uh.

ART (overlapping Austin): (laughing) That sounds super aggressive! (Austin laughs)

NICK: Look - I'll settle for a Swatch? That's fine too.

AUSTIN: (still laughing) Okay great. (sighs) They make those in the Confederacy of Helvetica, I believe. (laughter)

ART: I love those Helvetican watches!

AUSTIN: Oh they're the best.

DRE: Mmhm. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Ah. I like a He- a nice Helvetican knife, you know? Helvetican army knife?

ART: Mmm. Yeah. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Okay. So let's see... Let's think. Yeah, okay, so, for the first two watches, nothing happens. And, in the third... you can, you can hear some noise, Fantasma? Off in the distance, and, you're able to carefully see, that there are some... there's some shouting and some troops way down to the south, at the fire? But they don't... they don't seem to see you, and they kind of kick some dirt over the fire, and put it out.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: And...

ART: Those monsters.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Those terrible monsters. (Dre laughs) A- again, this room is, or this like, big throne room is really weird. Huge, huge halls, sprouting out from the - from the side, of the... of the kind of like, big *massive*, throne room itself. Very tall ceilings, windows... that are, that are, occasionally on the roof, instead of the, the walls, because the - building has been turned, on its side, in that spot? It's just like, it's a mess here. The whole thing is again, kind of red, and gold, and ornate. Lots of statues. Hadrian, you can't help but feel the eyes of Samot on you. From, from one of the statues nearby. But I'll also remind you, this isn't the *throne* part of the throne room. So. There isn't, like, a throne, there.

ART: And you don't mean like in a Scooby Doo way, right?

AUSTIN: (laughs) Right. Like -

ART: Like it's not like the -

AUSTIN: (laughing) The eyes aren't literally -

ART (overlapping Austin): There's not like a person in the statue?



AUSTIN: (laughs) Right. (pauses, breathes out) No. (laughter) Though Kodiak as Scooby Doo is a pretty good... pretty good bit.

DRE: (imitates Scooby) Ruh-roh!

NICK: I mean. Throndir is *basically* Shaggy.

AUSTIN: (laughing) It's true!

DRE: (offended) Whoa! Hey, whoa! (Nick laughs) Just cause I like to get my dad high on special arrows (laughter) doesn't mean I'm Shaggy, alright?

AUSTIN: (over laughter) That was my favorite episode, of Scooby Doo.

DRE: (shocked) Ah, it was Shaggy's dad the whole time!

AUSTIN: (laughing) High on Scooby Snax! Alright. So the next day, where are you going, what are you doing?

ART: (pauses) I mean. Why haven't we checked out the - this one?

AUSTIN: (pauses) Where?

DRE: The - the - the bottom areas?

ART (overlapping Dre): He says as his click does nothing. Why is my click doing nothing?

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Click and hold. There you go.

ART: Why haven't we checked down there?

AUSTIN: Good question! I don't know.

DRE: Uh, cause we didn't -

ART (overlapping Dre): Oh, it's because - cause it's, bad things are in between? (laughs)

DRE: Yeah. I think that's why.

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): Those are gone now, that was - sorry, I'll move them. I'll move them, actually I'll move them to the south, where they - where you were last night.

ART: (pauses) So we could split up, rememb- like, splitting up was always... a good idea, right? We could, we could just take three chunks of this four chunk. Or we could, we could go due north, which I think could be an interesting section. Also that little sliver.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Which little - oh, that little sliver, right.

DRE: Well I think it was... if we go through areas that we've explored before, it doesn't take as long? Right?

AUSTIN: (hesitantly) Yeah, I, at this point I'm just gonna say anywhere on this map is a day and back.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: You're right that originally the way it was working, was like... was, you know, you could kind of bounce from place to place? If you'd already explored it. But, at this point, I kind of just want to... push us through. Plus you - you at this point kind of *have* a direct line, to everywhere?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know what I mean.

ART: Unless we're going like, *way* up here...

AUSTIN: Right but even there you have a line, through... the manufacturing mine, I guess you - you wouldn't want to cross through the, the raw rupture. (laughs)

ART: Also, we - we, didn't we stop this from existing?

AUSTIN: That's just, it's, it's, now it's just the broken tower. Like it's *just* -

DRE (overlapping Austin): *Just* broken, right?

ART (overlapping Dre): Oh, it's just...

AUSTIN: Right, right. Exactly.

DRE: I mean, we could split into groups of two. Counting... Sunder.

NICK: If... if we do that, I could, you know. Telepathy, between the groups.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Keep an open line of comm-

ART (overlapping Austin): And if we went to like close-*ish* groups, if something *super* bad happened - #00:35:00#

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ART: We could adjust.

DRE (overlapping Art): Yeah if we went like one group *here*...

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

DRE: And one group... (hesitantly) here... h- here, there we go.

ART: Or into the sliver.

NICK: Yeah!

ART: I, I have this weird fascination with the idea that the little ones are the best?

AUSTIN: Uh huh? (laughter)

ART: Because five temples was pretty good.

DRE: Yeah. That's true.

ART: And the throne room was pretty good.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

NICK: Yeah, let's -

ART (overlapping Nick): But not like, that's probably not t- that's probably not true. (laughter)

NICK: Let's do that. These two are -

AUSTIN: Okay, so... which two?

NICK: The, the sliver and the... other half of the...

AUSTIN: Okay. Who's going where?

NICK: (pauses) I'm gonna go with Sunder.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Wait is that a good idea?

DRE: Yeah, sh- I think we should have one martial and one magic person per group (laughs).

NICK: Oh. Yeah okay, true.

AUSTIN: That's fair.

ART: Unless like, you and Sunder just want to like, talk about us. (Austin laughs)

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: N- no.

AUSTIN: That is a good, that would - mm. Yeah.

DRE: If we all go -

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): I'm interested in that storytelling potential, but, but. Am totally open to the sort of like, let's play this smart, too.

NICK: Sure. (pauses) Alright, I'll go with... Throndir, then.

DRE: Okay. Elf party!

ART: (doubtfully) Alright, I'll go with Sunder.

AUSTIN: To... okay. Where's Elf Party going?

NICK: (pauses) Let's -

DRE (overlapping Nick): I guess we can let Art have the little one. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Yeah, I - I want the sliver.

AUSTIN: Okay. (pauses) Alright. Who wants to go first?

NICK: Oh man. Is that the same book?

ART (overlapping Nick): I mean, it, it's logical that they would - they would get there, faster.

AUSTIN: I think - I'm not sure. I'm not sure if it is or not.

NICK: It's a sweet book.

AUSTIN: It's a sweet book, yeah.

NICK: Whatever it is, it's got a skull on it?

AUSTIN: That's your - that's your icon.

NICK: Yeah. No, I know.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Let's start with... Elf Party.

DRE: Okay.

NICK: (in Fantasma voice, but imitating Keith) Elf Party!

AUSTIN: So... the... (pauses) Just as when you first went into the Ordennan, kind of zone, here, you step in and it is... it's hard to know, even though you, you're looking for it, now? Where it transitions -

NICK (overlapping Austin): Oh wait!

AUSTIN: Mmhm?

NICK: Before we leave, I, create a -

AUSTIN: Oh, good.

NICK: Telepathic bond, with... Sunder.

AUSTIN: Can you roll for it?

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mmkay. You know, just in case something - something terrible happens.

NICK: (quietly) Yeah yeah yeah.

DRE: (laughs loudly) Just in case! (pauses) Wink!

AUSTIN: Also so we know what to... keep, and what to. You know. So what are you -

NICK: 8.

AUSTIN: Yeah, 8 - 8's a success, do you, do you... get rid of that spell? Do you...

NICK: Uhh... (sighs)

AUSTIN: Take a minus one -

NICK (overlapping Austin): Yeah, I mean once it's established -

ART (overlapping Nick): Don't do the draw attention one.

NICK: Once -

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): (laughing) Yeah don't do draw attention, yes.

NICK: I'm gonna, I'm gonna forget it for the day.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: Cause, once it's established, I don't, you know. Whatever.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. Yep. Alright, so you start a bond with Sunder. She, obviously, is, is, is fine with that. And, you... go, to... right, that middle zone, here. So, like the Ordennan one, at first it's strange, because it's hard to see... where it shifts between the real tower, and some other form of the tower. And... it's (pauses) it's only when you start to hear music... that you... realize something is strange here. That this is another one of the zones that's been touched by the rupture. The music in my head that I'm imagining it, is this strange combination, strange to, I guess our human ears? And, wild, and weird for, for... your ears too, in, in the game, where... it's a combination of kind of, heavy rhythmic drumming? And, kind of like, a plink-plunky... what we would recognize as like chamber music? But like, much, much deeper, in, in tonality. But like those sorts of melodies are being strung together, over these really heavy drumlines. And... it's not soon after that, that you see... you start to see the walls, adorned with these banners that are... *really*, that have these really intricate knotted... symbols, painted on them. Some of them are knotted, some of them have like, long arcs. It's all very, again, ornate, and, and... but also handmade, everything here feels handcrafted. As you get deeper in, and again, so, so. This zone is like the size of a m- of a mini-city. Right, so I can't really give you everything all at once. Or I can't give you every little, step by step thing. But. #00:40:00#

After exploring for about... an hour, and hearing this music in the distance, you... I kind of have this image in my head of where like, you're going through a bunch of different twisted corridors and blah blah blah. And finally you open it up, you open up one little door and it opens up into the side - sidestreet of a massive city block. Where, there are, just, dozens - hundreds? Hundreds, of orcs, talking, and singing, and... doing business in a marketplace, there's a big fire in the, in the kind of middle of this city block. There is, a bunch of, really nice smelling *food* happening here. And, there is a live music performance, kind of on the other side of the fire, where there's kind of a, a, a low stage, where... a group is performing. These are not (sighs, pauses) These are - (slowly) they don't look like... Uklan Tel, or like... Lem King, the other orcs you've met. They're not dressed in that same manner at all. They're dressed in a manner that is not very... outgoing, right, like, the, the... Lems, and the Uklan Tels are adventurers, so they wear like, leather armor, and... like, they have - maybe they have, you know, like a, a cool cowl, or something, right like. These are people who live in a city, and who do city things. Like, sell corn, and who go to parties. (Dre laughs) Everything has kind of a - a crisp... fashionable... value to it, right? Like this is, this is, these are all... this is all clothes, made to be, made to be worn. And it's a combination of very *plush* stuff, and very *flowing* stuff. So, I, I'm picturing like a lot of like, long sleeves, and, and, lots of soft fabrics and textures here. But they're still orcs! Right like, so they're still like buff as *hell*. Like, they're still like... (Dre laughs) Big dudes, and huge ladies, who are just like ready to roll. With cool tusks, and stuff.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But they are also - but there is something, there is something - noble feeling, here. There is something like, like this is - like I imagine Thrandir, you definitely feel like, these people are... high - like, you've gone to the, to the right side of the train tracks? (laughs)

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And like maybe you don't belong here, necessarily. And, and Fantasma, like you've never seen anything like this before. I have no idea what you think about this (laughs). What do you do?

DRE (as Throndir): Did we - did we step into another portal?

AUSTIN: I mean not *explicitly*, cause it doesn't happen explicitly like that, you know? Like -

DRE: I - I think that's - I don't think that's me asking you that,

AUSTIN: Oh, okay.

DRE: I think that's Throndir asking...

AUSTIN: Yes. I see.

DRE: Fantasma.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE (as Throndir): Is this more crazy magic!

NICK (as Fantasma): Uh. This is definitely magic! It seems to me we are looking at another reality, the same as we were when we were inside the... manufacturing... area... that I... destroyed. (laughter)

DRE (as Throndir): Let's uh... let's see if we can be a little more... more friendly? With this one? Especially because they have food, and we need food. (Art laughs)

NICK (as Fantasma): I uh. I - I took - took a note to *not* prepare Dispel Magic this time. (Dre laughs loudly)

AUSTIN: Just in case!

DRE (as Throndir): (laughing) Just in case you had the urge!

AUSTIN: (pauses) So yeah what are you doing? Are you...

DRE (as Throndir): (eagerly) We should - we should go talk to someone!

NICK (as Fantasma): (pauses) Of the two of us, you are undoubtedly the most... the more... (pauses)

NICK: Darn it, I'm trying to think of a big word.

DRE: Couth -

NICK: It's a big word that means friendly.

DRE: Couth?

NICK: No, there's a word I'm looking for.

DRE: Amiable? Amicable?

NICK: A- yeah! (Austin laughs) Amiable!

DRE: Okay.

NICK: That's not that big, but. You know, whatever. (laughter)

NICK (as Fantasma): You should -

DRE (overlapping Nick): It's like a good SAT word.

ART: (whispering) You guys should use that move first.

NICK: I - I needed a, I needed a Fantasma - wait, what move?

ART: The - the search, the search and... the, the, the search and get stuff move.

AUSTIN: They can - y-

NICK (overlapping Austin): Oh, well yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can totally do that if you want. But again, doing that opens you up for bad stuff. Would not to - not to say like you couldn't go get yourself into bad stuff, *anyway*. But yes.

DRE: Right.

NICK: Yeah.

DRE: I mean - we'll *get* there, don't worry. It's just a matter of when.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: Anyways. Fantasma was saying -

NICK (as Fantasma): Of the two of us, you are the, easily the - more - amiable. So I suggest that you pick someone that you seem... that you s- that seems friendly to you. #00:45:00#

DRE: The nearest merchant, Austin, are they... are they speaking in a language that we understand?



AUSTIN: (sighs, hesitantly) Not exactly. They're speaking in a language that is like (pauses) They're speaking in a language that's more similar to *your* language. To - to like, the Auniq variation of the common tongue?

DRE: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: But it's not - you can under- you can, you can make it out, but it's broken. In your ears.

DRE: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: You know what I mean? Which is to say that like, you just don't - there are words you don't necessarily understand, and there's some strange construction, but like, you basically get the nouns. You basically get the verbs.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: There is a strange way of talking, that you don't... there are lots of words you don't understand, and that you think are names. So... so for instance, there are things like... (pauses) You know, at the end of a, at the end of, of a purchase, right, you hear... someone say like... you know, this'll - this is - (pauses) 'you can guarantee it,' you know, 'on the name -' or names that are like on the name of like 'Duke Blahblahblah,' or like... and you don't know who Duke Blahblahblah is, that's for sure.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Or... in, in a more abstract way, you can hear it used where it's like... the Marquis, So-and-so. And like that's the whole of the answer. And you don't really understand what they're doing there? It's not like they're only using those, they're also using nouns that you know and verbs that you know.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But there is this - there is this like, weaving of... personal names, almost always associated with a title, that you do understand... attached to it. But you don't really know how that's being used.

DRE: Okay. And what sort of currency are they using? When they're, when they're making deals?

AUSTIN: (hesitates) There's lots of... there are lots of deals being made on promise, here.

DRE: Hm.

AUSTIN: Where it's just like, you'll get what you get, you know, you'll get your, your pay in the future, basically.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But you do see some people exchanging gold coins, with, with each other. You don't really see if there's anything printed on them, you'd have to get really close for that, and people are all - are already starting to stare at you a little bit.

DRE: Yeah. Oh boy. Um... okay, before I talk to anyone... I guess I'm gonna see, I'm gonna try Kindrali's Chosen, just to see if I get anything? From that?

AUSTIN: Sure. What's - how's that work again? What's the roll?

DRE: So, when I consult Kindrali, He Who Knows, about a historical artifact, place, or event, I roll +WIS, on a 10+ get something interesting and useful, on a 7-9 get something interesting but without an explanation of its use.

AUSTIN: What are you... looking at specifically here?

DRE: (sighs uncertainly)

AUSTIN: There's stuff here you could do this for, I think.

DRE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: But I don't think it's just like, this place, necessarily.

DRE: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Whoop!

DRE: I was thinking either -

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): One second.

DRE: the title - oh, sorry.

AUSTIN: Someone lost connection just now, I think it was Nick.

NICK: Oh!

AUSTIN: Art, are you still here?

ART: Still here!

DRE: Yeah, Nick's got the dots at the bottom.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Do you want me to go ahead and make this move, while he's reconnecting, and we can fill him in when he gets back?

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: Okay. I was thinking either... if the language triggers anything?

AUSTIN: Mm.

DRE: Like, to help me -

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): Sure.

DRE: when it comes to like, if it would help fill in those gaps.

AUSTIN: Yeah. No, that's -

DRE (overlapping Austin): Or, if a specific historical person, like, marked entrance.

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): Totally, yeah, you can just, you can just do it. Yeah. I just remembered a thing. (typing)

DRE: Okay. (pauses) Oh. Okay!

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

DRE: Let me do... WIS. (pauses, typing) Oh, a 3! Perfect.

AUSTIN: (dismayed) Okay.

DRE: Great. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Um... that's fine. That's perfect, actually! Because, here's what you learn.

DRE: Is it? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah! I'm gonna wait until... Nick is back, for this.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Skype crashed, and he can't rejoin the call. Let's re- let's recall. I'm gonna hang up and recall.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Alright, ready?

DRE: Sure. (pauses, whistling)

AUSTIN: Yo?

NICK: Hello.

AUSTIN: Hey.

NICK: I figured it out.

AUSTIN: What was y- what was it?

DRE: Hello?

NICK: When - when Skype crashed it reset my audio settings.

DRE: Ohhh.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

NICK: So. I had to put it back. But, working now, again.

DRE: Cool.

AUSTIN: Awesome.

NICK: And also, I was still recording the whole time, so.

AUSTIN: Yeah, same, same, I haven't stopped. (pauses) Art?

ART: (uncertainly) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Making sure everyone's here.

DRE: Alright!

AUSTIN: (breathes deeply)

DRE: So Nick I just rolled a 3.

ART (overlapping Dre): It almost like, didn't ring for me.

AUSTIN: Weird. So yeah. (pauses, Dre laughs) Throndir was... trying to tap into... Kindrali, He Who Remembers.

NICK: Mmhm. #00:50:00#

AUSTIN: The memory of Kindrali to see if there was anything here that kind of sparked a memory. And, there, there *is*, th- there's a, a memory of... an orcish friend Kindrali had, who was... who was, you kind of get this whole flash, of, of, a kind of outsider's understanding of, of Old Orcish culture.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Of pre-fall orcish culture. You don't - and when I'm saying outsider's, I mean like, it's a very minimal understanding, it's sort of like, what the average person might say about Celtic, Druid- Druidism. Like, what I'm doing right now, like, is that a thing? Is the thing I'm talking about - I know England had druids, (laughter) I know Ireland had dru- there were druids in Ireland, they were Celtic? I don't, uhh, hm, so you get kind of *that*. For... for the, pre-Erasure orcs, and you know that they... had a system, the reason you know this is because Kindrali had a friend. Who was, who was a devotee of, of, Jesh Lem, who is the Marquess of Old Runes, Warm Drinks, and the Twelfth Full Moon, who was a kind of a... a living goddess, you guess? You guess is how you understand it? These people are alive, right? But then they also, are supposedly gods?

DRE (overlapping Austin): Probably -

AUSTIN: But then they also can die and still be gods? It's weird.

DRE: Yeah, the way... Kindrali, *kind* of, was, to an extent.

AUSTIN: Right. So it's a similar system. E- except there's also this whole like, weird houses and nobility, and, and all of these like, weird... kind of like, what is - what are you the god *of*? And like, oh, I, yeah, I'm the god of... like, fried foods. Oh, I'm the Duke of, uh, Yellow. Like, that's it. (Dre laughs) Right, like that's the whole,

DRE (overlapping Austin): Oh uh, okay.

AUSTIN: okay, weird. The thing is, (laughs) that you then - Kindrali remembers, is that while his old friend was, was a devotee of Jesh Lem, Marquess of Old Runes Warm Drinks and the Twelfth Full Moon, Jesh Lem herself was, a, just an aspect of her own mother, Jesh Lam, the Duchess of the Long War Against the Elves and Crickets.

DRE: Oh!

AUSTIN: And it's about the time that you remember that -

ART (overlapping Austin): Wait. They had a war against *crickets*?

NICK: That seems like a pretty one-sided war.

AUSTIN: (amused) She's - sorry. She's the Duchess of the Long War Against Elves, and Crickets. And I am not sure, and neither are you, if that means it's the Long War Against Elves and Crickets, *or* if she's the Duchess of the Long War Against Elves, *and* the Duchess of Crickets. (laughter) It's - it's confusing.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: They didn't have commas, uh, you know. (laughter) So - (laughs) this is what the war was about. It's at - it's about the time that you remember that, that you feel a hand, on your shoulder.

DRE: (concerned) Oh boy.

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc, low, raspy voice): (clears throat) A couple of' elves, huh? (sinisterly) What are you doing round *these* parts?

AUSTIN: There's a - a large, very broad orcish woman, with a, with a deep voice, and... a large sword at her side. She's wearing, I'd mentioned before the kind of like knotted... iconography, and she's wearing, a, a kind of badge, over her shoulder or like a... like a piece of cloth? Over her shoulder, that's kind of strapped to, to... her, her clothing. Her clothing is a little more... practical? And a little less fashionable. You - your guess is that she has some sort of official capacity here, a magistrate, or a guard, or something.

DRE: Gotcha. Or a god.

AUSTIN: Right. So, her hand's on both of your shoulders. (pauses) Her hands are - (laughing) her *one* hand is not on both of your shoulders. (laughter) She's big, she isn't *that* big.

DRE: Yeah, and we're elves, so we're kinda... a little, slightly.

AUSTIN: You're kinda, kinda tiny!

NICK: (pauses) And crickets.

AUSTIN: Right. (laughs)

NICK: Her one hand is on both of our shoulders,

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

NICK: and crickets.

AUSTIN: And also crickets. (laughter)

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): What are you doing here?

DRE (as Thrandir): (pauses) We are here... as... ambassadors! We, we seek no harm, we seek to... to cause no conflict, we are just here to see... what, what, what sort of understanding could potentially be fostered between our peoples.

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): (snorts)

AUSTIN: A wide grin, on her face, really showing off those bottom tusks.

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): (tone like “seriously?”) Let me see your papers.

NICK (as Fantasma): (long pause) The uh... the truth is we are travellers, and we are here seeking (pauses) s- stuff.

NICK: What’s the word? Goddamn. Stupid brain.

DRE: Asylum? Asylum?

ART: Provisions?

NICK: No. Uh.

DRE: What word are you looking for?

ART: (loudly) Stuff?

NICK (as Fantasma): W- we’re...

DRE: (laughs) Thanks.

NICK: Like rations! Provisions! That’s a good word.

NICK (as Fantasma): We’re seeking provisions. For our... to, continue our journey.  
#00:55:00#

DRE (as Throndir): Fantasma that was not very good, yes *and*. (Nick laughs)

AUSTIN: (exasperated sigh)

NICK (as Fantasma): What about sand? (laughter)

AUSTIN: She shakes her head.

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): Listen. I, *personally*, have *no* problem with the elves. But there’s a way about this. (fed up) You have to go to the office. You have to get the paperwork, that says you’re allowed to be here. And if you’re looking for food, we have a kitchen for people like *you* down at the base of the tower.

ART: (disgusted noise)

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): So. (pauses) So.

NICK (as Fantasma): I see...

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): I’m gonna do you a favor. I’m gonna let you go, but, if I see you again, I’m gonna have to take care of you, and your dog. *That* can’t be here. There’s *food* here. (pauses) You’ll all be taken care of.

DRE (as Throndir): Thank you. Thank - thank you very much, we appreciate it.

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): (deep sigh)

DRE (as Throndir): Which uh - which, which way was that building? Was that - to get the papers?

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): (another deep sigh)

AUSTIN: She shakes her head.

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): You're from Auniq, aren't you? I recognize it. (emphatically) You're all just the *biggest* idiots from Auniq, I swear. So you're gonna go -

DRE (as Throndir, overlapping Austin): We - I'll actually agree with you there.

AUSTIN (as Mysterious Orc): (snorts)

AUSTIN: She points down a hallway, and... and kind of like, gives you some obtuse directions, that are really hard to follow because, like everything else in their language, it often references the names of people you don't know.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Like, at one point, she, she tells you to go down... the Hall of Vlorg, who is the, the King of Mysteries and Lamplight? And then at a different point, she tells you to go down the, the Utuga, Hallway?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But Utuga is himself, the, the Master of Hallways? And that ends up getting really confusing? (laughter) So, it's, it's... she sends you on your way, but she's watching you.

DRE: Sure.

ART: Austin, you can just say that my personified god thing messed with your cosmology, and not just have like an entire adventure around like passive-aggressive jabs at my, uh... (laughter) theology ideas?

AUSTIN: (laughing) No, no - no, this is, I *swear* this is based on another ridiculous thing. I *swear* (laughs). I have a whole long thing. It's great. (pauses) This is based on the Lesser Key of Solomon, that's all I'll say. So... (breathes out) what do you do? Actually, let's jump to, let's jump to Hadrian at this point.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: As you two kind of walk away. (laughter) Hadrian and Sunder, you find a place here that is... as far as you can tell, *not* touched by the rupture. This is... a pre-Erasure, a



pre-Erasure ruin of what seems to have been here before. The reason you know that is because Sunder would be able to tell you if anything was magical.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Which is one of the benefits of splitting the party this way. It... this was a residential district, and, it was, the sort of residential district that the upper class members, of the tower seem to have lived in? The apartments here - so everything here, and to give you again, a picture of the way this, this looks, for me in my head, is, the two things that come to mind, are, the forum shops, at Caesar's? In Las Vegas, or, or even... the, the Tropicana has a thing like it, called the Quarter, in Atlantic City, where it's like a fake sky ceiling, that is, that is, in this ruin, really worn down? And like, not very well lit, from like the occasional window, so it's, it's just real gritty and grimy in here. And then it's like, the other thing that it reminds me of, is... some of Bioshock 1's residential districts? Where it's just like, oh these are just apartment buildings that are kind of - but they're in, they're also inside? Like they're - the whole building is inside of another building, basically.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: And, and... there are kind of... kind of like a mall, right? Where like there's an upper level... like there's multi-levels, even inside of... one big chunk of the building. And so there's like lots of little apartments here. Some of them are, are, really big, and you can see like oh this is like a whole family would live here. Others are, are, kind of... quaint, or, or, meager, but are adorned with like, oh that's like a really nice bed! Like even after all these years, like you can still make out that that was a, a fancy bed, right? Or oh there's a good workspace in this place.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: And that's kind of the, the gist of this place.

ART (overlapping Austin): It's like a, it's like a good episode of Rehab Addicts. #01:00:00#

AUSTIN: Right. Exactly like that. (Dre laughs) Identical to the thing that you just said. (laughs)

DRE: Lead windows *everywhere*. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: So what are you doing?

ART: (pauses) Uh, there's no, there's no like... obvious signs of people, right? There's not like...

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): No, no one's been here - um (breathes sharply) you'd have to search to see if, if there had been anyone - no one's *obviously* living here, is what I'll say.

ART: (dubiously) Okay. Yeah, I'll take the, the search move.

AUSTIN: Okay. Give me a 2d6 plus wisdom. [car horn blares] Hi car.

ART: Oh and I popped out the - when I pop out the thing, I don't get the little...

AUSTIN: Oh, the roll icons aren't there anymore?

ART (overlapping Austin): deal anymore...

AUSTIN: Hm.

DRE: They are for me but it's just all the way like, wayyy down.

ART (overlapping Dre): Oh no it's just all the way down here?

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: Yeah.

ART: Yeah this, this pop-out is not... doing great, yet.

AUSTIN: (laughs) They're working on it, I'm sure. P.S. congratulations to Adam Koebel, who is one of the co-writers of this game, who is now the Roll20... official GM.

NICK: Yeah! That's cool.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

DRE: It's awesome.

NICK: Also - uh - (sheepishly) we like your game! A lot!

AUSTIN: It's a good game! (pauses) Okay, so choose one.

ART: I rolled a 9.

AUSTIN: Something to eat, which is +2 rations, a useful tool or weapon, useful information or long-lost knowledge, or medical supplies.

ART: (pauses) I'll take useful information or long-lost knowledge.

AUSTIN: (laughing) For 500, Alex. (Nick laughs) Okay.

DRE: Bup bup bup!

AUSTIN: (pauses) Hm. Okay. (sighs) You find... in this sector, there is, a... a little temple, that is... it's clearly felt the, the kind of wounds of development? Which is to say like, people are moving here to live here, and the sort of people who live here aren't necessarily very religious? Or at least aren't very religious to this specific sect, of, of, religion. Because it's just like, crammed in between... other houses, and there's some like shops there, like there's not, there's not the solemnity that you'd normally feel when you, when you see a temple. Of any, of any faith, right, like, it just doesn't, this is strange, for, for Hadrian, to see this, this church kind of...

cramped in here. Inside, you find... a, a big room of worship, and then, you know, with lots of seating spaces. A- again, big is... relative, here, big in that it's bigger than like, a bedroom, but it's still not as - it's *nowhere* near as big as the cathedral, that - or, the temple that you call home. It's like a... in my mind it's like the basement of the church I used to go to as a kid? (laughs) Where like, once a week there was Mass for just the Vietnamese population of my little town? (pauses) Not that they couldn't go to regular Mass -

ART: Wait why weren't they allowed to go -

AUSTIN: They were, but it was in -

ART: Oh. (laughs)

AUSTIN: But it was in, but it was in Vietn- it was in, a language they understood.

ART: Got it.

AUSTIN: Once a week. So it was kind of like, a crappy basement, but like, it still has the sort of like... layout, of a, of a, of a place of worship, where like, chairs facing forward, or maybe they're pews - I think they're pews, here. And at the front, there are five religious icons. One of them you recognize immediately, as kind of a - an early form of Samoths, so kind of a short figure, with a, with a, a hammer in his hand and the sun behind him. The second one is a woman, who is... at the front of a ship, or maybe she is, she *is* the ship? Like, she's the - she's like, at once a distinct woman, but also the, at the, like built *in* to the front of the ship. Like what are those called?

ART: (pauses) I don't know, what are those called?

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): You know the thing I'm talking about?

DRE: Oh!

ART: But it's definitely like a -

DRE: I know what you're talking about! Hold on. (typing) Now I gotta look this up.

ART: Boat ladies.

AUSTIN: Boat - (laughs) yeah.

NICK: Uh -

AUSTIN: A good - a good... (typing)

NICK: They - figureheads?

DRE (overlapping Nick): Oh like a figurehead.

AUSTIN: Figurehead! Is that what it's called?

NICK (overlapping Austin): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, she's like a figurehead. But like, is actually built into the boat, and not just like - like - you can kind of see the ship... is, part of her, in a way that a figurehead isn't always the case. Like, it's not just like her hands are *on* the boat? Her hands, and her arms, literally... go *in* to the, the structure of the boat behind her. I mean it's just like the front of a boat. And, you, like, some sails in the distance, kind of, like - oh, in the distance in terms of like, relative, visual, not - this isn't like a big long thing, you know? Anyway. The third one is... an armored figure, holding the top of a shield, that has been driven into the ground? That figure also has kind of, shoulder-length hair? Another figure is a... is a... (pauses) they're another person, but their face... they're, the whole of this icon is kind of split into four? And it, and it's... it's hard to like, figure out if this is a combination of the other... characters, here, the other, the other, icons, or if this is its own thing. In one of that icon's hands, there is a tree, uprooted, but still in bloom. In the other, there is a, a, ball of fire. And finally, in the center of them all, is... Samot, the Boy - the Boy-King. With... a book, over his heart, in one hand, and a bottle, in the other. And that gaze, even in this kind of primitive, you know, religious icon, is the same. And it sees right through you. #01:05:00#

ART: Well that sounds really accusatory. (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) You dig around some, and, you, again, I think at this point (frustrated sigh) actually now I have to remember, from our holiday game... did the names come up in the holiday game? Ah yeah, I delivered the names as if - I delivered the names in the intro. In the intro...

ART: Yeah, as the days of the week.

AUSTIN: As the days of the week. Yes. And you find them here, too, I think.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: I will read them again, for those who have not heard that special. They are, of course - I'll just use the, the names that are actually in use at this point? And not, I won't do the whole spiel I did then, but - Samothos, who put the sun in the sky, then gave us its fire and made, made from it tools so that we could do our work. Samot, who, who donates his body and - oh sorry, Sam- Samol, who donates his body and blood to be worked on. Samaantine, who shields us while we work, trade, think, play, and sleep. Samont\* [note: also spelled Samonta], once called Severeia by the old people, who blows the wind into our sails so we may trade our work.

Samot, who *taught* us how to work, and how to relax when the work is done. That's - those are the five figures, here.

ART: (pauses) Alright. So, so that's, that's useful.

AUSTIN: It's, and I -

NICK: Wait, did you say -

ART (overlapping Nick): About how lost it is.

NICK: Samot, twice?

AUSTIN: No, the first one - I said Samot by mistake, earlier, it's Samol. S-a-m-o-l.

NICK: Oh, okay, right.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: (pauses) Okay. So we have like, some idea of what... of what this is.

AUSTIN: (breathes deeply) What the five... yeah, yeah.

ART: And that they were worshipped here, and that it's a big deal, and.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Sunder... this seems to be old hat for Sunder. Sunder is like,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (dismissively) Ah, you know, another temple to the five gods.

AUSTIN: Like.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): I swear we'll, we'll never find anything useful here.

ART: (sarcastically) Well. Some people are raised in a rel- repressive religious environment, and this is all new information! (laughter) I don't say that. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (pauses) What do you -

ART (overlapping Austin): Uh, yeah, Hadrian tries to play it cool, like,

ART (as Hadrian): Oh, yeah. Pff. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) Weird! Weird how you've - yeah, okay. (Dre laughs) That's all I have - yeah.

ART (overlapping Austin): Of course I know all these things! (sarcastically) I am a man of the cloth.

AUSTIN: Great. Meanwhile, over at the orcish harvest party.

NICK: Mm.

AUSTIN: H- how's it going, what are you up to, did you leave? Are you sticking around?

DRE: Well, I think... I, I guess, let's have a quick in-character conversation... so I guess we're like, ducking through these alleys, supposedly in the way that this, this, this place that I guess - I'll pull Fantasma aside and be like,

DRE (as Throndir): Do you hear anything from Sunder?

NICK (as Fantasma): Not - not, no, nothing.

AUSTIN: Nah, she hasn't said anything to you.

DRE (as Throndir): (insistently) Well can you - say anything to her? I mean like, does it work here?

NICK (as Fantasma): I don't see why not. What would you have me say?

DRE (as Throndir): (exasperated) Well, tell her we found a crazy city full of orc stuff! Like (laughs) *jesus*, she should know about this! (laughter)

NICK (as Fantasma): (pauses) Um. Okay.

NICK: I... I relay that info to (laughs) to Sunder. Over the... telepathic link.

AUSTIN: She... huh, how do you think telepathy works? What do you send, like, is it just words? Do you *hear* her? Do you *feel*, is there something, like - what is it like?

NICK: I actually... have been imagining that it's basically just like the... like the digital communication between... the characters in *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*?  
#01:10:00#

AUSTIN: Oh, totally. Yeah, yeah, I know what you mean.

NICK: Like, you have to *specifically* think a thing.

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: But.

AUSTIN: And it's just - it's basically just an audio channel.

NICK: (pauses) Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Alright, so, you, you kind of catch her up on what you found here, and she says...

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Huh. That's... that sounds like what we're here for. (sighs) I wish I could talk to Uklan. I'd know exactly what we needed. Uh - if you can just (sighs) we need *something*. We need something from *there*, to bring back. Something, something of value, you know, not just a... not just a rock (laughs). Not just a windowpane, like we need something with words in it, ideally? Or, or a... a painting? Something, something someone *made*.

NICK (as Fantasma): (taken aback) I see.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (earnestly) If you could do that, I'd be, I'd be so thankful.

NICK (as Fantasma): (pauses) I uh... I will see what I can do.

ART: (teasingly) oOoOh!

AUSTIN: (laughs) I don't think she meant thankful like *that*, Art.

DRE: (laughs) Was that - was that your attempt at doing the '90's sitcom, like -

AUSTIN: Yeah (laughs).

DRE: (laughing) Okay.

ART: (pauses) I think you mean my triumphant success at doing the... '90's sitcom. (laughter)

DRE: Yeah. Yeah. Uh huh. Yeah. (Austin laughs) (pauses) Uh, do you - do you -

NICK: And then I - yeah, I relay that to Throndir.

DRE (as Throndir): Okay. We find what we came - we find *something*, and we get out. Because, I don't think anything good happens if we stay here for much longer. Papers or no papers.

NICK (as Fantasma): (pauses) I agree. Also, that orc woman was rather imposing.

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah, I don't - I - yeah! I don't think, uh, we would win that fight. And even if we did, we wouldn't win the next one. (laughter) Or the one after that.

NICK (as Fantasma): Indeed.

DRE: So I guess, I guess we'll make a, a search roll.

AUSTIN: Yeah, do it. Wisdom.

NICK: Wait a sec - can we like... is there anything around here that Throndir can camouflage in?

AUSTIN: No, this is a city.

DRE: Well I - I -

AUSTIN: This is a...

NICK: Okay.

DRE: And I ended up not - I ended up not taking that skill, I took a, I took a different...

NICK: Oh, alright.

DRE: And I'll talk, I'll talk about it in a second!

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: Cause I'm gonna use it (laughs).

AUSTIN: Yes.

NICK: (laughs) Oh, okay.

DRE: Can Fantasma roll to aid me on this?

AUSTIN: Sure.

NICK: Well I was gonna say, can I - go invisible, first?

AUSTIN: You, you can cast that spell, yeah.

NICK: To, hopefully, keep from being caught? Or.

DRE: (pauses) Oh that's true. Yeah, if - I mean if we find something, and, yeah. (pauses) How does it work if you touch something while you're invisible? Do you stay invisible?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: Yeah, I'm invisible until...

DRE: And does that thing turn invisible?

NICK: Dispel - no.

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): You can cast it - no, the thing doesn't turn invisible, no.

DRE: Like, but you could like, tuck it under your invisible robe? (uncertainly) And it would be covered by your robe, and thus invisible?

AUSTIN: Mmm... maybe?

NICK: Uh...



ART: (abruptly) What if he ate it? (laughter)

AUSTIN: Yeah, that would work, yes.

DRE: Yeah, he would just turn into like that weird, creepy statue in your science lab.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah (laughs).

DRE: You pour liquids in to see how the digestive tract worked. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (pauses) It's until you attack, or until you dismiss the effect, basically.

DRE: Okay.

NICK: Yeah, yep.

DRE: Alright, go invisible.

AUSTIN: So yeah, go ahead and make your invisibility roll. (pauses) There you go. Good roll.

DRE: Whoa! Holy cow.

NICK: (satisfied) 13.

AUSTIN: (laughs) And just like that you're alone, Throndir. In the middle of -

DRE (overlapping Austin): I'm - I'm used to it. (laughter)

AUSTIN: this city, that seems to hate elves.

DRE: Alright, well I'm gonna make a search roll, and that's +WIS... but when I leveled, I also took the Well Trained, skill, which is supposed to be giving an additional training to Kodiak, my dog.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

DRE: And I got him trained to do searching.

AUSTIN: Which means...?

DRE: So I think with... well, so with now I'm search- uh, I guess, should I add cunning?

AUSTIN: I think it's cunning.

DRE (overlapping Austin): (quietly) Is it cunning, to my roll?

AUSTIN: Yeah you add Kodiak's cunning.

DRE: (pauses) So I'll, I'll take... a +2, in addition to my regular +1 bonus to my wisdom check.

AUSTIN: Nice!

DRE: So that would be

NICK (overlapping Dre): (loudly) Oh!

DRE: 2d6 +3...

NICK: I should -

DRE: Oh?

NICK: I should say also, that, I left the Servant, and my extra books,

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: My invisible servant, back...

AUSTIN: Okay. (laughs)

NICK: at the camp.

AUSTIN: So there aren't just books floating around near you.

NICK: Yeah. (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughing) That's good.

DRE: Alright! It's gotta be better than a 3, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah!

DRE: Alright, 8.

AUSTIN: Phew! Even then! (laughs)

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's close. (laughter) Alright, so... so go ahead and you can take, you can locate, again, medical supplies, rations... tch tch tch... useful item... or useful information or long-lost knowledge.

DRE: Useful item.

AUSTIN: Okay. (sighs) I guess I wanna split the difference here, between tool and information here, right? Like. #01:15:00#

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Cause like a book or something is going to be... (pauses) How does Kodiak help here... (pauses) So I think you manage to cut through the old alleyways and stuff, until you... come to... what looks like, a - alright, there's a group of... of well-adorned, men and women, off... like still in the kind of big main city block area? But, but off to the side, where the music is a little more quiet, and the... there, there aren't any guards nearby, and, they're kind of having an intense debate over something. And what the thing seems to be, is... the book, in, in, on the table in front of them. And, the argument gets like, *real* intense? Like shouty, and then like, pushing? And... before you know it, guards are there, and have taken them both away, to calm down. And maybe be arrested. (Dre laughs) And maybe worse. But that book is just still there! Right on the table.

NICK: (pauses) Yoink!

AUSTIN: You take the book, and... again, you can't really make out a ton of it, it will take time for, for anyone to study it. But... (pauses) The, there *is* a phrase, kind of, in, in one of the early chapters, like maybe on the, the title page of one of the chapters, like the, the chapter - chapter one. And it says, "The breath of our world will light the tower." (pauses) And you have no idea what that means, but, you take it. And it's clearly a text, as you skim through it, about - magic, or theology, again lots of Dukes, and, and Duchesses, and - Marquis, and... all sorts of weird, religious figures are there...

NICK: Lots of Darmoks and Jalads.

AUSTIN: Lots of Darmoks and Jalads, yes. It's a *little* more clear than Darmok and Jalad? And Tanagra? Like, it's not *just* that system?

NICK: (laughs) Yeah. No, I - I dig.

AUSTIN: But it is similar to that system, of like.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Lots of referential things. Lots of... and, and lots of like, lots of using names, in, in order to signify intensity? Right, like, like, if you... if you *really*, really... if you, if you like, (ambivalently) yeah, you know, I like - *kind* of don't like somebody, you might compare them to, like, you know, Glum, the, the, Duke of Bad Days? But like if you *hate* someone, you might compare them to like - Amun, the, the King of, of, Broken Backs, and, and Wasted Potential, you know?

NICK: (laughs) O- okay.

DRE: So this is like, if like a, if a theology book was written by like T.S. Eliot. (Austin laughs) There's lots of footnotes in this book, you're telling me. (laughs)

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): (laughing) Right. *Tons* of footnotes. Alright, so. So you have that! (pauses) I think that's probably a whole day. I think that like, you've basically spent a day

navigating these streets and ducking out from, from trouble, (laughing) you didn't fail any terrible rolls here, so I'm not gonna put you into any shitty situations.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah, I think you can -

DRE (overlapping Austin): Can we -

AUSTIN: come back.

DRE: Okay. We leave and get back to camp?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah, Fantasma, you should tell... you should tell Sunder we got a book. It looks... it looks like it would be up her and Uklan's alley.

NICK: Okay. (pauses) Fantasma tells Sunder that, but does so in a way that... she, very obviously, realizes that he's trying to mask his excitement (laughter) at finding

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

NICK: a *fancy book*, from potentially another dimension. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Yeah! (laughs)

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (exasperated sigh) Old man, I swear. (Nick laughs)

AUSTIN: You all get back. Who gets back first? I'm gonna say... the Elf Party gets back first, to find broken windows, and a missing orc.

DRE: Ah, crap.

AUSTIN: (pauses) What do you do?

NICK (as Fantasma): (sharply) Where are my books?

NICK: Are my books here?

AUSTIN: Your books are - your books are there.

NICK: Oh, good.

AUSTIN: It looks like they jumped in through the - some of the windows that were on the roof, the, the kind of new roof of this building, because it's been twisted up in weird ways. And took Uklan by surprise. There is some blood, but there is no body. (long pause) What do you do?

#01:20:00#

NICK: (pause) Uh...

DRE: Is it just the two of us?

AUSTIN: Yeah, the others haven't got back yet.

DRE (overlapping Austin): Hadrian's not back yet?

AUSTIN: Hadrian and Sunder aren't back yet.

NICK: (pauses) Oh. Okay. Well, I, I. I tell Sunder that, over the, the link.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): (in a low, angry voice) I knew we shouldn't have left him alone. God - (sighs)

AUSTIN: She shoots Hadrian a look, and says,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): We have to hurry. Uklan's been taken.

ART (as Hadrian): (flatly) Oh no.

AUSTIN: (laughs) You want to do another read on that, Art? (laughter)

ART (as Hadrian): (dramatically) Oh, no!

AUSTIN: There you go! Alright.

DRE: (like a director) That was good, Art, can we uh, can we do a little more uh... (Austin laughs) a little more terrified, in that next take?

ART: Sorry, it's, it's hard, it's hard to get first take every time (laughter) it's a struggle.

AUSTIN: Alright. You guys arrive too, Sunder and, and Hadrian, to, again, find he is missing, there is some blood.

DRE: (grumbles)

DRE (as Throndir): I - I can track them -

ART (as Hadrian, overlapping Dre): Okay, we know where their camp is. We know where their camp is. There's -

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah. That's the logical place where they took him, but.

ART: (pauses, laughs) I mean you can track him if you want,

DRE (overlapping Art): Well I don't care -

ART: I'm - I'm just saying. (laughter) We can start moving toward the camp, while you track.  
(laughs) [jingling sound]

NICK: I like that uh - Dre is that one of, is one of your dogs in the room?

AUSTIN: (laughing) Yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's just Kodiak, is hanging out. (laughter)

NICK: Right. (laughing) I like - I like hearing the dog collar jingle every once in a while,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: cause it's just like. Oh yeah it's, that's just Kodiak's presence.

AUSTIN: Mhm!

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: (pauses) So what are you doing? What's the decision here? It's, it's evening, now.

NICK: (pauses) I missed -

ART (overlapping Nick): We -

NICK: What, what did people just say, sorry? (laughs)

AUSTIN: I don't think anything, I don't think there was -

NICK (overlapping Austin): I was just kind of thinking about - just thinking about dogs. (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): I don't think anyone had decided anything, other than... Hadrian had said like, oh, well, we know they're - where they - where they are, we probably know where he's being kept.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: And... that's about it. And like, and, and Throndir said or we could also, I could also track him. You know.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: (decisively) We *should* track him. That's, that's, I - that is the smarter way to go about it, right, cause like what if, what if he's not there?

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: We don't want to go to their big armed camp, and like, (laughing) oh he's not there but there's, there's still a ton of them.

[MUSIC: AUTUMN NOT WINTER]

ART: Also, considering they're like automata, they're not... they, they are, we're not like, going at night isn't a huge advantage (Austin laughs) I don't imagine. Unless they're the handy, solar-powered, kind.

DRE: Mm!

ART: (pauses) Eh, I mean, it's *possible*.

AUSTIN: Right!

ART: But it's, it's not likely (laughs).

AUSTIN: (indulgently) Lots of things are possible.

ART: Yeah! But like, once we get there, we need a, we need a better, we need a better plan.

DRE: (pauses) Yeah.

ART: Because like, they'll, they'll kill us. That's a - it's a - it's a camp full of trained soldiers, like we can't, the four of us will lose.

AUSTIN: Probably.

[Music continues, then fades out]

END OF EPISODE #01:24:12#