

## Autumn in Hieron 10: Chekhov's Torture Elf

Transcriber: Hannah (@chiropteira)

DRE: Also Keith, I just adjusted my microphone, so sorry for killing your ears.

AUSTIN: He's not really sorry.

NICK: Testing.

DRE: Oh nah, fuck Keith.

[keyboard noises]

ART: Aw, poor Keith. Poor Keith.

AUSTIN: He hasn't gotten any of these yet, so.. Y'know, these could all be just garbage.

DRE: What a *dick*.

[MUSIC- Autumn not Winter by Jack de Quidt- begins playing]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the table-

[popping noises in background]

AUSTIN: ..an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterisation, and fun interaction between good friends. As always we are presented by streamfriends.tv and by runbutton.net. My name's Austin Walker, joining me today are: Nick Sondgeroth.

NICK: Hi, I'm Nick. I was making popping noises to test my-

AUSTIN: You were.

NICK: ..my sibilance while you were doing the intro there, sorry.

AUSTIN: Ooh, it's a good word though.

NICK: Ssssibilance.

AUSTIN: Ooh.

[Someone making more popping noises]

ART: Does that work? I don't --What?

AUSTIN: I don't --Don't --That's not..

NICK: Sort of. That's- Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh, we're all gonna do it, we're all gonna start popping.

[Nick laughing]

[Dre and Art speak at the same time]

ART: Then gonna start walking.

DRE: Nick, which, which wristwatch is the Swiss wristwatch?

NICK: [laughs] Yeah there you go. Yeah, Dre knows what's up.

[Dre laughing]

AUSTIN: Andrew Lee Swan is here with us.

DRE: Hey! I'm Andrew, you can find me on twitter @andrewleeswan.

AUSTIN: Nick, did you say where you were? I don't think you did.

NICK: You can find me @drevilbones, that's it.

AUSTIN: And, Arthur Tebbel.

ART: Hey, uh, twitter, @atebbel.

AUSTIN: Good work.

ART: Me is there.

AUSTIN: Today --Oh, oh brother.

[Dre laughing]

AUSTIN: We're gonna continue our Dungeon World campaign with this group. At this point it seems clear that there's Boat Party and there's like Terrible Winter Ice-

DRE: Right [laughs]

AUSTIN: ..Dead Lands, Misery, Wordlessness,

DRE: Is it too-

AUSTIN: Godlessness.. Party.

[MUSIC- Autumn not Winter by Jack de Quidt- fades out in the background]

DRE: Is it too late to petition.. That Thorondir should have gone with the other group?

AUSTIN; [pauses] The thing is that you, Thron-, Throndir was always gonna be on this group.

DRE: Yeaah.

AUSTIN: You were the one character who couldn't move from this group.

DRE: Had, uh, I know [laughs]

ART: Is it too late to ask what we did to make you mad at us?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I don't know. I think you guys should just spent some time reflecting and uuh think about it.

DRE: It's probably my fault. I probably should have been like, yeah the Mark of the Erasure it's a, it's a big beach.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah.

[Art laughing]

DRE: It's just a beach, and everybody drinks margaritas all day. It's ruled by Jimmy Buffet.

NICK: Yep.

AUSTIN: Yeah that would have [unintelligible]

DRE: It's ruled by Jimmy Buffet elf.

ART: It was too many, too many mojitos that caused this, this apocalypse.

NICK: I don't..

AUSTIN: [laughing] Guys don't spoil the big mystery.

NICK: It was going well until the end there and then I think you actually maybe made it worse?  
Than our current predicament?

DRE: Ugh, Buffet elves.

NICK: Maybe? I don't..

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. As always we'll be playing Dungeon World which is by Sage Latorra and Adam Koebel.

[Art laughing loudly in the background]

AUSTIN: It's a hack of Apocalypse World by D Vincent Baker. Our agenda today is to portray a fantastic world, fill the lives with, fill the character's lives with adventure, and to play to find out what happens. Speaking of what happens, what, what happened last time we played?

ART: Wait wait wait, I have, I have one more, I have a personal goal? And I feel like I should add that to the end of our group goals?

DRE: Uhuh?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Sure.

ART: And my, my personal goal is for, at some point, for, for an army of zombies to be coming at me and they're just groaning [zombie voice] 'Wasting away in Margaritaville'.

[Austin, Dre and Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: 'Cause they're actually wasting away. I see.

NICK: And then-

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: .. and then some are going [zombie voice] 'Saaaalt'.

ART: [zombie voice] Saaaalt.

NICK: 'Cause they're looking for their lost shaker of salt.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ART: Uhuh.

[short silent pause]

DRE: I'm gonna not add onto this joke, I'm just gonna let it die.

[Art laughing]

AUSTIN: Andrew, what happened last week? Dre? What happened?.. Or, the last time we recorded.

DRE: Okay so we deci-, we decided that we had to go to the Mark of the Erasure. I don't think Thrandir is still one hundred percent certain why-

AUSTIN: [laughing] That's true.

DRE: ..Fantasmo and Hadrian are going to the Mark of the Erasure, but they started marching in there. We killed an owlbear! That was pretty rad.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: Then we ran into a cursed lake where there was like an ice monster?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: It was like, it was like a man, but he was made out of ice. I forget exactly how we killed it but I know Art punched it and I shoved a torch in it's face, and some..

AUSTIN: It was the torch that did it, the torch that killed it. Yeah.

DRE: Yeah! Okay.

AUSTIN: Good work.

DRE: So, so,, we killed it and then the, and the lake became less frozen. I mean, it's still cold because it's in the Mark of the Erasure-

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: ..But not less frozen. We made our way around the lake to a cabin where we found a old goblin man who let us in and explained to us the phenomenon of the nameless.

AUSTIN: Right. Which were..?

DRE: I'm gonna let, I'm gonna let someone else talk about the nameless.

[Austin laughing]

DRE: Because I wanna see if anyone else remembers.

ART: Can, can we get a quick technical note? Is anyone else having people break up or is that my problem?

AUSTIN: No, I'm hearing a bit of that. I'm hearing a bit of that.

NICK: Yeah.

DRE: You broke up for me a little bit earlier Art, but everybody else was fine.

AUSTIN: We can just quickly re-host this call, If you want. Who is the best.. Like, Dre and Nick are probably more central than me?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Probably Nick.

NICK: Okay.

DRE: I can host.

ART: Oh sh-

[All audio cuts out completely]

KEITH: [loudly] Boop.

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: Yeah.

DRE: Hey Keith, have fun editing that part!

AUSTIN: He'll be fiiiine.

NICK: Sorry Keith, I love you.

AUSTIN: He's a prooo... He's a, he's not a pro he doesn't get paid for this. So then, the nameless that Dre just brought up. Does everyone remember who the nameless were and like what caused it?

ART: What caused it? No, I remember the, his older gods.. He had like fetishes of them.

AUSTIN: No that was something else actually. Those were just his older gods. The nameless were something else.

ART: I'm lost then.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Nick, you wanna give this a shot? Before I become a lore nerd.

NICK: I think it was they, it was caused by.. The, the elves.. No. That was a side effect of the, the elves in the erasure no longer speaking the names of their gods?

AUSTIN: That was part of it. That was, that was definitely a part of it.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: So, I'll just do it so that Dre isn't too much of a keener.

[Dre laughing]

AUSTIN: There were these things called word eaters-

DRE: God, it's grade school all over again.

AUSTIN: I know, it is. I listen, y'know, I don't wanna shame Art or Nick, so..

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I mean, they should be ashamed. No, no they shouldn't.

ART: I remember the cliffhanger.

AUSTIN: What was the cliffhanger?

ART: I, I couldn't remember the name of, of my, of my deity.

AUSTIN: Right, and then Nick was also having some problems. What were your problems in general last game? [laughing] Or Fantasma's problems?

NICK: Oh, I have to, Fantasma forgot the invisibility spell.

AUSTIN: Right.

NICK: Or, or part of it. A, a major part of it so that Fantasma has to concentrate to stay visible now.

AUSTIN: Right, and the key-

NICK: And when he's invisible he's in some other like parallel shadow dimension or something

AUSTIN: Right, yeah.. So briefly the name eaters, or sorry, the wordeaters were things that you were told kind of licked and sucked away at, and sometimes even ate, devoured whole words from people's minds. And the nameless were the goblins who had lost their language and become kind of roving bands-

NICK: Oh right.

AUSTIN: ..of, of kind of drive, driven on instinct alone. They have a lost culture. And, and the person who told you that was.. The, the goblin, the old goblin man who kind of brought you guys in, and fed you, and gave you something warm to drink.

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: Did we ever learn his name?

AUSTIN: No one *asked* it. Which is, y'know..

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm just sayin'.

DRE: Ohh man, that is mmm. That's disappointing.



ART: I mean-

DRE: Throndir wouldn't ask, y'know..

NICK: Somebody would have asked.

AUSTIN: He thinks-

NICK: 'Cause we were hanging out there for *hours* weren't we?

AUSTIN: He th-

DRE: If anyone would have asked it would have been Hadrian.

NICK: I mean, we're still there.

AUSTIN: You were hanging out there for a whole night. You slept there, yeah you..

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Last, the cliffhanger kicked in last time at like bedtime because, because it was Hadrian saying his, his goodnight prayer when he realised he'd lost the name of his god. Yeah, I think Hadrian had that like long extended chat with him, basically.

ART: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you know his name is, his name is Mee kosk.

DRE: Mee kosk?

AUSTIN: Yeah. M E E space K O S H.

DRE: Okay.

NICK: That's a good, good goblin name.

AUSTIN: It is a good solid name, solid name. The some of the other things just to kind of make sure that were back in this mode. You guys were in the middle of the, of the --And like to fill in some of the gaps here. You guys were in the Aldred pineland which are the which is the area around the, the Erasura where where it's kind of .. cold in a way that the local climate shouldn't be y'know. That's that not just out of season but the, the weather here in general is just --You

know this is out of place based on the, the weather in Velas which isn't so far away. You, you know, Hadrian and Fantasma that you're there to head to one of the other marks that was on the map that you found in the first tower that you went to.

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: And that is, was at the, the cent of where the Mark of the Erasure is here. And you're headed deeper and deeper into the woods for that... Aaand, I think that's pretty much it, I think that's all the other big stuff, I think that's everything that..

DRE: There is, there is one thing that Mee Kosh said that I thought was interesting that Art or Nick seem to have forgotten.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: And that was Mee Kosh accused me of bringing the both of them to the erasure to be tortured by other snow elves.

AUSTIN: Yes.

[Dre laughing]

AUSTIN: That is what happened.

ART: Oh yeah.

NICK: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: That's a good point. This is what happens when our recording is two weeks apart.

DRE: I thought about letting it slip but..

ART: No I forgot that that day.

[Austin laughing]

DRE: Yeah I know, like he said it and you all just let it go for the rest of that recording... And, while in character I would obviously never bring it up. I feel like that is, that is a point that could lead to some good, some, some good character building, so I didn't want to let it just slip by the wayside.

AUSTIN: Good call.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Good call.

NICK: No, that's a good, goood thing to remind us [laughs].

[Dre laughing]

NICK: For sure.

ART: Well, we'll be reminded when you start torturing us.

[Austin laughing]

ART: Then we'll be like 'Oh! That dude warned us!'.

DRE: [whispering] That was the plan. Why did I ruin my plan??

NICK: Nooo.

AUSTIN: That's what we call foreshadowing in the storytelling game. It's just a character says 'Oh, this other character's gonna do this thing', and then later he does it.

DRE: The ooold Chekhov's gun and torture device.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Right. The old Chekhov's torture elf.

[Dre and Nick laughing]

DRE: Okay, you, look-

ART: It's like the opposite of-

DRE: Man, we're like ten minutes in and we already found the episode title [laughing]

AUSTIN: Boom! Nailed it. You're welcome Keith.

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: Keith doesn't name these episodes, I do. I don't know why Keith.. Okay... So you go to bed that night-

NICK: You're welcome future Austin.

AUSTIN: Yeah [laughs] I guess so. Oh, also in the future I changed my name to Keith, that's why I said thankyou Keith.

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: That explains that. So again the last thing, kind of the last thing that is happening as you're going to bed that night. One, this is the thing I also just left out that was: the nameless goblin did take the, this man's cattle, which you heard.

DRE: Mmm. That's right.

AUSTIN: Them like kind of braying and and calling for help and he kind of just let them go as if like 'alright, this is just how it happens'. And the second thing was again that that Hadrian had forgotten the name of his god So I, I guess we should start there as as as Fantasma drifts off to sleep and vanishes [laughs] from existence-

DRE: Oh man.

AUSTIN: ..or, from view. Because when he isn't asleep, because when he isn't y'know conscious he can't stay stay, stay focussed so he can't stay visible.

DRE: Oh.. Oh *man*.

AUSTIN: But you know-

ART: He probably like comes in and out in his dreams in a really like fuckin' weird to look at way.

AUSTIN: Ohh *yeah*.

DRE: Man! Yeah.

AUSTIN: Toootally. Hadrian-

DRE: Or like just bits and pieces of him fade in and out?

AUSTIN: Yeah, do you see that Hadrian since like, do you not sleep that night? [laughs]

ART: Right, no I don't sleep... So yeah I guess, I guess that's one of the things I watch is-

DRE: Wait wait wait, wouldn't, wouldn't you have to sleep though? Because one of your things was that your blessing was that you didn't need the sleep but now that you can't do your ritual do you have to sleep again?

AUSTIN: Well no, because his. No his, his.. His like vow to keep that benefit was to comfort those in need no matter who they are.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: And, and it was forbidden to suffer an evil creature alive. So I think despite the fact that he's lost this name, that effect is still in play.

DRE: Okay.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I don't think he's --I think he even, I think you still at the moment probably feel a connection to you god and that's kind of what makes not knowing the name so creepy.

DRE: Hmm.

ART: Right. Well it's, its like, it's like that feeling right? Like, I must feel like it's on the tip of my tongue, right?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: Like..

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, you're probably actually really close to it, right? Like, you're, you're going over other --You're like: Samol? Samanta?

ART: Yeah, it's-

AUSTIN: Samantine?

ART: It's three syllables, so-

AUSTIN: Samot? No, Samot's that other guy.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: It's three syllables, I've heard it a lot. Like, [very frustrated] Arggghhh. And it's just like eight hours then probably, right?

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: Just like sitting there, y'know like just like pounding my head against my own..

[Nick laughs]

ART: Like not literally but like that like-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: ..endless frustration.

AUSTIN: Mhm, yeah definitely.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: And like probably a little bit of rationalising as we get toward morning and like this isn't happening, right? It's like, well you know the name is important but like my devotion is probably the most important thing.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: Y'know, we're gonna get through this, me.

[Austin and Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: So at some point --So yeah again, all through the night you see Fantasma drifting in and out of existence. [laughs] In this kind of --On his --I'm guessing you probably just have like --You're all just sleeping on the floor, is what I envision. This guy has like-

DRE: Yeah, on whatever those rolls are, like bed rolls.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Exactly. Honestly, this has been the best night of sleep you've gotten so far, right? Like you're indoors, it's fairly warm in here.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: You had something hot to eat that wasn't what you'd expected to eat that morning, y'know? Like, that's always a nice thing. So, let's say it's the next morning-

NICK: I mean, Fantasma has long since like trained to to do simple prestidigitation in his sleep so he actually sleeps on a an air mattress? Basically he floats is what I'm saying.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Does he have, does he have like a blanket on? Is there like a blanket effectively hovering over the ground where you'd be invisible?

NICK: Yeah I mean that would be part of the adventuring kit right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think so, I think that's fair. I think like your camping gear includes something.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Especially because like you know you're going into a place that's cold. Like, yeah you brought a blanket like.. [laughs]

NICK: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: That's fair.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So the light comes in, starts to come in through the frosted windows of, of Mee Kosh's little hut.. and .. y'know Fantasma and Thrandir can, can kind of wake up bit by bit. I think Mee Kosh is probably up at dawn too. And like immediately leaves to go start doing, to go start cleaning up from last night like raid basically.

DRE: How, how-

ART: I mean I, I probably offer to help him if.. 'Cause I'm just sitting there right?

AUSTIN: Mm. He like nods and like let you come out and there is blood from the-

DRE: Uuurgh.

AUSTIN: ..the cattle that kind of resisted. And you can see that you know there are some of the, there are definitely bits of the house that were like chopped into for fun and and you know just shit is pushed over. It's just one of those --It's like, it's like teen vandals, y'know?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's like uncontrolled id. And you can see that they like, they've been dragged off. Into the, into the snow. At a certain point you can like, you can like see where their footsteps are, and at a certain point the footsteps of these creatures stop and there's just like drag marks. It's like drag marks mixed with blood here and there.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: He just, so he goes about his like daily morning right which is like first he obviously he cleans up this mess. And then he goes to the back where it looks like he's, he's despite the cold weather is growing some sort of like tuber or something? And he actually like digs up a couple of like ice potatoes and is like-

DRE: Ah yeah!

ART: Mmm.

AUSTIN: He like feels it like to see how it's doin'. Like, oh it's pretty good. Actually that's a good question, in general here, Throndir, what do people eat and drink? And like what, what's food like here? Like, what are animals like here, like naturally?

DRE: Yeah. Ohh..

AUSTIN: What do you think?

DRE: I think like , I mean since it's colder climate it's a lot, it's probably a lot of like, really you need a lot of calories. So it's a lot of really dense food. So I'd imagine probably like a lot of red meat from like large animals, like you know bison or buffalo. Probably some game, you know, like a, like a moose or, or something like that. And then like really like dense, dense starch vegetables.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: So probably like things that keep for a while. So like onions and potatoes. Leaks.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: A lot of, a lot of stews, a lot of y'know, just, just stuff that you can eat quickly that will sustain you for a while.

AUSTIN: Mhm. So, I guess a little while later everyone's up and and you know you guys can go about your journey if you want. What do you, what do you do?

NICK: How does, I actually I, I just thought of something. How does Fantasma actually wake up-  
[Austin laughing]

NICK: ..if he is basically in a otherworldly sensory deprivation tank?



AUSTIN: I think you wake up naturally after your, you've slept like your whole night.

NICK: Okay, sure.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? Like you've gotten your night of sleep.

NICK: Is that a thing p-, normal people do? 'Cause I don't, I don't know if I've ever done that.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah if I, if you went to bed and didn't set an alarm, like, you would still wake up at, at least-

NICK: I would sleep forever. Nope.

AUSTIN: You would sleep forever?

NICK: I would sleep forever.

AUSTIN: Fantasma's an elf, so, and elves have this thing where they wake up [laughing].

NICK: Yeah, okay.

[Art laughing]

AUSTIN: That's the thing.

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: I think but --That's fine though, right? The Idea of that Throndir wakes up like early, y'know maybe not as early as Mee Kosh and obviously Hadrian didn't sleep at all.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But that like Fantasma is just like kicking it in bed for --On his hover bed.

[Nick laughs]

AUSTIN: ..for an extra hour or two when other people are going about their morning. Is kind of in-character to him, right?

NICK: Sure, yeah totally.

DRE: Yeah. Like, like Throndir's used to waking up and like doin' the chores for the day like.. like people who grew up on a farm.

AUSTIN: The other way that this can work is at a certain point you hear, he makes the sound of a heavy sigh and the the invisible servant that you described to me the other day, remember? Or a couple weeks ago?

NICK: Oh yeah. Right.

AUSTIN: Could lean in and like shake you.. Awake.

[Art laughing]

NICK: Okay. I like, I like that better. Yeah, I like that.

AUSTIN: Yeah, let's go with that, let's go with that. Still gives you a little bit of time to sleep in. Y'know like, it's, it's still like.. It has to be so late as to where-

NICK: Well-

AUSTIN: ..he thinks he can step in-

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: ..and not be a, a, you won't be upset at him.

NICK: I'm still his master-

AUSTIN: Right.

NICK: ..so he knows me.

AUSTIN: Exactly.

NICK: Yeah but, but also like Fantasma's probably a little startled.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

NICK: Because he's not used to seeing him.

[Art laughing]

AUSTIN: Right. And *nothing* else.

NICK: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Right like, floating in a void of nothingness [laughing].

DRE: Mhm.

NICK: Just me and this little on-armed stone man.

[Art laughing]

AUSTIN: And not even you. You can't see yourself either [laughs]

NICK: Yeah true.

AUSTIN: Right like, you look down and you don't have a body. You're like an FPS character, you know?

[Art laughing]

DRE: You're doom guy now.

AUSTIN: You are! So-

NICK: Man, I hope we don't have to do any platforming.

AUSTIN: That would be bad. But yeah you, you're able to bring yourself back into, into view, and being able to see things once you like shake off the morning and concentrate a little bit. But yeah I --Y'know Mee Kosh kind of explains that while he's, he's happy to to let you sleep here there just isn't enough food to keep you here indefinitely. And you know, if, if you'd like to stay for one more day or so that'd be fine but y'know, he has to get back to work.

NICK: Yeah.

ART: I'm gonna, I'm gonna --I, I have questions.

DRE: Wait, I have questions too.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART (as Hadrian): I, I need to know, I need to know how to get, how to get words back.

AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): Hmm... Very few.. have gotten their words back. Most.. most figure out how to live without them.

ART(as Hadrian): I can't I can't do that.

AUSTIN(as Mee Kosh): Hmm.

ART(as Hadrian): I've, I've lost, I've lost a very important word.

[Silent pause]

AUSTIN(as Mee Kosh): Hmm. The elves maybe or.. Hmm.. If he knew still, Kindrali...

AUSTIN: Did we talk about Kindrali last time? I can't remember if we talked about Kindrali.

NICK: It sounds familiar. I wanna say it's..

DRE: [hesitantly] Yeah?

NICK: ..someone that lives in a cave?

AUSTIN: Yes! Okay. He does live in a cave. So Kindrali, I think he explained to you last night, and if not let's just say he did during this entire, overnight, during that long talk, that Kindrali-

DRE: No he did, I remember the name.

AUSTIN: Okay, Kindrali was he who remembers the day.

NICK: Oh right, yeah.

AUSTIN: And he has also become wordless, but only very recently.

AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): Hmm.. If he had his words Kindrali, Kindrali.

[Long silent pause]

ART (as Hadrian): I know, I know we're on an important quest.. I know that that we we have, we have tasks ahead of us. And that we, we've promised powers both mundane and and divine that we would, we would accomplish them. But I, I've lost I've lost holy words.. And, and I need to, I need to go get them.

[Silent pause]

AUSTIN: You're addressing the party here, right?

ART: Yeah, I'm addressing the party.

NICK: Oh..

NICK (as Fantasma): Of course! I have lost magic words.. I cannot stay in this strange, invisible weirdness.

[Austin laughing quietly]

DRE: [thinking noise] Yeah I mean for Throndir he's, he's struggling with the, this idea that like what if he's lost something his entire life? Like he doesn't even know what's missing.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

NICK: Oh man, I didn't even think about that.

DRE: So [laughs] --'Cause he's, he's been living in the Mark of the Erasure his whole life. So he, he looks over to.. to Mee Kosh and says:

DRE (as Throndir): Are you, are you gonna be okay? If they come back are you gonna be okay?

AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): I know how to deal with them.

[Sound of things falling, Nick laughing]

DRE (as Throndir): Well, when we find [laughs] when we find this Kindrali-

NICK: And then he throws a bunch of maces on the ground, or what?

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah.

DRE: Right, yeah. He just pulls out an A-K and- [laughs]

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: Yeah [laughs] Blat!

[Nick laughing, Dre sighing]

ART: There's no like polite way to be like: okay, but if you need the three of us to come back here and kill a thousand people-

DRE: Right.

[Nick laughing]

ART: ..we can probably do that.

DRE: You gave us dinner so now we'll murder people for you. This is how, this is how agreements work in pen and paper.

AUSTIN: I think he can like, I think he's smart enough to, to hear that like intent though, in your tone.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: And he just kind of does like a laugh, like a, like a  
AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): [laughs dryly] I know *very old words*.

DRE: Ooh.

ART: Ooh.

DRE: Well Throndir also says:

DRE (as Throndir): Whenever we find this Kindrali and my friends get their words back, I have a lot of questions that I wanna ask you.

AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): Hm...

AUSTIN: And he kind of like [sounding confused] Okay? Like y'know are you gonna stay? What's up? What're you doing?

ART: No I think we're gonna-

DRE: No.

ART: Oh, I guess --Oh.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Like what, where's this cave?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: Like, can we get-

AUSTIN: He calls you back, he actually calls you back. And.. he.. he says --Mm. What would he call these? What would he call.. Mm.

AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): Skins, give me your skins.  
AUSTIN: And he points to your water skins, your wine skins.

ART: Oh. He doesn't want us to step outside our bones?

AUSTIN: [laughing] Right. But he, but you definitely have that thought for the brief moment, right? Oh right, goblins, he wants your skins. Right.

[Art and Nick laughing]

DRE: Okay yeah, I give him my-

AUSTIN: Yeah, you give them over. He, he , he fills them with some sort of hot drink that he's prepared. A sort of a tea, presumably.

AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): Mm.

AUSTIN: And he gives them all back.

DRE (as Throndir): What, what're these for?

AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): For, for you? [laughs] It's very cold.

[Art and Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: And he laughs like [laughs/sighs] snow elves.

DRE: [embarrassed noise] What're you gonna do? [sighs]

AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): Travel well. Keep your important words close. But not too close. It's how they get them.

ART (as Hadrian): Thankyou.

NICK: Before, as we're like walking away Fantasma's like trying to peer inside of his water skin.

[Austin laughs]

NICK: To like analyse whatever it is. And then he just turns around and yells;

NICK (as Fantasma): [shouting in the distance] You didn't spit in this did you?

[Dre laughing]

AUSTIN: A deep laugh.

AUSTIN (as Mee Kosh): [laughs deeply a few times]

DRE: Aw man.

AUSTIN: Like-

DRE: Gosh, you're the best, buddy.

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: He's a good guy. So you're now, again, you're, you're past that lake. That kind of cuts this area in two. And y'know, you know that south-east-ish is the direction you're hoping to go, in general. Thrandir you know that your group is also south-east in some direction. Like your old snow elf buds.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I guess you could probably see like, instead of south-east, to the *south* you can see some, some hills and. and low like mountains and foothills kind of. Which is maybe where a cave would be?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But there's lots of caves. Y'know?

ART: Approximately where are we on this map?

AUSTIN: I'm gonna say.. like.. here.

ART: Okay.

DRE: Oooh.

AUSTIN: Which is, which is-

ART: That was a, that was a nice effect.

AUSTIN: Yeah it's a pretty good effect. Which is like, y'know fairly into the Era-, the, the --You're near the part that hasn't ever been mapped. Or hasn't been mapped since the erasure, the event happened. Right? You're getting there. So --Those aren't me, the ones that just --Those lips were not me. [laughs] ..But yeah. Like where your lines kind of stop on the map here. To the south-east of Velas, in past this, y'know --If everyone's looking at the map that Janine made us, you're --There's the big burn mark around the actual bit of the map that's burnt through. We're in the burned part still. But quickly approaching where there's no map at all.



DRE: I appreciate that you charted the meandering course that Hadrian took us on.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yep, uhuh. I had to. That is what happened.

[Nick laughing]

ART: [laughs] Look-

AUSTIN: That, is just honest.

ART: ..a lot of times when you're travelling you just have to make right angle turns in the middle of the woods.

DRE: Uhuh?

ART: That's an important part of travel.

DRE: Sure.

[Austin laughs]

ART: You just, you walk a little bit-

AUSTIN: Is that one of your religious beliefs, or..?

[Nick laughing]

ART: ..then you do a sharp left, then a sharp right, then another sharp right. 'Cause you never know.

AUSTIN: Mhm. So which way do you guys go? Again, I think what he basically said was Kindrali could help you if he had his words, maybe the snow elves could help. But probably there's problems there too.

DRE: Throndir just-

NICK: Oh I say let's go and find Kindrali.

DRE: Yeah. That's --Yep.

ART: I wanna go, go see what another god knows about words. Or whatever we're calling this guy.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Yeah so, you can head --Again, I'm guessing the smartest thing you could do here would be to just head to the mountains.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's where caves are, right? Up against things?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'd say you travel for about half the day.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: You leave fairly early, right? You leave by eight or nine in the morning, at the latest. And by one or two you're at the, the kind of foothills of, of the mountain range that that is here. Kind of the --If you're like, again, if you're looking at the map. There are like low foothills coming across from like, you know where the archives are? To the east.

NICK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Those are like real, like those are like *Rockies*, like those are like real mountains. This is like loooow alpenes like its, its probably smaller than the the Appalachian mountain chain. You know what I mean? So..

DRE: Okay.

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: The kind of stuff that you'd find in in the north east. And.. I think on.. While you're nearing there.. You start to see signs of other people's activity. You see an axe, a kind of shoddy half, y'know, not half-built. Like an axe, it looks like an axe that was once well maintained and like a well-made axe that has since been gerryrigged to stay together at all. Y'know like, tied together with twine and rope from three different source. Dropped in the ground with blood on it's, on it's blade. You see an arrow stuck into a tree. And at one point you find the corpse of a goblin... It's a, it's a small leathery creature and, y'know, whatever vitality was once in it is now gone. It hasn't frozen over yet, but there's no warmth to the body as you approach it.

DRE: Hmm.

AUSTIN: But it's skin has begun to, to already lose colour.

DRE: So this is *somewhat* recent?

AUSTIN: Right, right.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like, probably from today and not yester-, like, it didn't freeze overnight.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which it probably would have done.

DRE: Does Throndir notice like any, is there like any tracks, or trails, or any clues of where whoever did this went?

AUSTIN: Do you have any moves about tracking stuff?

DRE: I have Hunt and Track. 'When you follow a trail of clues left behind by passing creatures, roll plus WIS'.

AUSTIN: [quietly] Go ahead and do that.

DRE: Okay.

[pause]

AUSTIN: Sorry, I was far away from the mic there for a second.

DRE: It happens to the best of us.

AUSTIN: It does.

ART: On 10+ ease on down that road.

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: That's not it, that can't be it. Is that it?

DRE: Oh good, I got a four. Perfect.

AUSTIN: Oh boy. Okay.

DRE: I'm gonna mark this xp really quick [laughing]

AUSTIN: Yep. There's always.. Let me, let me get at my, your sheet.

DRE: Thrandir, the best elven ranger that you could find this adventure.

[Art laughing]

AUSTIN: Listen, if you're gonna have a ranger-

NICK: I mean, beggars can't be choosers.

AUSTIN: This is true. This is true. Alright-

ART: Yeah you should see some of the jokes on the last trip.

[Austin and Nick laughing]

AUTIN: So I think you do follow, you do find a trail... You find.. So you see that beside the goblin's feet there are, there are larger feet, that are, that were like chasing it. Like you recognise the f-, the.. you recognise the length and distance of, of running footsteps, right? It's one of the things that you know as a ranger. And you can see that there had been a pursuit, and then it was struck down and left here. And then, you kind, you can, you can almost see it happening. Someone else kind of looked around, took a few paces in a couple different directions. And then you can almost see in their footsteps where they caught wind of their second bit of prey.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Because then they pick up the pace and start sprinting in another direction and you begin to lead the party that way... It's about, it's not like --I don't wanna say that this is like the opposite direction of where you're going. But now you're going like parallel to the mountains.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: Instead of towards them. Right?

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: .. After about twenty minutes of walking you notice.. the sharp crack of a branch. What do you do? Lets say, lets say Thrandir for this as he's kind of leading the party, as a tracker here.

DRE: Oh man. A sharp crack of a branch?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: I would imagine he, he just out of instinct, he pulls for his bow-

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: ..and looks around to see where that noise is coming from.

[silent pause]

AUSTIN: Glve me a... give me a defy danger dexterity.

DRE: Okay... [typing noises] Eleven!

AUSTIN: Nice.

DRE: What's up!

AUSTIN: An arrow.. like flies just past your your face you dodge just in time. Like you like do one of those like, I'm looking around, I'm looking around, oh thats an ar-! [surprised noise] dodge.

[Dre laughs]

AUSTIN: Y'know like-

DRE: Yep.

AUSTIN: ..*just* in time. And then you hear the soft patter of footstep as, as whatever shot at you seems to disappear, The treeline here, like the trees here are *dense* to where there are directions that you can look and not see anymore. Or like, not see nature. Do you know what I mean? You just see trees, you just see --There's no distance, you don't see the horizon.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So it's easy to get lost in here. Closer and closer to the mounds the more they open up and the, there's more space. But here you can tell there are definitely, there's a lot of place to hide if you know --Like you know how to hide in the in the woods.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: What do you do as a group here?

ART: Ooh! This can, I can --I think I'm going to I'm gonna, I'm gonna use a move.

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

ART: I'm gonna 'I am The Law' them.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: ..I [thinking noises]

AUSTIN: Good-

ART: Oh this is going to be hard not knowing the name of my-

AUSTIN: [gleefully] It suuure is!

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: [still gleeful] Lets see if you can do it at all!

ART: I have to give an order based on divine authority.

AUSTIN: [skeptical] Uhuh?

ART: I can do this.

AUSTIN: [still skeptical] Yeah.

ART: Names aren't important, some religions you can't even use the name.

AUSTIN: Uhuh..

DRE: Yeah. Throndir'd doesn't know any names.. So...

ART: Well that doesn't [distressed noises]

[Austin and Dre laughing, silent pause]

ART (as Hadrian): Tell me, why I'm forgetting information I don't remember.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART (as Hadrian): [authoritatively] I am the, I am-  
ART: Oh [frustrated noise] I wish I had that stupid list of my dumb titles.  
ART (as Hadrian): I am.. I am Hadrian, vessel of the divine king, ruler of this land, now..  
again and forever. I demand that you show yourselves.

[silent pause]

AUSTIN: Is there a roll associated with this?

ART: There is. I was wondering if you were gonna say 'and that doesn't work'. I was gonna-

AUSTIN: Nope! That works. That's, that fits your, your need.

[silent pause]

AUSTIN: Oh! Nice. You did it.

ART: Oh I [unintelligible] one thing.

DRE: Wow.

ART: Alright, so I get a, I get a plus one forward so they can: do what I say, show themselves-

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

ART: ..back away cautiously and flee, which might show themselves-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: ..or attempt to attack me, which probably makes them show themselves.

AUSTIN: Right, right.. Hmm... You hear them, you hear. Here's what I'll give you with, with that. You actually hear voices and you ear like in, in a kind of.. Like this is a common tongue because Thrandir speaks it. Thrandir you didn't, you didn't learn like the Valeysian language when you moved there, right? Do you also know secret snow elf language? Is there a, is there a different snow elf language.

DRE: Yeah I feel like there probably is a snow elf language.

AUSTIN: Okay.

[Dre and Austin speak at the same time]

DRE: I would say-

AUSTIN: That makes sense. That makes like a lot of sense for there have to, to have been.

DERL Yeah but I feel like they probably speak it in the way that there is like a special language for like some of like the Mennonite-esc communities that live in Pennsylvania.

AUSTIN: Riiight. Right.

DRE: So like he, he speaks it because like it is taught to him because its an important part of his culture.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: But I don't think that is like their primary tongue.

AUSTIN: But how would they know the modern language? Because they've been cut off, right? Like they've been living in this place for hundreds of years.

DRE: Right. I feel like-

AUSTIN: Their language would have been a different thing than the, the language in Velas or anywhere else, right?

DRE: Yeah. But I feel like the, they originally founded it like after the Erasure.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: And I feel like after the erasure things like their original language would have like-

AUSTIN: Wait. Actually so that's a question. I thought they formed it beforehand?

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: That was like very --The original pitch to me was --And we'll get there today, I hope.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Was that it was a response to --That they had been, that they were doomsday hoarders.

DRE: Yeah.



AUSTIN: Was what your pitch was to me.

DRE: In my mind they had done that after the Erasure happened-

AUSTIN: Mm.

DRE: ..and that was like their response. Like, well everything went to crap and the only way that we're gonna be able to survive is if we, y'know, stick to our roots.

AUSTIN: Right. See my thing there though is like doomsday hoarders prepare beforehand.

DRE: That's true.

AUSTIN: That's why they I-, that's why they *imagine* they live through the doomsday.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? Is, is-

DRE: Yeah. No, I can see, I can see that for sure.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? But maybe they didn't codify, I don't know that the *society* existed. I don't think that they were like, they weren't a *community* of doomsday hoarders beforehand, y'know?

DRE: Right.

[Dre and Austin speak overlapping each other]

AUSTIN: Like they were-

DRE: Or like there were probably like a couple that did this-

AUSTIN: You're right, you're right.

DRE: ..and they were like deep like crazy people.

AUSTIN: Right. Yes.

DRE: But then they're the ones that made it.

AUSTIN: Yes, yes that's what I think is the-

NICK: They could also have very well, it could be that like, y'know the Erase.. we, we've never.. really.. defined it.

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: We haven't. We should, yeah.

NICK: So, but.. It's possible that the erasure is a thing that happened over time.

AUSTIN: Right, totally, it could have been, you're right.

NICK: So there was some, maybe there were some clues that they saw or thought they saw.

AUSTIN: What I will say is there are, I think that there is a canon, there's a canonical --Inside of the snow elf community, inside of, of their, their, y'know, their civilisation is they were *prepared*. Right?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Whether or not they were or what Nick said which is probably closer to the actual historical truth.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Right? Which is like, there's a, there's was all the shit that was going down, it was really terrible. And bit by bit they coalesced into a community and, and gathered extra stuff and sealed themselves away.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think that the canonical like th, the re-, the almost religious historical view, the myth, of this place is [dramatic voice] *No-one* else was ready. But we were. [normal voice] Right?

DRE: Yeah, yeah absolutely.

[Austin and Dre speak overlapping each other]

AUSTIN: And I will say right now that, that is-

DRE: And we always will be.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Right, right exactly. That is not exactly as true as.. as they would hope, y'know? There is a bit of this stuff that we'll get to.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But yeah I think Nick I think you're probably right. And in general we should think about that going forward with the Erasure. Is that it wasn't just a snap your finger thing, necessarily, and now everything's bad. Y'know, it wasn't just the bombs dropped, right, like-

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Some of the best post-apocalyptic fiction zooms in on that soon after moment. And like okay to what degree can we recover this, to what degree is this lost, to what degree do we maintain control, etcetera... So.. so yeah. SO yeah anyway, you hear them talking in their snow elf tongue. Which I guess, I guess you know for the sake of ease is not the common tongue today, but you can hear roots and stuff.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right like you can hear how it could have once been --Its, it's a language that isn't so far off that you don't understand any of it at all, y'know? But you hear that they're just anxious and panicked at hearing you shout, and you hear a number of people fleeing into the woods. Hectically, almost, y'know, if you go to look at all Throndir you can see that there's a bunch of different feet here from five or six people who were were here.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you can find all their tracks backwards to see that they'd been tracking you for quite some time.

DRE: Hmm. But I heard them speaking snow elf language.

AUSTIN: Right. And you --What they were saying was basically just like:

AUSTIN (as Snow Elf): They're onto us, run!

AUSTIN (as Different Snow Elf): Cheese it!

AUSTIN: [laughs] Y'know.

[Dre laughing]

AUSTIN: Like nothing-

DRE: It's the holy fuzz!

AUSTIN: [laughing] Exactly.

[Art and Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: But nothing specific about his god.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right like they didn't say 'Oh no it's Samotheses dude'.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like not at all. It was just.. Yeah..

DRE: Well they wouldn't know why they're compelled to do that, they just know that they are.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly.

NICK: So was it-

ART: It's interesting to think about whether or not that transcends language.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: Or how that works at all.

AUSTIN: Mhm?

ART: But that's a, that's really a conversation for a different time.

[Dre and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: That's a conversation for like our afterparty, like aftergame wrap. Like when we wrap this campaign we'll have like a big 'oh here's some stuff that we never really worked out, but here's some ideas!'.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: I just, I've had revelation recently about like shit we should definitely know but we don't know.

[Austin laughs]

ART: And like I just don't know what to do with that, like I guess i should talk to you about it at some point.

AUSTIN: [uncertain] Yeaah. I don't-

ART: But like there's stuff that, that I'm like really weirdly.. Yeah.

AUSTIN: What I'll say is this isn't --It's, for me, It's exciting that you don't know that yet.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And think about that and tell me what you think you don't know and we'll work it out in play, Because like unlike --Art, y'know you and I played in, in Legend of the Five Rings campaigns in college for years. And we had this huge catalogue of information to draw on and that's great, but here I'd rather like --The strength of Dungeon World is that we get to play it by ear and invent that stuff as it goes along. Last week's game with, with Ali, Jack and Keith went really well because we left a lot of blank spaces on the map and were able to play with that really well when push came to shove. You know what I mean? Like when, when we had to invent something new we ended up in a place that was awesome. So, so-

DRE: Mhm.

[Art and Austin speak overlapping each other]

AUSTIN: I like those questions b-

ART: Sure. No, no I'm not tryna like-

AUSTIN: No, I understand.

ART: ..push us towards over-definition.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ART: But like there's some stuff that's like. Oh we have all this stuff, and it's like but, but .. but..

[Nick laughs]

ART: ..what happened, what, what happened to the government when all of this happened?

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ART: Is there a government? Is someone sitting on a throne thinking they're king somewhere?

AUSTIN: What I'll say is I also, just so you guys know, I, I have a looong document with a lot of things you've not seen yet. So I'm excite-

DRE: Wooords (??)

AUSTIN: That's what I'm saying.

DRE: Now I'm excited.

ART: Buy the collector's edition of Friends at the Table, and..

AUSTIN: [laughs] [unintelligible]

.

DRE: If you go to our Patreon and donate.

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: [laughs] Maybe one day, we'll see. I doubt it, but.. Alright, so.. now that you've scared that group off what do you do?

NICK: Was it obvious, was it obvious to Fantasma and Hadrian that they fled?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah yeah, absolutely.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: That was the, like, that's kind of, I'm giving you that on Art's success here, on Hadrian's success. It's clear that he terrified them.

NICK: Alright.

AUSTIN: This was a, this was a, his, his strength of voice and, and maybe his god, terrified them.

NICK: As soon as, as soon as Fantasma starts like hearing their footsteps through the underbrush he tries to prestidigitate like lightning above his head.

[Dre and Austin laughing]

NICK: And, and says..

NICK (as Fantasma): [booming, dramatic voice] Yes foul creatures of the forest!  
Yoooouu will run from the Great Fantasmooo!!

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: Great.

ART: [laughing] Yeah we all saw that one. That's what happened.

DRE: Yep.

AUSTIN: You get to-

DRE: Throndir whispers

DRE (as Throndir): [whispering] They, they're elves. [more loudly] They're elves, they're just elves, Fantasma. Its elves, they're not [sighs]

NICK (as Fantasma): [stroppily] Well *whatever*, they're gone now.

[Dre laughs]

NICK (as Fantasma): [muttering quietly] Thanks to me.

AUSTIN: So at some point you, you're able to make it [laughs (clearly just registered Nick's last comment)] to the mountain range, the kind of low mountains of of the Mark. And.. there are a lot of caves right like there's lots of, you can see up in the hills there lots of stuff. Are you looking for anything in particular to like know where you're headed here?

DRE: Yes, I would, I would also say that after realizing that, that snow elves know that they're here, and particularly that *he's* here. Throndir is very much on edge.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: He is very much like agitated, like always like looking over his back.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: Like he is, he is visibly on edge right now.

AUSTIN: Mhm. You can tell that there's a sort of, what I'll say is as scared as you would be if you were out here by yourself. I think that there is also a degree of relief because now you've seen Throndir, or now you've seen Hadrian, and Fantasma kind of like show their scary voices. Y'know?

DRE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: [humorously] Whoever saved the day, I don't know, I don't know what Thrandir thinks actually scared them off [laughing].

[Nick laughing]

DRE: [laughs] Yeah. Well I don't think, I don't think -- He's not like afraid. Like he's not afraid for his life.

AUSTIN: Okay. I got you.

DRE: He's not like worried he's in danger he's just like, I don't, those are the last people that I want to see right now.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

DRE: I really don't want to deal with them. There's a reason I decided to go on a wild goose chase into a cave instead of talk to my people.

AUSTIN: Right. So are you just spending the rest of the day kind of looking for signs of where to go here? Like, what are you doing?

DRE: Yeah.

ART: It's, It's hard because like y'know Hadrian's had a very urban upbringing. Like, I don't think he even begins to know like, oh yeah that's a cave that, that's someone's living in.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: But like, there's gotta be some-, like there's gotta be something. And maybe he's just like y'know peeking into caves-

[Austin laughs]

ART: Like well there's.. nothing.. there's nothing on the *outside* [laughs]

AUSTIN: Right.

[Dre and Nick speak overlapping eachother]

DRE: I would, I would imagine --Oh, go ahead man.



NICK: Did, did we get directions from Mee Kosh?

AUSTIN: Mee K-, oh he didn't know. He said he's --He told you last time that he was living in a cave now somewhere.

NICK: Just like in caves in that direction?

AUSTIN: In that d-, in that direction. From what he hears. Do you know what I mean?

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: And to be clear the idea was he didn't *used to*. Right like, he use to not be a man who lived in a cave. This is not his natural habitat.

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: Whatever happened to him drove him here.

DRE: Yeah... I would-

AUSTIN: Throndir, you might have a little bit of something you're not remembering because it was two weeks ago?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you --What do you remember about the owlbear confrontation?

DRE: I remember it, it messed me up.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Right.

DRE: It hit me real bad.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: It tried to suplex my dog.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: I remember --Oh! Right, I remember Mee Kosh said that the owlbeats had been driven like away from where they normally lived because of the nameless.

AUSTIN: *You* knew that. You actually just knew that. You knew that from the actual fight with the owlbear. You knew that like wait this area doesn't show any signs of owlbear hunting. Like, this isn't its nat-, this isn't where it normally hunts. This isn't it's hunting ground, it's been driven here.

DRE: Yeah. Which shouldn't happen, thinking about owlbeats, they're..

AUSTIN: So --You shouldn't and also I'm gonna tell you something else.

DRE: I'm gonna guess this is where owlbeats normally hang out. They probably hang out in mountain caves.

AUSTIN: Maybe specifically even, even specifically this, that one that you fought, this might have been it's area. And now it isn't. So one thing you might want to look for are things like y'know owlbear stuff. I don't what like, what do owlbeats-

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: Owlbear leavings? Like f-

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Poop? And feathers?

DRE: Well if I, if we're looking for a cave where someone is holed up. Wouldn't we like, wouldn't we be looking for a conspicuous lack of owlbear stuff?

AUSTIN: No, this is what I'm s-, this is the thing I'm trying to hint at here, like.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which is: there used to be an owlbear in this place.

DRE: Ooooh okay. Gotcha.

ART: And this guy just like muscled this owlbear out?

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which should say something, given the strength of that owlbear.

DRE: Right. So I-

ART: I remember killing that owlbear.

[Austin and Nick laughing]

DRE: Yeah. So, so Thrandir is using his, his ranger skills to see if he can't-

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: ..track some, some owlbear signs here.

AUSTIN: Right, yeah and you basically are able to find a kind of reverse trail. Right like, you can see it, you in fact can tell that it wasn't just driven away from like --You can find a trail of it being driven away from place after place after place. That it was like 'okay if I have to move I'll move down a couple caves'. And then like '[sighs] I guess I have to move down further'.

DRE: Oh okay.

AUSTIN: Like oh okay keep forcing me away further and further and further.

NICK: Interesting.

AUSTIN: Until eventually he just fled. But you're able to track it back to one cave that, y'know, that eventually you can find. You know, you do find a clutch of feathers that have been torn out, that are stuck in like a nearby tree. And again I'm kind of imagining this cave, or, I'm imagining these mountains as being grey and snow covered.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: With a few pine trees on them, y'know? It's a hard, it's hard to walk here. But you're a-, y'know, every once in a while you're able to find like a plateau that you're able to like step, step on.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There are kind of tiers here. But you make it to this cave and it's not that different from any of the other ones. You couldn't like pick this one out, this isn't like extra big or something.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But.. as you --I guess you're at the mouth. You stare in, you don't see the end of this cave. What do you do?

DRE: Oh boy..

NICK: Like, because its-

DRE (as Throndir?): Fantasma, do you have anything that can light this up?

AUSTIN: Because it's deep is what I'm, sorry, is what I'm trying to explain.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like, the sunlight, the natural sunlight doesn't reach deep enough into here.

NICK (as Fantasma?): Yeah I can, I can light stuff up.

NICK: I'm pretty sure that's covered under..

AUSTIN: That's one of your, your main thing right?

DRE: Also, Austin is Kodiak doing anything? Is he, he's just..

AUSTIN: Kodiak was definitely helping you track here. I think there's lot's of barking. Unless you're telling him to be quiet. Like, back when the, when the elves had shown up, you were probably like 'shhhh' and he was like '[adorable growling sound] [sulkily] Okay'

DRE: [laughs] But he's not like freaking out about the cave or anything? Like, he doesn't-

AUSTIN: Right no. Uhh.. I think, hmm. There's a low growl that you're attuned to hear.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? Like, he's on his guard.

DRE: Yeah, something is in there.

AUSTIN: He? Kodiak's a he?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Have we decided on this?

DRE: I think so, yeah. Yeah. He is.

AUSTIN: Yeah you have a light cantrip that you can cast.

NICK: Yeah, yeah I just found that.

AUSTIN: Give me a roll on that, go ahead and, and..

NICK: Okay. I need to..

ART: Hadrian's bracing himself

NICK: I need something to light. Oh wait, I should be in character.

NICK (as Fantasma): I need someone to volunteer an item on which I can cast a light spell.

DRE: I can-

NICK: Fantasma says as he like puts his staff behind his back.

AUSTIN: [laughing] I was gonna say, yeah wait a second!

DRE: I've got an idea, hold on!

ART: I literally don't have anything.

DRE: Throndir undoes Kodiak's collar that has his nametag on it and holds it up.

[Austin laughs]

NICK: Oh okay.

[Austin making confused dog sounds]

NICK (as Fantasma): A clever idea.

NICK: And then here is my --Where is the button to do that? There we go. Oh wait it's --I'm not stunned anymore am I?

DRE: [fake angrily] If you light my dog on fire, I *swear*.

AUSTIN: No you should still be stunned. This is on-

NICK: Oh right yeah, 'cause that stunned is from..

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: Yep yep yep. Okay.

AUSTIN: But that's still a roll-

NICK: I've rolled an eight.

AUSTIN: Okay so, so you can choose to either forget that spell or take a minus one forward etcetera. What do you, what do you choose?

NICK: Jeez, I was almost gonna say forget that spell but if I do that here..

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: I do have a torch. Throndir also has a torch.

[Nick laughing]

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: Well, it's, it's too late I already cast it.

AUSTIN: Yeah we have to stick with the-

DRE: Well I know. No I'm not saying that because like 'oh no, takebacksies'.

AUSTIN: I have a --Right.

NICK: Oh.

DRE: I'm saying like, we're not completely screwed.

AUSTIN: So, so yeah, which of these three? You draw unwelcome attention to yourself or put yourself in a spot [unintelligible]-

NICK: [groans] I'm gonna, I'm gonna forget it.

AUSTIN: Okay. This feels like, extra scary for you when you do forget it.

NICK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Like, this --Forgetting spells is a day to day thing for you, right?

NICK: Right, right.

AUSTIN: Like, this is part of your life but-

NICK: Well, not necessarily day to day, because like-

AUSTIN: Right right right right right. We talked about your, your history

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But like, when you're adventuring you know that this is a thing that happens.

NICK: Fantasma doesn't *practice* magic.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Right.

NICK: He is a theorist.

AUSTIN: But this is especially scary for you.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because it's --You know what that means here. You know what forgetting means here.

NICK: Yep.

AUSTIN: The light is --What colour is it?

NICK: ..It's, it's like a, a pale blue.

[MUSIC (Autumn Not Winter by Jack de Quidt) BEGINS PLAYING FAINTLY]

AUSTIN: Okay. It lights the, the.. cave pretty well, and as you go deeper and deeper into the mountains you can see why someone might have chosen this. Which is that it it twists and winds in a way that is off putting? But not necessarily confusing. Right? This isn't a maze, there aren't lots of splintering paths, but after about ten minutes of walking you realise that like you don't *really* know where you are *in the mountain* anymore. If that makes sense.

NICK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: You notice as you get closer and closer.. Bodies here and there. First a couple of snow elves, their bodies smashed into each other. Mangled together. Left to rot. Then a couple of goblins, their heads missing. Spat against the far wall.

[MUSIC CONTINUES TO PLAY]

ART: Wait, let, let me see where my levels are.. [singing ummmm to various tunes]. I might actually be at an appropriate -Ah! Fuckin' fuck!

[END]