

All Year Round, There is Work to Do 02

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Recap

[“[The Farmers' Almanac](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Jack: On the ground, it is temperate. It is— well, it's temperate in that there are wildflowers in the spring, cold streams from the meltwater coming down from the mountains.

Janine: Underground, it is always cold to varying degrees, and it is always wet to varying degrees.

Ali: In the clouds, it is very humid. The temperature is something that you really feel with the change of the seasons. Thankfully, I've had a mechanic come through once a week to look over my equipment and make sure I don't *fall out of the sky!*

Jack: “Put it in a box with a candle, and in a year, it'll soon grow.” She meant it literally. The coin was bewitched.

Janine: I cannot get the guidewire hooks into the walls; they are frozen. I cannot clear out the flue to the surface; it is frozen. I cannot run the bath; it is frozen.

Ali: My first shipment was missing in transit, which I understand. The skies can be very dangerous in the winter months, what with all the ice bandits.

Jack: How's Leanna? Did she end up getting that horse? How's Robbie? Tell him he still owes me 500 francs from the card game.

Janine: I wanted to let you know that I received the molds and crystal forms you sent last week. Unfortunately, seeding them has so far been unsuccessful.

Ali: When I saw your cloud lifter for the first time, rusted and unloved as it was, I saw a dream sitting there unimagined.

Jack: I think the bit of me that knows how to be close to people, knows how to make a smile or arrange my face, has curled in on itself or fallen away.

Janine: I hate it down here. I feel like I am a dead body.

Ali: Don't you always think of the sky as beautiful and cool like a refreshing breeze? Well, I suppose you don't. You're much better at this cloud stuff than me.

Jack: Why did I spend those coins on plum wine? Why did I let the candle go out? What was I thinking? I am going to sell the farm and move back to the city.

Janine: As to your proposal, I regrettably am not in a position to approve it. My agreement with the NDGAG [Ali snorts] only covers crystal farming, and regardless of my success or failure at this endeavor, every hollow is meant to serve this end.

[song ends]

Introduction

Ali: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am

your host, Alicia Acampora. [laughing] I realize that I am still doing the voice of the character of this game, which is good. We're playing *Grandpa's Farm* today. I am joined— [laughs]

Janine: By “doing the voice,” do you just mean “are talking happily”?

Ali: Yeah, I think so. Maybe.

Janine: That's fine.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: You just sound like you're having a good time. [Ali laughs]

Ali: And I am, because I am joined today [Janine laughs] by Janine Hawkins.

Janine: Hi. I'm Janine Hawkins. You can find me at @bleatingheart on [Cohost](#) and [YouTube](#) and [Twitch](#) and...[X](#). That sounds bad, but you know. That's where I am.

Ali: And Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi, I'm Jack. You can find me on Cohost at notquitereal, and you can— no, that's not right. Jesus. You can find me on [Cohost](#) at @jdq, and you can buy any of the music featured on the show, including the theme for this arc, at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#). I've been so excited to write some music that isn't industrial shoegaze synths. [Ali laughs] It's very exciting to be able to get the clarinet out again.

Ali: Yeah. Thank you for writing the theme. Every time we return back to Nievelmarch, it's fun to have you in that...the nice guy mode. [laughs]

Jack: You know, it's, uh...sometimes you just need to write some really nice twee— although I did do that, um...I did that, like, Jane Austen ridiculous piano piece that kept getting faster and faster for the *Good Society* one as well. [all laugh] Hopefully this one's gonna be easier, because I have to write it in...one day?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Shit. I have to write that theme today! Okay. We'll see. [Ali and Janine laugh] I'll be fine. I'll be fine.

Ali: You have some time. It's okay.

Jack: I have some time.

Ali: Yeah. Hi. Hi. Hello to the future listeners of this. [laughs quietly]

Game Discussion [0:04:41]

Ali: Today, we are continuing our game of *Grandpa's Farm* by Possible Worlds Games and illustrated by Evlyn Moreau. Again...I guess I didn't do the full Possible Worlds plug last time around, but Possible Worlds is, like, both the name of a game designer and a set of, I believe, six games. We've played a couple of them on Friends at the Table. I'm a big fan. It's festival time.

Jack: It's festival time.

Ali: We should just jump right into it.

Janine: It's festival time.

Ali: It's festival time.

Janine: Let's fucking go.

Ali: Let's go. Let's go. I guess we should re-introduce our characters.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And talk about our farms and our festival booths, and then we'll go for these festival mechanics.

Jack: Do we want to go top to bottom, from heaven down to hell?

Ali: [laughs] We have been doing this order, from heaven to hell, and I think that makes

sense. Here, representing heaven, [laughs] representing the cloud farm, I am playing Sable Butter, whose pronouns are she/her. She is a plucky girl in her late 20s, farming alchemy cactuses because her late mentor left her a big, like, farm raiser when she passed. Farm raiser is this big thing that goes into the sky that you sort of stamp out a piece of cloud to plant things into. I had a decent year? I had no financial success, because maintenance was a problem, but I had okay infrastructural and social progress, and I have two momentum in agricultural, so I did well for myself up there.

Jack: I'm glad for you. [Ali laughs quietly] I am playing Ernan Langerhank. His pronouns are he/him. He has recently moved from the city, because he is the victim of a curse that meant that plants grew around him all the time, so he decided to go to a farm. He thought that he could find a loophole in the curse, and he could not. It is genie logic here, [Ali laughs quietly] because no plants grew whatsoever. He had a terrible year. He made no social progress. He made a tiny bit of financial progress when he was given a coin that sort of, like, duplicated itself, and then he spent it. [laughs quietly] He made no agricultural progress. He made a tiny bit of infrastructural progress by fixing a broken path, but in the final accounting, that actually got rounded down to nothing. [Ali laughs] I didn't intend to write the saddest farmer on the planet, but I have accidentally ended up with one.

Janine: So, I'm playing Velvet Lunde, who I described as being like when Ursula in *The Little Mermaid* takes the form of Vanessa, but, like, looking less evil. Just, like, aesthetically, that's kind of the vibe. She is in the underground farm with her three rabbits: Gamble, Gambol, and Captain. And she has also not had a good time at farming. We're at a zero on farming and infrastructure, unfortunately, momentum-wise. But money and social, like, not bad. She's stumbled across some fossils instead of crystals, which are turning a profit, even though it's sort of not really what she's there for and is potentially a problem, and the fossils have opened some social doors, but you know, nothing too exciting, unfortunately. [Ali and Jack laugh quietly]

Ali: Okay, yeah. Well, so, we are starting our festival here, which is kind of an optional thing in the game itself where you can track your yearly progress to build up something

called momentum and then potentially spend that momentum to make your deck better, to say in game terms. But it basically is, like, a fun roleplaying opportunity for us, because we all finally get together with the denizens of Nievelmarch, and that's very exciting. Last time, we had a short scene of sort of the setup period and our little open face tower, our open face siege tower. So, I'm excited for that, but let's jump into the stuff, unless there's— does anyone want to— is there any reminders that anyone wants to say about the festival? I think we said it was just, like, a showman's thing for different businesses across the town, right?

Janine: Yeah, it's kind of like a county fair vibe, right?

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. It's like...I wonder—

Janine: Like, someone's got a butter sculpture.

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: Mm, mm-hmm.

Jack: How much of this is rooted in, like, extremely old harvest tradition that, as we have seen Nievelmarch become more and more commercialized, [Ali laughs] has become more of the harvest fair or the town fair vibe?

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: It's like the—

Janine: A butter sculpture of a wicker man? [Ali and Jack laugh]

Jack: Or it's, you know, like, was there a time where this was a cooperative effort to pool food in autumn to look after people in the winter? And also, like, offer up a...not a sacrifice, but like a bounty to—

Janine: God, what if the tower was originally burned?

Ali: Huh? [Jack laughs]

Janine: What if that's why the tower is the way it is?

Ali: Huh? [laughs]

Janine: Is that, at the end, they would light it on fire, and maybe they don't do that anymore, but like...

Jack: As, like, a sacrifice.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: We're the only ones with a tower. Do you just—

Jack: Maybe there were more towers.

Ali: [laughs] Okay, sure. Or just, like, you light up this tower and also, like, these rows of booths, right?

Jack: Oh, the whole thing burns?

Janine: Or it could be, like, a rotating tower. Like, every year it's a different group who has to do it.

Ali: Oh, yeah.

Janine: And this year, it just happens to be ours. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. Definitely. [Ali laughs] Absolutely. But, you know, the grinding march of capital advances as always on the Marchmont Mountains, and here we are. The broth booth is up. Love a broth booth.

Ali: Yeah. Love a broth booth. Okay, so, we— there's a couple steps to this, and we've already done most of them, basically. We need a second deck of cards. We have that already. We've discussed the history of this festival, how did it start, and why does it endure. People used to like to gather and set things on fire, but now capitalism has

made it... [laughs]

Janine: People still like to gather and set things on fire, just not things they could sell.

Ali: [crosstalk] Yeah, this is true. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Especially here, yeah. What do people eat or drink at the festival? Broth.

Jack: Broth.

Ali: We know this, yeah. Okay, so, the one thing that we've also done is to add up your suit totals across the entire year. We referenced some of that in the opening bit there, but for Sable, her numbers were social progress 13, which averages out to a 1. Her financial progress was a 2, which averages out to a 0. Her agricultural progress was a 15 that averaged out to a 2, and her infrastructural progress was an 8 that averaged out to a 1.

Jack: Ernan's social was 0, which averaged out to 0. His financial was 1, which averaged out— er, sorry, was 10, which averaged out to 1. His agricultural was 0, which averaged out to 0, and his infrastructural was 4, [laughs] which averaged out to 0.

Ali: Aw. [laughs]

Janine: Hmm.

Jack: Eh, you know.

Janine: Yeah. Velvet had a 1.9 in social, which averaged out to 2. Had a 3.1 in fossil money, which averaged out to 3. And then a 0 in...that's infrastructure, right? This spade?

Ali: Uh, agricultural.

Janine: Oh, right, okay. Had a 0 in the agricultural, which, yeah, was, yeah. [Ali laughs quietly] And a 0.3 in infrastructure, which, again, 0.

Ali: [laughs] And then, yeah, the way that you figure out those numbers is you add up

each season to get a sum, and then you divide that sum by 10 and then round up or round down respectively. So, those are our momentums. Ern, you do have one momentum to spend.

Jack: I do.

Ali: Yeah, so, let's...okay. [reading] "It costs one momentum to pursue a new positive development for yourself at the festival. As with letter developments determined by an ace or a face at the end of the season, momentum development should have a significant impact in your life and reflect some sort of change. The momentum development you try for should also reflect the suit of the momentum you'll be spending. Asking for a loan, for example, might require you to spend a financial momentum, while proposing marriage would require social. To spend momentum, first describe the positive development that you're pursuing and from whom. For example, convincing a local blacksmith to help you with a large infrastructure project. Then, imagine, write out, or roleplay a scene with others where that development is attainable."

And then this is sort of, like, it's almost like *Fiasco* rules, where, like, we open a scene, and then once we play out that scene and we feel like the question of the scene has come up, you and the person that you're playing the scene with are both going to draw a card. The cards are gonna be played against each other. The simplest way to kind of explain these rules is that you want the highest card that is the same suit as what you're trying for, so if I was spending my 2 agricultural progress, which is a spade, I would want a spade ace is the highest card that I can get. There's, like, a little chart here that determines the rankings, but the momentum suit is the highest ace through 2, and then ace through 2 on the offsuit is also the same ranking there.

Jack: Cool.

Ali: Let me just— I'm gonna just continue reading, because there's one thing that I am a little confused on, which is, like, if you fail that roll, I think that you can spend that second momentum to try again, but I don't know that— I think it's one scene per festival, so like, I have 4 momentum right now. I don't know that I could, like, pursue four

different things, because that seems like a really...

Jack: Right.

Ali: That seems way too...

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: [laughs] Gamey. So, let me— I'm gonna read the "if you win, if you lose" things. "If you win, roleplay the scene's resolution and remove an ace or a face card of the same suit as your development from your deck. Without that ace or face in your deck, future seasons will go on longer before a card tells you to stop dealing and tally your progress," which is what we saw a lot in the last episode. [laughs]

Jack: Nice. Nice.

Ali: "If you lose, it costs an additional point of momentum of the same suit to try again. Deal cards off of the top of the deck and compare the new values. You only need to win once to remove a card from your deck, not a majority of the attempts made." Okay, cool. So, if I had, like, four momentum, and I just kept spending and spending and spending, three losses and one win will still win it for me. "You may try as many times as you have momentum for, but don't shuffle cards back into either deck until you're finished making any attempts. Ties count as losses." Okay. Cool. Perfect.

Jack: [sighs] Okay.

Ali: Anyone have any momentum ideas to start with? [Jack exhales] Or do we want to do just, like, some open festival play and see what comes up? [laughs] A festival is fun, because it's like, anybody could be here, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: You could run into one of those little Odd Job Boys and have him come onto the farm for you.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: Oh, that's true. [Ali laughs]

Jack: The horse, the very strong horse. I was gonna say Princeton. Princeton is the horse from Bluff City. Friends at the Table has had several **[Ali: Wow.]** extremely powerful horses show up. [Ali laughs]

Janine: There's also probably a Princeton here, but he's probably, like, a powdered milk horse or something, you know? [Ali laughs]

Jack: I don't think that they've invented powdered milk yet. They might have done. I don't know.

Janine: Don't you just have to boil milk forever to make powdered milk? Isn't that...?

Ali: Mm...

Jack: Uh, I don't— I think that there might be— hmm.

Janine: [typing] When...was...powdered...milk...invented?

Ali: Wow.

Janine: 1947.

Jack: Uh, Marco Polo wrote of some people who had powdered milk, but sort of—

Janine: Oh, it's like a paste. I see, yeah.

Jack: "Sun-dried skimmed milk as 'a kind of paste.'"

Ali: Ugh. [Jack laughs]

Janine: Ugh.

Ali: When were—

Janine: Oh, the process for dried milk was invented by the Russian doctor Osip Krichevsky in 1802.

Jack: It is amazing to me the ease with which we have segued from one of Friends at the Table's pet topics, powerful horses, [Ali laughs] to another Friends at the Table pet topic, milk. [Janine laughs]

Ali: Drink Girlies stream, [youtube.com/friendsatthetable](https://www.youtube.com/friendsatthetable).

Jack: Ah, Drink Girlies stream.

Janine: Mm-hmm. Getting rave reviews. People love it. People love the Drink Girlies.

Ali: [laughs] And look forward to Drink Girlies Winter, coming soon.

Janine: Yeah. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Well, coming in winter. [laugh quietly]

Ali: Yes, yeah.

Janine: That's— I hate to tell you: that is soon.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: Augh!

Ali: Yeah, especially since this is gonna be released in September.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is September? This is a Jack's birthday podcast?

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Whoa. Nice.

Janine: Also, you're gonna be in a climate soon where that's...

Ali: Yeah, you're gonna need to...

Janine: Winter comes.

Jack: Oh my god.

Ali: Well, you've had cold weather.

Jack: I have experienced cold weather, but not where I live.

Janine: Have you had “winter coat by Halloween” cold weather?

Jack: Well, not lately. When I was a kid, England was a lot colder.

Ali: Mm.

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: It got warmer in my life.

Janine: Same here.

Jack: When is this releasing? Late in the month, right, Ali?

Ali: Yeah. Late September, yeah.

Jack: Oh, god. Hello. [Ali laughs] Hello, listener.

Ali: Hi.

Janine: Hello, God. [Ali laughs quietly]

Jack: I'm in Eastern Standard Time now. [Ali laughs quietly]

Festival Activities [0:21:10]

Jack: Okay, let's see. Where do I want to begin with the festival? Let's just go around the table and describe a thing that is happening at the festival that we are not doing. Here's one thing that is happening. A group of witches are offering fortune telling readings at an impromptu stall, and it is way too real. They are taking this very seriously, and they are delivering seemingly extremely accurate fortunes. [Ali laughs quietly]

Janine: Spooky.

Ali: A team of orchard farmers are hosting apple bobbing, but it is like a carnival game that the tanks each have one fish in there.

Jack: What?

Ali: And if you— [laughs]

Jack: Wait. Wait.

Ali: And if you can catch the fish... [laughs]

Jack: Ali.

Janine: Huh?

Ali: You get free cider for a month.

Janine: Ew.

Jack: How do you see apple bobbing working? [laughs quietly]

Ali: [laughs] There's a container of water with apples floating in it.

Jack: Okay.

Ali: And you're supposed to dunk your head into the water.

Jack: Dunk your head. Okay.

Ali: And bite the apple.

Janine: You want to do that with a fish?

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Whoa. Shit. Okay. [Ali laughs] Is anybody doing it? How big is the fish?

Ali: You know, average sized.

Jack: Is this game just kill a fish?

Ali: Well, you don't have to—

Jack: With your mouth?

Ali: [laughs] You don't have to break skin. You just have to pull it up.

Jack: Oh.

Janine: [sarcastic] Which I'm sure it will go along with, totally. [Jack and Ali laugh]

Jack: What's the name of this game?

Janine: Choke on a fish?

Ali: Go Fish.

Jack: Oh.

Janine: Boo. [all laugh]

Jack: It's called Go Fish, because that is what a crew of 12 Odd Job Boys are chanting in encouragement. [Janine laughs] To the fish.

Janine: Ah. My idea is off road competitive goat racing.

Ali: Yes.

Jack: Wow!

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Wow. Off road in the sense that an off road course has been loosely laid out, or...?

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: And how large is the course?

Janine: My original idea was, like, *Excitebike* but goats.

Ali: Whoa.

Janine: But I think it's cooler if there's, like, a forest element, you know?

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: And not so much a track. Like, it should be hilly, but also a little bit, like, obscured and like...you have to kind of improvise your route a little bit.

Ali: Okay.

Jack: That's incredible.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This is great, so much that I'm going to suggest that we go around again. [Ali and Janine laugh] Some children are— there is a stall where children are making masks, harvest masks that have, you know, like, representations of various plants and fruits and things on. You know like those paintings where, um...god, they're like still life paintings of fruit and vegetables that have been arranged in such a way that it makes a human face? I wish I could find...

Janine: Oh! I know what you mean. Um...shit.

Jack: Yeah, here we go. Giuseppe Arcimboldo did a bunch of them.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: And they're, like, way older than you would think from looking at them.

Jack: Yeah. They're kind of creepy looking, and the kids are making these, and that

means that all around the festival, there are these children and maybe some adults wearing these kinds of masks.

Ali: [laughs] I think that there is a booth from one of the local toymakers, which is like an embroider your own face onto little, [**Janine:** Ouch.] like, gingerbread-shaped—

Janine: Oh. [Ali and Janine laugh]

Ali: No, they're like little gingerbread-shaped toys.

Janine: Oh, cute!

Ali: Like, sort of crude little representations of, like, maybe some of them are, like, this is like a little cow, and here's a little horse, and here's a little guy, and you can like embroider— it's like a little thing where you sit down, and you, like, embroider either the little horseshoes on and, like, little eyes, or you know, it's a strawberry, and you put on [laughs] the seeds or something.

Jack: That's very cute.

Ali: Yeah, uh huh.

Janine: Um...I think there is a...I really had all my eggs in the goat basket. [Jack laughs] I think there is also a...it's like a snack cart kind of thing, but it's like, there's a cauldron and a little fire, like a little portable stove in there, and it's being pulled by a horse, and what they're doing in there is they are, like, basically making sweetened condensed milk.

Jack: Huh.

Janine: And then, like, pouring it and sort of making it to, like, a hardening sort of candy stage and then pouring it into little molds, and they put a stick in it, and then they let it harden, and they give it to you, and it's like a warm sticky sweetened condensed milk popsicle kind of thing.

Jack: That doesn't sound too bad.

Janine: Yeah. And the horse's name is Princeton. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Oh. Oh! What a guy. Before we move onto scenes, I would like to specifically share this last Arcimboldo painting that I'm putting in the chat now. Look at this man's hair. [laughs quietly] Can someone describe what is going on here?

Ali: Oh my god.

Janine: Oh, he's birds! He's birds!

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: I see.

Ali: It's birds top to bottom, like, to the point that I, like, really can't make out the face here?

Janine: If you squint, it's like a cartoon ogre kind of thing.

Ali: Yeah. But I, so, the hair is just representatives of birds' faces, just a big crowd of birds' faces.

Jack: It's hundred of birds.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: His eye is a duck. His nose is a turkey. His beard is, I think, like a female peacock's tail.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: And his whole coat is a male peacock's tail spread out, with a parrot popping out from behind it.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: Naturally.

Jack: You can get to this painting by searching “Arcimboldo,” which is spelled A-R-C-I-M-B-O-L-D-O, “Air.” It’s part of his *The Four Elements* series, and this one is *Air*, which is very cool.

Janine: Some of these birds don’t really fly, though, but okay.

Jack: Birds are of the air.

Ali: Mm, mm-hmm.

Janine: Oh.

Ali: They’re— yeah.

Janine: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Much like, uh...much like Butter, Sable Butter. [Ali and Janine laugh] “I’m Butter. I’m from the—” What did you say? “I’m from the sky”?

Ali: I’m Miss Butter. I’m from the sky.

Jack: Um...

Ali: Okay.

Jack: I could spend my single momentum token.

Ali: Okay. I was gonna say, before we do that somehow, [laughs quietly] to delay us once more, I think that we should do a round one more time and say one interaction that we’ve had at the booth.

Jack: Oh my god. [Ali laughs] Yeah.

Ali: Just one bizarre thing that has happened today.

Jack: Okay. Okay! I go out out get some broth, and when I come back, somebody else is in my spot in the tower, pretending that they run my farm. [Ali gasps]

Janine: Oh my god!

Jack: And it's just someone doing a prank. They're, you know, saying, "Oh, I run the cursed farm. It's bad there." Sort of doing a very bad, "Look, I have no produce," and I kick 'em out.

Janine: "I'm a dirt farmer." Snaps suspenders.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah. I'm unbearably cruel to this out of townner.

Ali: [laughs] Aw, you're being hazed.

Jack: I am being hazed!

Janine: Aw.

Jack: You know, in my old days, I'd have killed him with a creeping vine that would have burst from a vent above my head or something, but no longer. The curse, I can't use it for my own benefit.

Ali: [laughs] I had a big display of, like, bottled alchemy water. I have, like, a big table where it's like, here's the produce, and then here's the, like, bottles of stuff that people actually— like, here's it refined or whatever. And I think that a teenager saw the big thing of bottles and threw a ball at it, because they assumed that it was one of those...

Jack: [laughs] Oh my god.

Janine: Oh, fuck.

Ali: [laughs] It was one of those carnival games!

Janine: Yeah, that's a fair hazard right there.

Jack: Shit.

Ali: Yeah. I'll have to remember that for next year.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: A fistfight broke out [Ali gasps] between two...I think just, like, two guys. Just two lads, you know? [Ali laughs quietly] Two lads who were looking around, and they saw the griffon skull, and one of them was like, "That's a big chicken," and the other guy was like, "That's not a big chicken," and it just, like, descended into this, like, "You always say it's whatever, but you don't respect the fact that I went to school for a year longer than you," or whatever. And it just descends into a fistfight [Ali laughs] and Violet is just, like...just, like, doesn't know what to do?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: And I think maybe Captain breaks it up by, like, doing that thing rabbits do where they stomp, and it kind of freaks you out, because it's so sudden.

Ali: Yeah!

Janine: And he's so big.

Ali: Rabbits do do that, and it's really scary.

Janine: It's just like a whack on the ground, and they're like, "Aah!"

Ali: Yeah. Why do rabbits do that? To break up fights.

Jack: Why do rabbits do that?

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: It's to warn people in the— not people. They stomp, because rabbits usually live in warrens with other rabbits, and the stomp will travel through the ground, and it will tell all the other rabbits, like, "Bad thing. Bad thing happening. Be careful."

Ali: Ooh.

Jack: Fistfight.

Janine: Fistfight. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Watch out.

Janine: Fistfight lads out here. Be careful. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Watch out! The fistfight lads are out. [Ali and Jack laugh] The scamps are about.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack's Momentum [0:32:59]

Jack: Okay. I would like, at this festival, I have pooled the tiny bit of money that I have left, and I would like to buy or secure a treasure map or something of that nature.

Janine: Oh.

Ali: Whoa.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Can anybody help me?

Ali: Whoa! A treasure map. Do you think that you're, like, you went to, like, an oddities booth? Or do you think that, like—

Janine: Did you go to the fortune tellers?

Ali: Ooh. I was gonna say, like, a visible pirate walked into your booth, [all laugh] but that's way better.

Janine: An invisible pirate?

Ali: No, a visible pirate. Like, somebody you could look at and you could see—

Jack: You mean someone who is clearly a pirate?

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Why would you specify that they're— okay, right. Like, they're obviously— okay.

Ali: Yeah, because there's no doubting that they're a pirate.

Janine: [laughs] I wasn't sure what you meant. I was like, "Why would you specify that you can see the pirate? That's normally— that's, like, the default mode." [Ali laughs]

Jack: God. No. I think that I get into conversation with... [sighs] God, now I'm thinking about a visible pirate.

Ali: [laughs] Yeah, man. Had some great times on the seas this year. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Jack: But you're gonna have a treasure map to a pirate treasure, and I can't go there.

Janine: Well...okay, yeah. You know what, that's true.

Ali: Mm.

Janine: What about, like, some kind of elf? [Ali laughs] A visible elf.

Ali: A visible elf.

Janine: Because they're often invisible.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: Oh my god.

Janine: Like a gnome.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: You know there are gnomes. There have to be gnomes here.

Jack: Will Austin let us put gnomes in?

Ali: Oh.

Janine: Austin doesn't get to decide. [Jack laughs]

Ali: Oh.

Jack: Oh man.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Friends at the Table has been gnome-free since 2014. [Ali laughs] I tell you what it is. Here's what I think that the treasure is, and you tell me who can...how I can find this out or maybe find a map to it. Last winter, as a result of either an alchemical experiment going wrong or the aftermath of some sort of magical war, a brief hailstorm of rubies fell somewhere in the Marchmont Mountains.

Janine: Whoa.

Jack: Which, those are the high peaks above Nievelmarch that are where the witches live, and I think that I learn where this ruby fall happened, or at least I try to.

Janine: Hmm.

Ali: Hmm. Who would be out there? And who would be someone that you could spend momentum with?

Jack: Yes.

Ali: Maybe it's...maybe it's like asking someone to travel there with you? Or not with you but, like, to bring you there, or asking for, like, permission to get onto the place where it happened? If it's, like, a sealed off...

Jack: It, like, fell in a ruined courtyard up in some, like, blasted mountain pass.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: And they know the way up. Maybe it's a gem dealer. Maybe it's someone who is selling, you know, beautiful cut gems and is telling this story of this fall of rubies that they just need— mm. Hang on. Let me think.

Ali: Oh, it's like a thing of, like, I'll give you a cut if you...?

Jack: No, because now I'm thinking that a pirate is actually more interesting.

Ali: [laughs] Yeah. You see a pirate there, and you hear somebody talking about gems, and yet, you say to yourself...

Jack: And yet, the pirate is probably more interesting. Oh, shit! What if you are extremely old?

Ali: Okay.

Jack: Like, millions of years old.

Ali: Millions. Okay, sure.

Jack: Well, back when this used to be an ocean.

Ali: I'm a skeleton pirate.

Jack: YES!

Ali: [laughs] Okay. This is great.

Jack: And you have a shipwreck up on what is now mountains but used to be, like, an ocean or something.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And it's like...god.

Ali: [laughs] Okay, wait, this is...okay, this is...here's my pitch, okay?

Jack: Okay, okay.

Ali: At this festival, this skeleton pirate comes every year and stands up on a big box and tells this whole story of, "Oh, when I used to sail these seas right above where you're standing, this all used to be water, and I used to rule it all, and I'm looking for

someone out there who can find the treasure upon the mountain that I lost.” [Jack and Ali laugh] Just, like, doing this all day, right? Just like...

Jack: Yeah, absolutely.

Ali: Truly like *Pirates of the Caribbean*, just continuing to say this myth all day.

Janine: Can I—

Jack: Has a banner above his head that says “Pirate King.” [Ali laughs]

Janine: Can I propose that this is, like, a ghost pirate? Like, in the sort of, like, romantic billowy sleeves? Mostly billowy sleeves. Like, billowy-sleeved ghost, like, lighthouse at night kind of ghost, or like the person who you see on the cliff, and then they disappear, and you're like, “Whoa, what was that?”

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: And it's, like, an illusion all the time, but then they just show up at the festival and are like, “Here's my deal. [Ali and Jack laugh] Hey, everyone. It's this time of year again. How've you been? Here's my deal.”

Jack: This is extremely Grand Tableau, you know?

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: If we ever need to get reminded that Nievelmarch is in the Grand Tableau, it's this pirate showing up to deliver his “I have a quest for you” speech. [Ali and Janine laugh] God, yeah, I think when there's, like, a lull in the conversation, Ern goes up to him and says:

Jack (as **Ernan**): Hi. Uh, I'm Ern. I heard you were looking for a treasure hunter.

Ali: I have this impulse to, like, put on, like, a good Austin Walker pirate person voice. [laughs] I don't know. I don't know if...

Jack: This is prerecorded. Take a swing at it, and if you like it, we can... [Ali laughs]

Janine: Yeah. That's true.

Ali: But I'm so sleepy. No, I... [clears throat, pauses] I can't. [laughs]

Janine: You could just, like, change the position you're in.

Ali: Uh huh. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Janine: Like, if you, like, hunch forward or something.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: You know, just kind of, like, feel it out.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. [laughs] The thing is that I've said it, and now the next thing that comes out of my mouth is gonna be really funny no matter what it sounds like. [clears throat]

(as **pirate**): What makes you think you'd be a good treasure hunter?

Jack: [laughs] No, I think you did great. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Wink. [Ali laughs quietly]

Jack (as **Ernan**): Well, uh, you know, I have a spade. I have dogged determination. I think I, um...look, I've had a hard year. I need some treasure.

Ali (as **pirate**): Desperation doesn't make for good huntin'.

Jack: Are you a cowboy?

Janine: I was gonna say, kind of a cowboy pirate. [Ali laughs] I didn't want to be the person to say it, because I didn't want to shake Ali's confidence, but little bit of cowboy pirate.

Ali: [laughs] It's all good. You know what? This is— Grand Tableau is a melting pot of...

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Ali: This is a seasonal event. This is a seasonal event pirate, and you know.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Look, buddy. I don't know about desperation. I do know that I had a full year in a town where I don't know anybody and I don't know how anything works, and nothing came of it, and frankly, I'm looking to sell the farm and move on. But the way I see it, if I can get out of this with some...you know. If I can go back to the city and say, "I did something out there. I found something. I succeeded." You know, maybe I can make my family proud? I don't know. What is the treasure? [Ali laughs quietly]

Ali (as **pirate**): Well, back when me and my crew used to... [Ali laughs quietly] used to sail these seas...these seas, you understand.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Uh, yeah.

Ali (as **pirate**): There was a great big storm.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Uh huh.

Ali (as **pirate**): There was a big, big, big old storm, and it shook my ship, and my treasure went over. [Ern gasps] Over the edge. [Ern gasps] Been looking for it ever since.

Jack (as **Ernan**): But what is the treasure? Look, I don't mean to look a gift horse in the mouth, but if I'm gonna follow this— hunt this treasure, and it turns out that it was just rum or something, you know? I want to save myself the disappointment.

Ali (as **pirate**): Well, I think there might still be some rum in there, but...but the real treasure is...there's a box in there, you see.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Oh.

Ali (as **pirate**): And you open up the box, and there's a little picture of a dog. [all laugh] And then— and then—

Jack: Just looking to camera like Jim from *The Office*. [all laugh]

Ali (as **pirate**): And then, you gotta get— [Ali laughs] you gotta get a dog, you see, and when the dog barks at the picture, the box opens up, and there's a trio of rings in there that used to be owned—

Janine: When the dog in the picture barks?

Ali: [laughs] No, a real life dog barks at the—

Janine: Looks like that dog from the picture?

Ali: Yeah, barks at the picture.

Janine: Okay.

Ali: You get a dog to react to the picture, and then inside—

Jack: You helping me here, Velvet? Velvet has also shown up. [Ali and Janine laugh]

Ali (as **pirate**): And inside of the box is a trio of rings, the trio of rings that used to be owned by three brother kings.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Whoa. Whoa.

Ali (as **pirate**): You see those mountains over there?

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

Jack: First snow starting to fall on the mountains. [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **pirate**): 100 miles past that mountain is a nation of brother kings.

Ali: [laughs] Why do I keep saying that?

Janine: I bet that nation doesn't work great.

Jack: What are you trying to say?

Ali: [laughs] You know, a nation ruled by kings who are brothers?

Jack: Eh, I think brother kings.

Ali: Yeah.

(as **pirate**): And I was sailing back from there, and it's gotta be on that mountain.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Okay. Is there a map? How would one go about hunting the treasure?

Ali (as **pirate**): "Is there a map." You think I wouldn't go to the mountain if there was a map?

Jack (as **Ernan**): Are you saying that there isn't a map and that's why you haven't gone to the mountain, or are you saying that you can underwrite the value of your treasure because you have a map?

Ali (as **pirate**): I'm saying I need somebody to do this for me.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Oh. Well, I think I'm your man, for a cut of it. For two of the rings.

Ali (as **pirate**): Two of the rings? If you keep going to that— [Ali laughs] you wanted to leave this all behind, right?

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

Ali (as **pirate**): If you find those rings, keep walking to the nation of the brother kings,

Ali: [laughs] that I'm not gonna name right now, because I'm just not.

(as **pirate**): And I'll meet you there, and you'll see how much two rings is worth.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Okay.

Jack: What's the roll here? Because it sounds like he's just giving me the job.

Ali: Wait, yeah, it does sound like that, doesn't it? [laughs] Okay, yeah, that's true. Yeah, we're playing a game here.

Janine: Is the roll whether or not this is real?

Ali: Aw. But then it would mean, like, Ern would still have to spend the time out there, right? But I guess, yeah, that's— you're trying to get financial progress, so the roll is your journey, I suppose.

Janine: And like, you do only have one chance either way, so that actually maybe gives us some wiggle room fiction-wise, in terms of, like, rerolling. [Ali laughs] Because, like, you got one shot either way. It's...

Jack: But this is gonna be, like, a mega quest into the— [Jack and Ali laugh]

Ali: Well, no, it's just a seasonal quest. You know. [laughs]

Jack: So, is this roll the test? Oh my god.

Ali: Let's maybe see what the cards say, and then we'll determine your success by that and see what that means.

Jack: Okay, yeah. Okay. [Ali laughs] Sounds good. So, I am rolling against the pirate king, the ghost pirate skeleton.

Ali: Yeah, I'm gonna pull a card from my blue deck, and you're gonna deal a card from your pink deck.

Jack: And my momentum suit is triangles.

Ali: Yeah. Diamonds.

Jack: So, a face card of triangles. [laughs]

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: I forgot what they were called and just called them triangles. [all laugh] Okay. Let's try again. I want diamonds.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: And I am drawing from...pink?

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: Okay. Oh.

Ali: Ooh. Oh, but you win!

Jack: I win! Oh, wow!

Ali: You win!

Jack: Okay. I drew a seven of triangles.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: Which beats, because it is higher rank than the queen of clubs, a queen off suit that Ali drew, **[Ali: Uh huh.]** that the pirate king drew.

Ali: Yeah. Basically, a card of the same momentum suit is going to beat any card of that non-suit, so you've won. The values are dashed away. This queen is meaningless, because she is an infrastructural queen.

Janine: She's a queen of circles.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: The three circles put together. They're obviously hearts, triangles, leaf, and circles.

Ali: Well, okay, but this...I'm glad that we got this success and now that we can talk this out, because this means two very important things: that Ern gets a financial boost here,

but that it ends up being invested into the farm.

Jack: Okay.

Ali: So how do we get to those two places from you finding a trio of rings from a trio of kings? [Jack sighs] Who are brothers.

Jack: Who are brothers. The brother kings. [Ali laughs] My favorite *Dark Souls* boss. Um, okay, I have a couple of ideas that we can talk through. The first is that as I turn to go on this adventure, an extremely adventurer-ass-looking adventurer comes down from the mountain and is like, “I found them.” [Ali laughs] Like, they've just been discovered. The alternative is that I go on the quest, but then why wouldn't I just leave with my rings? Hmm. Okay, so, what is the mechanical effect here? I get to remove an ace or face card out of the same suit [Ali: Mm-hmm.] as your development from your deck. Now, there is a mechanic in play here, which is that aces are actually more valuable than face cards, in terms of festival games. So, there is—

Ali: Oh, that's true.

Jack: An ace would beat a face card in a festival game.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: So I think I'm going to remove a jack of diamonds.

Ali: Okay.

Jack: Triangles.

Ali: I'm gonna go into your deck and physically delete that card.

Jack: Okay. Goodbye. [Ali laughs quietly]

Ali: And then, yeah, what does that...? Diamond of...jack of diamonds. Okay, but what does that mean for Ern?

Jack: What does that mean for Ern? Let's see.

Ali: [quietly] Goodbye, jack.

Jack: I'm thinking. I'm considering. [Ali laughs] I'm considering. I'm rotating the three brother kings, brother rings.

Ali: Uh huh, yeah. And I feel like this has been a learning experience for future scenes. [Jack and Ali laugh] Is it just, like, a change of heart? Is it renewed confidence? Is it...do you have a heart to heart with this pirate? And he's like, "You gotta go back." Or is it...are you given, like, beans? No, I guess that wouldn't be financial success. That would be agricultural success, but... [Ali and Jack laugh]

Janine: I mean, are the beans currency, or are they produce?

Ali: Yeah. Well.

Jack: I kind of love the— I think what I want to do is have the success here being that I actually don't go on this quest.

Ali: Oh.

Jack: There is something so funny to me about this pirate delivering this big monologue [Ali laughs] all day, *all day*, about these three rings.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And then me being like, "Yeah, I'll do it," and having this massive conversation with the pirate about the three rings and the kingdom, and then the success being "don't go on a pirate quest to get three rings." I wonder if what I end up doing is, like...ok, here's my pitch as to how this works.

Ali: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. [laughs quietly]

Jack: I say to the pirate, "Yep, I'm interested. Look, let me buy you a drink." [Ali laughs] And this is, like, a moment of social connection that I've had. I've had this courage to say, like: I'm gonna go on this quest through the Marchmont Mountains to find three brother king rings. I want the information. I'm just gonna hang with this pirate king, this

potentially million year old pirate king, and it turns out that this guy and I just get on really well. [Jack and Ali laugh] And we have, like...you know, we have, like, a beer, a festival beer in one of the big things from the people who have been brewing, and it's really great, and the pirate drinks it, and of course you can see it go through his ribcage, because he's a ghost pirate.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's very fun. I get to talking about how hard the year has been, and the pirate is like, "Yeah, man, it's really tough. I've been alive for a million years. My ship got wrecked over—the sea doesn't exist anymore? It's been a really hard time." I talk about how money's been tough. And I think he's just like, "Look, man. I don't think you should go on this. [Ali laughs] There's bad stuff up in the Marchmont Mountains. Look, I'm gonna give you something." And he gives me, like, a gold doubloon or something with an ancient king's face on, you know? A king long dead.

Janine: Mm-hmm

Jack: Dead by the time that the coin was minted or whatever. It's just like, a...it's not unbelievably valuable, but it is very valuable, and this represents the thing, and I'm like, "Great. I have made a pirate bro. I will not quest." I have one shiny gold doubloon in my pocket, and the dog-locked box containing three potentially cursed rings still lies at the top of the mountain. And in fact, I think we get a shot, right? We just get a shot of the snow falling on the Marchmont Mountains, and you know, tucked within the roots of a tree that has grown up over it is, you know, this dog-locked box, as yet unfound.

Janine: A stray dog nearby barks, and you see a camera shot of it, like, jiggle a little bit, but the dog's too far away.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah. What's this pirate's name? Because earlier, we chose friends, and I said that I was friends with the lady who sells the wood.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: And I don't think that I...I think that I want to be friends with this pirate instead.

Ali: Whoa! You're casting Melissa Miles aside?

Jack: No, I shouldn't cast Melissa Miles aside. I shouldn't cast Melissa Miles aside. I wrote letters about Melissa Miles.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: I'm going to...

Ali: Also, like, Melissa is a part of your farming life, and this pirate is a part of a life that you could have had otherwise, and you're letting that go.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, in exchange for one shiny doubloon.

Ali: [laughs] But, you know, put it on the table. You know, end of next season, you're gonna get another friend.

Jack: Yeah. All right, okay. I'm sorry that took a while. We needed to figure that out.

Ali: [laughs] It's okay.

Janine's Momentum [0:56:00]

Ali: Janine, do you have a momentum idea?

Janine: Um, yeah. I think the Odd Job Boys have a booth.

Jack: Oh, yeah!

Janine: And I think it's, like, from a distance, it is kind of like the classic children's lemonade stand, but then you get closer, and they have, like, professionally printed materials.

Ali: Mm.

Jack: Whoa.

Janine: It's just like the sign is, like, hand-done, and the booth itself is very, like,

scrapwood patched together. But then you walk up, and they've got, like, glossy brochures for, like, the services they provide. Probably not glossy, but they have printed—like, actually printed by a printing press—brochures of, like, their services and, like, testimonies and stuff like that about, you know, all the good shit that they do. And I think, like, straightforwardly, I think that Velvet, like, starts trying to negotiate someone to do errands for her regularly.

Jack: Huh.

Ali: Mm.

Janine: And sort of, like, bring shit to her, but also someone who, like, okay, they come, and if she needs to go into town, she can go back with them, and just a slightly more regular...I'm saying this is social mostly, so she's not just, like, isolated down there. It's like, there's contact. There's a regular thing she can rely on. Yeah.

Jack (as **Odd Job Boy**): All right, lady. [Janine laughs] Look, you, uh...just give me a second. Just, uh, go and look at the gems or something.

Jack: And I think I turn to the other Odd Job Boy, Carly, by the side, and say:

Jack (as **OJB**): All right, Carly, what do you think?

Ali: Oh. [laughs] Sorry.

Jack (as **OJB**): Yeah, I know. You were looking at the Go Fish stand. It's barbaric, but you know.

Ali (as **Carly**): Barbaric? It's free cider for a whole month!

Jack (as **OJB**): What do you mean free cider for a whole month? I'm not gonna—

Ali (as **Carly**): That's the prize.

Jack (as **OJB**): I'm not gonna grab a fish with my— all right, we gotta stay on topic, Carly. This lady— this lady wants us to go down there and, like, do tasks?

How you feel about that?

Ali (as **Carly**): Aren't we here to do tasks?

Jack (as **OJB**): Huh?

Ali (as **Carly**): We do tasks.

Jack (as **OJB**): Yeah, but not in a cave, Carly.

Ali (as **Carly**): Well, we go out and about.

Jack (as **OJB**): It's cold down there.

Ali (as **Carly**): Well, it's cold up here sometimes.

Jack (as **OJB**): You want to spend all that time hanging out with that old lady and two rabbits as we move into winter?

Ali (as **Carly**): [mumbles]

Jack (as **OJB**): You know, I have to negotiate for you, Carly, if you're not prepared to stand up for yourself in this way.

Ali (as **Carly**): I'm just saying, we get one lady down in a cave, we get two ladies down in a cave, and then we have a whole— we set up shop down in a cave.

Jack (as **OJB**): What? Uh, what, you mean we expand our empire—? Hey! Hey, lady. Come back here. [Ali laughs]

Janine (as **Velvet**): Yeah? Uh huh?

Jack (as **OJB**): So, we got some terms.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Mm-hmm?

Ali: Wait, we should draw cards. We're gonna do this again. [Ali and Jack laugh] If the tension of this scene is "are these two Odd Job Boys going to agree to this?"

Janine: Mm-hmm. All right.

Ali: We should... [laughs]

Janine: I'm drawing.

Ali: We should draw cards and then have terms, right?

Jack: Yeah, probably.

Ali: Okay.

Janine: I have a ten of diamonds.

Jack: What is your momentum suit?

Janine: Hearts.

Jack: Okay. What have you drawn, Ali?

Ali: Oh, let me draw. I wasn't sure if you were going to. I'm drawing from your deck, for some reason. Oh, and that's a three of spades, right?

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, so I think Velvet wins, because neither of these are in the momentum suit.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: So it's just ten versus three.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah!

Janine: All right. I'll take it.

Ali (as **Carly**): We have some terms, lady.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Mm-hmm.

Jack (as **OJB**): All right, lady, we have some terms.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Of course. Yeah. [Ali laughs] I read the brochure. I know how this works.

Ali (as **Carly**): [whispering] She read the brochure.

Jack (as **OJB**): [hushed] Shit. We're dealing with a real tough customer here.

Ali (as **Carly**): [hushed] I'm telling you. You gotta get the smart nice ones.

Jack (as **OJB**): [hushed] Yeah. Yeah. Okay. You want to say the terms, or shall I?

Ali (as **Carly**): [hushed] You should do it.

Jack (as **OJB**): [hushed] Okay. [regular volume] We don't just go down in a cave for nothing. We don't like caves. [Ali laughs quietly] Mostly surface boys.

Ali (as **Carly**): That's right.

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

Janine (as **Velvet**): I bet I can change your mind on that.

Jack (as **OJB**): Well, let's hear it.

Janine: I think Velvet reaches into her skirt pocket and pulls out, like, a fossilized little lizard, because these are—

Jack (as **OJB**): What is that?

Ali (as **Carly**): [fascinated] Ohh.

Janine: Because these are fundamentally kids. [laughs quietly]

(as **Velvet**): This is a fossilized, um...I believe it's a baby dragon that I found in

my cave.

Jack (as **OJB**): What?!

Janine (as **Velvet**): Uh huh.

Jack (as **OJB**): Whoa!

Ali (as **Carly**): You got dragons down in your cave?

Janine (as **Velvet**): I got fossils of 'em.

Jack (as **OJB**): Wow. Okay.

Janine (as **Velvet**): It's cool down there.

Jack (as **OJB**): Yeah, it's cold down there, though, is the problem.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Yeah.

Jack (as **OJB**): You know? One dragon might win over Carly, but it's not gonna win over me. I'm nine.

Janine (as **Velvet**): I mean, I'm also gonna pay you.

Jack (as **OJB**): Oh.

Janine (as **Velvet**): I do have money.

Jack (as **OJB**): You got, uh, you got real money, or you got cave money? 'Cause we've been swizzed before, vis-à-vis that situation.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Swizzed?

Ali (as **Carly**): Yeah, we're not spending all our money down in the caves, giving you your money back to you.

Jack (as **OJB**): No.

Janine (as **Velvet**): What? No.

Jack (as **OJB**): We don't want cave chit. We know our rights. [Ali and Janine laugh]

Janine (as **Velvet**): Listen, I sell the fossils to Mr...

Janine: What the fuck was his full name? [Jack laughs quietly] Uh... [typing] Honorable Gorbet van Vermillion.

Janine (as **Velvet**): To Mr. van Vermillion. I sell the fossils. I make a decent income. I just need some help with basic stuff, you know? Getting food in and getting fossils out and, you know, I just— it'll save me some time if there's someone else who can make that trip and who could help me out, you know? Drive me into town every now and then on a cart. No big deal.

Jack (as **OJB**): Yeah, we have a cart, but there's an extra rate for that.

Ali (as **Carly**): [hushed] Well, you didn't— you don't want to be in the caves, right? She's saying we'll be aboveground mostly.

Jack (as **OJB**): [hushed] Yeah.

Ali (as **Carly**): She's in the caves.

Jack (as **OJB**): [hushed] Yeah. Yeah. That's a good— yeah. [Ali laughs quietly] That's a good point. [regular volume] All right, listen, here's where we stand. We have a boilerplate series of terms that we will send over.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Mm-hmm.

Jack (as **OJB**): We're sure you'll find them agreeable. We seem to understand what you're putting down on the table. We like the little dragon fucker. That's pretty cool.

Janine: Oh my god, I didn't know Odd Job Boys swore. Whoa.

Ali: Yeah, this other littler kid is just looking at you in shock. [all laugh]

Jack: I'm nine years old. I'm on a high of having closed my first major Odd Job Boy contract. [Janine laughs]

Ali: Mm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I feel extremely powerful right now.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack (as **OJB**): All right.

Jack: Spits in hand. Goes to shake your hand.

Janine: [disgusted] Mm. I'm gonna shake the other one's hand.

Jack: This— I'm not happy about this, but you know. I don't want to turn down work.

Janine: I'm not doing spit hands.

Ali: [laughs] I think that this little kid grabs Velvet's hand and then, like, crosses their arm in front of them to reach to the other Odd Boy's hand beside them. [Jack and Ali laugh]

Janine: Oh, cute!

Ali: So they can shake both of them in unison.

Janine: Yeah!

Jack: That's very sweet.

Janine: I love that.

Ali (as **Carly**): Deal made!

Jack (as **OJB**): Deal made!

Janine (as **Velvet**): Deal made.

Jack: Okay.

Janine: So, I...I take a card? What am I doing?

Ali: Oh, yeah, so, we're deleting one of the face cards from your deck of the same suit, which is diamonds, right? Or heart.

Janine: The event was a heart, yeah.

Ali: Okay, cool. Do you also want to go with Jack's gamey thing and not remove an ace but remove a...?

Janine: Yes. Yes, I do.

Ali: Yeah. [laughs]

Janine: It was a good idea, and I'm going to also do it.

Ali: Uh huh. So, I'm looking for a jack of hearts. Delete card. Save changes deleted. Okay.

Ali's Momentum [1:05:40]

Ali: Okay, and now I have my momentum spend, which I think that I, um...I have the highest in agricultural, and I've sort of been struggling of a way to think of how to make agricultural progress in this way, but I wonder if it's diversifying the crop that I'm trying to bring up? Like, if I...and I'm, like, wondering how I would do that. I don't know if it would be, like, meet somebody...it's either, like, meet another cloud farmer or...I don't know. What could I do up there that would be—? Hmm. I remember, in character creation, I had closed off the possibility of breeding fish up there. [Ali and Jack laugh] And I wonder if that's it. I wonder if there's...

Janine: Yeah, I was gonna say, that's not binding. If you want to breed fish.

Ali: Yeah. I wonder if I see somebody who is, like, displaying livestock in that way or who is, like, just as much as this festival is for people showing off their own goods, it's for people trying to make these sort of opportunities for themselves, so if it's somebody who's, like, looking to rent a patch of land or something?

Janine: Mm.

Jack: Oh, up there.

Ali: Like, I would be the one to maintain this, and then it would be...it would be almost like the contract that Velvet has with the N.D.S.A. or whatever it is. [laughs] Whatever that acronym is. The, um, NDGAG.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: The N.D.G.A.G. Because I guess I'm just, like, an independent farmer, right? Like, I had this weird plane farm thing. I had a dream. I went up there, but...

Janine: Yeah, in Velvet's case, I've been imagining it as kind of like a job placement kind of thing.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: Which I don't know would be a situation for everyone. I think that's just how it is for her.

Ali: Mm-hmm. So, I think that my interaction here is more of, like, a job fair sort of thing?

Jack: Huh.

Ali: Like, there are people who've, like, set up booths in a way to be like, you know, I'm looking for— like, as much as their— or maybe it's not like a booth. Maybe it's somebody who's going from stand to stand to sort of find someone who would be

appropriate for this sort of thing, and I'm sort of— I guess, no, 'cause I— well, it's the works. It's not that I have to interact with somebody. It's that the opportunity has to come up. So maybe it's like I'm sort of pulled aside by this person, because they've deemed me worthy.

Jack: Hmm hmm hmm!

Ali: [laughs] Well, that's the— well, I guess, yeah, it has to be the other way, because I have to be able to fail at this. It has to be sort of an interview in that way, but it can still happen at my booth, so whatever. But maybe it's somebody who's, like, looking for a place—in the clouds, especially—to have me grow a different thing, aside from alchemy cactuses. Maybe it's a bird person? Does anybody want to play a bird person?

Janine: Oh, I could play— oh, you mean like a person who is a bird.

Ali: [laughs] You know, if you had a different idea there, 'cause you sounded excited, I would love to hear it.

Janine: I was thinking of, like, a real fancy lady.

Ali: Mm.

Janine: Like a, uh...god, there's a...I wonder if I can... [typing] I think I might be thinking of a person from the beginning of *101 Dalmatians*?

Ali: Okay. Not Cruella de Vil.

Janine: No. [Ali laughs] I think I'm thinking of, like, the lady with the poodle.

Jack: Poodle lady 101 Dalmatians, question mark?

Janine: Yes.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Yes, this is real. This is real and is a person. This but, like, with a longer skirt, probably sort of the classic coke bottle silhouette Victorian lady. I'm gonna paste it in.

There's, like, a *Love Nikki* outfit I'm specifically— or *Shining Nikki* outfit I'm specifically thinking of that I can't remember the name of.

Ali: [gasps] Oh, this is a poodle lady.

Jack: Oh, yeah, totally.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: I know this lady.

Janine: This fancy lady. This is a painting someone did of her, I think, but still, nevertheless.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: Super fancy, like, fur hat type, nose in the air, very dainty, everything is matchy matchy.

Ali: Including the poodle.

Janine: Yeah. So, does she walk up to you, or do you walk up to her?

Ali: Um, I think maybe she walks up to me.

Janine: Okay. [clears throat]

Janine (as **fancy lady**): Are you the, uh, the sky farmer? Yes?

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh, yes, hi. Hi. Miss Butter.

Janine (as **fancy lady**): Oh, that's your name. Okay. [Ali laughs quietly] My name is Lady Rosegold, and I'm— I was wondering...you know, there's a sky item that's quite hard to find here, and I've been speaking with some of the other sky farmers and seeing if maybe anyone would have the space for it on their tract, if you will. I was wondering if you— do you have any free space?

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh, um, well, I, um, I've been doing a lot of upgrades on my sky planter, and I believe so. I've been focusing on cactuses mostly, as you can see. [laughs quietly] But the opportunity to branch out would be lovely. What is it that you're looking for?

Janine (as **Rosegold**): I'm not sure if you've ever heard of these, but they're called honey willows, and it's a sort of very thin wispy tree, and you can cut it. The core is very spongy, and you can wring a kind of sweet nectar from inside of it, and it's very wonderful on ice cream.

Ali (as **Sable**): [gasps] Oh! Yeah, that sounds like it's something I could take on. I'm sorry, are you...would this be for personal use or...?

Janine (as **Rosegold**): I'm the president of the Nievelmarch Socialites' Party Planning Circle.

Ali (as **Sable**): [gasps] Oh.

Janine (as **Rosegold**): Yes.

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh, I believe I...I didn't do the interview, but the magazine that I worked for did a sort of exposé on y'all when I was writing.

Ali: What's a nice way to say exposé?

Janine: Feature. Not— [all laugh] I was gonna say, you did an exposé? I don't know if I'd lead with that. [Ali laughs]

Ali: A feature.

Jack: I'm onto you creeps. [Janine and Ali laugh]

Ali (as **Sable**): We did a feature on the trio of, um...

Janine: Kings.

Ali (as **Sable**): Summer pool parties that you did in, uh, I believe it was three

summers ago.

Janine (as **Rosegold**): Oh, yes. It was very expensive to get all those billiard tables together, but it was so worth it.

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh, it was beautiful.

Ali: [laughs] Okay. We're gonna draw cards.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Ali: I'm gonna draw— I'm gonna shuffle all the decks again. And this is agricultural progress, so I am looking for a spade. Blue deck, gold deck. Okay.

Janine: We really should have a deck that's, like, untainted by removing cards. It kind of doesn't matter, but like...

Ali: [gasps] Oh, yeah, that's true.

Janine: You know?

Ali: I can just add two more, then. That's actually a good point.

Janine: I think we only need one that's, like, untainted, right?

Ali: Yeah, because it says, "Shuffle your deck and the spare deck."

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: So maybe the challenger should always have a different...like, a fresh deck?

Janine: Yeah. I think before we were fine.

Ali: Okay, yeah.

Janine: Because you were the one who was pulling the cards, and your deck hadn't been edited yet.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: But should probably have a fresh one going forward.

Ali: Okay, yeah. I'll fix that after this, but for right now, I'm just gonna draw from the blue deck. That's not great for me. [Jack laughs]

Janine: No.

Ali: That's not great for me. [laughs]

Janine: That's not great.

Ali: I feel like whatever— yeah, I drew a—

Janine: Eight of spades. What were you— you're doing spades, right?

Ali: Yeah, uh huh.

Janine: Oh.

Ali: You super beat me.

Janine: Uh oh.

Ali: [laughs] You super beat me. But I here have two agricultural momentum.

Janine: Oh, you do.

Ali: So I'm gonna draw one more time, and that is a four of... [laughs]

Janine: Do I draw again, or are you still competing with the eight of spades?

Ali: No, we draw again, yeah.

Janine: Okay.

Ali: At least I think so.

Janine: Queen of spades.

Ali: Oh my god! This woman hates me. [laughs]

Janine: Nose in the air, just—

Jack: She heard about the exposé.

Janine: Yes, maybe it actually was an exposé. [Ali laughs] Or it, like, had a little bit of a negative bent, you know? [Jack laughs]

Ali (as **Sable**): Well, let me think. I have about...I would say it's about 10 acres of land up there, and right now, like I said, it's all to cactuses, but cactuses don't really need a lot of space, I've come to find. How many trees do you think that I could fit onto two acres?

Janine (as **Rosegold**): Oh, you're...you're doing cactuses?

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh, yes, yes, yes. For the alchemists.

Janine (as **Rosegold**): For the alchemists. Ah.

Ali (as **Sable**): Mm-hmm.

Janine (as **Rosegold**): I see. Um...okay, well.

Ali (as **Sable**): I'm—

Janine (as **Rosegold**): I will, uh...I do need to do some calculations to know.

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh.

Janine (as **Rosegold**): But I will get back to you with those numbers. I have your address.

Ali (as **Sable**): Uh huh. Oh, would you like a bottle of cactus water before you go?

Janine (as **Rosegold**): Oh. No, I couldn't. I...I, uh, could not. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Ali (as **Sable**): I understand.

Janine (as **Rosegold**): [stilted] If I see any alchemists, I will let them know that you have that for them here.

Ali (as **Sable**): Please.

Janine (as **Rosegold**): Yes. Okay. It was lovely to meet you.

Ali (as **Sable**): Enjoy your time at the festival.

Janine (as **Rosegold**): Thank you so much. Yes.

Ali: [laughs] I love this. I'm glad that I had the most successful year, and yet I am the one who made no progress. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Janine: Not everyone likes alchemists.

Ali: Not everybody likes alchemists.

Janine: I think rich people in particular might have a little bit of beef with people who are trying to turn garbage into gold as a career.

Ali: You know?

Janine: If they're not in on it themselves.

Ali: Uh huh. All right.

Janine: Social climber alchemists, it's...ugh.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Ew.

Ali: Okay. And with that, those are our festivals. That is our festival. The harvest, the fall

harvest...show off.

Janine: -athon.

Ali: What do you— an expo? [laughs] Is that what I'm thinking of?

Jack: What are you—

Janine: Kinda, yeah.

Jack: Which...

Ali: This wouldn't be an expo.

Jack: It's sort of an...it's a festival.

Ali: But it is an exposition, yeah. Yeah.

Jack: I have a— you know, we can just play single scenes. I have a question. Would you be able to keep spending momentum, in theory, or is it one scene per festival?

Ali: I think it's one scene per festival. I feel like it would really break this game if I tried to spend all of them or if I could, in one year, remove three cards from my deck.

Janine: But is it— I mean, is it— I think the other question is: is it one successful scene per festival?

Ali: Um...

Janine: You know what I mean?

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Because failure isn't gonna break it the same way, right?

Ali: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: You just message Tyler?

Ali: Oh, um... "Up to two cards can be removed from your deck through community members during the festival," so I guess...

Janine: Okay.

Ali: "A third card can be removed from your deck if you spend momentum making an ask of another player's farmer during the festival."

Janine: Ah.

Ali: Oh, wow. So, I could just blow through all of my momentum here and try to get social progress and try to get infrastructural progress from one of you?

Jack: Yeah, so you could...how much momentum do you have? You have four total.

Ali: Right, so I just blew my two agricultural progress in that last scene, but I could still get infrastructural progress and social progress.

Jack: Yes. You could.

Ali: I could do that. Yeah, I...

Jack: And similarly, Janine spent...

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: Oh, wow, that's true, yeah.

Jack: One financial? No, one agricultural? What did you spend, Janine?

Janine: I spent social. I spent one social.

Jack: Leaving you with one there remaining and three triangles.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: I have nothing.

Ali: [laughs] Well, you spent yours and got a card removed, but yeah.

Jack: Oh, that's true. I mean I have none remaining.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I hung out with my new bud, the million year old pirate. [Ali and Janine laugh]

Janine's Momentum [1:21:12]

Janine: If that's the case, I would do more.

Ali: Okay, yeah. What do you want to spend your...?

Janine: I've had such bad luck that just, like...I would love to have better luck.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: I want to spend diamonds, I think. I think the thing that Velvet does is I think she's under the table dealing the fossils that she brought, even though it's just supposed to be a showcase. I think she's, like—

Ali: Ooh.

Janine: I think if people are like, "Oh, that's really nice," there's a sort of gentle, like, "You know, sometimes you can buy stuff like that," and like, maybe, you know, implying like, [hushed] "You know, I'll have it delivered after the thing." [Jack laughs] And there's a little bit of under the table stuff, and maybe the dilemma's, like, does she get caught doing that? Because she's also, remember, [Ali: Oh.] not supposed to be focusing on fossils. It's not supposed to be her— her primary trade is supposed to be the crystals that she can't grow.

Ali: Uh huh. [laughs]

Janine: So there's a little bit of an illicit quality to any effort that she's putting into fossils, if it seems like she's putting her time into that instead.

Ali (as **customer**): You mean I could take one of these home with me?

Janine (as **Velvet**): I mean, I could...you know, sometimes a thing that can happen is it gets delivered after the fact, and that way it's very discrete, and no one would...you know, it would seem normal, it's just sometimes you buy something, and it shows up at your place. Odd Job Boy brings it round, and, you know?

Ali (as **customer**): Oh, the Odd Job Boys, of course.

Jack: Thumbs up from Carly and the one who swears on the other side of the... [Ali laughs]

Ali: The challenge deck. I'm gonna change— challenge deck is gonna be this blue one on the bottom, and when I have more time, I'll change the color. So, you're gonna draw from your deck, and I'm gonna draw from the challenge deck, and I think it makes sense to do it now and have the question be, like, "Does she get caught?" and roleplay it out from there.

Janine: Cool. Okay. All right.

Ali: And this is diamonds. This is another financial thing.

Janine: Yeah. This is financial.

Ali: Spend for you, right? Okay.

Janine: This is my only financial. The other one was social.

Jack: Ooh, not great. That's a five of hearts.

Janine: Five of hearts.

Ali: Uh huh. Okay, well, you lose this round, but you have...

Janine: Yeah, I have—

Ali: You only spent one before, so you have another one.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Ali drew a seven of clubs, of circles.

Janine: Uh huh.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: And I got a five of spades this time. Four of clubs.

Ali: And this time was a four of clubs. So you beat that.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: Because that's just five versus four.

Janine: Yeah. When we're doing this, do we adjust our momentum? I haven't been— I should be marking that, right?

Ali: I deleted mine, and I guess, yeah, you now have a zero momentum, because you spent one and then two here. But after this, it's not gonna...I think momentum is yearly and doesn't carry over?

Jack: Yes, I believe momentum is...

Ali: Yeah. Okay, so I'm gonna take another card out of your deck. Okay! And now you have the option to do this a third time, but it has to be from one of us.

Jack: Yes. Asking for help from us.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: I can see a way to do that.

Ali: Ooh, okay.

Janine: I think Velvet is feeling, like, a little bit buoyed by her successes and a little bit less, like, somber. Oh, wait, we haven't done that scene.

Ali: [gasps] Oh, with the— yeah.

Janine: I mean, I guess we kind of did the scene, but... [Ali giggles] I guess the scene is just, like, “Okay, here’s some money.” “Okay, I'll have your fossil delivered.”

Ali: [laughs] Yeah, what is the scene of you not getting caught? Is it, like, a NDGAG... [laughter] a N.D.G.A.G. person coming by and being like—

Janine: Yeah, and being like, “Oh, this is not crystals.”

Ali (as **representative**): Oh, these fossils are interesting. I thought there would be more crystals here.

Janine (as **Velvet**): I haven't been having much luck with the crystals, but I figured I would just bring up some interesting things that I found while I was trying to, you know? Trying to turn the rocks and all that. Sometimes a good thing shakes out, and I thought people might be interested in it.

Ali (as **representative**): Hmm. And what have people been thinking of these...these rocks of yours?

Janine (as **Velvet**): I think they're quite, um... [sighs] Well, I think it lessens the disappointment of a lack of crystals this year. The harvest wasn't good, and I wouldn't want it to bring the festival down. You know, I wouldn't want it to disappoint people, and I think the fossils have been a good way to leave people still feeling positive about the subterranean farming efforts that are happening.

Ali (as **representative**): Well, do make sure to speak of the crystals while you're...

Janine (as **Velvet**): Of course.

Ali (as **representative**): But otherwise, this booth is wonderful. I love the little bats.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Thank you. [Jack and Ali laugh]

Ali: And this representative of N.D.G.A.G. wanders off, none the wiser. But as for your— what's your— what are you gonna ask one of us for?

Janine: Social.

Ali: Aw. [laughs]

Janine: I think that, uh...I don't know if this is, like, a final scene, but it's easy to imagine it happening when it's like we're sort of packing up.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: And Velvet's, like, loading stuff into Ernan's wagon, just being like:

(as **Velvet**): Hey, we should just, like, pick a day of the week where we can just, like, have some tea and just, like, chat. [Jack makes touched sound] Wouldn't that be nice?

Jack (as **Ernan**): Yeah. Yeah. I think I'd like that.

Janine: Do I have to draw a card to get that answer, though?

Ali: Mm-hmm. [laughs]

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Well, no. Here's the thing. Ernan will promise this. It's whether or not this actually, uh...

Janine: Right.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: I know what happens if this doesn't work. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Oh boy.

Ali: Well, Jack, the challenge deck is all yours.

Jack: Okay.

Janine: Oh, it's a heart, at least.

Jack: Oh, yes! Okay.

Janine: Okay. Phew.

Jack: Janine has drawn a four of hearts, and I have drawn a five of diamonds, and I think Ernan says, like... [sighs] buoyed by hanging out with the pirate, [Janine laughs quietly] pulls out a little pocketbook and I think, actually, you know...

Janine: Aw.

Jack: Actually puts in a little date. You know, makes out Mondays. You know.

Janine: Oh, I love that. Mondays for tea. Very good.

Jack: Mondays for tea. You know, I have this deal with the woman who makes firewood now, so I can get firewood. The house won't be as cold, as we go into winter. You know, I think this might be a good idea. Still not committing to staying on the farm all of this year, you know?

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I think still very much, like, "I could just sell up and leave," but starting to make more connections though.

Janine: That's good.

Ali: I love that. [laughs] Importantly, this is not a social development for Ern.

Janine: No. [Ali and Jack laugh] I mean, that's the thing, right? Is like, it's not gonna keep him from leaving.

Jack: Oh no.

Janine: Necessarily. It's just like, oh yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: Sometimes a person comes over.

Ali: Uh huh. Love it.

Jack: Sad.

Ali's Momentum [1:29:23]

Ali: Okay. I guess, with that, now that I have—I can spend my remaining momentum, I feel like the other two are sort of easier questions, and I think that...I think, for my infrastructural progress, I can follow the lead that I sort of set up in my letters from the last year, which is this relationship that I'm setting up with Ronstein Mechanics.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Ali: I think that...I mean, I don't want this to be a financial success, but I wonder if the thing I can do is, like, set up a deal where I'm having somebody come out once a month or whatever or I'm making an upgrade or something, so I'm not, like, paying these fees as things come up, I guess, which is what I had been doing.

Jack: Yeah, sort of like an ongoing relationship with the Ronstadt Mechanics.

Ali: Uh huh, uh huh. Yeah, let me do the card draws, and then we can roleplay the scene depending on that. That is a queen of spades. I want a clover here, but I might win if whoever would like to draw gets under a queen.

Jack: I will draw.

Ali: And it's not a clover.

Jack: Ooh, I have drawn a jack of hearts.

Ali: Ooh, so I win!

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: [quietly] Nice. Nice, nice, nice, nice. Who would like to play R.J. von Ronstein?

Jack: Uh, I will be R.J. von Ronstein.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Hello! [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh, Mr. Ronstein, hi. I'm—

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Greetings! [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Sable**): I'm Sable Butter. I believe we've been in touch?

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Oh, yes! You sent me those letters about the various problems that you were having with some of your machinery.

Ali (as **Sable**): Yes, yes. I've been having a bit of trouble indeed. It's my first year doing this, you understand.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Oh, I remember the first year when I ran Ron—

Jack: Am I Ronstein or Ronstadt? Ronstein?

Ali: [laughs] Ronstein, yeah.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): [even more exuberant] I remember the first year when I ran Ronstein Machinery! Oh, it was a hard year, and I was but six years of age!

Ali (as **Sable**): Wow. I knew the company was foundational in Nievelmarch, but

that's...that's an incredible tale.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Indeed! Inherited it from my aunt! [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Sable**): You know, I inherited the cloud farm as well, but there was some distance between when I knew my mentor and she was a farmer, so. Any—

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Is your mentor—

Jack: No, no, go. [Ali and Jack laugh] No, go ahead.

Ali (as **Sable**): Anyway, I was wondering. I was thinking, since we're at the festival and I was speaking to some other cloud farmers and considering the past year that I've had, and I think that it's been, how do you say...inefficient, the relationship that we've had.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): I beg your pardon?

Ali (as **Sable**): [stammers] Well, the way that it works now is something breaks or I notice a problem, and then one of your people come out. I believe R.J. has— your son.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): My dear boy!

Ali (as **Sable**): Yeah. Robbie Jr., I'm sorry. I believe Robbie has spent a lot of time there. And I was wondering perhaps if it might be more advantageous to have a regular meeting.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Oh!

Ali (as **Sable**): Some preventative care, I think is what they say.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Yes, yes. Well, of course!

Jack: And he produces from his pocket, [Ali laughs] like, a large— almost, like, concertina unfolding. I tell you what: have you ever seen those, like, either paint swatch booklets or, like, carpet swatch booklets that have, like, little pieces of carpet in that all

sort of, like, unfold so you can compare them? [Janine chuckles] He produces one of these that has, like, it's like a flip folder of various membership cards for the Ronstein sort of business. And he says:

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Well, given our involvement over the last year, I would be very happy to upgrade you to the oak membership! [Ali laughs quietly] Now, of course, the oak membership, among many other benefits, includes a weekly check-in at your convenience.

Ali (as **Sable**): Weekly? Oh, that's much better than I would have imagined.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Yes, indeed! And, uh, let me see here. I think that little R.J. has put in a good word for you, so I'm sure that we could prorate the various costs to this to ensure that it works out better for all of us in the long run.

Ali (as **Sable**): [gasps] That would— I appreciate your regard, and while I'm here, I just want to say I will be able to settle the bill that's outstanding from the previous season.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): I didn't think that you wouldn't for a moment! [Ali and Janine laugh] Everything I hear of you from my son speaks to your aerial quality, your kind heartedness, and your ability as a sky farmer! Have you got fish up there yet?

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh, um, you know, I find them every so often still, but you know.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): You know my brother is a fish farmer?

Ali (as **Sable**): A fish farmer, you say?

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Yes! He has donated the specimens for this joyful game being played over there! Go Fish, I believe it's called! [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Sable**): Well, I've been very busy at my booth, so I haven't had the chance to partake.

Jack (as **Ronstein**): Oh, play the game, now we've sorted this business endeavor! [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Sable**): I think I'll do just that, sir.

Jack: Off he goes.

Ali: That's a scene.

Jack: In the background of the next scene, whatever it is, you know, you can see him slapping someone on the back in delight, so much that their spectacles fly off the front of their face. He's that kind of guy. [all laugh]

Janine: Amazing. Oh my god.

Ali: Wonderful. Wonderful, wonderful. Okay, with that momentum spent, I now have a special momentum that I can also spend with one of you, and I think that maybe— I think that I, when the festival's over, I go down to the bottom floor to Velvet's booth, and I'm carrying, like, a big tray of, like, end-of-day pastries or samples or whatever that I also got from, like, the culinary wing of whatever this festival is.

Janine: Ooh.

Ali: And I'm tired, and we're all packing up, and I'm, like, sitting next to...Champion, was it? No. Charrot? Carrot?

Janine: Captain.

Jack: Captain.

Janine: [quietly] "Charrot."

Ali: Captain. [laughs] Champion was close. Okay.

Janine: Uh huh. That's true.

Ali: [laughs] I'm sitting sort of cross-legged on Velvet's floor, and I say:

(as **Sable**): So, how do you deal with the ice? I get so much ice in the winter. I feel like I didn't expect any of the issues that I had up there.

Janine (as **Velvet**): [sighs] Torches, mostly.

Ali (as **Sable**): Torches.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Mm-hmm. There's, uh...

Ali (as **Sable**): I have such trouble with fire and the air quality.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Yeah. It's not good. There are some vents. They tend to get blocked, and you have to really wrestle with that, and then you have to make sure the torches are anchored in the walls appropriately, and, you know, that's a whole thing. There used to be, like, a boiler system down there, but it's not really working right now, so it's not ideal.

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh. That sounds very difficult. And what about the warm seasons? What is the summer like?

Janine (as **Velvet**): Kind of the same. It's more wet than icy, but it's still pretty cold.

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh. Hmm.

Janine (as **Velvet**): It's drier than spring. Spring is very wet. So, summer's okay.

Ali (as **Sable**): Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: [laughs] I didn't have a long term idea of how this becomes a social thing, but I'm gonna draw a card to see if you enjoyed this conversation. [all laugh]

Janine: Games!

Ali: So, I have drawn a jack of diamonds.

Jack: Ooh.

Ali: I'm looking for a heart here, but a jack is a pretty high card, so I might win this.

Janine: Ten of hearts. [Ali gasps]

Jack: Ah. Shit.

Ali: I did not.

Jack: You do not like hearing about this. [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Sable**): You know, I wonder if there's a way for us to meet in the winter, you know?

Janine (as **Velvet**): I mean, I guess...

Ali (as **Sable**): Mm. [Ali laughs]

Janine (as **Velvet**): How do you get up there? Do you have, like, a...I have, like, an elevator. Do you have, like, an elevator? Or how do you...?

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh, I have, like, a little personal carrier that I bring up and down.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Oh.

Ali (as **Sable**): There's a little fan on it, and...

Janine (as **Velvet**): So you can just go up and down wherever you like. You don't have to go to, like, one set spot to go up and down?

Ali (as **Sable**): Oh, well, I have to launch off the flier, of course, but I can...it's very easy to land anywhere I'd like in Nievelmarch, yeah.

Janine (as **Velvet**): [disheartened] Oh. That's nice.

Ali (as **Sable**): I'll send you a letter this winter.

Janine (as **Velvet**): Yeah.

Jack: Aw. [Ali laughs]

Janine (as **Velvet**): Yeah. I'm looking forward to it.

Ali: And my momentum is spent for the year. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Oof.

Janine: It's hard to be the person who's doing pretty well.

Ali: Uh huh. [laughs] Okay, but I— oh, but I didn't remove my card for the infrastructure win, which I'm gonna do right now. That was an infrastructure is a club.

Janine: Did my social win card get taken out? I don't remember.

Ali: Oh, I don't think so. I'll do that too.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: Or, no, you have 50 cards, so yeah, that— did you get three successes or two?

Janine: Uh, I think I got three, right? I got...

Ali: Okay, so you should— yeah, so I have to delete one.

Janine: Two social successes and then one money success.

Ali: Okay. So, with that, I'm gonna have 51 cards, Jack is gonna have 51 cards, and you should have 49.

Janine: Cool.

Jack: But we got the festival done.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: We did, yeah.

Friends [1:41:30]

Ali: Time for a new year in this game. But we do have one more thing to do, which is I think that we did this privately as a group, but we have not done it on radio yet, but at the end of the year, you also have a, um... “After every fourth season, you make a friend. Name this character if they don't already exist in your game, and describe your friendship with them, whether in your mind, in conversation, or on paper.” And then I am gonna pull aces out of our decks, and then, through this next season, if we pull a face card early in the season—or I guess whenever—we can use that ace to negate that draw, basically, to let us draw more cards, but we have to describe how that friend helped us out. So, if I drew— my friend, for instance, is Robbie von Jr., who is a mechanic with the Ronstein Industries group. I think that I said that he was, um...what was that character's name? R.J. von Ronstein of Ronstein Mechanics's son?

Jack: The man with the loud voice.

Ali: Yes, the man with the loud voice. Robbie is his son, you know, hoping to take over the business one day, and, you know, has been in and out of the sky lifter for a little bit, helping me out throughout the season, and now we're friends. Ern.

Janine: Hell yeah.

Jack: My friend is a woman called Melissa Miles. She is the lady who ran the honor-based system wood store that Ern had a variety of unpleasant experiences with, or not unpleasant experiences. The wood store was kind of, like, a locus for his loneliness and lack of money.

Ali: Mm.

Jack: But I do think that, at the festival, he met Melissa and kind of explained this or it came up in conversation, and Melissa was basically like, “You know, you're an idiot. You could have just taken some wood.” [Ali laughs] And it was this sort of moment of connection for Ern of recognizing that he might not be quite as lonely— or he might not— there are hands reaching out to him, even if he doesn't recognize that they are

there. Velvet.

Janine: Uh, I had to ctrl+F to find this person's full name, because I didn't put it in. [Ali laughs] 'Cause mine just, there's an ace of spades, and directly above it, it just says the word "Gorbet."

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Did you remember writing that?

Janine: Yes. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Okay.

Janine: I'm putting the full name in here

Jack: Oh, wow. And then rotating it sideways.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: [laughs] And then rotating it sideways, because it's long. So, mine is Honorable Gorbet van Vermillion, [Ali laughs] who is like a, you know, like a rich respected member of the community, a patron of fossils.

Jack: Mm.

Janine: Really into, like, fossils and rocks and stuff.

Ali: Gave you all those, uh, socks, et cetera.

Janine: Yeah. So, basically, because I keep finding fossils and stuff, this is the person who is sustaining me while I fail to do my actual job.

Ali: That happens. I, um...I have a question, which is that you've written on here, "H-O-N dot."

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Like it's a prefix like "Dr." or "Mrs." [laughs]

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: Is that a thing in real life, or are we setting that up in...?

Janine: No, that's a thing.

Ali: People do that on Earth?

Janine: I think it's, like, an old military thing?

Ali: Okay.

Janine: I'm not 100%. Let me look it up.

Ali: Okay. [laughs]

Janine: Uh, it's offering me office furniture.

Jack: Yeah, certain, like, U.K. peerages are also called, like, "the Right Honorable."

Janine: Yeah, here we go.

Jack: With "Right" as another prefix in front of "Hon."

Ali: Whoa!

Jack: I know. It's not good.

Janine: This is also in Canada, of course. Hon., Honorable, Right Honorable, Rt Hon. "The honorary title 'The Honorable' is used before the names of members of the Canadian Privy Council, lieutenants, and certain other officials." Yeah, so it's like a, you know, certain things. He's, like, a guy, you know?

Ali: Incredible.

Janine: Oh, that's the thing. Yeah, the prime minister gets called the Right Honorable

Justin. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Right Honorable Justin. [Ali and Janine laugh] It's bad. What we've got going here is bad.

Ali: Yeah, I think...if you're gonna earn the prefix Honorable, you should change your first name to something like Gorbet, so it fits.

Janine: Yeah, I agree. [Ali laughs quietly]

Jack: Yes. Also, I think if you're gonna earn the prefix Honorable, you should earn it by doing something, like, full-on honorable. I'm not sure what that is.

Ali: Oh.

Jack: But like, what if if you met someone with that Honorable prefix, you met them, and you were like, "Jesus Christ. [Ali laughs] That person's..." you know?

Ali: Yeah, uh huh, I do know. I do, yeah.

Janine: I want to say that used to kind of be the idea of it, but I might be basing that purely on Brian Jacques's *Redwall* books.

Jack: Ha!

Janine: Which is where I encountered the term as a child. I think it was, like, a...there was, like, a big rabbit, like a big army rabbit who was, like, Honorable, Hon. something.

Ali: Wow.

Janine: And he, like, made everyone call him that.

Jack: And I'm sure that that is—

Janine: And I doubt he was in the Privy Council, so.

Jack: Yeah. I can imagine, in theory, that's where it comes from, but of course, the

people who are able to give the Honorable title have very particular ideas about what Honorable means.

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: And that might mean running colonial mining efforts in, uh...

Janine: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Jack: You know. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Almost certainly.

Jack: For a long enough time. But I mean something like, uh, what is a very honorable thing to do? Mm, saved a train from...? [laughs quietly]

Ali: Saved the train!

Jack: Train's coming off a cliff, and you figure out how to do it. You're the one person who does the trolley problem right.

Ali: Oh.

Jack: Then you get to be called Honorable.

Ali: Sure.

Jack: Saved a dog.

Janine: Famously, I don't think that's possible. [Janine and Ali laugh] I don't think that's a circumstance that is—

Jack: But what if someone could figure it out, Janine?

Ali: [laughs] That'd be pretty great, yeah.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Then they'd deserve the Honorable title.

Ali: That'd be pretty honorable.

Jack: It would be pretty honorable.

Winter [1:48:35]

Ali: Okay, with that little lesson in honorifics out of the way, [laughs] it is time to actually start our second year and to return to something I've anxiously been waiting to do again, because it feels like it's been a long time since we've gotten to this phase of the game. We are gonna be drawing some cards for our winter season here.

Jack: Ugh, god, it's winter again, isn't it?

Ali: It's winter again. Does anybody need a refresher on—? We're just gonna keep pulling until we see a face, basically. Then we're gonna add 'em up.

Jack: Except now there are fewer faces. Not a lot, but there are fewer faces in some of our decks.

Ali: There are fewer faces, yeah. And I mean, we did pretty good at that festival.

Jack: Yeah, we did all right.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: We had a fun time.

Ali: Uh huh. [laughs]

Jack: And if we draw a face, we can spend one of our aces once a season to cancel it out and keep drawing, right?

Ali: Yes. Uh huh.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Mm-hmm, and then the face card is going to determine the theme of our upcoming letter. Off to the races? We ready to go?

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: Let's fucking go.

Jack: Oh, wait, whose deck is whose?

Janine: They're in order now, right?

Jack: It's ordered, right?

Ali: Yeah. I'm blue. Jack and Ern are pink.

Janine: Wait, what?

Ali: What?

Janine: Is that true?

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Why? Oh, right, sorry. I forgot who was where. [all laugh] I just totally forgot.

Ali: I'm in the sky, and I'm blue.

Janine: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I totally forgot. [Ali and Janine laugh]

Ali: And Jack is amongst the fields and the flowers and is pink.

Janine: My tone of just, like, "That's bullshit, Ali. What are you—" [Ali and Jack laugh]

Ali: Janine is in the rocks and the tunnels and is gold. Okay?

Jack: Okay. Here we go.

Ali: [laughs] Let's start doing it. I'm doing it.

Jack: Fuck!

Ali: No way. That's impossible.

Janine: You gotta spend your thing. Spend your thing. Get rid of them.

Jack: But what if I need to do it in future? [Ali laughs]

Janine: What— but— okay, but don't let this be like a healing potion thing where it's like you finish the RPG and you've got 60 potions. [Ali laughs]

Jack: [crosstalk] No, no, I won't. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ali: I'm having a fantastic season. This is insane.

Jack: God.

Janine: Yeah, I'm doing great in...wait, is this the thing I've been bad at the whole fucking time?

Ali: What?

Jack: Uh, spades?

Janine: This is agriculture, right? Or is it infrastructure?

Jack: Oh my god, are you gonna discover some crystals?

Ali: Oh, wow.

Jack: It is agricultural progress.

Janine: Oh my god. Okay.

Ali: Okay.

Jack: Janine and Ali are just—

Ali: I would like to stop drawing cards.

Janine: Holy fuck.

Jack: Oh, there we go. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Oh my god, Ali.

Ali: I drew eight cards. Jack, are you really just gonna let this sit? [laughs]

Jack: Yes. Yes, I am.

Ali: Ern's returned to the farm. You were a minute from quitting.

Jack: Yeah. [Ali laughs] Yeah, I know what to do.

Ali: All right!

Janine: I'm not done yet. [Ali laughs] I'm at ten.

Ali: [chanting] Janine! Janine! Janine! Janine!

Jack: [chanting] Janine! Janine!

Ali: [chanting] Velvet! Velvet!

Janine: Did you take all of the face cards out? Oh my god.

Ali: No, but you had a really good festival.

Janine: Fuck.

Ali: This is— okay, this is getting wild. [Ali and Janine laugh]

Jack: Janine has drawn 11...no.

Ali: That's 14.

Janine: I got—

Jack: Ah, there we go.

Janine: Okay, my face card is at 15. I'm at 15, and I got my jack of clubs here.

Ali: [laughs] Boy howdy.

Janine: [sighs] Time to do some fucking math.

Ali: Yeah. Okay. Yes. I should have been doing math, but I was cheering you on and your amazing pull. I'm just gonna go down the list and say that I drew a two of spades, a two of clovers, a seven of spades.

Janine: Clubs.

Ali: Clubs. Sorry. [laughs] I have to stop myself every single time from saying "clover," and I don't know why. A seven of spades, a seven of diamonds, an eight of clubs, a seven of clubs, a two of diamonds, a six of diamonds, and then a king of clubs, which is infrastructural progress.

Jack: I drew a jack of hearts, which is social progress. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Uh, okay. Did I do this math right? I got an eight of hearts, a 10 of spades, an eight of spades, a five of spades, a four of diamonds, a seven of spades, a two of diamonds, a nine of spades, a nine of clubs, a two of hearts, a six of hearts, a five of hearts, a six of spades, and a nine of diamonds, and then finally a jack of clubs. [Ali laughs] Which I just realized, like, that's the thing I did the worst in that I have to...

Ali: Ooh. You know?

Jack: Oh, that is interesting.

Janine: Everything else I killed at, but it's— yeah.

Ali: [laughs] You know, even in the face of tremendous unseen success, you can't help but focus on your shortcomings here.

Janine: I guess, yeah. I totally did this math wrong. I'm tired.

Ali: Yeah, I was trying to do math while you were reading those numbers, and I was

like...

Janine: That's impossible, yeah.

Ali: [laughs] This is a seven of spades, for me.

Janine: I need my calculator out. I can't do this.

Ali: Yeah, I... [laughs] Uh huh. Oh, you have, like, a physical one. You're, like, using one. Using it for real.

Janine: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I brought it out the first time, and then I didn't use it, so I was like, "I don't need this."

Ali: [laughs] But now you're getting these good pulls.

Janine: [laughing] Why did I think it was 21? It's 45.

Ali: Wow! [laughs]

Jack: Jesus.

Janine: That's a different number.

Jack: 45 is, uh...

Ali: Amazing progress.

Jack: Amazing progress.

Ali: Okay, so my final numbers are a zero in social progress; a 15 in financial progress, which is average; a 7 in agricultural progress, which is barely; and a 17 in infrastructural progress, which is average, and I'm writing my letter about infrastructural progress.

Jack: [sighs] Okay.

Ali: Oh, I forgot...

Janine: Oh, sorry, I was waiting for Ern, and then I realized. We know. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: So, mine are: I got a 21 in social, 15 financial, 45 in agricultural, and a 9 in infrastructure, but I'm writing my letter about infrastructure, which, you know, sometimes you have a great season, and you focus on the negative, because it's what you're used to.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But that's still minor progress, right? In the first season, we were regularly drawing no progress at all.

Janine: Mm-hmm. I have a good idea for what this is.

Ali: Okay, hi. [Janine laughs quietly] We have our season five letters here. Winter two.

Jack: Winter two. [Jack and Ali laugh quietly] The sequel.

Ali: The sequel to winter one. Okay, I am gonna read my letter. Again, this is an infrastructural letter about my progress. Okay. [laughs]

Dear R.J. von Ronstein of Ronstein Mechanics,

I'd like to thank you again for meeting me at this year's Fall Harvest Showcase. It was so lovely to meet you in person. Robbie and crew were able to replace the fan blades on my cloud lifter.

Ali: Isn't it—? No, it should be a sky lifter. Sorry. I'm forgetting my own stupid sci-fi— this isn't sci-fi, but my own weird tech names for the stuff.

Able to replace the blades on my sky lifter before winter started in earnest, and the extra elevation has already made an impact on my yield and, more importantly, my fueling and heating fees. How's winter treating you down in Nievelmarch? At night, I've been sitting on the edge of my little platform and

watching the lights twinkle down in the village below. I can't go party hopping like you ground folks do anymore, hehe, but watching the shops turn on and off at night make me feel like I'm dragging my feet home after a long night of tea and pastries even so. Happy holidays.

With deepest appreciation,

Sable.

Jack: Aw. How nice. [Ali laughs quietly] Get a little view of the winter city.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Of the winter town.

Ali: Yeah, with my zero social.

Jack: Dear sister,

This letter will arrive late. I have been unable to send it. A small cloud came down the mountain heavy with snow and emptied all of it—*all of it*—onto my little farmhouse. I was in the snowglobe, and it was not good. Luckily, I'd filled the woodshed and have that little entrance to it from my kitchen. Kept the fire warm.

At the festival, I saw this big thing of jam, pot of jam the size of a bucket, and I don't know what came over me, because I was talking to the shop guy, and then suddenly I was on the way home with all this jam. All the way back home, I was thinking, "Who's going to eat all this?" and I couldn't stop. "How did this happen? Who's going to eat all this jam? And it's going to start to go bad. I've been given an impossible task. I'm cursed now with this huge thing of jam. I've got to invite people over. That's what I've got to do. I've got to invite folks over to my house in the winter, and we'll all have to eat this jam. I'll ask Melissa over. Maybe I'll talk to Velvet and Sable."

And then the snow came down. Trapped. And all I did all winter was put wood

onto the fire and spread jam on crackers and eat the crackers, for weeks. No farm progress. No money. Pale light filtering through the snow blocking my windows. Eaten about a third of the thing of jam. [Ali laughs]

Your brother,

Ern.

Janine: You're an artist. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Jam winter. Ern's jam— [Ali and Jack laugh] Ern's jam winter.

Janine: Also, like, the jam's not gonna go bad. That's the point. You'll be fine. It's just a lot of jam. He'll be okay.

Jack: It's a fucking— it's a lot of jam!

Janine: [laughs] I'm picturing, like, if you ever had one of those school fundraisers where you sell cookie dough and it comes in, like, a big bucket.

Ali: Oh.

Jack: [laughs] Yes, yes.

Janine: A big bucket of cookie dough.

Jack: [sighs] Okay. Well.

Janine: To Nievelmarch Municipal Library:

Subject: Information Catalog Pull Request

This is Velvet Lunde, card number 934722. I'm writing to request the dispatch with some urgency of information in your records concerning the following topics:

- Subterranean irrigation systems
- Subterranean irrigation system maintenance

- Crystal growth in enclosed environments
- Crystal growth underwater
- Crystal growth in water vessels
- Geo-hydroponics (unsure if such topic exists, spelling, et cetera)
- Augurs/auguring

Anticipating prompt reception.

Regards,

Velvet Lunde.

[Ali laughs quietly]

Janine: I should perhaps say, just for clarity's sake: the thing that happened was Velvet found the crystals, and they were all in the water pipes. [Ali gasps] So.

Jack: [laughs] Oh, cool!

Janine: Uh huh. [laughs]

Jack: Hmm.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: A challenge.

Janine: They were there the— they were there, and now it's a thing of like, well, I gotta figure this out.

Jack: Amazing. So now we just do it again, right?

Spring [2:00:32]

Ali: All right, here we are. It's spring? Winter, spring? Summer, fall? Right.

Janine: That's how the year goes.

Ali: Uh huh. [laughs] Let's draw our cards. No whammies.

Jack: Here we go. No whammies.

Ali: I swear to god, Ern, if you don't do good this season, I'm gonna... [laughs]

Jack: I know. [Ali gasps]

Janine: Ah.

Jack: Uh oh. Bad news for Velvet.

Janine: Hmm.

Jack: I am ignoring this king. What do I do here?

Ali: Wait, did we—

Jack: How do I spend my...?

Ali: Wait, okay. We have to— we all have to take a second here and acknowledge that we all only drew one card and then a face card.

Jack: Oh shit. Here's the thing.

Janine: And it was all hearts? [Ali laughs] We each drew a heart of varying degrees and then a face.

Ali: This is wild.

Jack: Oh, oh!

Janine: And now I assume we're all immediately playing our weirdo.

Jack: I mean, are we all playing our weirdo? Or should we say...

Janine: I'm playing my weirdo. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Okay, fair. Or we could say something has happened that has affected all of us in

the same way. There's, like, a curse.

Janine: I can't lose this streak, and also, you need any streak. You need anything. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Jack: Okay, fair enough. I'm gonna play my weirdo.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: So, I just put my ace over here and keep drawing?

Janine: Fuck off. Fuck.

Ali: Wow.

Janine: [frustrated] Just, aah! Aaah!

Jack: Aaah! [Jack and Ali laugh]

Ali: What a waste.

Jack: I also...

Ali: Whoa!

Janine: What the fuck?

Ali: Okay, I'm afraid to draw my card! I am gonna use my weirdo.

Janine: God, our faces were of the same suits too, Jack.

Jack: That's fascinating. We're being punished.

Janine: We are.

Jack: By financial progress.

Janine: Heart, spade, diamond.

Ali: Okay, I shouldn't have used my weirdo—

Jack: Oh, this is wild.

Ali: 'Cause now this is getting a little wacky. Okay, there we go.

Jack: Oh, there you go.

Ali: Wow. Okay.

Janine: Cool.

Jack: So, I make 10 social progress.

Ali: [laughs] Let's tell everybody what happened here. Let's explain what happened here.

Jack: Okay. We just go top to bottom?

Ali: Let's go top to bottom. I drew...I drew a three of hearts, and then I drew an ace of diamonds, which I used my ace of spades to negate, and then I got a three of clubs, a six of diamonds, a nine of clubs, and an ace of hearts.

Jack: I drew a 10 of hearts—that's social—and then drew a king of spades. I used my weirdo to negate that and then immediately drew a king of diamonds.

Janine: I got a four of hearts, then a jack of spades which I used my weirdo upon, and then got a queen of diamonds.

Ali: I don't know why we keep saying weirdo when it's very nice friends. [Jack laughs] I'm double checking the rules really quick to see if the...

Janine: I mean, yours is...well, I guess I'm the only one with a weirdo, [Ali laughs] but that's why I started saying weirdo, and then it stuck. It happens.

Ali: Yeah, yours is just a rich guy, though. Is he that weird?

Janine: A rich fossil weirdo is a classic weirdo.

Jack: Rich guys are always weird.

Ali: Mm.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Have you ever met a normal rich guy?

Ali: [agreeing] Yeah.

Janine: Did you hear the drama about— they did a 3D scan of the *Titanic* and found a shark tooth necklace, which they got convinced was a megalodon tooth necklace, but it was probably not.

Jack: Oh my god, really?

Janine: Yeah, and like, I watched a deep dive video where someone was like, “Okay, let’s figure out what this actually is,” and was like, “It’s probably not a megalodon necklace, because relative— it’s next to, like, this tusk bracelet, and these tusks are usually this size, and the teeth are usually this size.”

Jack: Huh.

Janine: And then they were like, “So who could this be from?” and it was probably jewelry from, like, Indigenous communities in Vanuatu and, like, who would have access to that, and—? Anyway, rich weirdos just...it’s a thing.

Jack: All over the world. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Yeah. They love bones. They love new bones. They love old bones.

Ali: Sure. Sure.

Jack: They simply love bones.

Janine: They simply love bones.

Ali: Also, so, the face card negates the other ones. You wouldn't add, like...your jack of clubs isn't a 10 now, for instance.

Janine: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Just ignore it.

Ali: Yeah, you just ignore it. See, I already mentioned Robbie last time, and now I've gotta...

Janine: Although, do we have to explain how the person helped us with an agricultural problem or just how they helped us in general?

Ali: Um, the game doesn't specify, so I feel like you can do it however you like. What the game says is, "If you do, explain in that season's letter how your friend helped you out of a pinch." So.

Janine: Mm, mm-hmm.

Ali: Okay, yeah. So, I am writing a letter about my three social progress, which is barely any, and I have to include about how Robbie von Jr. helps me out of a pinch.

Jack: I am writing a letter about my financial progress, which is zero. [Ali laughs] And I have to write about how Melissa Miles helped me out of a pinch.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: She bring you some crackers? [Jack laughs]

Ali: You got that 10 in social this season.

Jack: I did, yeah, that's true.

Ali: That's all you got, man.

Jack: Uh huh. That is all I've got. [Ali laughs]

Ali: Okay. Spring has come and gone, and we've written our letters. I'm gonna start, as usual, since we're all ready. Okay. [clears throat]

Dear Charlene,

Can you believe I've been a farmer for a whole year? It seems like just yesterday I was packing up my desk and hugging you and the girls goodbye. It feels like I've learned so much, and then a new dawn arrives, and suddenly another day comes to teach me how little I know.

Thankfully, I've had a lot of support from the Ronstein family of mechanics from Nievelmarch. Just this season, when my poor little cloud was barren despite last spring being my best season, a very kind fellow named Robbie has taught me that even with no growth, I still have a harvest if I upgrade and recycle the components from the farming mammals I have here. He really saved my toast this spring. I swear, if I was really on my own here, I don't know what I'd do. I've grown quite fond of him, but these sorts of things are difficult, aren't they? Have to keep it professional.

I miss you and the girls terribly. I have a big stack of last year's issues in my bedroom, and I flip through them as often as I can, reading the articles in your voices. You should release digital copies. You should make little jewelry boxes and little figures of you all spinning in place, and then I'll open it up and hear you all regale me on the latest and greatest of window dressings and bench chairs down in Nievelmarch. Well, don't do that, but promise me you'll make time for coffee next time I'm on ground?

Love,

Sable.

Ali: Reading this, I...I guess if this is an MMO, there's a place here that has the world "digital" in it.

Jack: Yeah, somewhere.

Ali: [laughs] Somewhere. I was like, “Wait.” I had a real out of character moment there, where I was like, “Oh, I fucked this up.” But maybe that’s audio.

Jack: Definitely digital somewhere.

Ali: Audio copies. You should release audible copies. [Jack laughs] Anyway. Ern.

Jack: Dear sister,

Spring came, and all the snow melted seemingly at once. The low part of my garden flooded, and I came out of my house one spring morning to find Melissa Miles wearing huge boots and carrying some sort of drainage device. We spent a week or so bringing the water level down and talking. She’s all right. She knows her stuff. Comes from a logging family on the other side of the Marchmonts. Says her great great grandpa invented pine trees, but I’m not sure I believe her.

When the water level dropped, it revealed a couple of things. First, all the bulbs I’d planted in autumn were waterlogged and rotten, ruined. Melissa pursed her lips and frowned. “I suppose that’s what you get,” she said. I asked her what she meant. She changed the subject. Melissa left a couple of days later. Most of the work had been done.

As I was clearing away some debris, I noticed that the rain had uncovered the strangest thing: a metal plaque, bolted into the ground beside the path with some old script engraved above it. There’s a little slot in the plaque the size of a coin. The script says, “For good luck.” Only one coin left in my pocket, but I dropped it in. Tiny sound of metal against metal. Figured I could use it.

Your brother,

Ern.

Janine: Neale[or Neil???],

I am taking you into my strictest confidence. Do not speak a word of this to

Mama—she will worry too much—but I know Papa heard through the ministry about what happened, so I owe you both the honest details. It was four long tons of crystal down the drain at least, literally down the pipes. I watched it go. I tried to sieve out what I could, but it was powder. It was dust. “Sell the water,” you’ll say, “or maybe evaporate it off?” And the mud? The rust? The muck in the irrigation lines? The mole fur and beetle shells? They do not evaporate, and I would rather be left with nothing than with a vat of glistening scum. And it took weeks. I think I may never get the filth out from under my nails.

The sharpened edges of the crystal powder caught in with it all bite into my skin every so often, though it no longer draws blood at the nail bed like it did initially. My patron provided his doctor’s information so that I could write to him about this whole pitiable affair, and he has been sending along vials of special soap, with which I have been instructed to make a bath for my hands, to at least help loosen the debris and prevent any tainting of the blood. So I am doing as well as could be expected. **[Ali: Aw!]** I hope you are doing better.

Vetty

[Ali laughs]

Jack: Yikes.

Ali: Oh man, what a rough springtime.

Jack: Yeah, it’s a hard spring for everybody.

Ali: **[laughs]** All right.

Janine: I don’t know what you’re talking about.

Jack: Sable did all right.

Janine: Getting spa days. It’s going great. **[Ali laughs]**

Jack: Mm, yes, to deal with the potential, uh, crystal blood poisoning.

Janine: [laughs] Yeah, you know.

Summer [2:10:36]

Ali: And so we move on to summer.

Jack: Summertime.

Ali: You ready to go?

Jack: Sure am.

Ali: I really— that good luck coin, Ern. [laughs] I'm praying, because I can't do this with you anymore. [Jack laughs] You're stressing me out.

Janine: Worst case scenario, you dig up the coin box, right? [Ali laughs]

Jack: Ah, god.

Janine: I, like, just saw a thing about the, um...there's, like, a place in London. There's, like, a handle. It's like a railing or something where you can put coins in. It's supposed to be, like, alms for someone, and it was like an old rich person house where they were like, "Yeah, put your coins here, and then we'll get soup for people," or whatever.

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: It's just like a public coin slot thing. Weird.

Jack: Shit. [Ali gasps]

Janine: Oh my god. Okay. Well.

Ali: Ooh. Wow! [Janine sighs] What is happening to us?! [laughs]

Janine: So, you know, I think this game— I think it's fair to say this game is designed to skew hard early on, and then it gets easier.

Ali: Yes. Uh huh.

Janine: But also, I do think we're having a rough time.

Ali: [laughs] I thought— you know, I thought year two would be this incredible change.

Janine: No.

Ali: I really thought we would be getting these 15 and 20 numbers that you...

Janine: No, not quite yet. No, no, no.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: It's great, because I've always had, like, some level of frustration with— and I can understand the work that that they are doing in a genre space. They are operating in a heightened mode. I've always had a kind of frustration with, like, wholesome farming games on some level, because, you know, working on a farm is exhausting and demoralizing and often physically painful and unbelievably hard work. And I feel like often in those games it's like, "And I'll bake the bread, and I'll take it into town and meet Mark, and Mark will thank me for the bread, [Ali laughs] and then I go home to sleep in my lovely little pastoral house." So, on some level, I'm really happy that we've been playing this game and it's just mean. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Have you heard about Harvest Moon: Wonderful Life? Or, sorry, *Story of Seasons: Wonderful Life*?

Jack: I know of the game, but—

Janine: Which is the one where you die at the end? [Ali gasps]

Jack: Because farming is so hard? [laughs quietly]

Janine: No, you die 'cause you live a life, but you die.

Ali: That's...

Jack: That's kind of great.

Ali: Incredible.

Janine: Compared to, like, I think it's *Friends of Mineral Town* where you can just, like, keep playing forever, and it's just like— I saw a video recently of someone who, there's like a special cottage or a house that you unlock at, like, 50 years of marriage, but you'll still have, like, a baby, because the babies don't grow up.

Ali: Oh. [laughs]

Janine: So you just have this 50 year old baby. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Jack: It's like *The Simpsons*.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: That's amazing. I do really want to, like— this is only tangentially related, but I do really want to go back to the, like, early farming games or, like, early *Animal Crossing* when, like, they would still, like, curse you out. [Janine laughs]

Jack: Yeah, they were, like, mean.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Ali: [laughs] Or where you could, like, wake up Tom Nook in the middle of the night.

Janine: Yeah. I mean, *Harvest Moon* also used to be kind of brutal. Like, I think they gradually got rid of this, but it used to be a thing of, like, if you left your chickens out overnight, [Ali gasps] sometimes in the, like, overnight screen, you would hear, like, a howling. [Ali gasps] And then you would wake up, and you'd have fewer chickens, because the coyotes fucking got them.

Jack: Oh my god. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Yeah. Yeah. You had to be real fucking careful.

Ali: Yeah, this is what we need in games. We need to— we need reality, and we need truth, and we need consequences.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [laughs]

Ali: On that, I am going to announce that, for this season, I drew a two of hearts and an ace of diamonds.

Jack: I drew a five of clubs, a six of diamonds, and then a king of clubs, indicating—

Ali: That's a king of diamonds.

Jack: Oh, sorry, a king of diamonds. Yes, you're right, a king of diamonds, indicating financial progress.

Janine: Well...yeah, sure. [laughs quietly] Or lack of financial progress.

Jack: Uh, yes. [Jack and Ali laugh]

Janine: Yeah. I drew a six of hearts, a 10 of hearts, and then an ace of diamonds.

Jack: Okay. Let's see. I made a little financial progress.

Ali: Yeah. [laughs] Okay. Time for summer letters. I am, once again, writing a letter about my zero financial progress. My letter reads:

Attn: Mx. Pommel

To Bank of Nievelmarch, Southside Branch:

Do you recall last season when you advised that I not transfer so much of my earnings to my savings just yet, because your cousin, a brilliant skywatcher, told you to reschedule your wedding? That you contacted all your caterers and the band and all the guests and the florist and the furniture deliverers, because you trusted her above all else, and that the heavy rains this summer might lead to a difficult upcoming season on my cloud lifter? I'd like to withdraw 25% of my holdings in my savings account. [Jack chuckles] I hope your special day was lovely, and I do hope I'll be able—

Ali: I really wrote this incorrectly.

I do hope you'll be able to show me photos when I'm on ground next.

Your favorite client,

Miss Sable

Jack: [chuckles] Sometimes, you know, sometimes you hear advice, and you don't take it.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: Dear sister,

I spent a lot of this month repairing the water damage from the spring flooding. Rotten wood needed to be cut out. Debris needed to be cleared. Even once I'd gotten all the mess out of the way, all it revealed were structural things that needed fixing. Turns out there was a leak in my roof, and that took a lot of work, although it's been so hot and dry here that maybe I didn't need to be doing that. But I made some money. Odd jobs here and there. Nothing to sell, but I can do some laboring in the other nearby farms. Feels weird seeing their places flourishing, but I'm trying to keep my head up.

Every morning, I go down to the little plaque and feed a couple of coins into the slot. I bought some seedlings from a neighbor to plant around it, make it look nice like. They came up beautifully. Sometimes I go down to the plaque in the evening too, crouch by the path in the summer night. Another coin for the slot. The guy who sold me the flowers said they were daisies, but he must have been wrong. I know what daisies look like.

Your brother,

Ern.

Janine: Kind of ominous. [Ali laughs quietly] I guess it's all kind of ominous. [sighs]

Dearest Dr. Prise,

I just wanted to write and thank you for the hospitality offered during my unexpected stay at the hunting lodge. I was in no state to be proper company, but I am awed by how graciously I was received by yourself and your party. I feel much better for my time there, and despite my ill health and ill fortune, my spirits are much lifted. I so rarely get to enjoy the high summer sun. It felt as curative as any medicine. Please give my regards to Lucy in particular. The kerchief she embroidered for me has been a pleasing sight in its every use. I will send her a sketch of the rabbits when I am in a slightly better state to produce it.

Affectionately,

Miss Lunde

Jack: I love to send a sketch of my rabbits. [Ali laughs quietly]

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Once I've got the crystal poisoning out of my system. [all laugh]

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: This is gonna cost you your whole year.

Janine: It's bad. It's going bad.

Jack: Okay. Fall. [Ali laughs quietly]

Autumn [2:18:33]

Ali: All right, we're recalling these miserable tiny card stacks, and we're shuffling our deck. Oh my god, this is the last season.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: Of the year.

Ali: Of the year. This went by so quickly.

Jack: Yeah, this was a— well, we weren't— I think, here's the thing. The first time around, we were so balled over by the sheer bleak horror of... [all laugh quietly]

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: And now we're just sort of like, [resigned] "Yeah, okay, yeah. Uh huh."

Ali: Uh huh.

Janine: That's how it is.

Jack: Yep.

Ali: Okay.

Janine: It do be like that.

Ali: I'm gonna start pulling my cards. [laughs] No fucking way! I can't do this.

Janine: What the fuck?

Ali: I can't take this anymore. [Jack and Ali laugh]

Janine: Once again carrying on the tradition of Velvet only focusing on the negative. [Ali laughs] Always focusing on the lowest thing.

Ali: Well, you're down there, and if you're gonna take the time to go all the way up the thing and then walk across the little thing and then walk back up the thing to send a letter, it's gonna be about something important, right?

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: [laughs] Okay. Let's go over results. I have drawn a five of clubs, a three of diamonds, and a king of spades.

Jack: [sighs] I've drawn a king of clubs. [Ali laughs] So I'll be writing about infrastructural progress.

Janine: [groans] I have a two of hearts, a seven of clubs, an eight of hearts, an eight of clubs, a three of spades, a seven of diamonds, and then finally, an ace of spades, meaning that I'm focusing on my lowest thing, which is the three in agriculture. But hey, it looks like maybe the pipes are fixed. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Okay, let's see.

Ali: Oh, Ern. I want the audience to know, at home, my extreme reaction there was for Ern's sake and not mine. [Janine and Ali laugh]

Jack: Also, in case viewers are thinking, "Oh, Jack has an ace that they could spend to negate this, but they are just deliberately playing a miserable character," no. I spent my ace in spring. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Ali: And got nothing for it.

Jack: And I have no recourse. [Ali and Jack laugh] And got nothing for it!

Janine: I thought you were gonna say, "In case people think that Jack is cursed..." [Ali laughs]

Jack: Mm, mm. Hmm.

Ali: You know?

Janine: Jack has the curse where face cards just appear wherever they are.

Jack: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: Do you believe in the power of a curse?

Janine: Hmm.

Jack: Do you believe in the power of a curse.

Janine: [laughs] Do you believe in the power of a curse.

Jack: Have you noticed how realtors are such big stars lately?

Ali: [laughs] Oh, my zero...

Jack: Thanks, Jonathan.

Ali: My zero financial— my zero agricultural progress. Okay, I am writing about my zero agricultural progress.

Jack: I am writing about my zero infrastructural progress.

Janine: I am writing about my three agricultural progress.

Jack: Okay. Are we ready to go?

Ali: I'm ready.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Okay, so this is our final season of this year, fall, and here is my letter about my zero agricultural progress.

Whomst it may concern,

I hope this letter finds you well. You may be surprised to find a letter at your doorstep and not a modest little bit of this season's plump cactuses, which I'm sure you're anxiously awaiting. We do not have much direct contact, but I thought I'd change that to extend my apologies for this year's low output. With any hope, maybe I can meet a few of your fine members at this year's fall festival, and we can discuss the intricacies of our disciplines in person. If you spent time in Nievelmarch, you know that this year has been exceptionally rainy and humid, a dreadful combination for our shared interest.

Following this letter will be a shipment of what little purified water I've been able to collect from the skies, since I know that this still has some conductive benefit in alchemy and assure that you can still provide a fair amount of tinctures and

potions for the upcoming winter season. There was a shipping delay to account for the glass, so here is a timely letter in its place, making you aware of your upcoming arrival.

Best wishes and deepest apologies,

Sable Butter.

Jack: You gotta write to the witches and say, “Oops.”

Ali: Yeah, to the alchemy guild.

Jack: Dear sister,

The harvest is coming in all over the valley. I guess when I started the farm, I thought I'd be joining them—loading the cart with vegetables and fruits and cider and gourds and taking it down into the village—but I'm not. Instead, Melissa came by with some apples she got from a friend. Perfect, red apples. Of course, most of them went into the hole, but I kept one or two. Felt a little guilty about that. I thought for so long that the hole was only for coins. I don't know why I thought that. The apples went in and some of the pear schnapps and a loaf of bread or two.

The woodshed had to come down completely. I suppose this is the season for it, but there was something wrong with the foundations, and it was leaning to the right. I made a good start on getting it fixed, but I don't have the money to do a lot of work on it. I need to be ready before the snow falls. Maybe I can trade some labor. This time last year, I thought I was going to leave the farm altogether. It was so hard. It's not got any easier, but this is the place for me. The red daisies are growing really nicely.

Your brother,

Ern

Janine: To Lucy Prise-Mornet,

Square brackets. A sketch of three very large rabbits standing around a single hexagonal pillar of crystal. Close brackets. [Ali laughs]

Vetty

Jack: Nailed it. Beautiful.

Ali: I love it.

Jack: Done and done!

Festival Planning [2:24:45]

Ali: You know, that was year two, and we do have a fall festival coming up, but because we have learned that festivals are very tricky and involve a lot of rules and a lot of roleplaying, instead, we are gonna end this episode with deciding what the festival should be and maybe meeting again. Year two, all together once more.

Jack: Oh.

Ali: At the beginning of this game, we had an idea of every year we would do a fall festival, but it would be a different festival each time. Last year for— I guess we didn't say it out loud in the recording, but for purposes of the episode description, [laughs] I named it the Fall Harvest Showcase, because it seems like kind of a, you know, people were showing their things, and people from town would come and see it. Do we have ideas for what this year should be? I have a little bit of one, but I wanted to ask the class before sharing.

Jack: I would like to see a cave festival at some point.

Ali: Whoa! Okay.

Jack: Doesn't have to be here or now, [Ali: Yeah.] but I would like to see a festival of, like, it's fall. Like, we know that they worship, like, low gods of the earth.

Ali: Uh huh.

Jack: And I think, like, maybe, like, a festival that takes place underground. Maybe not quite as deep underground as what Velvet is used to, but some sort of weird, like, lights in a cave.

Janine: It could be like a surface cave.

Ali: Yeah, a surface cave.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Janine: Like a cave in a mountain?

Jack: Yeah, I was thinking of a mountain, yeah.

Ali: I love this suggestion, because when I was thinking of festivals, I didn't realize that, like, "cave festival" was a genre of festival that could be suggested. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Jack: Mm.

Janine: Ali, what was your idea?

Ali: My idea was to do something that was more of a...less of a, hey, the workers are showing off what they're doing, and more of, like, an exclusive, like, you know, event thrown for people who are doing this sort of work to enjoy together.

Janine: Oh, like the flower festival.

Ali: Uh—

Janine: *Stardew Valley* flower festival.

Ali: Is that a thing?

Janine: Which is— it's like a dance. It's like farm prom.

Jack: Ha!

Ali: It's farm prom but for farmers?

Janine: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ali: Wow.

Janine: Well, I mean, it's like everyone in the town, in *Stardew Valley* at least.

Ali: Oh, sure, sure, sure.

Janine: You know, that's like...it's very classic for there to be, in these games, a festival where it's like, "And here's the one where you get to dance with the person you want to marry. Ooh," you know? [Ali laughs] And then everyone has, like, they have special outfits, and they'll do a little choreographed routine, and like there's plinky plunky music.

Ali: Oh my god, this is amazing. Well, the thing I was thinking of is more of, like, like a—I don't want to say conference, because that's not what it is, but sort of a thing where, like, to be able to get into it, you're part of somebody who is doing this work and not just, like, a guy. Just like, you know, a lady who sells shoes or whatever.

Janine: Right.

Ali: Unless you make the shoes. That's where this gets weird. [Janine laughs quietly] But now that cave and flower festival have been put in front of me, the idea of, like, more of a ritual type dance hall sort of situation but in a cave... [laughs quietly]

Janine: Hang on. I found a GIF of the flower festival, so I'm just gonna...

Ali: [laughs] Okay.

Janine: It's just really...it's high quality. I'll just put it in our group chat. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Let's see. Let me just check this out. [Ali laughs] Oh, hell yeah! Look at this!

Ali: Oh, I love that this was made in Blingee.

Janine: Uh huh. It's very good.

Ali: Okay, what we're seeing here is, in a game screenshot, there is a row of men and women standing across from each other, and the sprites are just sort of bouncing?
[laughs quietly] Because they're not really sophisticated enough.

Janine: Well, they're, like, lifting each side of their skirt and doing a little leg kick, you know?

Ali: Yeah, the women here are way more...

Janine: The guys are definitely bouncing.

Ali: Yeah, the guys are just bending their knees. [laughs]

Janine: Realistic, I don't know.

Ali: Yeah, fair. And then the edge here is some flowers and Blingee stuff. That's fun and funny. I love this. Anyway. Yeah, so, I...yeah, maybe a cave thing where it is the sort of thing of, like, this is an ancient...this is a...ritual isn't the right word here, but it's close enough that, like, it works. But, like, not just for funsies thing, you know? Like, it's like a...I don't know. Why all am I saying this? [laughs] I mean, it's for funsies, because it's a funny party that you throw, but like, you know, this has specific dressings and, you know, a way about it, because it's this traditional thing. Traditional is maybe the thing that I'm looking for. Even though, I mean, a harvest showcase is still traditional, but...

Jack: What if it's, like, a meal that takes place in a cave? For, like, the farmers. Rather than a big festival that the whole town comes out to, it is, like, this dinner or something.

Ali: Oh.

Jack: At a long wooden table in a cave. Everybody dresses up nicely. It's lit by candlelight. It's in summer, so there's, like, summer light coming in from the cave.

Ali: It's in fall, unfortunately.

Jack: Fuck! It's in fall. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Ali: But still. I mean, a gorgeous fall sunset coming in from the cave at 5:00 p.m. or whatever is...you know, this is the...

Jack: Everybody brings a thing, except it's not necessarily the, like, showy thing of the festival display and more like you've brought something to set on the table, or...I don't know.

Ali: Oh, we're getting closer to our "bring a thing to put into the pot" suggestion. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Jack: Anything else? Are there any other details that we want to add? I think what we're getting at is that this is kind of a more intimate festival, right? It's a...

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: It's for a smaller group of people, for the people who are producing the stuff for Nievelmarch.

Ali: Yeah. I like this.

Pre-Festival Scene [2:31:24]

Ali: Unless anybody has any ideas, do we want to—? I guess this— hmm. What's the best way to do this? Because the sort of, like, night before, hectic, you know, putting up birds and setting up all of that stuff the day before isn't as appropriate for something like this? Maybe it would be funny if, like, because this is a more formal thing, the scene would be all of us, like, getting into Ern's car? [laughs]

Jack: Oh, it's like a horse and cart. It's the oldest car.

Ali: Oh, sure, sure, sure. Yes, yeah. I don't know that we have automobiles in Nievelmarch, but we do have a sort of tricky machinery, so.

Jack: Yeah, they exist, but...

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. I wonder if it's like a Sangfielle thing where they invented the electric guitar before they invented the guitar. [Ali laughs] They have, like, cloud launchers, but they don't have a car. Yeah, what about if we are all meeting up, and I'll take us down to the cave together, and we're wearing our special outfits?

Ali: Yeah. I like this.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Who— it's the same question as last time, right? It's like, how ahead of time do you arrive? I have said: meet me at the— meet me outside my farm at, you know...let's say the dinner is at 7. Meet me outside the farm at 5, so we can get there with a nice amount of time. It's, like, a journey up the mountain to this cave.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: What time do y'all arrive?

Ali: My first idea is too funny not to go with. [laughs] The idea of Sable arriving at, like, breakfast time. [Jack laughs]

Janine: Oh my god.

Ali: Her hair, like, still in curlers and in just, like, you know, a loose shirt and shorts or whatever with, like, this big dress bag and a big makeup case and just, like, completely taking over Ern's, like, kitchen table to, like, lay out.

Jack: You've arrived seven hours early? [Ali laughs] Oh my god.

Janine: Hey, bro, heard you got jam. [Jack laughs]

Ali (as **Sable**): You know, I couldn't— I was so afraid of my dress getting, um...what's the word?

Janine: Wrinkled?

Ali (as **Sable**): Wrinkled in the trip down, and oh, the thought of doing my

makeup and it getting all, you know, caught up in the humidity and the wind and everything, and I, uh, well, I didn't get a chance to drop by for scones or anything, but they're so quick to make, and I have some flour packed in my bag, and I just thought that we would—

Jack (as **Ernan**): You want to make scones?

Ali (as **Sable**): Yes, it's very— well, yes. Well, I thought that I would, um...since I'm not dressed yet, we could make some scones here in the morning and then eat them, and then I would put my makeup on and I would put my dress on, and then Velvet would be here, and then they would be warm and ready, and we could even bring them! Hi!

Jack (as **Ernan**): Hi. Yeah, the kitchen's kind of a mess, but yeah. Absolutely.

Ali (as **Sable**): Do you have any butter?

Jack (as **Ernan**): No. [something clatters] No.

Ali (as **Sable**): [disappointed] Oh.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Did you bring any? No?

Ali (as **Sable**): No.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Can you make scones without...without butter?

Ali (as **Sable**): I don't believe so. Oh, but we'll have a great morning. How's your year been?

Jack (as **Ernan**): Uh... [sighs]

Ali (as **Sable**): The rains were so difficult, weren't they?

Jack (as **Ernan**): Yeah, it's been— look, you know, last time we met, I was in a really dark place, and it's not been easier this year, but I'm glad I...I'm glad I stayed. Actually, there's something I'd like to show you.

Jack: And I take you outside into the garden, where beside the path, there is what looks like a sort of ragged well except without sort of a stone lip. It is essentially just, like, almost like a sinkhole, like a hole in the ground about the size or width of, like, a kitchen table, just disappearing into darkness. And Ern says:

(as **Ernan**): Yeah, I sort of...it's less about the crops, at this point, and I sort of just have to look after the mouth.

Ali (as **Sable**): I beg your pardon?

Jack (as **Ernan**): Well, look, you know. [sighs] It took me a long time to realize what the farm was for, and I think that it's just really about, you know.

Jack: Sort of gestures at this hole in the ground. [Ali laughs quietly]

(as **Ernan**): You know, every day and every night, you feed stuff to the hole in the ground, and, you know, it brings you good luck.

Ali (as **Sable**): Uh—

Jack (as **Ernan**): So, what have you brought?

Ali (as **Sable**): [hesitant] Um...well, I suppose I have that flour that can't be made into scones.

Jack (as **Ernan**): That'll do. It eats anything. It eats *anything*.

Ali (as **Sable**): And it gives you good luck, you said?

Jack (as **Ernan**): Yeah!

Ali (as **Sable**): But you have all of this land here.

Jack (as **Ernan**): Yeah?

Ali (as **Sable**): And...mm...

Jack (as **Ernan**): Nothing grows. It's just— I just need to— I just need to look after it for long enough, and then I'll be able to grow anything that I want.

Ali (as **Sable**): Is...is that so?

Jack (as **Ernan**): Yup! Yeah, I've thought about it. And it got rid of most of the rest of the jam that I couldn't eat, so, heh, you know, it's kind of like a silver lining, really. But I don't feel bad about it at all. Stuff just has to go into the hole.

Ali (as **Sable**): And then you'll be lucky.

Jack (as **Ernan**): And then I'll be lucky! Yeah.

Ali (as **Sable**): H— wh— a—

Ali: [laughs] This is an in character and out of character way of stumbling through, “And how have you been lucky this year, sir?” [Ali and Jack laugh] because I don't know about that one.

Jack: I think Ern sees you looking at the barren— [Ali laughs] well, and the rest of the farm has sort of been neglected is the other thing, right? It's like, there are red flowers growing around the lip of the hole, and that is it. There is, like, dusty flowerbeds with spiderwebs, you know, between, like, sticks of plants that grew and then died. There are little low walls that have kind of been broken down. And I think Ern sees you looking at that and kind of intuitively your question without you needing to ask it and kind of laughs awkwardly and says, like:

(as **Ernan**): Well, you know, the luck...the luck doesn't come, you know, sort of like...I'm not drip fed the luck. I need to...I'll reach a point. I'll reach a point where I, you know, where it becomes lucky, and then, you know, my ship will come in, and everything will just spring up.

Ali (as **Sable**): Wonderful. Yes, well, um, I...um, I have this flour here, [Ali laughs] and I—

Jack (as **Ernan**): Careful not to fall in!

Ali: [laughs] I think Sable pulls, like, the backpack off of her back and very...just, like, continually glancing between Ern and this big hole while she pulls it out and looks at her little paper bag of flour and looks at the hole and looks at Ern and looks at the hole.

Jack: Ern nodding, smiling. [laughs]

Ali: And tosses it in.

Jack: And it just disappears. Just gone. Just down into blackness. And yeah, I guess we spend the rest of the day just sort of hanging out. I go to my room and come out in a nice little pressed shirt. I have a little tie. I'm all ready to go. What time does Velvet show up?

Janine: Probably, like, one minute later than agreed, but also she's, like, immaculately done up. [Ali laughs quietly] She has, like— her hair is, like, smooth and in big nice waves. She has a sort of satiny dress, but like, the sleeves...it has, like, long sleeves, but the sleeves connect in the back, so it's like, it's kind of like a combination of having long sleeves and having, like, a sash on your arms.

Ali: Oh.

Jack: Huh.

Janine: They sort of connect in, like, a band behind her. And she's got some gloves on. And yeah, she's ready to go, at that point.

Jack: Amazing. I mean, I think that, you know, Ern...Ern feels self conscious about the hole in the ground that you feed, [Ali laughs quietly] and so I think is glancing at Sable to be the, like, "Oh, as a guest, you have to put something in the hole." [Ali laughs] You know, like, Ern's like, "I already did my thing," but is glancing at Sable, glancing at Velvet, looking out of the window at the hole with the red flowers, sort of smiling and nodding at Sable. [Ali laughs]

Ali: For outfits, first and foremost, I'm a broken person, and I, in my head—and I can't get this out of my head—is the bridesmaids dress from *Final Fantasy XIV*. [Janine and Ali laugh]

Jack: Oh, sure.

Ali: And, like, really the reason I can't get it out of my head, because the thought of, like, the neckline with, like, a ribbon that's sort of going through it that, like, pulls it tight. I'm just gonna link this in our chat.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ali: And for anybody who wants to, you just have to google “FFXIV bridesmaid dress,” and it'll come up, but it's a...it has, like, this open neckline, right? Where it could fall off of your shoulders unless you had this ribbon that was pulled through, like, places on the top of it, like a lacing on the top of it to pull it tense around your shoulders, and I think the...this is not a one-to-one, I guess, of this, but it's that sort of thing where, like, it holds together that way, and then it's just this nice sort of, like, embroidered off-white dress that she's wearing. And her hair, which I described that she usually wears in ponytails and is sort of, like, a little bit longer than shoulder-length, is all curled up and also immaculately put together, because she was able to spend hours [Ali and Jack laugh] in Ern's house getting ready this whole day and learning a lot about the hole, I bet.

Jack: There's not much to say, you know? [Ali laughs]

Ali: And yeah, around this social awkwardness of Ern suddenly not talking about the hole, [laughs] after talking about it all day, when Velvet arrives, I think that she...she sort of does the thing of, like, Velvet's a minute late. The time is set. It's time to go. And then everybody's about to get into the car, and then she's like:

(as **Sable**): Oh, I forgot my bag inside!

Ali: And has to run back inside, and then comes back, and like, standing on the stoop or whatever and seeing Ern and Velvet there, being like:

(as **Sable**): Oh, Ern, did you tell Velvet about the hole?

Jack: [laughs] Ern knows that this is now the moment, you know? [Ali laughs] That he's not...he can't get away from it anymore, and he's like:

(as **Ernan**): Yeah. Yeah, you got to, uh...would you mind if you just...well, since you're visiting, uh, just gave the hole a gift. For good luck.

Ali (as **Sable**): Velvet, I'm so curious. Um, do...are you...? Does the hole go down to where Velvet is?

Jack: I don't think so. I mean, Velvet might have an answer to this, [Ali laughs quietly] but I think that it is...I don't think that the hole works in the way that holes usually do. [Ali laughs]

Janine: I feel like that's a question we can't answer yet, either way.

Ali: Wow.

Jack: Yeah, that's a good point.

Ali: True.

Janine: I do think Velvet...is Velvet shown the hole or just told about it?

Jack: Well, you're presumably gonna have to see it to put something in it.

Janine: Oh, I'm not gonna do that. [Ali laughs quietly]

Jack: Hmm.

Ali (as **Sable**): Well, we should be making our way.

Jack: Ern, foul mood. [Ali laughs] Just—

Janine: No, wait. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. I feel like...

Jack: Awkward sulking.

Janine: Maybe Velvet, like, digs around in her purse or something. 'Cause, like, she doesn't have a lot. Her purse is basically empty. There's, like, a handkerchief in there, you know? What would she find in her purse? Uh...like, a cardboard tube that used to have some lip balm in it. [Jack laughs]

Ali: Wow.

Janine: And she just, like, has it in her hand, so it's not really clear what it is, and then, like, crouches down and tosses it in.

Jack: Wham! There it goes. Okay, foul mood averted. Brittle smile. Into the cart, off towards the festival.

[[“The Farmers’ Almanac”](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]