

Sangfielle 55: Six Travelers: Es

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AUSTIN: Sangfielle is a series that draws on elements of dark fantasy, horror, and Gothic fiction. As such, a list of content warnings will always be made available in the episode description.

[MUSIC INTRO BEGINS - [“Six Travelers” by Jack de Quidt](#)]

AUSTIN (as NARRATOR): There was always something about the Lady Es and their host, Syntyche Moyle, that I never quite understood. Not that I fully do now, but I have something of a sympathetic situation. She always talked about how, as a heritrix, she was sensitive to a sort of world beyond physical sensation. And I got it, but I didn't really get it, did I? Now, though, as I connect to all of you through this broadcast station, I do sort of get it. I can sense you listening. I know when I put on a bad cylinder, or when a story don't quite hit. It's literal, but it's more than that. It's sensin' the other, and closing the distance between.

[RECAP]

JANINE: So, my name is Es. It is E-S or the letter S. My class is Witch.

[STITCH]

JANINE (as ES): I like to enter into relationships with people assuming the best of intentions, and the best of faith.

[STITCH]

JANINE (as ES): I need everyone to kinda—to look away for like, just a second. You'll know when it's okay to look again.

[STITCH]

JANINE (as ES): I thought, you know, I've never written before, and I kind of want to see how a pro did it.

[STITCH]

JANINE (as ES): Well in the sense of being productive, but not well in the sense of being pleasant.

[STITCH]

JANINE (as ES): I have an important question. Is there room service?

[STITCH]

JANINE (as ES): I would hope so, because you and I both know that you do not approve of how it was run in the past. Do better.

[STITCH]

JANINE (as ES): I tried very hard to help here, and I think I did a very good job, and it didn't matter.

[STITCH]

JANINE (as ES): 'Stole' is a fascinating word to me in this context.

[STITCH]

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): Would you like to come with me as I break down a wall?

JANINE (as ES): We would.

[STITCH]

JANINE (as ES): Bringing down the wards will hurt people. If they're suffering, I don't want to close the door on them.

[RECAP ENDS]

[MUSIC INTRO ENDS]

AUSTIN: Es, where are you headed after leaving Blackwick?

JANINE: Um... I mean—

AUSTIN: I mean I guess I know—I know the abstract—I know where you're going maybe more than you know where you're going in some way, right?

JANINE: Yeah, it's kind of a tag-along situation.

AUSTIN: [CHUCKLES] Well, I guess given that—

JANINE: I guess north? Just 'cause like, it's the closest—it's the closest?

AUSTIN: Yeah. It is, and maybe if there's a degree of like, 'oh, I know I'm going towards Concentus,' it ends up being a little more specific than that. I think Dyre tells you straight out that you are headed to a particular place in the mountains of Concentus. There is this northwest—or, sorry, northwest, jeez—north-south running mountain range that runs across the continent and kind of splits Sangfielle in half. And if you look close, it actually goes up through Concentus, and you can really see it on the other side again.

JANINE: It does.

AUSTIN: And in my mind, Concentus is just built across and through and inside of that part of the mountain, and that is where they are leading you. And I don't know how zoomed in every step of the travel will be, I think we'll just kind of play it by ear and see what our prompts are. And see where that opens up opportunity to check in on the journey. Let me ask you what I've

asked everybody else. I'm gonna draw two cards, and you can tell me if you think the first one or the second one should be your above card. Do you want above or—

JANINE: What does 'above' mean?

AUSTIN: 'Above' will flavor "that which is fortunate, positive, and hopeful; the lights at the ends of tunnels, and more literally, your potential allies, resources, boons, and haunts."

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So places you might stop off for help, allies you might meet on the road, et cetera. And below will flavor "that which destroys and hinders; the Heart itself, as well as the adversaries, banes, and obstacles that the Delve will consist of." And those we can kind of pull in as we want to. In the past, we have not always used them for every encounter, for instance. They maybe only show up once, or they color things thematically more than they are like a literal material foe.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: So which one of these do you want to be your above, and which one do you want to be your below?

JANINE: Without seeing them?

AUSTIN: Without seeing them.

JANINE: Just the—okay.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

JANINE: I think the one on the left is above and the one on the right is below.

AUSTIN: Okay. Do you want to know good news or bad news first?

JANINE: I don't know. All news is news in this kind of thing.

AUSTIN: Okay. Alright, well, let's go with—Dyre wants to hear good news first. Let's flip over the good news. Let's flip over the ten of spades. Can you roll a d6 for me?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That is a 3. The ten of spades is "a guide attuned to the land unwillingly." And 3 is "a child with a preternatural bond to an angel." So it's someone with—for us, we've used the angels as they kind of are similar in—I mean, angels exist in *HEART* in a bunch of different ways. For us, the angels are specifically just Cleavers who have reached the end of their lives. They either are consumed by the hunt and are solitary, or they become these kind of like, angelic legions that combine into a single being as they kind of cooperate and collaborate so closely with each other that they mend together. So this is some sort of child who is our guide,

who has some sort of bond with an angel. If it wasn't already accounted for, it sure would be good. Right?

JANINE: Yeah, I was gonna say. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: God.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I wonder if this is just someone—someone that Dyre knows, or alternatively, is something that we can take kind of metaphorically. But I do kind of like the idea that Dyre has been like, building a little—not building, but like, has connections across places. Right? And this idea of a child and their, like, tamed angel—'tamed' is even too strong, but.

JANINE: It would be wild—given that Dyre moves around, it would be wild if like, the Blackwick crew were the only people—

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: —that they'd interacted with in a meaningful way. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Yes. Exactly. So let's flip this negative one. Oh, that is the ace of spades. Give me a d6.

JANINE: That seems bad.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think we've hit the ace of spades once before. We probably won't have hit whatever this is, though. No, okay, yeah, so the ace of spades means six—or, sorry, 'means six,' you rolled a 6.

[JANINE LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: The ace of spades means "light," and—just the word 'light.' And you would think that that would mean a good thing, except you've gotten it for your 'bad thing' roll.

JANINE: It's *Final Fantasy* now.

AUSTIN: Exactly. Light is bad. 6 is "a dead Delver, hands clenched around a secret rife journal." So there's something here, something that should be a source of information and knowledge and like, goodness, that is weighing over this, that is instead something that could be opposed to this. I kind of have an idea of what it could be, and I'll call—I'll maybe call on it as we get into whatever our first encounter is here. Maybe we'll literally find this Delver with their hands clenched around a secret rife journal. Let's pull up this first card, this first encounter, as you move up through the mountains and begin north, being led by this kid. Do you have a good kid name?

JANINE: Um... uh... hang on, hang on, give me a second.

AUSTIN: Of course.

JANINE: I gotta find a good kid name now. [PAUSE] Gasto.

AUSTIN: Oh, Gasto's here. I think that you—

JANINE: It was the first one on the thing, and I love it.

AUSTIN: Incredible. I think Dyre is very much like:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): Gasto, is the route prepared?

AUSTIN: And Gasto, you know, looks up to see this angelic form that is like this incredible amalgam of a half-dozen Cleavers' bodies being used as wings to stay aloft, and it makes some sort of shriek, terrible and monstrous, to which Gasto says like:

AUSTIN (as GASTO): [CHEERFUL] Yeah, it sounds pretty good. Sounds like everything's okay.

[JANINE CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Give me a d6 to see what this two of diamonds is. A 3. Okay. Two of diamonds is "a paltry sum; the bare minimum, maybe," and 3 is "a dying Delver begging for the safety of his lost party." I think we come to a chasm, or—just maybe some increasingly treacherous terrain, and we find someone who is headed this direction from further South. I don't think someone who is fleeing Blackwick, necessarily, but I think that they kind of, you know, call for your attention.

He's wounded, and he begins to tell you this story of how he and his people were leaving from—let's say from Vish, Vish is nearby. That there was a bad sign—the fish turned again in the river, like they did all that time ago, during the festival, when something broke bad and the fish died all at once there. That happened again. And so he was leading—or was part of a group, maybe, that was going north, and as he went north—as they went north through the kind of treacherous terrain of these mountains, something happened.

[10:00]

Something began to prey on them, and he fled. And is trying to warn you away, but also is increasingly like, anxious and—I don't want to go as far as hostile, necessarily, but like, something is... he's really teetering on the edge at this moment.

And, you know, I'll read it again, it says "a dying Delver who's begging for the safety of his lost party." And so I think he's going between this mode of like, 'you need to help them,' and 'no, you can't go, it's too dangerous.' The thing that stalks the mountains between here and Conventus is, you know, too dangerous. What do you do?

JANINE: Um... hm.

AUSTIN: I think Bof—Bofto? Is that right?

JANINE: What?

AUSTIN: You said Bofto? What was the name of that guy? The kid?

JANINE: Gasto.

AUSTIN: Gasto. Where did Bofto come from?

JANINE: I don't know.

AUSTIN: Gasto is like:

AUSTIN (as GASTO): We don't have time for this, Dyre.

JANINE: [CHUCKLING] Flash my Magistrate's badge.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah?

JANINE: I don't know if that's what I do, but I'm like, looking at my sheet in terms of like, what's stuff that could be applied here.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Again, we're looking for one Skill, one Domain, and one Ability over the course of this.

JANINE: Right.

AUSTIN: And we can explain this kind of broadly. You know, this could be a Skill of you being on the lookout as we move through this next stage of the mountains, it could be a Skill about bringing this person peace as they die, it could be about healing him before he dies. Right? Really, it's an opportunity for us to see Es confront something. You know? And how we would frame—like, almost, again, from that broader perspective with this writing prompt. What's the story about Es we want to tell?

JANINE: Es isn't very good—is not very good at healing, is the thing.

AUSTIN: This is true.

JANINE: Es is a little bit [CHUCKLES] more kitted out towards, like... being a little bit flashy and menacing.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So, you know, there's a degree to which I, personally, would rather choose the comforting route, but I feel like her move would be to be like, 'look, we'll be fine.' Like, find some way to prove, like, 'we've got this, we're not your crew, we're a bunch of like, hardcore weirdos.'

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

JANINE: 'We're good.' I'm wondering if that's—I think the thing that I want it to be is I want it to be that she sries in front of this person.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's fun. I should note, you get one use of any Ability, one use of any Skill, and one use of any Domain. You don't get to return to each one multiple times, so this would be your one Ability. I think that's fine. I like the idea of scrying to see what's ahead here. Especially because that's one of my favorite moves of yours that we just haven't gotten a lot of.

JANINE: Yeah, I got to use it once. I'm still really bummed about it. So it's the kind of thing of like, I'm really torn because—

AUSTIN: Well, what do you—

JANINE: I have a lot of moves that are really useful, but also, I just like that one so much. You know?

AUSTIN: Yeah. You then—how about this? The way that move works is you get to say three things, right?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: That you'll see? Is that—am I remembering that right? And you get a bonus?

JANINE: “You bleed into an upturned mirror and omens swim within the crimson. Roll Discern plus Occult to cast this spell before you embark on a Delve. On a success, you see three omens. Describe them.”

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: “You don't have to be too specific; in fact, the more vague you are, the better. These are fated to come up on the Delve. The first time you interact with whatever you find that relates to each omen, you or an ally roll with Mastery.” Et cetera.

AUSTIN: How about you give me one of those, I'll give you one, and then you give me the third one?

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: What's something that's gonna come up on this Delve?

JANINE: I'm gonna go with a tree that has sort of a big, smooth, round, polished semi-precious stone embedded in it.

AUSTIN: Ooh, yeah.

JANINE: Like you know where there'd be a knot in a tree? It's like if that was full of like, polished quartz or something.

AUSTIN: I love that. The second thing is pretty specific. It is runes, or glyphs, of a language that you don't—that even you don't know, that even you don't find familiar, that are glowing—they're glowing red, potentially wet.

JANINE: You said wet?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Glistening, certainly.

JANINE: This is us watching the KB and Jack Hieronymus Bosch stream being like 'is that blood? Does that count as blood? I don't know if that's blood.'

AUSTIN: 'Does that count as blood? I don't know. Is that—is that a guy that when you look at him you go "look at him go?"'

JANINE: And the third one... a generous length of really nice cloth.

AUSTIN: Ooh, I love that. The—this man, this dying figure, you know, I think seems at ease as you tell him this. And then, I think, with no prodding, Gasto begins to go through his belongings as he kind of drifts away. And Gasto pulls out that little—our negative thing here, that journal. Which of course, we don't know is negative—I mean, we know, we know it's negative, but the—

JANINE: Yeah. It's just a weird little journal.

AUSTIN: Right. It's just a weird little journal. It's just "a dead Delver, hands clenched around a secret rife journal." And Gasto, of course, begins to immediately start reading through it, as if like, 'oh, what could this be?' And, you know, every once in a while, says like, 'there's a weird drawing in here. It's like a weird bear guy.' You know? It's like, 'alright, Gasto.' [CHUCKLES]

What's it like moving through the mountains in this way? I feel like we've seen a lot of Delves that have a time—like, when we're trying to get down to Bell Metal—or not Bell Metal for you—Yellowfield, or we're trying to get back from Sapodilla or whatever, whereas this is kind of like—in my mind there's something sort of... not restful, necessarily, but you're leaving Blackwick behind, and the Blackwick Group, and you're travelling with Dyre and this weird kid. What's going on in Es's mind as we continue journeying through these mountains? What's her attitude? What's her vibe?

JANINE: I mean, I think we should acknowledge that it's probably, like—it's probably not just a vibe, right?

AUSTIN: Right. Sure.

JANINE: It's probably—I kind of wonder how a being that has a really long life would react to change, because they would have to see so much of it, but also their life is on such a timeline that they could fall into stasis for long periods where not a lot of things change, and then to have things change, like—

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: So I wonder if—I wonder if from Es's perspective, there is kind of just a lack of acknowledgment. Kind of like... you know. Kind of like—you know, for me, when I get really anxious about something, if I have to do a thing, I'll get really anxious leading up to it, but when it actually happens, it's just fine.

AUSTIN: You just did it. Yeah. You're just doing a thing.

JANINE: Because it's happening and it's more trouble to get around it or whatever than it is to just go with it and get it over with.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So it's like, you know, a lot of things in my life that should have been really scary or whatever, it's just kind of like 'well, this is happening.'

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: And it just is, and I'm just doing the thing I have to do. So I think there is sort of a degree of that for Es where it's just like 'well, this is just what's happening.' Like, the thing in Blackwick is over, and this is what we're doing now, and that just is what it is. That's how life works, is you just do stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: But I think, you know—I think the other side of that is like, Syntyche is the one who's probably really sad, about like, you know—we were with all these people and we like, had favorite spots and stuff, and like, all that stuff, we're just getting farther away from it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And, you know, Syntyche's gone through change, too, god knows—

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: But, you know. That doesn't necessarily make it easier. That doesn't make it easier to be like 'well, you know, we're with Dyre, and Dyre's cool too, and we're moving towards stuff where like, you know, we'll have another favorite coffee place.' Or like, 'we'll have another room that we really like that has a good view down the main street,' or whatever. These things will come again, but right now we are moving away from the ones that we know.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[20:00]

JANINE: And that's sort of difficult. So I imagine there's kind of a...I don't even know that it would be a dialogue.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JANINE: Like, an internal dialogue. I think it's just like, that's Syntyche's experience, and Es's experience is a little bit more—

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] It colors...

JANINE: A little bit more detached.

AUSTIN: A little muted, maybe.

JANINE: Even though, like, I would say that Es, if she sat down, would feel the same things.

AUSTIN: Right, right. Well, let's say you actually sit down towards the end of this night. Whatever this creature that has been warned of has not arrived, you have not found this person's so-called missing party, strangely—or maybe not strangely, maybe they've been devoured by this creature, who could say? But I think Dyre asks you a question, and, you know, I think that they're being diplomatic, maybe, in saying it this way, but they ask you if you ever saw, you know, 'the Heartland before the Panic?' And then actually says:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): Or before Aldomina came?

AUSTIN: And is like, you know, kind of asking your age—

[JANINE CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: —but is genuinely interested in like 'hey, how much do you know about this place?' I don't know that you and I ever actually answered that question, necessarily. I know heritrixes are very old, but.

JANINE: No, we didn't. I think—we didn't, and I think an idea that I like is that Es spent sort of a considerable part of her early life unhosted, basically.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And I think when you're a heritrix and you're unhosted, the way you perceive the world is probably quite different, so I honestly don't think she knows.

AUSTIN: Right. That's interesting.

JANINE: I don't think she knows the answer to that, because I think, like—I think that if you are a thing that has no physical being, it's really easy to spend 10 years, like, 60 feet under the crust of the—under the surface just like, zooming around looking at bones or whatever. Like, I think it's really easy to just kind of have no idea, like—if you've never been in a body before, is Blackwick different to you than, like, a city in the sort of Kay'va region?

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Like, do you—is it just, is it—do you just perceive it as like 'there are people here' versus 'there are no people here?' Do you—you probably, like—I mean, we've established that the heritrixes can—are like, aware of emotions and things like that, and can sort of access that

sort of aspect of people when they're not host—when they're not, like, inside of a host. Is it just like, 'well, there's a lot of scared people here, so something bad might be happening?'

AUSTIN: Right, might be happening, yeah.

JANINE: Or like 'everyone seems really happy here, so this might be a good place.'

AUSTIN: Right. But there are totally happy people in bad places sometimes—

JANINE: Yes, true.

AUSTIN: And terrified people in places of great luxury, you know?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, you never know.

JANINE: Exactly. And I think she'd have to be very aware of that, of just like—she knows what she perceived, but putting that perception to a time and a place is really difficult.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Especially because it was so long ago.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think that he says—I'm guessing you kind of summarize some of that, at least, or you kind of gesture at it, at least, yeah.

JANINE: Yeah. I think she... yeah, I think she just sort of explains that like—she explains the perceptions she had from her early life to sort of frame it as like, 'and this is why I have no idea.'
[CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. I think he laughs at that—like not at you, but you know, like, 'yeah, that seems understandable.'

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): A lot of people think of this place as having been sparse or empty or, sure, there were people, but they were very far away. They were very far apart from one another. In ways, that was true, but I think you would have enjoyed the way we crossed paths, the way we mingled. And there was way—

AUSTIN: 'There was way more.' He would never say 'way more. There was way more life than people think.' He would say—

JANINE: Much more?

AUSTIN: Yeah. He would say:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): There was much more life, and much different life, than what those in Aldomina, or even those in Sangfielle today, would imagine. It is hard to look down from these mountains and see valleys and streams that once were home to people, and people I

knew, and are now empty. And no matter who moves there now, there are ways in which some sounds don't echo anymore.

When we get to Concentus, I will need a favor from you. There will be part of the journey where I will need to be unavailable. And if you could simply see me to our destination—and I'll give you more details once I see what they've done to the place—just keep my body safe until you enter the room. You'll know it when you see it. I suspect, anyway.

JANINE (as ES): [CHUCKLES] A little embarrassing if I don't.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: No skin on the bones of Dyre Ode still, and yet, you can sense the bones smile, somehow.

The seven of hearts. Can you give me a d6?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Let me look up what this card is.

JANINE: 1.

AUSTIN: Ooh. Alright. The seven of hearts is "a deeply, deeply entangled pair." Number 1 is "enormous eels; enmeshed, electrified, and tumbling right towards you."

JANINE: Eugh.

AUSTIN: Terrible. So I think we are a couple of days further north, maybe even a week further north. The creature of the dying Delver told us about never showed, and—unless it is, of course, [CHUCKLES] these enormous eels enmeshed, electrified, tumbling right towards us—but I think there is a moment before we step into a tunnel. Maybe we're moving from one tunnel to another. We're kind of like stepped outside one of these caves for a moment, and there is that screech from the angel above again. And Gasto says, you know:

AUSTIN (as GASTO): The angel says someone or something is coming.

AUSTIN: And then you can hear the spark of this—these kind of electric tunnel eels. Which I know it sounds like a snake, but they're—they move like eels do, for some reason. What's the difference between an eel and a snake? I guess it's water, really, isn't it?

JANINE: They're—well, there are water snakes, though.

AUSTIN: There are. So what's the difference between an eel and a snake?

JANINE: I would guess that an eel has gills, and can like, breathe in the water, versus most water snakes, which I think—

AUSTIN: Yeah. I guess they're fundamentally, are they—I don't know enough—they're fish, they are fish.

JANINE: Eels are fish, not like reptiles, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And they look meaningfully different than a snake. They have that taller body, you know, and the fins, and all of that. But I do think that there's some sort of like, gooey liquid that precedes them comes pouring out of the tunnel. As if to like, prepare the area around this part of the mountains for them to slip and slide around. And we hear that same electric charge behind us, from the tunnel we've just left. And it's like, ah, great. There's two of them. What do you do?

JANINE: Um... hm. I mean... do I just fucking kill them?

AUSTIN: I mean, you have Kill, don't you?

JANINE: Uh-huh. And this doesn't feel like a good—I feel—I'm so—I don't know how many Domains other people have, but I made it through this entire season with only two.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's wild. I think you have the least. I think that that is—

JANINE: I just did not prioritize it.

AUSTIN: Chine—well, Chine didn't make it through the season, but Chine also only had two. I think everybody else had three plus.

JANINE: Yeah. But Chine could eat stuff to gain Domains—

AUSTIN: This is true, this is true.

JANINE: Which means that buying them was kind of pointless in that way.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. True. Whereas, you have just—what are the two that you have?

JANINE: Cursed and Occult. Which, also, is like, having two Domains—

AUSTIN: You doubled in—yeah.

JANINE: —and they're only Cursed and Occult, is like, one, I feel like those came up the least. Maybe Technology, Religion, or, well—Cursed and Occult basically came up like once for me.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] I suspect Wild and Warren came up less, but maybe I'm wrong. Someone will run these numbers.

JANINE: Wild and Warren were really big in like, that first—

AUSTIN: Yeah, we were outside.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: On the way up to Roseroot.

[30:00]

AUSTIN: But once you got there that was—yeah.

JANINE: I did really—I did really double down. I did pick things where like, if one is happening, it's an equal chance of the other happening. I would have been wise to pick some else.

AUSTIN: But also, they're good ones to have on this particular journey, presumably.

JANINE: Maybe. They don't feel good for killing eels. Or for dealing with eels.

AUSTIN: No, no.

JANINE: In this space.

AUSTIN: No, we are not in a Cursed—we are in a Wild or Warren place, to your point, probably.
[CHUCKLES]

JANINE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: We're on mountains and caves, right? So.

JANINE: And despite the fact that I got a—I satisfied a major active beat in our last session, I didn't take the major power I was gonna take, which is the thing that lets me just make an area Cursed.

AUSTIN: Oh. That's a fun one.

JANINE: Or—no, it lets me just make it Occult. But, it kind of—

AUSTIN: Makes it Occult. That makes more sense, yeah.

JANINE: —doesn't matter because I used my power anyway.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: I mean, I think, if I was alone, I might go with like an Endure or Sneak, but the fact that there are other people here, and like, I don't know how good Gasto is in a fight.

AUSTIN: Gasto is not super good, but Gasto is a Pet class, and his Pet is this giant angel, this ten-person—

JANINE: I thought you were saying that he was the pet. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Oh, no. No. He has—like, you know, like an MMO pet—you know what I mean?

JANINE: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Like a class that has a summon or whatever. So, I think alright, you know? But I think killing is the play.

JANINE: I don't think I've ever seen Dyre fight, either.

AUSTIN: No, Dyre begins walking up the mountain towards the large polished semi-precious stone embedded in a tree.

JANINE: Oh. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: And is like 'ah, yes.' You know? It's what you cried before. You know?

JANINE: Points at it. Unworried by the eels.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Yeah. And effectively, is like:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): I'll make them vulnerable. You deal the blow.

AUSTIN: And is going to use whatever that is to, I don't know, make them—to de-electrify them so that you can actually touch them or hurt them, or is going to—

JANINE: If fantasy has taught me anything, it's that big stones are good at holding energy somehow.

AUSTIN: Yes, yes. Exactly. Yeah. Uh-huh. And I think what they're going to do, 'they' being Dyre, is take a glove off to produce just a long—a too-long skeletal hand and finger. The finger is like—there's too many knuckles. It's probably like six or seven knuckles. And a sharp point—

JANINE: Just hoarding extra bones they find now?

AUSTIN: Uh, yeah. Uh-huh. And presses it against the jewel, and the jewel cracks, and as it does, all of the eels start to—both of the eels start to flail, making them—I mean, it's still dangerous, but they're not trying to hurt you in this moment. And so you can—what do you do? What's your kill look like? Without getting too gross, eel-y.

JANINE: Um... yeah. I mean, I have, over the season, accumulated a lot—like, increasingly less gross ways to kill.

AUSTIN: This is true, this is true.

JANINE: I do have some real gross ways to kill things just in general, but... given the fact that there are two of them and they're kind of in opposite directions, I think this might just be a thing of just like, a gun. You know?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you have that super lightning gun, that Fulmina-blessed gun.

JANINE: Probably loaded some lower quality rounds in it for this trip—

AUSTIN: Yeah, keep those good bullets. Yeah.

JANINE: —just 'cause, you know, you're mountaineering, you need to—sometimes you need a deer or whatever.

AUSTIN: Sometimes there is a bear, or yeah, there is a deer, sure.

JANINE: Yeah. So I think it's just—it's a pretty straightforward, like—I was gonna say 'gun job.' It's a pretty straightforward, just, shootin' the eels.

AUSTIN: Yeah, once the jewel is cracked, yeah. Perfect. And I think, you know—I almost called him Gusto. Gasto and the angel are—you know, Gasto comes out and does like, the hand wipe, like 'yep, I got it taken care of.' [CHUCKLES] Comes out from hiding behind a rock. I love this little rascal. This little kid's a jerk. And he's like:

AUSTIN (as GASTO): Well, that wasn't too bad.

JANINE: I just keep picturing him as the kid from *Howl's Moving Castle*.

AUSTIN: Oh, me—literally same. That is exactly who it is in my brain, I hadn't realized it, but that's exactly who it is!

JANINE: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yep. It's just him.

AUSTIN: It's just him. That kid's alright. I like that kid, because that kid does a bunch of chores, and was like, making—you know, he doesn't do enough chores, necessarily, to keep that house clean, 'cause like, that house is a fucking mess.

JANINE: Got a big beard for when you go to grocery store.

AUSTIN: But I love his big fake beard. That's like my favorite thing, is when he's like 'I gotta go pretend to be a little guy and go out there and get whatever this house needs.'

JANINE: [CHUCKLES] Now that's a little guy.

AUSTIN: That's a little guy.

JANINE: You can look at him and say 'look at him go.'

AUSTIN: Look at him go. Yeah, a hundred percent. People should go watch Jack and KB's *Garden of Earthly Delights* stream. Extremely funny. Anyway—KatBamKapow on Twitch. I think, you know, you're now able to continue making your way through the rest of the mountains, and, you know. I think along the way, the angel has flown back away to do some scouting, and Dyre and you are able to take the lead.

And soon enough, you start to see the first semblances of Concentus being kind of sprinkled across the mountains. Like, you start to see a few more houses here or there. You know, at first maybe you saw some cabins, and some huts, and maybe even some pathways going a little bit further down the mountains towards places. You found some communities of—definitely a couple of little communities of people who just like, live in the mountains and warrens and in caves that have been converted to living spaces or whatever, but more and more you start to

see this particular model of building that looks like the—I mean, if we're going north, it's specifically the sort of Pale Magistratum stuff which, you know—I think the Magistratum in Aldomina are where we are in our most Bloodborne dark Gothic—our kind of contemporary vision of what that looks like.

And that stuff just begins to dot the landscape and increase in density as you get closer and closer. And there is some sort of structure ahead—I'm gonna pull this next card and see if it helps me characterize it. But in my mind, it's some sort of fortress or castle or other sort of fortified structure. A spire of some sort, maybe. And Dyre points at it and says:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): That would be it.

AUSTIN: The four of clubs. Give me a d6.

JANINE: Ooh. 4 on four.

AUSTIN: Ooh, interesting. 4 on four. Ah, this is very fun. I'm gonna tell you what this is when we get there. I'm gonna get a little bit deeper in. I think Dyre looks down to—I think Dyre says:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): We should find an inn. Tomorrow will be the day.

AUSTIN: And you know, they go to a little—it's almost more like a teahouse, you know? With some, you know, boarding available. And I think at some point they ask Gasto to, like:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): Prepare the vessel.

AUSTIN: And Gasto disappears for the rest of the night, so it's just you and Dyre in this teahouse with the little old couple who run it. [CHUCKLES] You're probably about, you know—you can see the spire, and its kind of fortress at the bottom of it, is probably about half a day away at this point on the path you're going. Dyre orders some tea and some sort of dinner. Dyre likes to eat, even though Dyre's just a big skeleton person. What do you talk about on this night before whatever this impending situation is?

JANINE: Hm... um... I'm torn, because part of me wants to ask some like, really big thing. 'Cause like, Dyre's been in and out of the story for, you know, since basically the start.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Especially for Es.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And—so there's a desire there to like, find some big question that needs some big answer or something.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: But, you know, the truth of it is that this is Es we're talking about, and I think for Es, the priority is just like... maybe to just talk about the food.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's good. Yeah.

JANINE: Like, I can—it's really easy for me to imagine them in this teahouse, with like, one of those little three-tiered tea sort of snack trays with like, the different kinds of sandwiches, and little, like—you know. Like, if you eat enough of them it's a meal. But at the same time, also, like, this is a teahouse, and not like, a—you know, a steakhouse.

AUSTIN: Right, right. I almost imagine it's like—

JANINE: They're not gonna serve you like a—what were you gonna say?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I was gonna say, I bet it's like, dried fish and fruits. Like, fresh fruit, probably, but not—we're not talking about a—

JANINE: Yeah. It's a lot of stuff that like, you can cut up and put on a cracker, or you can have a slightly bigger piece on some bread, or—

AUSTIN: Exactly. Yeah, I bet they have pretty good bread. I bet they bake their own bread. Or they know someone—they probably know someone who bakes their own bread.

JANINE: Again, the tiny sandwiches are very important, so you need good bread for that.

AUSTIN: Yes. Absolutely. I think at some point, Dyre produces some tea from a small satchel—or not even a satchel, a little pouch kept inside of the flowing robes that he wears, and goes and presents it to—presents kind of two containers of it.

[40:00]

One for—one to use the last of it of for another cup of tea, or another pot of tea tonight, for the two of you, but then also—and one that's like the same type, as a gift to the couple that run this teahouse. The old couple.

JANINE: Aw.

AUSTIN: And you know, he kind of comes back over, and continues to just enjoy your presence. I don't think is eager to—you know, I know a lot about who Dyre Ode is. I know why Dyre has long finger bones. Do you know what I mean? I know whose bones those are. But I think that it's probably true to character that neither of you are here to do exposition.

JANINE: And this is like, I mean—I think, for me, Es and Dyre's interactions are colored a lot by that first misunderstanding.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yeah.

JANINE: Where the only thing she wanted was to know that, like—that Dyre wasn't going to be a bigger problem than the problem they had just dealt with.

AUSTIN: Right. Mhm.

JANINE: Because, you know, she didn't know who they were. She didn't really know or understand what was going on, and all she wanted was the assurance of like, 'are you cool or are you—' like, 'are you secretly an enemy,' or you know, something like that.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

JANINE: Beyond that, like, she didn't care—or, I mean, she cared what was going on, but, you know, it was more of a thing of like 'well, this is yours, so you should have it.' But, you know. I want to like, register my concern. So a lot of their interactions to me come down to, like—again, there's that compulsion of like, I want to ask all these—I, personally, want to ask all these questions.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah.

JANINE: And, you know, someone like Adaire would. Like, someone who is a little too nosy for their own good. Or a little more interested in like, building up their knowledge regardless of anyone else's stakes in those things. But I think for Es it's truly just like— 'Dyre is interesting, I don't understand the full scope of what's going on, but I like spending time with them, and by spending time with them, maybe I'll get that understanding, and maybe I won't, and it's not the worst thing if I don't.'

AUSTIN: Yeah. And I think—you get drips and drabs, right? You get stories of times past told in the way that you meet someone and they're like 'oh, this place reminds me of a time that I was with so-and-so and at such-and-such.' You know? 'Oh yeah,' you know, I could tell people stories of when I visited Sydney when I was a kid. You know, stuff like that, right? And so I think you get little bits of that, but there's not—we're not looking at big revelation talk, you know?

JANINE: No.

AUSTIN: I think mostly you find someone who is eager to enjoy a night before a difficult day.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And before bed, I think, before the two of you kind of go your way, I think they explain to you that there will be a room at the bottom of the spire. 'Ignore its height. If anything, its height is a distraction. Find its center and go down, and at the very bottom, as deep as they could go...'

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): ...they will have anchored Concentus to a part of me. There is something that is mine, but as you know, I cannot say its name. I can hardly see it in my own mind's eye. Retrieve it, and return it to me. If I appear in its presence in the way that I am now, I will be weak and fragile, and could come under the sway of the wards that keep Concentus safe.

AUSTIN: And he kind of—he doesn't literally air quotes 'safe,' but has that sort of slight disdain.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): Gasto will do what he can, but this will rely on you. I... wish I knew how to repay you.

JANINE: Um... I think—I think... I think Es just kind of like, laughs a little, like, just at the idea that that's even needed.

AUSTIN: Right. That that's even what this is.

JANINE: Right, like—

AUSTIN: Yeah, and I think—yeah.

JANINE: It's never—I mean, for one thing, it's never really been about that with her. Like, the payment is the thing that allows you to keep doing the stuff—like, you need to, you know, when you're in Blackwick, you need money to eat so you can still be there so you can do the things and whatever. But like, this has nothing to do with any kind of compensation.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: This is a thing that she's doing because she has trust in Dyre, for one thing, that if that is a priority for Dyre, that it's something that's worth doing. But also sort of has that gut feeling of just like, 'this is the right thing to do,' or like, 'this is the thing that I should be doing right now,' even if, you know, there's gonna be clean-up later, there's gonna be problems, there's gonna be all of that.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: But it's—so the idea of like, repayment or anything is—it's probably the first time she's thought about compensation since she left Blackwick, which is why it's funny.

AUSTIN: And I think that they laugh also, at this, right? They realize that in this moment, you know, he's retreated to the safety of a simple phrase, the sort of transactionalism that gets you through places like Blackwick and Sapodilla that you can rely on. And I think straight up says, like:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): I should know you better by now. Simply, then, thank you.

JANINE (as ES): I will say...

JANINE: And I think Es, that's—Es says 'I will say.' And then holds the shoulders of the warded cloak that she wears, and like, does a little spin.

AUSTIN: [CHUCKLES] Mhm.

JANINE (as ES): If you ever find anything like this again... 'cause this thing has been worth its weight in gold.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): I'll see what I can do. Good night.

JANINE: It also just looks—you know. I think there's a degree to their—like, Es is a person who takes a lot of pride in her appearance.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, totally.

JANINE: And is kind of about that, and just the idea of like, a big nice cloak that's like quality but also, like, has warding, is practical too, is like, you know. She's proud of that thing.

AUSTIN: The next morning comes, and outside, chained to a sort of draft horse and a wagon, there is a coffin waiting. And Gasto wakes you up and says that everything's ready to go. Dyre, presumably, is inside of the coffin.

JANINE: Yeah. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: At this point, you know, your job is to get inside to go—and we have not hit this card that I've drawn yet. Or the number. And so we can be really—I think we can be kind of montage-y here in terms of 'how do you do the thing that I just described' which is, I mean, at this point, get this coffin to the deep underbasement of this fortress that's protected by presumably a combination of—I mean, I actually imagine that Conventus has its own sort of military and policing group, but it's kind of colored by whichever Canton it is. And so they're kind of like knights meet the Magistrates, you know, sort of? You know, you kind of have your medieval town guard, except they're kind of mixed with the sort of sheriff-marshall vibe that the Magistrates have, so like, maybe they don't have the guns that the Magistrates have. Maybe they have, you know, clubs and swords and stuff, but they still wear the dusters over some plate mail or whatever. Right? They're this weird blend.

And you know, there's a bunch of them, and there's probably some magic people defending this place, and there's probably some other shit. Without talking about your Skill, because we're not even at this card yet, what's it look like for Es to do this? What's the vibe? Paint me some pictures.

JANINE: Uh...

AUSTIN: Also, you do have Gasto and Gasto's big flesh-angel as some backup, also.

JANINE: Yeah. This doesn't really feel like a situation where you can just kind of like, talk your way in when you're—

AUSTIN: I think you can probably talk your way into the walls of Conventus, but not the walls of the fortress, right?

JANINE: Yeah. I think that—

AUSTIN: 'Oh, yeah, I'm bringing someone home to be buried.' That makes sense. You know? But, beyond that.

JANINE: Yes. Yeah, I think that's probably how they get through the walls, but getting into the actual thing...

[50:00]

JANINE: I think it's just a thing of like, waiting for your moment and like... I mean, you can't get a horse into a tower, can you?

AUSTIN: Probably not. I mean, probably—it's a big tower. It's a big tower. You can get the horse maybe into the tower, I don't know about down the secret stairwell, or you know.

JANINE: Yeah, how do you get a coffin down?

AUSTIN: I don't know.

JANINE: I've carried people before, but I don't know about a coffin.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: I mean, bones are light.

AUSTIN: Bones are light, coffins are heavy.

JANINE: Coffins are heavy.

AUSTIN: This is like a lacquered—you know, this is a pretty—

JANINE: How big is this angel?

AUSTIN: Big. This angel's big. This angel is—I said it was ten people stitched together, basically.

JANINE: Oh, god. Okay.

AUSTIN: And then like, ten big Cleavers—like, ten Chines. Do you know what I mean, like?

JANINE: Right.

AUSTIN: Big fuck-off, you know, powerful Cleaver types.

JANINE: Yeah, I feel like the best bet is then to like—

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] *Ba-doom ba-doom*, as it hits the ground, you know?

JANINE: Yeah. Um... best bet feels like hitching the coffin to that thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And just like, stomping your way inside.

JANINE: Maybe like—yeah. Using it a bit like a battering ram to just kind of get through.

AUSTIN: Yeah? And, you know, I said before you can't use your Skills to solve things at this point, but you can obviously—or, yes, your Skills or your Abilities. But obviously you still have those narratively for a moment like this where it's not about resolving things, so, you know.

JANINE: Oh, yeah. I imagine this is a 'true form' action. That it's like, mostly—

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. Sure.

JANINE: It's mostly sort of done behind this angel, just to like—I'm picturing this angel now like kind of—a battering ram was the wrong thing, but it's kind of like a cow-catcher on the front of a train which will just like push everything out of the way so that the stuff behind can get through.

AUSTIN: Charging ahead, yeah.

JANINE: So I imagine the angel's doing a lot of the work, and Es is kind of in the back just like, making sure the coffin doesn't bang into stuff badly, or, you know.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Kind of doing a little bit of clean-up. Not clean-up, but, um—

AUSTIN: As you run through the various doors, you see that Gasto is using some sort of like, paint or chalk—let's say chalk—to write runes on the doors behind you. And even like, sometimes on the ground, sometimes the angel will leave a bunch of rubble behind you as like a stop-gap barricade, and then Gasto seems like he's enchanting it to make it even stronger. And like, you know, locking the doors with these runes. And, you know, they're not familiar runes to you, necessarily.

And you do it. You get to the basement. You get all the way down to a large chamber, that is dark except for the—this kind of glowing ember, or it's—I think at first you think it's an ember, it has kind of a yellow light, but actually it's something—it's like a glass case that has something light inside of it. And maybe it's like a—it's not a light bulb, you've seen some light bulbs now, it's not a light bulb. You're just not quite sure. But it's a big chamber.

And it takes you a second before you realize that it is a heart. A heart that would be too large to fit into someone of average size, but would probably fit into the chest of Dyre Ode. And it's beating, this big red heart, as yellow glowing blood kind of pumps out of it and into a drain below. This is what powers Concentus's wards. The heart of Dyre Ode.

I'm guessing you go to get it.

JANINE: Yeah. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: And as you do, of course, it begins to beat faster and faster. And all around you, it is time to see those runes of an unknown language glowing red and wet, as they come to life, scrawled across the entirety of this room, and Gasto is like 'they're like from the book!' And the book falls out of his hands.

And stepping out of the book is the dying Delver who you saw before, pulling himself out, a hand appears from inside of the pages, lifting himself out, except now instead of the kind of, like, ruined clothes of an explorer or whatever that he had on, he now has on the kind of robes and belt of a court magician. He is one of the architects of Concentus, and he gave you a trap.

JANINE: [SARCASTIC] Ah, that's a fun trick.

AUSTIN: And the trap is not even—yeah, it's a fun trick. It is not even fully developed yet, because the thing that you rolled was—you got a four of—what was the four of? Four of clubs, right? And then you rolled a 4. You got “a specter, baffled and fixated,” and 4 is “a skeleton tollkeeper monitoring and cataloguing all who pass.” And so the coffin opens, and the now naked body of Dyre Ode—you know, hundreds of bones, in some places not even touching, just hovering near each other—appears, lifted up and clearly under the control of this court wizard.

Dyre's hand reaches out, that long finger, pointed the way we often see Death's, as if to judge those around him. Or those in front of him, which in this case is you. And so this is your challenge. This is your “skeleton tollkeeper monitoring and cataloguing all who pass.” Your “specter, baffled and fixated,” who desperately needs the heart to be put back into his chest before they kill you and prevent you from doing that. Dyre Ode is your final challenge. I mean, and also this mage. This court magician.

JANINE: [CHUCKLES] Yeah.

AUSTIN: And of course, all of the runes that Gasto is drawing are—have helped lock you in here. Right?

JANINE: Right.

AUSTIN: He found them in the book, and replicated them.

JANINE: [SARCASTIC] Very helpful. [CHUCKLES] Good work, Gasto.

AUSTIN: Hey, what's he know? He's just a little kid, he's trying to learn some magic, Dyre won't teach him any.

JANINE: Yeah. [CHUCKLES] Um... hm. So what's the—is the magic guy just controlling Dyre? Is that like—

AUSTIN: Yes, I think so.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: And Dyre is like—we have not seen Dyre truly wield power, I guess—

JANINE: No.

AUSTIN: In this case, I think that the thing that's happening is—there is a weight and a presence. There's something that you—you know, I actually think that maybe there's two things happening. One is when these wards come online, you recognize that this is—because you've probably passed through Concentus before, right? Post-having hosts. Whatever you do, there is like a—whatever the heritrix version of needing to have your ears popped as you fly and there's a pressure change, because the wards don't keep you out, but—because you're not from—you're not something that was developed, or evolved, or that came into being after the Panic, you're not one of these, like, quote unquote ‘truths of the Heartland,’ the terrors that

come after the Panic, but you are something strange to the people who built Concentus, who built wards that maybe go a little too broad in their anti-magic agenda, or their anti-certain types of quote unquote 'supernatural' stuff, and so there's partly—when the wards, the red dripping runes all around you come online, or come into being and begin to glow, that hits you and makes you sort of weak. And then the—Dyre pointing at you literally just makes your heart start to beat faster, as if—the thing that's happening is it's like you're advancing in age, or your body is—

JANINE: Hm.

AUSTIN: It's not like 'oh, your body is getting older,' necessarily, right, but it's like 'I'm going to deteriorate you by running you through all of the beats of your heart.' So there's something like a time limit on this, you know? It's beating so fast.

JANINE: Um... So I have a problem here, which is that I have a cool idea in mind—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: But it doesn't have much to do with Domains other than the fact that I'm true form'ed out and that's always spooky.

AUSTIN: That's spooky, Occult stuff.

JANINE: And also the thing that I want to do is mechanical in nature, but also kind of spooky, but also I don't know if it's possible or if it would somehow kill Dyre. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Well, tell me what you want to do.

JANINE: I wanted to use my grappling hook to steal his ribcage and stick the heart in it. [CHUCKLES] But I don't know...

AUSTIN: Right. I think you would find—

JANINE: There's a lot of question marks there, right?

AUSTIN: I think you would find that you couldn't pull his ribcage away.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: You could pull him close to you that way, though. Potentially. But you wouldn't break their bones.

JANINE: I think my go-to there is usually to pull myself closer.

[1:00:02]

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. And I think you could—I mean, we've seen you be—you've done that so many times now. You did that with—

JANINE: Yes. I wonder if that's just that like a 'true form, grapple hook, dunk' combo.

AUSTIN: Totally. I think that works. And you're in a—if there's ever been an Occult place in Sangfielle, I think the secret reverse tower underneath the Pale Magistratum's part of Conventus where they kept Dyre Ode's heart as part of the kind of fuel for this entire city, yeah, I think it's probably there. That's Occult to me. So yeah, you do it. You think this works, you don't think this—you don't feel like this fails, right? I'll leave it to you.

JANINE: I... I don't think it fails, but also, I don't want it to be a thing—you know, I'm making jokes about [CHUCKLES] slam dunking Dyre Ode's heart into his ribcage, but like—

AUSTIN: I mean, do you think you take Fallout here, so to speak? Do you think that there is a cost? Is there a back and forth? There's a couple of moments here of you trying to get close and being unable to?

JANINE: I mean, the—when this scene was being established, I was looking at my Abilities in terms of like, flavor stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And was reminded of a lot of the, like, “you don't bleed unless you want to. When you're angry, your veins pulse visibly beneath your skin.” But also, “mortal concerns fade in comparison to the majesty of bloodsong that resonates within you.” So, it's really easy for me to imagine that like, although this is a success, there is maybe sort of a Fallout-type thing to it where it's like, she's kind of in the zone, like, in the—you know, this is probably where the Occult element also would come more into play, is like, it's—in her true form, in this like, weird space, it's probably really easy to—not disassociate, but kind of, right? Where it's just like—again, it's like ‘this is the thing that has to be done,’ and then just not really thinking about the other things that are happening, until it's over and it's like, ‘oh, I'm all—’ maybe not cut up, but because I started at the ‘you don't bleed unless you want to’ thing.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: Just like, ‘oh, that was a lot more taxing than it seemed to be in the moment.’

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: So I think there is sort of like a delayed knock-on effect there.

AUSTIN: That make sense. At the end of the day, you do, though, manage to get your—the heart back in. Not your heart. Dyre's heart. Into the ribcage. And again, up close, you can count so many bones. There's so many bones here, and they're from different—they are from different people. I think—you know. Maybe now's not the moment to do a study of this. But the camera certainly is able to tell people—Dyre Ode has a skeleton, and then with it, are also the bones of probably—there are a hundred extra bones in Dyre Ode's body is what I will say. There are 100 even. I know that they come from 100 different people. But I don't know that the camera could show you that that's 100 different people. Just, it's a bunch of other people's bones. You'd have to be a pretty big bone expert to really know this, but that's how it is.

And you reach in, you put the heart in where it is—it's the only organ. There's no other organs in there. And as you pull your hand away, the court magician, I think, realizes that this is going to give Dyre autonomy back and begins to charge at you; the angel who was knocked away earlier, or knocked down because of the wards, kind of gets up and tries to stand in the way, and there is a blast of golden light from Dyre. And you see a more extended version of something you saw recently, when Dyre got mad and his skin came back briefly. You see them in all their glory, nude, golden, their hair long, and then pulled up into a sort of very well-maintained topknot with a crown. I specifically have in mind this sort of ancient Chinese crown, the—

JANINE: Oh, sure.

AUSTIN: I believe it's called a guan. But you know exactly what I'm talking about, right? And I think, you know, he reaches over to you and takes your hands, and says:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): [SOFTLY] Thank you.

AUSTIN: And then there's another blast of light, and his body is gone. In your hands is a generous length of fine cloth, a new cape to wear.

[JANINE LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: A little longer than the one that you had, and instead of the red interior, I think it's golden in the way that his light and his blood are. Or were. And that same golden color begins to fill the runes of the wards all over the wall. A kind of generous gold dust fills in the wetness and takes it away, and you begin to hear this whole place start to crumble. I'm guessing you flee.

JANINE: Yeah, time to go, Gasto.

[AUSTIN CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN (as GASTO): Yeah, where's Dyre?

AUSTIN: Has not put things together, necessarily. I mean, who could say?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And as you get outside, you know, this—we'll see if this court magician ever comes back, I kind of think this angel probably killed him as the runes switched over—but you see the same golden light that poured out of Dyre pour out of this spire, up into the sky, separating the clouds and beginning to run alongside the—or all through Concentus like a wave of light. You can like, literally see it move like a wave of water, except it's a wave of light. And it, like water, splashes down alleyways, and down thoroughfares, and, you know, turns down strange corners and alleys.

And as it does, you get the sense that that pressure I talked about before switches again, and you are in Sangfielle pressure now. You are in a place where anything could happen. This truly is Sangfielle now. And then there is simply the sound of something breaking. Not glass breaking, but you know, that like—it's almost like the sound of a bone breaking. Like just—*crrk*.

And somewhere, there is now a hole in the wall. It has flooded through, filled Concentus, and now finally broken through north into the Magistrate, and from there it'll move to Aldomina, and the Republica, and the world.

Any final shots of Es? 'Cause, I mean—you know, I kind of feel like—it's what they promised you. Things will get bad for some people because they will suddenly have to deal with like, you know. Super-strange wild shit happening, right? Dust-storms will start to hit this place that change them irrevocably. The sorts of incredibly unpredictable creatures that we've dealt with, places that echo some distant past or predict some distant future in some ways. That is the world that the people of Concentus and beyond will begin dealing with now.

Where do we see Es—you know, I don't even want to say a year from now or anything like that. But just like, in the near future, is there a final shot that we see of Es?

JANINE: Um... I... ooh. Hm. Okay. Um... I'm not a hundred percent sure that this fits with plans and intentions and stuff, but it's a thing that came to mind that I really liked. Which is the idea of Es, like, in the new cloak, sort of hood pulled up, walks into like a neighborhood that we've never seen before, basically, like a really packed kind of neighborhood, that's like—the kind of neighborhood that's packed in a way that is probably not possible in the parts of Sangfielle that we've seen.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And just like, populated and built up, and built up in a way that's like old and enduring, you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm.

JANINE: And I think she sort of walks into this neighborhood, where there's like—maybe there's like a market or something, and pulls her hood down, and just looks around to find someone who looks like kind of a—kind of a pillar.

[1:10:10]

Just as a first step, and says, like, you know, 'you need to cover your windows, you need to—' you know, like, basically giving them a run-down of like, 'here are the preparatory steps that you need to make, because within the next week, something's gonna come through here.' And it is just her sort of being like 'there's going to be a mess here. It's gonna be bad. I'm gonna have to help them clean up.' But also, you know, maybe she has discerned something from scrying or whatever.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Or has learned, at this point, some patterns or things like that, and can go into these areas a little bit in advance and be like, you know, 'board up your windows, sandbag your cellars' or whatever.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I mean, I think at some point someone recognizes that you're doing this. Just, you know, a regular person from Concentus. And is like:

AUSTIN (as TOWNSPERSON): Miss, it seems like you know a lot about what's happenin'. How much longer will it be until it goes back to normal?

JANINE: I think she just says something to the effect of, like:

JANINE (as ES): This was normal. And this will be normal.

[MUSIC OUTRO - ["Six Travelers" by Jack de Quidt](#)]