

SPRING IN HIERON 21: A FOUNTAIN OF INFORMATION

Transcriber: Cole

(Recap)

Austin: Hella Varal, you have taken the late shift. And you are therefore walking around the perimeter of the Last University on a patrol route. And you find yourself being led to a tree.

[Jack de Quidt's "[Something](#)" begins playing in the background]

And you see a person- a humanoid figure with a lar- with like, a long cloak with their arms outstretched in- in a kind of like, open-armed shape. Um, and there is a- there is the- the smell of something burning suddenly, and that smell disappears, too. And then you start to feel the ground shake. And so this is- this is what you should be on the lookout for. Some- someone is doing some sort of magical ritual at your cemetery.

Austin (as Exarch Braeven): The winter has been long, and people know the value of heat. No one need explain why a campfire or a warm soup is good. But the dark? Who cheers for a night like tonight? The dark needs an advocate.

Austin: And she- as she like, says this, she then is going to stab you again. And I think as her body hits the body, the ground finishes shaking as 2 gigantic claws begin to work their way up out of it. Um, and you notice maybe at this moment, where you are standing. And it is underneath the tree that Samol was buried under.

Janine: Um, I mean, Ad- Adaire has her stuff. I don't think Adaire- Adaire doesn't seem like the kind of person who like puts everything in a separate room and like, gets into a nightgown. She's probably got her knives under her pillow. She's probably that kind of girl. Uh, I think Adaire is gonna go find some rope.

Jack: So, I guess we- we actually get Lem just like, bow to strings looking at Hella to be like, 'do you want me to do it?'

Ali: [laughs] And then, no, I think that she- she shakes her head and she gets into like- She's not a runner-

Austin: Right, but she's wearing that Nike-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: That Nike Fit, so-

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: I think the thing is to jump on one leg-

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Janine: -tie the rope around the joint, but use the middle of the rope-

Ali: Yes.

Janine: -so there are 2 long, loose ends. And then, Hella and Lem can get those loose ends and like, yank it off its feet, and then we finish the job.

[Jack de Quidt's "[Something](#)" plays out to end]

Austin: Uh, yeah, it's tied down in this moment. Um, it is- it is- You have a- you can all take a breath. Like, you don't know how long this is gonna last. You don't- You do not know. Like, I cannot- It is not like, 'Oh, I'm done now. I'm gonna take a nap.' [**Jack** laughs] Like, it is still struggling. And here's the big one, you cannot go near its face. It will bite your head off, right?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Um, and it's like, rolling and trying to break free. But you have all of its legs tied up. Also, its tail is- is still writhing and like- So, its head and its tail are both very dangerous still.

Jack: In this moment, could we get a quick look at what the other citizens of the university are doing?

Austin: Yes. There are a number- Corsica's guards have already begun to- Or so there's like the city- In my mind, there's the city guard and there's the military guard, right? There's like, Corsica's military, and then there is like, Hella slash Thrandir's city guard. Um, and the guard has been shooting- or so, in general, what I want to say is, for people not looking at the screen, there are again- there are hundreds of little tents all around the city representing an influx of thousands of refugees over the last couple of weeks. Both the city guard and Corsica's military have been living and like, patrolling among those refugees to make sure that like, fights don't break out and to make sure people have food. And they're doing their best to basically be civil servants.

But also, people genuinely and generally don't like to just have cops walking around- [laughs] in- when they're like- it feels- it has made most of the people who've gotten here feel like they're under surveillance, right? Especially cause they're like- there is not enough room inside of the walls for a lot of these people, as more permanent structures are being built and more permanent solutions are being figured out. Many of them are just living in tents. Many of them are eating very cheap food. And so, to also have this feeling of like, 'oh, you're all under surveillance' is rough. And I think, in this moment, the groups to the northwest and the northeast, which are nearest to you, kind of like north of the Outhouse and Rix and Rowe's hovel- That group and also the group to the northeast of the cemetery temple and north of the range, those groups are being evacuated in this moment.

People are being like, those- the military guard and the city guard are both like, pushing people away and like, 'hey, there is a- there is danger over here. We have to get you further away.' So, it's moved a lot of people- Anyone who is inside of the star wall has been moved outside of the star wall and far enough away that like, if this thing breaks through and goes in those directions, those people will be safe. Uh, I think likewise, the people inside of the like, food, shopping, and homes district- the like, outside the wall- second city where the Outhouse- where Fero has rebuilt the Outhouse to be a giant building- [laughs] It's gigantic.

Um, is- those people mostly are moving inwards to the safety of the city wall, right? Or the campus wall. And the other- and then like, the northern half of that campus has now been filled with soldiers. And I think at this point that it's tied down more soldiers are now finally coming off the wall, down the wall, to come try to help you. So, I'd say probably like, 5 people have shown up so far and more are taken to the wall now. Um, people are scared. This is a very scary thing. There was a- there is a good chance this could break really bad.

Janine: Who do we have that is good at magic still? Anyone?

Austin: Sunder? Um, Sunder Havelton. Uh, Uklan Tel... Like, they're two of the best people there are. Do you want one of them to be here?

Janine: I'm wondering if the next up here is like- Is it possible to have someone who is capable of like, magically capable, disenchant the bones or something like that?

Ali: Yeah, or at least-

Austin: Could you call for one of them?

Janine: Cause the other- the other alternative is like, we go at it with hammers, and even that I don't know would help.

Austin: [laughs light] Right. Dragon bone is hard.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So, who do you call for?

Ali: Sunder?

Janine: Uh-

Jack: Sunder?

Austin: Oh, also Samot is here, who could theoretically also do magic, right? Of some sort.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: Also, Samot's read a lot of books.

Austin: Yeah..

Janine: Samot seems- [light laugh] Samot seems-[laughs again] It seems weird to be like, 'Well, we have a god here, but what if we call Uklan Tel in?'

Austin: Uh hm. Though it al- it's always like- No, go ahead.

Jack: I'm just checking the wiki to see what- [**Austin, Janine**, and Jack laugh softly] Do we know what Sunder's specialty is?

Austin: Magic. Um-

Jack: At the Last University, she- so she's just like a classically trained-

Austin: The thing that she is-

Jack: -magician?

Austin: She's a classically trained mage, who also has done pattern magic. She was working with the New Archives when we first met her.

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: Right? She's like a- she has like that crossover potential.

Ali: I- Yeah. I think that-

Austin: We've seen her do fire magic. We've seen her do all sorts of stuff.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Hmm.

Ali: I feel like I think of Sunder as more of a field agent than I think of Uklan Tel, who has only been a field agent the last 10 years or whatever, right?

Austin: Right.

Jack: And has- and has had a kind of checkered history with it.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yes.

Ali: But if Samot wants to get out of bed, by all means. [laughs]

Austin: Right. Sure. I mean, who- I'm asking who you're calling for. Cause the guard are gonna go-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -get whoever you ask for.

Jack: I think it's Sunder or Samot.

Austin: Ok.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Um, I'm cautious about... Samot is a wild card.

Janine: Samot's also- Is Samot perfectly healed now or-?

Austin: No, he's still- he's still recovering. But he's also Samot.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Um, I think one thing to maybe consider is like, this is the corpse of his father.

Janine: That's also true.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: We- ok. Yeah, that kinda- [laughs lightly] Uh, let's- let's not do that then.

Austin: Ok.

Jack: Sunder? [Ali laughs]

Janine: Let's go with Sunder. [laughs]

Jack: Sunder? Fetch Sunder?

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Ok. Um, so ok. So, I'm gonna need one strength roll to keep this thing down long enough for Sunder Havelton to get here.

Ali: Sure. God. [quietly] I hate dragons.

Austin: Um, uh-

Ali: Oh my-

Janine: Wow.

Austin: Wow.

Jack: Woah.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Wow-wow-wow. Wow! [Ali laughs]

Jack: Do we have any plus 1 forwards? Do we have any-

Austin: Wait, I was like- I was trying to figure this out because like, you're 3 off from a success. Um-

Jack: Ali rolled a 4.

Austin: You have a plus 1 forward from-

Jack: Ali rolled a 4.

Austin: Ali rolled a 4. [uncomfortable] Oooohhh, you have one plus 1 forward-

Janine: It took so-

Ali: Do- do- is it- Is-

Janine: We had so many good rolls in a row.

Austin: Ugh.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: We had so many.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah, we- it's too bad.

Austin: But you're- you're tying down a dragon with a rope, you know? Um, you have it down. I mean, like I have ways of making this break good at this point, right? Do you know what I mean? Um- [sighs] Just not that good. Like, I think you're holding- you're holding it down. You're holding it down. You start to see that the ropes are fraying, right? Hella? Um, it is- it is going to break, and Sunder is not here yet. And so, I mean, I think it- [exhales] I think it gets its back legs free. And it stands up. Um-

Jack: Jesus.

Austin: And I think it- I mean, I think it absolutely takes a swipe at one of the um... one of- Hmm. I'm doing my best to try to balance like, rewarding what you've done so far with the fiction which is- it is a big dragon that is- has taken zero damage. Has taken no damage, at all. [**Jack** laughs] At all. You know what I mean? [laughs] Um-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Um, Hella, I think it's gonna take a swing on you with that roll, right? Like-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -I think you're holding it- you're holding it- you're holding it. There's this moment where you feel like you're dragging it, do you know what I mean? You're like, 'Oh wow. I'm fuckin' stron- Oh.' And then it just like, claw out at you. Um, [exhales] and that is like, as Sunder gets here. Cross your fingers?

Ali: [laughs] Ok. I still have 3 armor. Wow.

Janine: Phoooo.

Ali: Uh-

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Wow.

Austin: That's a 12.

Janine: That was almost a- that 3d dice almost stopped on the 1. And I was like, 'This is gonna be great.'

Austin: [excited exclamations] It almost stopped on the 1. It almost stopped at the 1! Hella?

Ali: That's a 9. And-

Austin: Yeah. No, that's a 9 plus 3 is 12. And so then the 3 gets knocked off-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -cause your armor- uh-

Ali: Uh huh. And then that goes to 9 of 8. [laughs lightly]

Austin: [sighs] Yeah.

Jack: Jesus. [Ali sighs] Wow.

Ali: 'Hey, Honey!' [Janine and Austin laugh]

Austin: 'I'm home!' [Jack laughs]

Ali: Um-

Austin: Hmm- hmm. Oh, actually it also- Sorry. This thing- this may have already killed you, Hella. I'm just now looking again. It has 3 piercing. It just cuts through your armor anyway.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: So, what like- this- You were probably not dead yet, but you were probably lower than 8, if- we probably fucked up the math a little bit. Um-

Ali: Ok.

Austin: What hap- What ha- What's this look like in this moment? I think it has its claw in you. Ok, you know what? I'm gonna give you another choice.

Ali: [laughing] Ok. Ok.

Austin: Um, and this is like-

Janine: Oh.

Austin: It- it's- it's pulled toward you. It's like coming towards you, and you basically are like, 'I can let this thing claw through me, or I can turn and let it grab this ring. And it'll knock me to 1. It'll knock me out.' It'll knock you to zero, but you will be stable.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: But it will get this ring it wants. Um, [Ali exhales] and you can tell that it's like- it's leaving. This is it. It's like, 'Oh shit. They tied me down. I have to go.' This is it's final chance. And so this is your choice. Does it get the ring? Or do we have to make a roll to see if Hella Varal dies?

Ali: I- Hmm... I feel like that's really tough because... [exhales] I think if Hella sees Sunder arriving to the scene in this moment, you know?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: It's like, 'Oh, I will still protect this thing, and then whatever happens after, she will take care of.' Right?

Austin: Yeah. I-

Ali: I think that she believes that.

Austin: Ok. I- I think that the choice is more important than that though. Do you know what I mean?

Ali: Ok, yeah. Yeah.

Austin: I think like, let's have this choice happen, and then we'll talk about whether she sees Sunder or not as this happens, you know?

Ali: Yeah, ok. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um- God.

Austin: I can't believe you rolled a fucking 4. [groaning] Oh my god.

Ali: [laughing] I know. I can still roll Last Breath. It's fine.

Austin: You can. Totally. You absolutely can.

Ali: Um-

Austin: That is the thing. That is like, the choice, right? Is like, you're gonna take this blow in such a way that it can't get to the ring. Um, or you're going to- to protect the ring from this thing which you know wants this ring.

Ali: [exhales] Yeah. And I feel like with everything else where it's like, if this thing leaves, it goes to- it's just probably heading to whoever that person was working for. Like, I think there- there are so many moving pieces in this moment.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: That she... it's tough to prioritize.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Um, but again, you know, the priority is always, don't let my enemy get the thing that they want.

Austin: Right. Right.

Ali: Um... Ok. So, I have- [laughs lightly] I would have to get a- less than a 6 to die for real, right?

Austin: Uh, I'll read the move. Yeah, it's Last Breath.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Yeah, we should- we should look at everything. 'When you're dying, you catch a glimpse of what lies beyond the black gates of Death's kingdom.' So, that's an interesting thing here because traditionally what we- what we've done there is, 'Oh, you get to see the plac- you get to see where- where Adelaide is. Or before that where Tristero was.' But reading this move again, that's really interesting is, what is beyond the black gates of Death's kingdom. Um, I think you see it. You would be seeing a different thing here. And that different thing-

Ali: Oh, would I? Ok.

Austin: -is- Oh, you would still be seeing Adularia. Adularia, where she is. But the way this move is written is like, 'Oh, you can just see into Death's kingdom.' But the- beyond can be read the other way, which is what is beyond the- We know that there's this second gate. And that is the gate into the Heat and the Dark, right? And so, the- the image that I will have if you're- if you're gonna do this Last Breath roll is like, you're being pulled into the Heat and the Dark.

Hella, you've- you've tried really hard to protect this thing. You've given your whole life for so long to like, try to take this turn, and now you are looking into the nothing, directly. And there is something attractive about it. There is something that wants you to fall into it. And that it would be nice to rest. Um, and so then- then roll, just roll plus nothing. 'Yeah Death doesn't care how cool or tough you are.' Which I might give you a plus- or a minus one on this roll, which is what you want, because Death absolutely cares how cool and tough you are. That has been your plot for 4 years. [Ali and Janine laugh]

[0:15:00]

Austin: Uh, on a 10+, you've cheated death. You're in a bad spot, but you're still alive. On a 7 to 9, Death, herself, will offer you a bargain. Take it and stabilize or refuse and pass beyond the black gates into whatever fate awaits you. Or on a minus- 6 or minus, your fate is sealed. You're marked as Death's own, and you'll cross the threshold soon. The GM will tell you when. So, actually, you do want a plus. You do want a 10+ here.

Ali: Ok. Ok.

Austin: I don't remember what system that it was that we were playing where you want low, but not this, apparently.

Jack: A 7 to 9 will do. We'll- we- we just do with a bargain.

Austin: Yeah, I have to figure out what the fuck that is given the situation.

Jack: That's a hell of a lot better than a 6 minus.

Austin: Yo, yeah, of course. Yes.

Ali: Yeah. I- Oh god.

Austin: And also, the thing to note here is like, 'Your fate is sealed' can mean many different things. It does not mean you die in this scene, for instance, you know?

Ali: Sure. Yeah. I- But- Yeah. I think it's a weird thing because I think the- If you zoom it in enough to think about Hella dying to protect this ring, it's very silly, and she wouldn't do it. But if Hella would die to make sure the last 20 minutes wasn't for nothing-

Austin: Right.

Ali: -she would do that.

Austin: Right.

Ali: Um, so yeah. [Ali laughs uncomfortably and **Austin** sighs] Oh. [laughs again] Um... yeah. Yeah.

Austin: I can-

Ali: Yeah, I don't know.

Austin: I can tell you what like- Yeah. There are reasons why this would kill you. Even with Adelaide. But, so like, I want to-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: We will address that if you- if you fail this roll. But for listeners, there are reasons why the Cult of the Dark Son's reanimated bone dragon has the ability to circumvent Adelaide's control here.

Ali: Cool. Yeah. Ok. Let me just go for it then. Um-

Austin: Alright. 2d6 plus, plus 1. Plus 1 and that plus 1 comes from being the Dark Knight. It comes from being Death's Chosen, you know? [**Ali** sighs uncomfortably] Hella Varal. Death's servant.

Ali: Ok. It's gonna be literally fine. Um- [**Austin** breathes a light laugh] I'm now starting to think like, 'Wouldn't it be great if this dragon was away from my friends? Maybe I'm making the wrong choice', but I said it into a microphone, so I'm gonna roll this.

Austin: I mean, no. Listen, listen, listen. Wait, wait, wait. No. We did- We've been down this road before so many times. I would so much rather we make a choice that you are- Like, we can take a break. [**Ali** laughs] I'm happy to take a break so that you can think through this. This is a big deal decision. Like, full stop. You could roll the dice, and Hella Varal could be dead. You should not rush to that decision because what I don't want to do is roll the dice and then- and then in an hour, be like, 'fuck. We fucked up.' Because it is actual play, and I want you to be able to make an informed decision about what you want here. We could wait. We could be like, 'that's the recording', [**Ali** laughs] and before this goes out, do a pick-up. I am cool with that.

Jack: I think the minimum we should do is 5 minutes. Like-

Austin: Yes.

Jack: We should- we should just step away from the microphones.

Austin: Let's take a break. Let's take a step away.

Ali: [uncomfortable sound] Uh...

Austin: Unless you don't want to. That's the other thing. If you're like, 'No, I want to rip the bandaid off' But then you've said that out loud. [laughs]

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: But I want to be- My job right now is to tell you that I am happy to give you the opportunity to step away for a bit.

Ali: [sighs] It's just so easy to roll a failed dice. [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Um, and I don't want to. I really don't want to fail this roll. Um-

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: I really don't want to.

Austin: I- Well, the other thing that I'm gonna say is like, cool shit will happen if this dragon gets this ring. Not cool shit for you. But cool shit for the world. Um, but that is- The question then is like- the thing for me that's tough there is like, as a- as potential viewer, I'm super curious what happens if the Cult of the Dark Son gets this ring. As the- as a um- but as a, also as a viewer, I'm like, isn't- Is Hella protecting this thing more interesting and honest for who she is? Do you know what I mean? What I don't want to do-

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: -is do the thing where it's like, 'Well, the character is safe and the cool thing can- the cool bad guys get to do a cool bad guy thing because that's easier.' If it isn't honest to the fiction, you know? Um, let's take a break. Let's take 5. I'm gonna run to the bathroom and get some water.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Alright.

Ali: Alright. See you in 5 minutes.

Austin: BRB.

Jack: See ya, **Ali**.

Austin: Are we back?

Ali: I think so. [laughs]

Austin: How you feelin'?

Ali: Ok. Still complicated.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: Um, this is such a bummer. Cause I- [laughs] I like this roll, and I want to roll it.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: I don't want to fail it. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I think that there's something- it's tough because to think of Hella, Hella's someone who fights for her life.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Um, Hella's someone who wanted to live so bad, she killed Calhoun for it.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Hmm.

Ali: Um, [laughs] and like, I- [sighs] It would be- I think it's unfair to her character to see her die for this? Um, because if like, the arc of Hella is like, someone who is very confident and wants to be alive, and then through Winter, finding herself in a life that she doesn't want to live in-

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: -because she finally did like, the thing that wasn't worth it, like now that we're in Spring, it should wrap around back to like, Hella finding a life that she wants to live.

Austin: Right.

Ali: And like, not being able to lose it for a ring she hasn't touched or talked about-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: [laughing] -in a really long time.

Austin: Totally.

Ali: Ok. Um, and I- I think it also speaks to the confidence of Hella which is like-

Austin: Yes.

Ali: -it'll get this thing. I will find this dragon again. I've- I know how to fight this dragon now.

Austin: Right.

Ali: Um, right?

Austin: Right there's the moment- there is a moment in- and I only think about this because **Jack** sent us the uh, music that they- that they composed for the scene in the last episode where um, Hadrian goes to Throndir- er Throndir goes to Hadrian and says, 'Hey, Benjamin is a conduit for Arrell' and is like, 'What do we do?' And Hadrian is like, 'We're gonna deal with it. It's gonna be fine. [**Ali** laughs] It's gonna be fine.' And then takes a second and like, has to like, drill into what that means. Um, but like, I think there is among your group, at this point, a degree of confidence that whatever be- get between us and a better world, is something we can achieve. We can do it. Um, and I think that that does speak to something true for Hella.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Uh-

Ali: Um, especially with her being someone aligned right now to the- She is not the person who is like, 'I'm gonna live a happy life-'

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: '-until the world ends.' She is someone who is like, 'I'm going to fix the world.'

Austin: Yes.

Ali: 'And if it ends while I'm fixing it, sure.'

Austin: Right.

Ali: 'But I'm going to fix it.'

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Um, so yeah. I think that she gives it up.

Austin: What does the- what does the- What do- you know. I want there to be like a- the moment where we get her making this decision. Is that- is there- What is the equivalent of this?

Of the audience seeing this happen? Like, obviously we've had the conversation. It's an auditory medium. People heard you say it about her. But I'm curious how we show it on the screen. Um-

Ali: Um-

Austin: Like, is it a conversation like that with Adelaide as this is happening? Is this just something in her own face where you see her like, steel her resolve to be like, 'No, we're gonna fuckin' kill you'?

Ali: Yeah, I think it's- She does steel her resolve in terms of like, 'yeah, you should hit me. I'm not giving this thing up.'

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: But then she sees Lem and Adaire past the dragon.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: Right? And is like, 'We're gonna get a round two.'

Austin: Right.

Ali: 'This is not worth it.' Um, and let's it go.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: [laughing] I guess.

Austin: Yeah. Um, yeah, so I think it like- You're able to pull back just enough to where it digs into you. You're at 1 HP, you're knocked the fuck out. But then like, it pulls away, and its front leg is still tied. It is like, you know, almost as if it has three legs, 2 back legs and 1 big forward one, is like trampling southwest through the food, shopping, and homes district that has been evacuated, thankfully. Um, but people stuff gets wrecked. Like, Rix and Rowe's hovel is definitely fuckin' destroyed. And you know, past the big tree- Um, there is a- there is a moment where it actually, you know what? I think it goes like, towards the big tree, and then it stops and then starts heading west through the water instead. It does not want to get near that tree. Um, and does go through some of the refugees homes across the water. Not that many people get hurt, but people get hurt as it- as it escapes. Unless Lem and- and Adaire, you're like, 'No, wait! Get back here, big dragon. We're gonna stop you now.'

Janine: I think Adaire moves the hell out of the way. Also, is the Outhouse ok? Because I feel like if you fuck with the Outhouse again-

Austin: I am not-

Janine: Keith is gonna revolt.

Austin: I think the front of the Outhouse gets fucked up a little bit, but not the new, big center and bridge area of the Outhouse.

Janine: Ok. Ok.

Austin: Um, but truly funny if- if that had been broken.

Jack: The Outhouse would be that building in Fortnite that keeps getting destroyed-

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh.

Jack: -and built slowly over the course of the season. [Jack and **Janine** laugh lightly]

Austin: Exactly. Um, god.

Jack: I do- Maybe we should... We should think about working out where it went, but we should think about that after we've gotten Hella under a roof.

Austin: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Jack: [overlapped] Um- and with-

Janine: Also, Sunder watched all this happen, right?

Austin: Sunder- I think at the point at which like, Sunder arrives and sees it doing this, begins to try to cast a spell, but it is like, getting the fuck out. You know what I mean? Like, you really need to have this bone dragon captured and held down to do this thing.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Um, yeah.

Janine: I just mean like, Sunder at least getting a look at it is still valuable.

Austin: Yes. Yes, 100%. And also like, the- I- I think- I do think when Sunder gets here, does dispel the 2 other skeletons that are- have put themselves back together.

Janine: Fantastic.

Austin: Um, and then also is like,

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Bring me the body of the cultist. We have to study her.

Austin: Um, and so like-

Janine: Oh cool.

Austin: They are gonna start digging into what the fuck was going on here, you know? Um, Hella, you get brought inside. Ever- you know, everyone can take a breath is what I will say, at this moment. Um, let me look at moves for Recovery. 'When you do nothing but rest in comfort and safety after a day of rest, you recover all your HP. [light laugh] Uh, after 3 days of rest, you remove 1 debility of your choice. If you are under the care of a healer, magically or otherwise, you heal a debility for every 2 days of rest instead.' So, in 2 days, your like, poison weakness will be- will be healed. But after a day, you will be back to- to normal. So like, by this time tomorrow night.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: But until then, you're gonna be a 1 HP, so don't get into a fight. [light laugh]

Ali: I'll try not to.

Austin: What do y'all do as the-

Jack: Jeez.

Austin: Uh, you know, I think at this moment, maybe like, you know, the first- first um, rays of the sun begin to- to pull up over the- over the horizon. Or over some of the hills that make up a horizon to the east. And it's kind of quiet. Um... what do you- what are the three of you getting up to today? Like, I think we're- I would like to do a cut here.

Janine: Is this the next day or-?

Austin: I'm- I'm asking you. What are you doing? Like, we can- we don't need to zoom in on like, 'Is Hella gonna make it?' Hella's gonna make it. You know what I mean? Like, um, and there's definitely a montage of people taking care of Hella, but there is not- We don't need to do medical drama. You know?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: We've done- we've done medical drama this season. [light laugh]

Janine: Yeah. [Ali laughs] Um, I just want to find another spot for Rix and Rowe. That's my-

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Cause that sucks.

Austin: Yeah. Um-

Janine: I paid for that fucking hovel.

Austin: You did. Well, I mean, I think here's part of the thing that we see is like, people are- for now, I think they move into the Outhouse. There's enough room because Fero rebuilt it to be so big. Um, and they were already in here. But there is also a weirdness, right? Like, I think part of what we see onscreen in the montage is like, 'Why does some people get to have big, real homes first?' Like, 'Why should- why do they get to move inside the wall or into the Outhouse when there are so many other people who are in line waiting for big, real houses still?' You know? Um, but I do think for now, they move into the Outhouse and find room there. Like, they- they get a room in the Outhouse, basically. Uh, and I think the plan is to rebuild their hovel, you know? It's not to let it languish indefinitely. Um, they deserve a hovel, damnit. But for now, I'm gonna draw an X through it. Anything else people are gonna do in this little, even- like, pre-morning, early-early morning day?

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: Do you check in on Emmanuel?

Jack: Yeah. I think I'm gonna- I'm gonna- I'm gonna go looking for Emmanuel.

Austin: Ok. Um, I mean, I think you find him in the meeting hall doing his best to like- like, people are scared, and so the- there's a lot of people in the meeting hall where it feels safe.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: Um, and he's doing his thing where he's like, going around and giving people, you know, bread and butter and like, um, a little bit of bacon. Um, as if it's like a breakfast thing, you know? A tiny bit of scrambled eggs. Like, half a piece of bacon. Like, it's- we're stretching. We're just trying to get flavor out there, you know?

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. [light laugh] It's like- it's not even an egg each.

Austin: No. No, no, no. Yeah, totally. It's like really cakey bread, probably, you know? Um, uh, and he sees you there, and he says like,

Austin (as Emmanuel): Oh, thank- [exhales audibly] You're ok. Didn't-

Jack (as Lem): Just about.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Didn't I say you didn't need to go anywhere to find adventure?

Jack (as Lem): It just- it came right out of the ground. It woke me up. I woke up in the library.

Austin: He gives you like- He embraces you and kisses you without saying another word.

Jack (as Lem): God, we so nearly had it. We so nearly had it.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Shh. Shh. You saved so many people.

Jack (as Lem): It- it destroyed Rix and Rowe's-

Austin (as Emmanuel): How many-

Jack: I never met them.

Austin: You've never met Rix and Rowe. **[Ali and Austin laugh]** [crosstalking begins]'There are two kids!'

Janine: There are 2 kids. They are very upset.

Jack: I- Presumably I have now. I have- I will have done by now, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Like, offscreen.

Austin: Offscreen? Sure, if you want to have. Yeah. They're-

Jack: I think Lem's just-

Austin: I want that to have happened. I bet that's an adorable pairing. Um- **[Ali laughs]** God.

Jack: -distracted that like- Yeah. Just-

Austin: They just move your bookmarks around constantly. They like- You go into your library, and all of your bookmarks are in different places.

Jack: It's like-

Janine: They steal every sweet that Emmanuel bakes for you.

Austin: Oh no.

Jack: Isn't that um-

Austin: [lightly laughing] They just take a nibble of each.

Jack: It's that person who- who replaced all their parents' DVDs with copies of 'Click'.

Austin: [laughing] Yeah, exactly.

Jack: But- [laughs] but for a library.

Austin: Um-

Jack: Yeah. But I think-

Jack (as Lem): Yeah, I'm just- I just-

Austin: He is trying to calm you-

Jack (as Lem): I'm just so frustrated.

Austin: Yeah, he's like,

Austin (as Emmanuel): Please take a seat. We- Wha- [exhales] Let me get you something to eat. You-

[0:30:00]

Jack (as Lem): Have you got a small bit of bacon?

Austin (as Emmanuel): Yeah. I have- [light laugh] I have a small bit of bacon. [**Jack** laughs softly]

Jack (as Lem): A 3rd of an egg.

Austin: He like, rubs your head and like, rests your- rests your face on his chest, and is like,

Austin (as Emmanuel): Yeah, have a 3rd of an egg. I have- I have a quarter bread. Shh.

Jack (as Lem): Oh god.

Austin: Um, and is generally just trying to convince you that like, you did good. Because y'all did. You did stop-

Jack: And I-

Austin: The version of this in my notes, involves way more people getting hurt, so-

Jack: Right. But I think the-

Austin: Like way more people getting hurt.

Jack: I think that just as, you know... I- Me, Jack, right now, I'm like, 'Ugh, we rolled so well.' And like- [**Austin** and **Ali** laugh] And I think- and I can't imagine that in- in the moment-

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: -Lem is feeling anything other than that.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Like, no amount of consolation is gonna help Lem right now, and that's fine.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Because he recognizes that the consolation is being provided even if it's not-

Austin: Yes.

Jack: -you know, doing anything.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. Been there. [light laugh]

Jack: Yeah. Right. [light laugh] Where it's just like, 'I respect what you're doing right now, and I- it means a great deal, but I'm so mad that we didn't capture a dragon.' And my friend nearly died.

Austin: Yeah, um- Uh, and he says like,

Austin (as Emmanuel): I'll make sure she gets- she gets well fed, too.

Jack (as Lem): Thank you.

Austin: Um, and kisses your forehead and says,

Austin (as Emmanuel): I have to get back. But I will be here whenever you need.

Jack (as Lem): Ok. I'll be here. I'll be here.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Do you need books?

Jack (as Lem): I might try and tidy up.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Do you need- Should I run you over anything?

Jack (as Lem): Do I need books?

Austin (as Emmanuel): Like, to stay- if you're gonna stay here. Do you need-

Jack (as Lem): Oh.

Austin (as Emmanuel): [laughing] Not generally speaking. [**Jack** and **Janine** laugh quietly]

Jack (as Lem): No, I'm- I'm just- I mean. No, I'm fine. I'll just like-

Jack: And I think we just get like- I think we get three shots that are like, slower than a montage.

Austin: Uh hm.

Jack: It's just like 3 shots of like, 2 seconds each.

Austin: Uh hm.

Jack: And it's just like, Lem playing cards with someone in the meeting hall.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And then sitting next to Emmanuel and talking.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And then like, Lem standing up and stretching.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And then we just cut straight to whatever's next.

Austin: Yeah. Um, who wants to be next? What else is goin' on?

Jack: How you feeling, Hella?

Austin: Yeah, how you feelin', bud?

Ali: I'm bedridden, probaby?

Austin: Yeah, for- for-

Ali: So-

Austin: This is like- one of the-

Ali: I guess that's what I'm getting up to.

Austin: -the weird things about this game is like, in a day, you will have full HP. [light laughs]

Ali: Uh hm

Austin: You will go from 1 to 26 in a day. Don't worry about it. You're-

Jack: She's very strong.

Austin: You're very strong.

Ali: Uh hm.

Austin: But I think I would like to play it as being a little bit more bedridden for a little bit. Being a little bit more like-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -reco- You're recovering. You're in a recovering position. You know? Not recovery position. You're in a recovering position.

Ali: Um, it's funny cause I had- I had sort of short list of things that I wanted to do during downtime, and I think some of them I can accomplish while in bed, which is talk to Sunder and have lunch with Adaire. [laughsa]

Austin: Aww.

Janine: I was gonna suggest that Adaire would visit Hella in the infirmary with like, some kind of bad camp counselor activities, since that seems to be her thing now. [**Ali** laughs]

Austin: Oh my god.

Janine: Not really, but like, kind of.

Austin: It's very good. Yeah, no, I get it.

Ali: Um-

Austin: Which one of those do you want to do first?

Ali: Probably the Adaire thing.

Austin: Ok. Let's do that

Ali: Cause I think it- attached it's really funny cause it's Adaire like- I mean it's um, Hella very weakly and concernly being like,

Ali (as Hella): Adaire, can you... make the guard schedules for me this week? I don't think I'm gonna be able to do it tonight. [**Janine** laughs] I've been trying to go off of the

DuCarte's model anyway, so I think you'll better at it than I am. I just didn't want to ask you to bother you before.

Janine (as **Adaire**): O~k. I'm surprised you- I mean, you know I designed that mostly so people could go to the bathroom regularly, right?

Ali (as **Hella**): Yeah, that's a good thing.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I guess.

Ali (as **Hella**): People usually don't do that.

Janine (as **Adaire**): There's more bathrooms around here though. I don't know. I don't know anything about guarding. I don't know how it- [**Ali** laughs] I'm sure it's like working the perfume counter.

Ali (as **Hella**): I mostly just really like the way that you set up that people can request vacation time. [laughs ooc]

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: [laughing] I legitimately had a moment of like, 'Did Adaire- would Adaire-? Yes, she- It was- They were in paradise, so like, of course.'

Austin: Yeah, Uh hm.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: She was a capitalist, but she was an ok boss.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: Right. Yeah. I love DuCarte's cause I- [laughs] There's some elements to working retail that are really good, which is having a regular schedule.

Austin: Hm.

Ali: Um, which is why- [laughing] That's why I'm like, 'Hella was an employee and loved that.' [**Austin** laughs]

Janine: That's the other joke, right? Is like, 'Oh ok. You want me to make the guards' schedules. You want me to give everyone 39.5 hours?' [**Ali** and **Austin** laugh]

Austin: God.

Ali: Um, but yeah, maybe that could be that- See, like, I don't know that Hella is... Hella might be like, studying Jerod's books while she is in bed.

Janine: Hmm.

Austin: Hmm, yeah. That's interesting.

Ali: Um, and maybe she's having Adaire help her, if Adaire's visiting. If we want to flesh this scene out more, but I think it's more like- I think she appreciates that Adaire's there to help her pass the time because-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: [laughing] -um, she isn't good at this part of it. Uh, again, most XP drop in a decade. [light laugh]

Austin: Right.

Ali: I don't remember the last time in this game I've been under like 17 HP?

Austin: I do.

Ali: And it's the last time I died.

Austin: It was the last time you died, yeah.

Ali: Uh hm. Um, so yeah.

Austin: Um, yeah. If y'all want to look through books together, I think that's nice.

Ali: Yeah. Ok.

Austin: I think that's like a Spout Lore, right?

Ali: Ok, sure. With an assist.

Austin: This was the book that previously allowed you to know that there was a Cult of the Dark Son thing uh, in the area, and boy.

Ali: Uh huh. Uh, yeah. They're sure here, aren't they?

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: Ok, I'm just gonna roll this, and then we'll see.

Austin: Hey, nice.

Ali: Ok, that's a 9.

Austin: Uh, do you want to help?

Janine: Am I assisting? Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, if you assist, that could get up to a 10.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Uh, what am I rolling?

Austin: Plus bond for Aid. Aid/Interfere. Alright.

Janine: That's a 9.

Austin: Yep, totally. It's 10. Totally. It's a 9, but with the +1 now that you've given to **Ali**, that's a 10. So, the GM will tell you something interesting- er no, actually, sorry. Now it is actually, cause it's a 10, it is interesting and useful.

Ali: Yay.

Austin: Um, about the subject relevant to your situation. So, you're looking for info on what specifically at this point? Because there was a couple of things you were looking at before. But now, I'd rather know like, what are you looking for? What are you- together you're looking through notebooks and you know, sketches and all sorts of stuff that she had. What are you- what are you looking to get some info on?

Ali: Yeah, I feel like I sort of got- I got the most out of the Dark Son stuff that I could have when I discovered it, right?

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: Um, but there was the-

Austin: Well, I think you failed that roll. Which is why you only learned that it exists and that it is here, you know?

Ali: Right. But the thing that I-

Austin: That she wasn't sure who to trust. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But the thing that I was trying to do was look into the stars.

Austin: Yes.

Ali: And like, who she knew.

Austin: Yes.

Ali: Um, so I think that being bedridden is a good time to figure out how to decode a secret language-

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Ali: -with my thief friend.

Austin: Yeah. I mean, I think- [exhales] basically what the two of you are able to get is- is kind of eve- every- everything that Jerod Shiraz knew about the stars. Which is um- You know, kind of a rundown of who they were and how Samot built them and didn't finish them. Um, they were unfinished, but that they have this like, not only resistance to the Heat and the Dark, but a- a- can overpower it. Um, like there is a bit of this to like, I want to make sure this is not a lore dump exactly. But I do- I kind of want to like- She is very- she was very good at her job. And her job was understanding things social and spiritual. And this is a group of social, spiritual beings, and so like, it's kind of an open book to you based on- Like, there are things that you maybe don't know about like, what their long term intentions are. Though she even speculated about those. Uh, like where do you want me to begin? What are the- Let's- Let's like have an open conversation where you're asking me questions about them, and I can fill in the blanks.

Ali: Sure, um- yeah.

Austin: And either of- either of you can ask questions in this since you're both researching.

Ali: Ok, cool. Yeah. Um, I mean, I think that Hella's priorities are to read about the interactions that Jerod had to sort of find a foothold within to continue that relationship, right?

Austin: Right. Yeah. So, I think for that, it's- she had a trusted scout who would run messages out east to the Shredded Steppe where they were, even at that point in time, beginning to build their headquarters. We've now started to call like, The Citadel. Um, it probably has a bigger, real name at this point, but not on my sheet until you get there. [laughs] Uh, and the uh- She was the only one who was in contact with them in that way because she knew that they were dangerous.

So, partially it's, 'I don't want people to know that I am keeping up diplomatic relations with this group of people- or this group of beings that are so scary', but partially it was like, 'I don't want people who are not me to keep that relationship up because they could fuck it up.' Um, she had basically negotiated a sort of like, hands-off agreement. And that given that both sides were committed to stopping the Heat and the Dark, that neither should the Citadel do anything to harm the Last University nor the opposite. Neither the opposite. Um, and so like, you go do you. We'll do us. We will continue to- to you know, independently pursue our solutions. The stars were very curious about the way the starstuff shield worked because it is made of them. And in a very literal sense. The stars are- the starstuff is an extension of star identity and

star being. It is- you know, as far as Jerod Shiraz knows, there is not like, one- one being that has been stretched across this entire place the way that Chapter was, but like, this is drawing from some collection of star power of stars.

Like, literally from their- their being. And they do this all the time together. Like, when you look at the big star arches that through the sky across the- the you know, across Hieron where they are kind of holding back the Heat and the Dark in these kind of big arches. Those are literal stars who have stretched themselves and joined and made you know, gestalt you know, beings between multiple people to hold them back. Um, and they aren't like people in the same way, so like, that isn't boring to them. It isn't boring to them to just be a big archway, [laughs] you know?

Ali: Hm.

Austin: They take on the consciousness of an archway, which is a thing in our world. Um, in our world, meaning Hieron. Um, [Austin and Ali laugh lightly] so yeah. So that is like, very cautious. Some suspicions that they will hurt people, and that they will do it in the guise of helping people. She is not convinced that their vision of a world, and I mean, this is pretty obvious, has room for mortals in it.

Ali: Ok. Yeah.

Austin: Like, that is- she doesn't- They say that they would like that to happen, but they don't seem even convinced that they can do that. And a big part of their- a big part of their own melancholy about their situation is that they will probably hurt people in pursuing their ascribed tasks. Obelus is the one that she speaks with also, which is the one that Hadrian and Ephrim met back in Rosemerrow.

Ali: Ok. Yeah.

Austin: Obelus. O-B-E-L-U-S. Uh, any other questions from either of you about these things?

Ali: Yeah, I can ask a bunch more, but if **Janine** you have one, please. We can take turns.

Janine: Uh- nothing really comes to mind about the stars, to be honest.

Ali: Ok, cool. Um, I mean, branching on all of that stuff that you just said, I think Hella also has like- Is there anything attached to that that Hella can infer from being like, 'Oh, I had that experience with Chapter. I understand what the starstuff is from like physically feeling it.'

Austin: Yeah, I- I mean, they feel distinct in description from Chapter. Chapter's-

Ali: Right.

Austin: What I will say is like, for Hella, reading this is like, 'Oh, being around Samoths and around people helped Chapter become a different type of being. Um, a person who had a lot

more of a human style consciousness and much more interest in the safety of individuals than the safety of capital B Being.'

Ali: Uh hm.

Austin: The stars as they exist here in Hieron are interested in order. They are interested in um, existence. They do not want there to be a world- they do not want there to be nothing. They don't want there to be a moment where there is no such thing as differentiation, where everything is nothing. They want there to continue to be something. And they are committed to building something regardless of what that is because they see that-

Ali: Right.

Austin: -as being preferable to literally nothing. And have the power to do it, right?

Ali: Ok. Um, is there anything here relevant in terms of Jerod's like, first interaction with the stars. In terms of like, how that even-

Austin: It was- It like-

Ali: How the bridge was even gapped.

Austin: Yeah, I mean, I think the big one is that she- where you stabbed it, she- **[Ali laughs]** like talked to it. Um, and-

Ali: Uh hm.

Austin: -invoked a lot of language that Hella doesn't have to talk about the history of spirituality and the history of faith in Hieron. So when they said like, 'He has not told you.' She was able to be like, 'Who? Samot? Samoths?' Uh, you know ,other- other potential deities that she knows because she was a spiritual leader.

Ali: Right. Ok.

Austin: Right? Like, she had the language to have that conversation, even if- and did not have a really sharp sword that could kill a star.

Ali: [laughs] Right. Right, right, right.

Austin: So, she used what she had.

Ali: Um, ok.

Austin: And calmed it down, and it hurt people around her in the same way that it hurt people around you. I mean, we know that because it is what burned down the museum, right? She found it walking the streets after it had burnt down the museum. After it landed in the museum,

during Winter. And uh, she found it before the Justiciar could find it and try to kill it, and then gave it safety, and in doing that is how she like, opened the bridge of communication with it. You know?

Ali: Ok.

Austin: It's like, 'oh, these people are trying to hurt you. I will protect you.' And that is a good first like- which- which you know, she has notes on that, right?

[0:45:00]

Austin (continued): Like, this means that they- that they do believe in self-preservation. That means that they- they must understand themselves as selves at least so far as they want to continue to exist as selves, you know? Or at least, their default- or in danger, they want that.

Ali: Ok. Um-

Austin: Um, I think one other note that you get here is they believe in law. And they- they believe law both in terms of like, the laws of nature. Like they believe that if you drop something it should fall. But they also respect sovereignty with is part of why they are not fucking with you directly. They believe in the laws of humans. They believe that laws should be followed and that uh, that makes them dangerous in some ways because it means that like- She learns early on that they will not come to her aid if Arrell, you know, is doing something bad in Arrell's corner of the world. Or if Ordenna is doing something bad, right? Like, one of the earliest conversations you read from her is that she's trying to convince them that they should like, stop the Ordennans from you know, doing stuff back when- back in Ordenna, and they are like, 'Well, no that is Ordenna. Ordenna will do what Ordenna does.' Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, you know?

Ali: Ok. [laughs]

Austin: Um, and that is- and that is like, frustrating for her. Like, how can these people who want there to be something not care what that something is. [light laugh]

Ali: Yeah, yeah. Ok. Um-

Austin: But also, it meant that they are going to respect the walls of the Last University because they recognize it as a place with its own laws. And that they will not be Arrell and come through and like, steal people. You know?

Ali: Ok. Um, I can't think of anything right now, but can I take an opportunity to Spout Lore on Jerod's notes down the line if I-

Austin: Yeah, I would- and I'll give you like a plus 1 forward on that, basically. You know what I mean?

Ali: Ok, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, like- make sure you add those to your sheet, too.

Ali: Cool.

Austin: Um, anyone else off to do some stuff today?

Jack: I- [sighs] I want to- I want to start working out where that dragon's gone.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I- I don't want to waste the time.

Austin: Totally.

Jack: We have make- we have to make a move because that's a big fucking dragon.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: But knowing the Cult of the Dark Son, if we let it go, we just- it'll just disappear until we see it again.

Austin: Uh hm. [sighs]

Jack: Um, [sighs] it's safe to assume that Safewater is with Fero?

Austin: Absolutely.

Jack: Who else around here has wings? Man, if only Zo- Um... um, what's the bird mage called?

Austin: Uh, uh, the one who is coming is uh-

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: -Xeralia. I think Xeralia? Let me double check my notes. It is very funny to me that I- So, I've kept the same naming scheme for all of my notes for adventures in this game since 4 years ago? 5 years ago or whatever. So, like the first adventure is a file in my- in my Google drive just called DW1. For Dungeon World 1. [Ali and Jack laugh] Um, which is- which literally is like, 'Welcome to Friends at the Table' and like, 'Sage LaTorra, Adam Koebel's Dungeon World'. Um, like I have a note here that is, 'Is this the first truly undead creature you've seen?' about the uh- maybe about the skeleton? I guess? Um, [light laugh] uh, I have notes here-

Jack: Wow.

Austin: -about like the dining room fight and the library stuff. The tapping of the red carpeting and like, the living books. Um, and the thing that's really funny is that's DW1. We are now on DW8. [light laugh]

Jack: Oh.

Austin: Which is not that far in. [Ali laughs]

Jack: [laughing] Welcome to the 8th episode of Friends at the Table.

Austin: [laughs] You know like, the holiday specials have had different things. Marielda obviously had different things, but in terms of just like, Dungeon World prep documents I have, that is where we are. Alright, her-

Jack: Wow.

Austin: Her name is- I thought it was Xeralia, with an X. Uh, Xeralia. Yeah.

Jack: Xeralia, ok. How far off is Xeralia?

Austin: She will be arriving, hopefully sometime soon. How-

Jack: Ok.

Austin: Maybe along with more people. You know. People are comin' to town.

Jack: Ok. Uh, I think I'm gonna go see Corsica.

Austin: Ok. Doesn't have wings. I want to be clear.

Jack: But does have units.

Austin: Does have units. Uh, someone who has wings- There is someone who has wings. There is one person who we know has wings.

Jack: Oh. Is it Callowkeen?

Austin: It's Callowkeen.

Jack: Gnoll- gnoll Golden Lance member?

Austin: Gnoll Golden Lance member.

Jack: Man, ok. I'm gonna go see Callowkeen.

Austin: Ok. Callowkeen has- is working on rebuilding the hovel and rebuilding Marisol Sweetwater's press, which was probably damaged.

Ali: Aw.

Jack: So, Callowkeen arrived with um-

Austin: Maria Velasinha and-

Jack: Velasinha.

Austin: Velasinha, yeah. Uh, and- and the two of them are part- are Golden Lance partners.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: He is um- he is a gnoll who is a vampire. Um, and that means that he has vampire wings, unlike other vampires. And the way like his vampirism has- Every vampire has like different abilities basically- are- uh, that are all some variation on what we think of as vampire abilities, you know? Um-

Jack: And he's got bat wings.

Austin: And he's got bat wings which makes him just look like a big flying fox. Have you all looked at flying foxes?

Jack: Yeah, they're- they're great.

Austin: They're great.

Ali: Now I am.

Jack: But I'm gonna look at one because you know, why not?

Austin: Why not? They're big. One. Um, which is important to understand because it helps you- it helps communicate that this is a biggin'. It's like a big ol'- big ol' person.

Jack: Wow.

Austin: But uh- but uh- I'm trying to find one that's like with a- with a person nearby.

Jack: Hey-

Austin: Oh, they're so cute. [**Jack** laughs] What's up?

Jack: Hey, what are bats? They're rodents, right?

Austin: A bat- **Jack**, can I tell you something secret?

Jack: Uh hm.

Austin: Bats are whatever you want them to be. [**Ali** laughs quietly]

Jack: Are bats mice?

Austin: Bats are mice, but also bats are foxes. Um, but also-

Jack: Cause I think this is a dog.

Austin: This- Bats can be dogs.

Jack: Wow.

Austin: They are... what are they?

Jack: They're mice. They're rodents. Right?

Austin: They are- they are placental mammals.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: Which means that they are closer to being like, you know, dogs than they are to being like, other types of mammals. [**Jack** laughs] Um-

Jack: Ok.

Austin: I don't know what they are. What are they? They are-

Jack: Hey, listeners? [Jack and **Ali** laugh softly]

Austin: Uh hm?

Jack: Let us know.

Austin: You write in. You let us know. What's-?

Jack: Write in to [whatarebats @ friendsatthetable.net](mailto:whatarebats@friendsatthetable.net).

Austin: Look at this golden crowned flying fox. Giant golden crowned flying fox.

Jack: Giant golden crowned flying fox.

Austin: It's so- it's so big.

Jack: Oh, it's beautiful.

Austin: It's beautiful, and it has big- it has nice orange hair. Aw this is a good picture. I want to put this picture in the chat. What a good buddy. Um, anyway-

Jack: Oh, he's- he's peeping.

Austin: He's peeping. He's doing a little peep. Um-

Jack: So, yeah. I'm gonna go see Callowkeen.

Austin: Ok. Callowkeen is like- [altering voice] I have to find his- I have to find his voice. He's a gnoll which means he does that like, [breathes in] got a lot of little like, tiny mouth sounds. Have- have you met him before?

Jack: No.

Austin: Ok, well he's- he is- Oh wait. Yes, you did.

Jack: Ah, we-

Austin: You shared-

Jack: But like, not personally.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Right? Like-

Austin: You shared the back of a whale boat or whatever, right?

Jack: Ok, so I guess we've had like-

Austin: A interaction.

Jack: 'Hi, I'm Lem'

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: 'Hi, I'm Callowkeen.'

Austin: Yes.

Jack: 'Ok. Cool.'

Austin: So, I think he's like-

Jack: 'What do you get up to?' [light laugh] 'I fight dragons.'

Austin: [laughs] Yeah. He's like,

Austin (as Callowkeen): Lem King.

Jack (as Lem): Hi. Are you busy?

Austin (as Callowkeen): I'm just putting these things back together.

Jack (as Lem): Oh. Um, I'm sorry-

Austin: He's like-

Jack (as Lem): -you arrived and were just-

Austin: He's just holding two different parts of a printing press. [laughs]

Jack (as Lem): Is that a printing press?

Austin (as Callowkeen): Uh hm. Marisol's.

Jack (as Lem): Have you put- have you put these together before?

Austin (as Callowkeen): Of course. Yeah.

Jack (as Lem): Ok. Ok. Well, could you- Could you-

Austin (as Callowkeen): Good job, uh, by the way. I heard about it. The dragon.

Jack (as Lem): Oh. Well, no. You don't have to say that.

Austin (as Callowkeen): No, you know, I- as some- Justice is what I'm committed to, and-

Jack (as Lem): [laughs] Oh, ok.

Austin (as Callowkeen): And-

Jack (as Lem): Was that it?

Austin (as Callowkeen): Was that justice?

Jack (as Lem): Yeah.

Austin (as Callowkeen): Stopping a big dragon for hurtin' a lot of people. That's justice in my book.

Jack (as Lem): Oh. Ok.

Austin (as Callowkeen): And the- the- person who did it? Are they-? Do we know? What's goin' on there?

Jack (as Lem): Well, so, this is the thing. This is the thing. Um, I was- hm. I couldn't help but notice that you... you seem like you can fly.

Austin (as Callowkeen): [light exhaled laugh] Pretty obvious, I guess. Big ol' wings.

Jack (as Lem): And- and you know, a friend of mine flies all the time, kind of given any opportunity. [Austin laughs once] Um, but he's away at the moment. And I wondered if you could maybe- See but trying to track down this dragon before it goes to ground-

Austin (as Callowkeen): Hmm.

Jack (as Lem): And I think that these kind of first moments are-

Austin (as Callowkeen): No, I get you.

Jack (as Lem): I don't know. You're the detective, like- Does this seem like [laughs] where we should be going?

Austin (as Callowkeen): It's not a bad idea. I think um, yeah. Uh, let me finish up here and I'll see what I can see for ya. Where- whereabouts do you stay?

Jack (as Lem): Uh, I'll- I can be in the Lending Library. [overlapping] Um, that's kind of my thing.

Austin (as Callowkeen): [overlapping] Oh, I love it.

Jack (as Lem): Oh, thank you.

Austin (as Callowkeen): It's a great- It's a great- Did you set- Is that your library?

Jack (as Lem): Yeah, pretty much. Um-

Austin (as Callowkeen): Great.

Jack (as Lem): Pretty much. Rix and Rowe kind of- kind of did a- did a bit of a number on it, so if you fell foul of that, I apologize. That wasn't any of my doing.

Austin (as Callowkeen): Uh, they're the little kids who run around here, yeah?

Jack (as Lem): I think so. Adaire knows them. They're mostly um- like, little gremlins.

Austin (as Callowkeen): They're little gremlins, yeah. Definitely little gremlins.

Jack (as Lem): As far as I can tell.

Austin (as Callowkeen): Well, um-

Jack (as Lem): And it's a shame about their house, but if you- if you learn anything, it kind of went-

Jack: And Lem just sort of gestures in the direction-

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: -of the destruction.

Jack (as Lem): It kind of just went that way. And really, we're not looking for like a fullscale tracking or anything, we just want some eyes in the sky to give us a sense of where it's going.

Austin (as Callowkeen): Who is the 'we' in this whole- Who is the 'we'?

Jack (as Lem): Well, like, so I don't know if you've met my friends, Adaire and Hella. Um, we were kind of part of the original group that like... set this place up and then- [Austin laughs] we were split off from them at that point, but like- [Austin laughs again, then Jack laughs]

Jack: I'm trying to explain-

Austin: -without-

Jack: -our party to-

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. [laughs] 'We're an RPG party.' Um- [laughs again]

Jack (as Lem): Well, it's like- We're like- [Ali laughs quietly] We're kind of- We're the war table, basically.

Austin (as Callowkeen): Ah. I see. I see. Ok. Well, you know, I-

Austin: Janine, in the chat, has said I'm kind of doing a Columbo thing with him, and then says, 'Ah, Mr. King, uh, one more thing. One more thing.' [Ali and Jack laugh] And I can't- Ugh. I want to do 'one more thing' with you now, but there isn't really a- He isn't inter- He is kind of

interrogating you, in retrospect. He is just kind of naturally like, 'Tell me everything about you immediately.' Um- [overlapping] The thing- the thing- the thi-

Jack: You want me to be be useful, huh?

Austin: Yeah, exactly. The thing I'm actually wondering is- is like, did he not just do this immediately? You know what I mean?

Jack: I mean this is the- Is this Geralt saying like- you know you get those great things where if you do a quest objective before an NPC asks?

Austin: Yes. Yeah.

Jack: Geralt's just like, 'I've been there.'

Austin: Yeah. [laughs]

Jack: And your like, 'oh, o- ok.' [laughs]

Austin: Um, [Ali laughs] yeah. Yeah, I think actually- and then I think then that changes what the question of this conversation is like to some degree, right? Because what he's actually doing is trying to get a hold on whether or not you- he should tell you. So, actually he's like-

Jack: Oh. Oh my god. He wants to know if I know.

Austin: Yeah, and if you're trustworthy to tell. Do you know what I mean? 'How do I know if you're part of a cult?' You know?

Ali: Hmm.

Austin: Uh, so he's like, um-

Austin (as Callowkeen): So, uh, yeah. It's a bad business, I guess. Um, what do you know about the people who did this?

Jack (as Lem): Well, we would have to choose our carefully.

Jack: Cause Lem is now not sure if-

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: -he can talk-

Austin: Yes.

Jack: -to Callowkeen.

Austin: Uh huh.

Austin (as Callowkeen): Of course.

Jack (as Lem): They're- It a messy situation.

Austin (as Callowkeen): Hmm.

Jack (as Lem): It's a messy, messy situation. Um, I was um, unfortunate enough to spend some time in the caverns below Rosemerrow. Um... and I have uh- uh... Look.
[**Austin** laughs hard, followed by Jack laughing lightly]

Ali: Oh, Lem. [light laugh]

Jack (as Lem): Look. I'm not gonna mince words. You know as well as I do the danger of the Cult. And the threat that they pose to- [sighs] everything? We interrupted a cultist. We fatally interrupted a cultist in the process of summoning this creature. Um, but we were unable to reverse the enchantment. And the dragon seems to have made off with an item that is valuable to us. And-and it's very important to us to [sharp inhale] to find what their next step is. To find where they're going. You know, we can only-

Austin (as Callowkeen): An item? A valuable item? What was- what- what type of item would a dragon run away with here? What are we talkin' about? A treasure or some kind?

Jack (as Lem): Yeah, a treasure. A treasure.

Austin (as Callowkeen): Hmm. Now the thing is, I- This is how I heard it. I heard the uh- you know, the woman with the- with the armor and the strong arms uh, Hella.

Jack (as Lem): Uh hm.

Austin (as Callowkeen): She was the one who was hurt real bad. That's what I heard-

Jack (as Lem): Yes.

Austin (as Callowkeen): -during this. Found the undead- which phoof. And uh, fought the dang thing by herself for a little while before a couple other folks ran through. Uh, but what I didn't hear was anybody else getting hurt in the exchange, and so, you're right, we got to be careful. We got to be careful with these things. You never know who's helpin'. Who's helpin' who, huh?

Jack (as Lem): Right.

Austin: Uh, you're gonna need to convince this guy of this in some way. He's being genuine for as far as you can tell, you know?

Jack: Well, he's like being a good, Golden Lance.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: You know, the Golden Lance do two things well. Thoroughness and obliterating people with energy weapons. **[Austin laughs]**

Austin: Yes.

Jack: Um, so **[laughs]** like, uh, I'm trying to think. We- we still don't a Golden Lance badge or anything. Oh-

Austin: No, no. No.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: They know like- they- This is not- this is beyond that, right? Like, you couldn't even be like, 'Well they- they vouch for me.' Because that is how this cult works. Everyone who is part of this cult has someone who vouches for them.

Jack: How do you- how do you... opening it up to the floor here. **[Austin and Jack laugh lightly]**

[1:00:00]

Jack (continued): How do you get past someone saying, 'well, you're part of a cult.'? Um-

Ali: Um, I think that there's- My first guess would be saying something like, 'Fantasmo trusted me.' if you think that there's enough knowledge there to like- that that person would understand the... Arrell disguise, but that's kind of a stretch. Um-

Jack: Hmm.

Ali: I guess the other thing is like, 'I believe this other religion.' Which I don't know that Lem- but like, you're- you're an archivist, and can be like, 'This is the thing that I believe in, and not this weird cult.'

Jack: I bet there are archivist cultists. Um-

Austin: Yes.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: We might even have met some. Um, no, I don't know. I mean the other thing is like, if we're talking about vouching, Solomon and Lake vouch for us.

Austin: That's what I'm saying though. I think that's not enough. That's the specific thing. I'm saying-

Jack: Even Solomon and Lake?

Austin: No, I'm saying you- this is not a thing where you need to vouch. This is about deduction and fact, right? He is- he is nervous, and you should be, too, that people who are vouched for are in league.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Janine: Maybe the-

Jack: Ok.

Janine: -the angle is to point out like, 'why would you even ask?' Like, if you were a cultist, why would you seek anyone out to ask anything? Why wouldn't you just be like, 'Wow, I guess the dragon ran away. Ok. Oh well.'?

Jack: Yeah, actually, that's it, right? It's like,

Jack (as Lem): Why would I be looking for the dragon?

Austin: Um, give me-

Jack (as Lem): That thing got away-

Austin: Uh hm.

Jack (as Lem): -so clearly and so cleanly that it's not even a case where like-

Janine: You would be having a cool party to yourself right now. [laughs]

Austin: Give me a- give me a Defy Danger charisma.

Jack: Yeah. It's- it's why am I looking.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Um, and also why I am coming straight to a cop about it?

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: Yeah. **[Jack laughs]**

Ali: To find out what the cops know. Ok, I'm gonna shut up.

Austin: That is the answer, yeah. **[Janine laughs]** That is what I was prepped to come back with **[Jack laughs]** depending on how this roll goes. That's a 10. And so I think what he says is like,

Austin (as Callowkeen): Well, word of advice. Plenty of reasons. Plenty of reasons, Mr. King. **[Jack laughs]** Uh, you come, you talk to a *cop. You talk to someone like me.

Austin: He doesn't call himself a cop. He-

Austin (as Callowkeen): -talk to a detective like me because detectives, they're fonts of information. Fonts of information. And uh, you might want to know what I know. So if I say, 'Oh yes, for instance, the dragon ran southwest past the refugees into the woods, near a little uh, crooked oak when I last saw it.' Uh, you might then say, 'Oh, well he knows we're near the crooked oak. We gotta move the dragon from the crooked oak. We can't be near the crooked oak.' That's a thing that you might know if I had said that to you, for instance. And that could be a reason why. There's lots of reasons why. Maybe these cults like this, they're factional. Different people want different things. Even inside of regular church, people- you got the- the different- what are the different factions of the church? You got the people who want to reform.

Jack (as Lem): The prelates. And the-

Austin (as Callowkeen): The prelates. You got the prelates. Thank you. You got the prelates. You got the parishioners. You got the exarches. You got all the different groups. You got the people who want the mass to go an extra hour. You got the people who the mass to go 20 minutes shorter. There are factions in the world who want different things. Maybe you're part of the cult that says, you know, uh, 'A dragon bone like that, we could make a good armor out of that.', but maybe you're part of the cult that says, 'Uh, that-that's powerful ritual stuff. You could do some good damage; you could make something special out of that. Maybe make someone special out of that.' I'm just sayin' there are lots of reason why you might want to know what I know, but you seem on the up and up, so- **[inhales]** There's a crooked oak tree- **[exhales]** to the southwest. **[Jack and Austin laugh softly]** I followed it about as far as that. I lost it then.

Jack (as Lem): You've- you've already been?

Austin (as Callowkeen): Eh, dragons, they make a lot of noise. Me? I know I'm up right now, but I'm more of a nocturnal sort. I was already up in the air when it was happenin'. By the time I'd got there, it had already gotten away. I wish I coulda helped. But um, yeah. Those uh, Dark Son folks, they're down in Kanton way. My imagination, being what it is, tells me they don't go all the way back there. That's a lot of movin'. That's a lot

of opportunity for people like me to follow it. But somewhere west, southwest of here, far away from the river, but not too deep into the woods, I bet it's out that way.

Jack (as **Lem**): Wow. **[Ali** nose laughs once]

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): Wow.

Jack (as **Lem**): Wow. Hey, you're not gonna believe this, but I've worked for the Golden Lance twice, and this is the first time someone has explained detective work to me.
[Austin laughs]

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): We do lots of different type of work. Sometimes we're detectives. Sometimes we're cat herders. You get other people to do the detective work for you. And uh, you focus on the justice. Different strategies. I'm more of a detective. The justice is- I believe in it. It's good to have a partner. Anything else, Mr. King?

Jack (as **Lem**): No. No. I think that's it.

Jack: Lem is just- just bowled over by- **[Austin** and Jack laugh] just like-

Austin: -By a competent person.

Jack: Encountering a competent character in full form.

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): Uh, one- one more thing, Mr King. Mr. King [laughs lightly] one more thing.

Jack (as **Lem**): Yeah.

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): I just- **Ali** laughs] I'm preparing a bit of a- how do you say, a guide. A guidebook. Puttin' together some ideas. Some methods. Some techniques for how to survive out there in this- phooof- the things that are goin' on out there. So, I'm just wonderin', you got any- you got any tips? You know, any tricks? Fightin' dragons, goin' on adventures, I heard you been in a sword. You got any uh, advice for makin' do out there?

Jack (as **Lem**): Wel-well, well you've got to follow your heart.

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): Ok.

Austin: [inhales and exhales a light laugh] He's like, little notepad-

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): Da-da-da.

Austin: He has a little notepad, and like dips a fingernail into- there's like- He's wearing a coat, and inside his coat is straight up just uh, some sort of like, inkwell or something that is- that he's dipping a nail into to get color so he can start writing notes really quick. Um-

Janine: You're forgetting a detail that we agreed-

Austin: Oh, that's true.

Janine: -would have to be important if this character was ever on screen.

Austin: Ok. Well, here it is. Do you want to explain what the detail is?

Janine: Callowkeen is one of the artists of the Hieron postcards that I'm working on right now.

Austin: [laughs] Uh huh.

Janine: Callowkeen is explicitly a watercolorist.

Austin: That's true. That's true. So then, I guess-

Janine: Callowkeen does not use inks. Well, Callowkeen-

Austin: That's true.

Janine: -could also use inks.

Austin: Yeah. Anyone could like- yeah.

Janine: But I mean, you know, you need to write with a pen sometimes, it's fair.

Austin: You gotta write- That's- that's what I'm thinkin'

Janine: But uh-

Austin: So, maybe what you get is you get the- you get the shot of like, inside of his- inside of his coat is like, some sort of hanging system- like a hanging pallet in there that he has access to. Um, and also some sort of inkwell where he's able to like dip a nail in to quickly get out info and jot it. And as he's flipping through a notepad, he has a- he has like, you know, uh- he has some sort of notepad that is like a mix of paper to like, quickly write stuff down and then also, little kind of scratch paper to do um, little watercolor studies. And he- you see some of them in there, right? He's like basically flipping through his journal that includes a bunch of- of work he's done. Um, and on one of them-

Jack (as Lem): Oh my god, do you draw?

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): Eh, a little bit of this. A little bit of that. I mean, that's what I'm saying. I'm making a guide. Uh- uh- Maria and I.

Jack (as **Lem**): Wow.

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): We're gonna go out. We're gonna see the world. We're gonna ask people questions. We're gonna learn how-

Jack (as **Lem**): Oh, it sucks out there.

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): Alright- [breathy laugh] I'll write it down. It sucks out there, I guess. I- We've been out there. I've been out there. This is alright. This is- You been out there? You've been out there. If it sucks so bad, you know, you wouldn't go out.

Jack (as **Lem**): Huh.

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): And also, some people, they're stuck out there. And those people need a guidebook.

Jack (as **Lem**): Well, thank you for taking the time. Um, I hope that the printing press- uh you know, that those pieces fit together. Uh, and I'm gonna go check out that crooked oak. [**Austin** laughs softly]

Austin (as **Callowkeen**): You be careful. Don't go alone. It's- A thing like that, you gotta realize, even if it's under magical control, well, it's still dangerous. You're not the only ones who gotta tie a thing like that down.

Austin: Janine in the chat notes, do- this is a quote from you in the chat, presumably, Janine, from before when we were discussing this character?

Janine: This is a quote from the comments on the document where we've been tracking the- the postcard stuff.

Austin: Ok. What do- Do you want to read it?

Janine: We mentioned uh- The character's were- one character and then also Callowkeen, a cool gnoll detective.

Austin: [laughs] Ok. [**Jack** laughs] Uh, you've written, 'Doing watercolor while also having fur would be amazing because you wouldn't need a paint rag, except your forearm- except then your forearms would just be patched with wild colors all the time, and that's a detail we should make use of somehow.' I've made use of it by reading your note. [**Janine** and Jack laugh]

Janine: I'm just saying. It's just fun. I just like it. I'm sorry. [laughing]

Austin: It is good, no. I'm here for it.

Janine: It's important to me.

Austin: It's very good. I like it a lot. A rainbow Columbo, indeed. Yeah. Um, awesome. So yeah, I think he's gonna let you be on your way with that, Lem. Mr. King.

Jack: God, Callowkeen's fuckin' great.

Austin: This guy's great. He should stick around. He shouldn't go anywhere. Fuck it. Um, Adaire, Hella? Any other final things here? Hella, I think that when you sleep finally, you definitely get this like, deep dream where- or like this deep sleep state, where you are so close to death that like, you basically get to visit Adularia, you know?

Ali: [laughs] Fair. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Austin: So- so, you know, Adelaide wants to check in.

Ali: Uh, yeah. I um- This is a callback to about 30 minutes ago when I said I should have died to get a cuddle scene. [**Austin** laughs hard] Um-

Austin: I did not even-

Ali: Or at least I thought- [laughs]

Austin: No.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Great. Good.

Ali: Alright, I appreciate that then.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Um, uh... Good for Hella.

Austin: Good for Hella. I think it's just like- like- very teasing at first, obviously. Very much like, um, [laughs]

Austin (as Adelaide): : You know if you wanted to see me, you didn't need to do all this.
[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: And the other- the other thing is, you note when you get there, it smells like that good citrus fruit here.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Um, that she learned that you liked because your consciousness slipped into that- into the place while you were almost dying, right? Um, and so it is like, comforting and kind of wants to make sure that that isn't a thing you only associate with death, you know? **[Ali laughs]** It's very- it's very important for her to be able to eat various fruits and taunt you, so you know.

Ali: Uh hm. Yeah, good priorities.

Austin: So-

Ali: Um, not to talk about priorities

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Um- **[laughs]** Yeah, I don't know. I mean, I- I feel like- So, this is a funny thing cause I don't know how much we have to zoom in on this scene, but I want it to happen.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: And I'm also owed a move.

Austin: You are.

Ali: And this- this entire time, I've been thinking like, why don't I just take Guidance with Adelaide.

Austin: Right. Do you not- You didn't have that?

Ali: Um, so I have like, a get-out-of-jail-free card. **[laughs]** Um-

Austin: What does Guidance give you?

Ali: Uh, I don't know. I don't know what guidance is. I've never-

Austin: Oh, you're just saying, that other move, Guidance.

Ali: Right, what if- Yeah, what if I had that?

Austin: Right. Um-

Ali: And I could talk to her.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And this is an opportunity for them to be like, 'We can't keep meeting like this.'

Austin: Right, yes. [Ali laughs] Is there not a special Dark Knight version of that? I guess not.

Ali: I really don't think so. I- I- I only looked through- I have it open right now, so I don't know why I'm- [laughs] I only looked through the- the moves that I'm eligible for, so there could be one that's in the higher level stuff.

Austin: Right. Right, right, right, right.

Ali: But I really don't think that there is. Um- it's really weird that this um, playbook never thought that you would want to date Death. Um, and that's ridiculous.

Austin: It is. Agreed.

Ali: It's really bad foresight.

Austin: No, you're right. You're right.

Ali: Um-

Austin: Um, I think there is... So, one, we should figure out what this move is because I do think it can just be Divine Guidance, which is when you petition your deity according to the precept of your religion, you are granted some useful knowledge or boon related to your deity's domain. But that's not the roll that like- That's not the thing that like, Hadrian used to do. Or that Fero did, which was casting the spell Guidance.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: The symbol of your deity ap- blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Um, because that- it's not that because that is like, that is- there is a symbol. That is a wolf howls, you know? Or a- a light shines.

Ali: Uh hm.

Austin: And you want more than that. Um, so we'll have to look through it. Let's look through after this and see if we can find something that fits.

Ali: Ok, yeah. We don't have to this right now.

Austin: But I think one note during all of this is that before you go, she does ask you specifically, she says,

Austin (as Adelaide): When you're back on your feet, *a lot of people died out there.

Austin: Um, not a lot. She doesn't say a lot. She goes,

Austin (as **Adelaide**): You know, you did your best, but a few folks still did die. Can you um- I just- Send them- send them the right way.

Ali (as **Hella**): You're bothering me about work right now?

Austin (as **Adelaide**): Listen, some of us don't get to take days off. [pauses] I'm worried. A thing like that is gonna put a lot of people in my way.

Austin: Not in my way. [laughs] As I- as if she's gonna do a fuckin' heel turn, no. [**Ali** laughs]

Austin (as **Adelaide**): A thing is gonna send- is gonna send a lot of people my way. More people than I can deal with, and frankly, Hella, the sort of power that thing was playing with, it might just skip me altogether. Those Dark Son folks, I don't know where they're gettin'- where they're getting it from. But [sighs] they can touch the Heat and the Dark still. And they should not be able to. They should not be able to wield that power.

Ali (as **Hella**): [sighs] Can you find out how? Can I find out how?

Austin (as **Adelaide**): Right now, what I want you to do is find out how to stay in bed. [exhales] I'll look into it. Ask around. A lot of people pass through.

Austin: God, is that actually- is that a move that you have? That might be a move that you have. Isn't there a thing with you-

[1:15:00]

Ali: It's weird cause the Dark Knight stuff has like, a bunch of like, 'you can reanimate ghosts-'

Austin: Yes, or you can like ask questions. You can ask questions to corpses.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: That's true.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Including maybe that- maybe we don't do that tonight, but you can plunge your blade into a corpse, it's spirit will answer-

Ali: [quietly] Oh my goodness.

Austin: -any three questions you pose to it to the best of its knowledge. Which like, maybe she makes-

Ali: Oh, I love following in Hadrian's shoes. [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh. Um, I mean, I do think- I do think she specifically says like,

Austin (as **Adelaide**): And that cultist? Don't worry. She's- she hasn't gone anywhere. She was desperate to throw herself into the Dark. No such luck.

Ali (as **Hella**): Hum, Good lookin' out. Um-

Austin: Uh hm. [**Ali** laughs]

Ali: Um, yeah. I was thinking for a second- Yeah, I don't know that this scene has anymore like, functional use. Um, besides like, god. [laughs] They're so coy. Um, I think that Hella- it's like putting her hand on Adaire's face, right? [**Austin** gasps quietly] Which is like-

Austin: Excuse me?

Ali: Like- [laughs super hard while talking] like the side of her-

Janine: Wooooowww. [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: [laughing] Like on her cheek? Like [laughing throughout] she's like cupping her face.

Austin: No- no. Did you hear what you said?

Ali: What did I say?

Austin: You didn't hear what you said.

Ali: No. [laughs]

Austin: Who's name did you say?

Ali: Her hand? [laughs]

Austin: You said Adaire.

Janine: Uh huh.

Jack: Wow.

Austin: You said Adaire's face.

Jack: You know, it's-

Ali: Oh!

Jack: -it sucks that this playbook doesn't [**Austin** and **Ali** laugh hard] account for people wanting to date Adaire.

Janine: You don't get to cut that out of the episode, you realize.

Austin: You do not.

Ali: I would never. Are you kidding me? [**Austin** laughs]

Austin: Oh boy.

Ali: I think I'm still the biggest Adaire-Hella shipper now that Hella-Adaire is real- [**Janine** laughs]

Austin: [laughing] Uh huh.

Ali: -and people like that. Um-

Austin: Listen, it could be a lot of ways. Things can go all sorts of ways. [**Ali** laughs]

Ali: Oh, I'm so tired. [Ali and **Janine** laugh]

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah.

Ali: [laughing] Oh great. Glad I did that. That's so good.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Um, it is Hella doing that other thing, which is putting her hand on Adelaide's face.

Austin: Ah.

Ali: 'A' names are so tough.

Austin: They're so tough.

Ali: Um, it's hard to be around girls.

Austin: Yeah. Uh hm. [laughs lightly]

Ali: Um, and yeah. Anyway, uh, saying goodbye. I'm gonna go back to the friend that I'm in love with in real world.

Austin: Uh huh. [**Janine** and **Ali** laugh]

Ali: No, it is um- But it is her saying like, [laughs]

Ali (as **Hella**): When I come back here, I'll have my strength or whatever. [**Austin** laughs through nose]

Ali: Which is so- that's so horny, but it's fine.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: [laughing] I'm so tired.

Austin: I think she is like,

Austin (as **Adelaide**): You better.

Ali: Yeah. [laughs] Good. Great.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: Uh, yeah. Cool. Good for them.

Austin: Uh hm. [**Ali** laughs] And sees you on your way. Also, you should, at this moment, you're refilled with peace, so you can go back up to 3 peace.

Ali: Oh cool. Thank you.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: I'm also just gonna take my HP back-

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. We're- we're there now.

Ali: -since that was definitely a dream sequence.

Austin: Um, any other final things before we wrap today? It is late.

Janine: I should probably. I haven't done a lot, so I should probably do a thing.

Austin: You should. Ok, well, you did- you did- One thing you did do was jump on a dragon and tie it up. [laughs]

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: But I'm with you.

Janine: Um, yeah. Uh, so I think the thing like, once... You know, there's- there's time spent with Hella, you know, reading the books and stuff.

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: I think once Hella like, falls asleep-

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: -um, Adaire-

Austin: And goes to see her other girlfriend, yeah. [**Ali** and **Janine** laugh]

Janine: Yeah. Adaire slips out, and I think goes to check on Rix and Rowe.

Austin: Yeah. Um, they're in like, a little shared room in the Outhouse. It's ni- it's- Here's the thing. It's nicer than their hovel was. But it's not theirs.

Janine: Of course it is.

Austin: And so they're like, bummed about it still.

Janine: Is there anything- Um, no they probably wouldn't have brought it if- I was gonna say like, if I walk past their hovel, is there like a blanket I can tug out of the garbage-

Austin: Hmm.

Janine: -to bring or some shit like that. You know, like a gesture?

Austin: No. I think everything- Um-

Janine: Like, here's a-

Austin: God, what's a thing- Ok, here's a question. You were a young thief once. What's a thing that when other people go through the wreckage, they wouldn't identify as being valuable?

Janine: Hmm.

Austin: That is valuable to them.

Janine: That's a good question. It's tough cause I don't quite know how much Rix and Rowe have.

Austin: We can invent a thing. And also, we're all tired, so I know this is a hard question.

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Apologies.

Janine: It is. It's very- it's- it's very difficult.

Austin: It's late, yeah.

Janine: Oh, I know. I know because this connects to a thing I kind of wanted to do-

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: -when Adaire goes to see them anyways.

Austin: Ok.

Janine: And also a thing that would be very hard to spot in the wreckage of a hovel. Um, it's like a wooden toy sword.

Austin: Hmm. Ok.

Janine: Where like, to anyone else, that just looks like a- like a- cause I mean, that's probably what it is. It's probably a piece of scrap wood that like, they had left over when they were building the hovel or something, and then they like-

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: -cut it a bit, and made it look sort of sword-like.

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: And then use it to- to kind of play around and spar and like, practice non-dagger kinds of fighting.

Austin: Yeah, I like that a lot.

Janine: So, I think Adaire picks that up and brings that with her. Also, because I want the image of Adaire like, smacking at grass on her way to the Outhouse. [**Austin** laughs] She's a little frustrated.

Austin: That's good. Yeah, fair. Um, I think Rix and Rowe, when they see you come in, they- When the door opens, we see them like, retract a little bit, and then when it's you, they get out of bed and run over and hug you.

Janine: Aww.

Austin: And they're like, Rix is like, um,

Austin (as Rix): I was so worried you got hurt. There was a dragon. Um, and it was like- it was really big. And [sighs] you're ok?

Janine (as **Adaire**): Yeah. I mean, my tailbone kind of hurts cause I was like, sittin' on that thing and- it's not comfy.

Austin (as **Rix**): What thing? You were sitting on the- you were sitting on the dragon?!

Janine (as **Adaire**): Yeah. Oh, you probably got evacuated before that part. I was hoping it would seem cool.

Austin (as **Rix**): Oh, tell- Wait, what did you do?

Janine (as **Adaire**): I climbed on the- up the leg. And there's kinda, you know, some-

Austin: Their eyes are like, so wide.

Janine (as **Adaire**): It had like- it was like a little bone bit on the back, and I kind of sat on that, and then like, tied a rope around there.

Austin: Rowe is like- er Rix is like,

Austin (as **Rix**): Sit down. I want to hear it all.

Austin: And Rowe is like,

Austin (as **Rowe**): Do you want a lemonade?

Janine: How do they have lemonade?

Austin: Good- Ok, well, listen. They literally have a stolen pitcher of water [**Janine** laughs] that's probably not that cold and just a couple of lemons inside of it.

Janine: I mean, look, lemon water's nice-

Austin: Lemon water's nice.

Janine: Sounds- yeah, just water with a bit of lemon in it. Yeah.

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: That's good to fight off scurvy.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Hmm.

Janine: I don't want these kids gettin' scurvy.

Austin: Rowe- Rowe- Rowe comes over with a big glass of lemon water for you and settles into the bed and like, crosses his legs. And Rix um, like takes a seat at the- at the foot of the bed, basically and crosses her legs and is like- They're just like ready to hear the story about how you fought a dragon.

Janine: Do I give them the sword? I should give them the-

Austin: Yeah, do you- or like, yeah, I think you tell me how you give them the sword.

Janine: Um, so I think Adaire like sits down, and she has the drink in one hand, and I think she has the sword in the other hand, and like kind of uses it to-

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: While you were gone, I- I talked about like, a cool grandpa- like a grandpa telling a story with a cane.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. Yep.

Janine: You like- you just- Sometimes you just gesture with it to be like, 'and the leg with like- it was like, this shaped and you sit on this part and then I, you know-'

Austin: Perfect.

Janine: 'Threw the rope around and um-' I think it- I don't think Adaire sells it as well as she will sell it in a month. Like, she will sell-

Austin: Right.

Janine: -this story-

Austin: Right. [Ali laughs softly]

Janine: -if she's alive in a month. God only knows. [Janine, Ali, and Austin laugh]

Austin: God.

Janine: If she tells this story in a bar, it's gonna be different.

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: But in this moment, to her, she is like a little taken aback by their enthusiasm because a lot of it to her like- You know, as the scene was happening, my thought was like, Adaire is doing this because she grew up on a pig farm.

Austin: Right.

Janine: So like, she theoretically knows like, a concept of how to- how to get an animal off its feet and bind it or something.

Austin: Yeah. Right. Right.

Janine: Like- like to her- this is not like a glamorous skill. This is not even a cool thief skill.

Austin: Right.

Janine: This is like a fuckin'- this is an Addie Kneath-Forman skill.

Austin: Right. Right.

Janine: Um, so she doesn't feel super cool about it. Especially also cause it got away, and like the thing they wanted didn't happen.

Austin: Right.

Janine: But seeing them think it's very cool is- is um probably like a genuine moment for her.

Austin: Yeah, and I think that like, they are gonna hype you up as you tell the story. Do you know what I mean?

Janine: Hm.

Austin: Um, that is who they are, and they are excited about it. And I think when you finish telling the story, one of them... God. I'm trying to- let me- let me look at a list real quick. A list of some information you could be getting, and how they could give it to you in exchange for this dope story. Um, I think that you finish the story, and they're like- Rix is like,

Austin (as Rix): That's so cool. Uh, I know you didn't get it, but like, you'll get it next time. For sure. You learned so much about it, and there were only 3 of you there. We weren't even there to help.

Austin: And she's like,

Austin (as Rix): Don't worry. We won't- we won't get involved. I know. Dragons are a little too big for even us right now.

Janine (as Adaire): Give it 10 years.

Austin (as Rix): Damn right. [**Janine** laughs softly] Um, but there was um- So, I know you told me not to mess around with the- the Dark Son.

Janine (as Adaire): Which I hope is very clear now why. [light laugh]

Austin (as Rix): Extremely, but I did take one more meeting so that I could get a little more information.

Austin: And um, she hands you a little notebook.

Austin (as Rix): I- I picked it from the guy's pocket. I don't know that even he was involved, but he's like a middleman, I guess. Um, one of the Moonlighters who still does that work. And there's some stuff in here about the people they work with.

Austin: And there's just like a list of names, and it's not that tough of a code to break for you. And it- what there is not is clarity on like, what does it mean to work with people here.

Janine: Uh hm.

Austin: And so like, there are some names that are familiar, but are not necessarily people you know in here. There is- there are some people from Rosemerrow that are here as just- who are like- who live here. Who are not just like, recent refugees. Who have lived here for a decade. So, for instance, people like, Espanarde the Great and Eclectic are on that list. Um-

Jack: Fuck that guy. Wait, that guy is-

Austin: Uh huh. Um-

Jack: Finally.

Austin: Lardwulf is on that list.

Janine: Oh, Lardwulf.

Austin: Um, but there are other people who are on this list, and again, you don't know what this means. But Uklan Tel is on that list. Um, and what you can see is that there is some sort of monetary exchange between Uklan Tel and the Cult of the Dark Son. [someone exhales] Um, again, you don't know what that means. It looks like there was some sort of exchange. There was some sort of like- I- I would even say it goes as far as to say like, you can tell that there was like- something was- He purchased something from them.

It's not clear what he gave them. What's clear is that they gave him some sort of- I would say it's like- it's even listed in volume, right? It's like 10 liters or something like that. Um, and Rix doesn't know this, but you spot it pretty much right away. Oh, and there's another thing that you do see here which is- and this one, I think you can put together, altogether- like, right away, which is there is a um- There is a failed shipment to Velas that's been crossed off. And then there is a- a like, note that there needs to be double sent of the same stuff to Velas because- and then the note is um, 'Arrell already provided the scroll' Like, we already got the payment from Arrell.

We already bought the thing from Arrell. Arrell already delivered his side of the deal. We just haven't given him what he wants for it yet because that shipment was- was interrupted. And you're smart enough to put together, this is probably where they got the spell to do the thing with the- with the dragon. They have been buying magic from Tutor Arrell. In the absence of their god being gone. But also, they have now stiffed him, right? Like, he has not gotten his payment yet, so they are not like, tight allies because you disrupted that shipment.

Um, and that means that like, he is probably still pissed at them also because he held up his end of the bargain and gave them a spell that would reanimate and take a dragon corpse. And- and I mean, more importantly, you know that that is probably not the whole of what he gave them because that happened before Samol was dead. They gave- he got some- [someone exhales] he gave them something much, much, much bigger than that. So... just some facts about the world.

Janine: Oh boy. [sighs] Cool.

Austin: Um, god. I- I want to end on one last image here, too. Which is- just to- cause we've already- at this point, we're kind of like- I'm kind of give- We have like a- This has not been a faction. We don't do a faction game on- on Fr- on Hieron the way we did with COUNTER/Weight. [Ali laughs quietly] But there's a degree to which this moment feels like one, right? There is a- we were talking about what Arrell was up to. We've talked about what the stars are up to out east.

We know what the Cult of the Dark Son is up to. Which leaves one last group, which is Ordenna. We know that Fela Malle's Sapphire Song uh- er Sapphire Star? What is the name of his ship? Um, I just looked at it. Uh- [typing] His ship is called the Sapphire Song, and you know that that led an Ordenna armada down to Marielda, but we don't know like, what's happened in the weeks slash months since then. And the first bit of information you see, I think hits- God... who is the first person here to go... Maybe it's Hella. You're back on your feet. You go to get like, a drink or something. Is there a place?

[1:30:00]

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: There's like a bar you go to or a cafe or-?

Ali: Um, yeah. Let me look at a map real quick. Um, I- I imagine that the- the Lending Library has like, a cafe in it.

Austin: Yeah, ok. So-

Ali: Like, for- yeah.

Austin: Yes.

Ali: -patrons.

Austin: So, you um- you go in and like, you- you toss a coin down to get the drink or whatever. Toss like, 2 coins down to get a drink. Or you get- there's like an exchange, right? You know, you've tossed down your 5 dollar bill, and they're gonna give you back a couple coins, you know? [light laugh]

Ali: Uh hm.

Austin: And on the coin is a face that you don't recog- that you, at first, don't recognize, and you, of the people in the party, are able to recognize, and it is Fela Malle, Impetor Fer- Fela Malle's face. He has begun printing his own money down in Marielda, and it has already worked its way up here. There are lots of ways to kill gods. And one of them is to make your face much, much, much more popular and readily recognized than theirs. The Ordennans have lots of plans.

Jack: God.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: I should describe his face really quick, too. There's a face that you recognize. I'd say it's like a- kind of a sharp ang- angled faced with these big, bold eyebrows that almost wrap around his eyes. You know, I think it's like, a tight side profile, but you still see some of those eyebrows. He has this like, goatee that again, has this kind of sharp angled looked to it. He is- in so far as I am face-casting him, I am pulling from a very particular set of like, anime tough dude tropes. One is the Mad-King *Asnard from the um, games Fire Em- the-the Path of Radiant- Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance and Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn. Um, that-

Jack: Oh wow.

Austin: Yeah, that dude. He is a lot, right? Um- [laughs lightly]

Jack: Is his name Ashnard?

Austin: Is it- I think it's- Is it Ashnard? It is Ashnard.

Jack: It's- it's written Ashnard.

Austin: It is.

Jack: Asnard sounds like- it's pig latin or something.

Austin: It does. The other person- uh, the other person- I think this is probably closer in some ways because we know that- that the Ordennans have darker skin is a character named Rakan Dahkaran, which is *R-A-K-N space D-A-H-K-A-R-A-N because Gundam has the best names.

Jack: Wait, one more time.

Austin: Just type in Rakan Gundam. You'll be fine.

Jack: How do I spell Rakan? **[Ali laughs]**

Austin: R... R-A-K-A-N Uh, and you will see this just smooth lookin' dude. Just sharp as shit.

Jack: Oh wow.

Austin: There's a particular image that I'll post in our chat. Um, he is just- So, it's just this like, very imposing militant, confident face. And like, a thing is, we've never seen his face on screen before, right? Um, until now. Until now as printed on a coin. On a golden coin. And I think the back- God, what- what do they rename the town?

Ali: Oh, word.

Austin: Cause they're definitely not callin' it Marielda. Or City of First Light.

Ali: Hm. No.

Austin: Right?

Jack: Is it like- is it New 'X'?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Is it New something?

Austin: Yeah, right?

Ali: Yeah, it- it feels like it would be- It wouldn't be like New Ordenna-

Austin: Un un.

Ali: -or whatever, but it would be New Ordennan capital city.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: But I don't know that we have a name for-

Jack: Do we know what the Ordennan capital is?

[simultaneously]

Ali: I don't think so.

Austin: I don't think so.

Janine: Can I pitch Nova instead of New?

Austin: Yeah, or n- or-

Janine: Just cause star language is fun.

Austin: Yeah. They might want to stay away from star language.

Janine: That's true.

Austin: But like, nue- nueov- either like nueve-

Jack: Nuevos.

Austin: -or nuevos or something like another- a neo- not neo-

Janine: Not neo.

Austin: It can't be neo.

Ali: What if-

Jack: Neo-Tokyo.

Austin: That's it. [Ali and Austin laugh]

Austin: How about like-

Ali: It- it's tough be- because I feel like, if you're making yourself a king, you would maybe throw Malle in there.

Austin: Right. Totally.

Ali: But it wouldn't be New Malle, right?

Austin: No.

Ali: It would be like, Malle's Fist.

Austin: Malleielda.

Ali: Or translated and fancy.

Austin: it's not Malli-

Jack: Oh, Malle's Fist isn't bad.

Austin: Malle's Fist is not bad. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Yo, Malle's Fist is a like, golden age of Bioware-

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: -name.

Austin: Uh huh. [Ali laughs] God. Yeah, I kind of like Malle's Fist.

Ali: I don't hate it either.

Austin: Alright, well-

Jack: It's the- it's the best, as well, because we know Marielda is like- it either has extraordinarily intricate hanging gardens-

Austin: Right.

Jack: -or an unbelievably intricate self-growing tomb.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And the Ordennans arrive, and they're just like, this is Malle's Fist.

Austin: This is- Yeah.

Jack: It's the seat of Ordennan power in the south.

Austin: Also, it kind of looks like a fist. There's kind of a thumb stickin' out. You know what I mean?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Look at this-

Jack: Map of Mari- I'm gonna look at a map of Marielda-

Austin: I'll just post it. I got it. I got it. I got it.

Jack: Oh, it kind of does.

Austin: It's like-

Jack: The thumb on the right hand side?

Austin: The thumb on the right hand side. It's like a fist pointing down. You know? **[Ali laughs]**
God.

Ali: Which is how Fela Malle feels about Marielda. **[Austin laughs]**

Austin: Thumb-

Jack: No, doesn't Fel- **[laughs]**

Austin: Thumb down.

Jack: Fela Malle is like, thumb extremely up. **[Austin laughs]**

Ali: Well, yeah. Well, now, well thumb up for-

Jack: Malle's Fist

Austin: For Malle's Fist.

Ali: -Malle's Fist. Not Marielda.

Austin: Marielda, thumb down. Malle's Fist, thumb up. **[Ali laughs]** Alright, yeah. God.

Ali: Um, while we have this moment on camera, if any of this makes it in.

Austin: Please, it should.

Ali: I think that there is- **[laughing]** cause I think that there's something interesting here in like, being able to see Hella in bandages.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Hm.

Ali: In the weakest she's been-

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: -on screen in years. Ever maybe. And to see the face of the person that she has- you know-

Jack: God, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -not idolized, right? Because she was never in the military. She was never super political in that way, but is certainly- is the- it is a- there is a gaze of power on that coin-

Austin: Yes.

Ali: -that she is trying to uh, replicate.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Um, and there's a dichotomy there in this-

Austin: In this moment. **[Ali laughs]** There is. And like, not just replicate, but she has also been a force for this power, right? Like, even when-

Ali: Yeah.

[Jack de Quidt's "[Something](#)" begins playing in the background]

Austin: -she was anti-Justiciar, she never- she never shrugged away the- the like, the militarism of Ordenna. The strength of Ordenna.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: The symbols of Ordenna. Until recently, you know?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So, so yeah. We got a lot on the table.

[Music plays out to end]