

Realis 02: Feast at the Citadel Bein 01

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Opening Narration

[“[Realis](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Austin: Ulled is a pocked and placid-seeming agricultural moon. But as the saying goes, be wary the still lake. Yes, farmers speak softly and tend to their crops with loving cultivation. Yes, life is quiet, and late afternoons are restful. Yes, harvest work brings reward. Then there is underneath.

But Those Nerveless Chancers, The Krinsky Family Circus And Travelling Curiosity, they know only what is above.

They know they step on fertile soil and soft grass, perfect for staking their tents and stands.

They know they walk through fields under the lights and shadows of the Citadel Bein, a fortress layered with history so visible that it is seemingly built from the accretion of time itself.

They know that they stand above a castle village sonorous with the sounds of marketplaces and buskers and craftshops—a circus of a different type but not altogether unfamiliar.

They know they stand on a geological shelf, the shore of a vast, shimmering lake beyond—open like a sea, polished as a mirror, reflecting the sky above, reflecting the Thousand Moons in conlunation, reflecting Realis-Itself and in its light The Tetraspherica: Three more marble-like moons. Cousin orbs. Neighbor spheres dominating the heavens above.

So is it any wonder they do not consider what might be below? What might move in that fertile soil or between the blades of that soft grass? What else might have staked a claim on Placid Ulled? Or who else might move in the shadows of the Citadel Bein? What else might hover above the echoes of that castle town? Who else might stare out onto the lake's horizon, might witness the impossible beauty of the dancing lunar quartet, might bathe in the bluelight of Realis-Itself, and radiating with pure possibility, dream!?

It is no wonder at all. Such is life on the Thousand Moons. Such is life for those Nerveless Chancers, that circus caught in gravity. At least, for now.

Introduction

Austin: 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, Austin Walker, and joining me today, Ali Acampora.

Ali: Hi, my name is Ali. You can find me, since this is the debut episode, unfortunately sometimes still over on x.com at [@ali_west](#).

Austin: Mm. Mm-hmm.

Ali: I also am on another podcast, a *Star Wars* podcast. We're watching *Star Wars: Rebels* right now. That's [amorecivilizedage.net](#). Go there. And then...you're on

[friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.friendsatthetable.cash). Thank you.

Austin: You are. You already are.

Ali: Hi.

Austin: Keith Carberry.

Keith: Hi. My name is Keith Carberry. You can find me on [X](#) and [Cohost](#) at @KeithJCarberry. You can find the let's plays that I do at youtube.com/RunButton, where we're finishing *Metal Gear Solid 3*, finally. Probably going to be a bunch of new episodes of that out by the time this is up.

Austin: Hell yeah.

Keith: Unless this is up this week.

Art: [chuckles] That would be a surprise.

Keith: But go check out our *Metal Gear*.

Austin: That would be a surprise! I don't think that is out this week. I think Jack would be furious at us.

Keith: Some of our— yeah, I don't know. I have no idea how far along that is. But the *Metal Gear* stuff, those are some of our best let's plays, so go watch Run Button playing *Metal Gear*.

Austin: They're really fun. Yeah. I like those. And Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hey, you can find me on Twitter/X at [@atebbel](#), anywhere else I am at at [@amtebbel](#). And this is the Star Warsiest group of *Friends at the Table*, right?

Keith: Yep.

Austin: It is. Yeah.

Ali: Mm.

Art: Oh, I've seen just terrible *Star Wars* takes this week. I don't know what I've done to get that on my feeds.

Austin: I'm sorry.

Keith: Can you give me one of them?

Art: People, like, really upset that the Jedi are incompetent in *The Acolyte*, a show I have not started watching.

Austin: [unsurprised grumble] I know.

Keith: Well, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, they're Jedi.

Keith: Welcome to people also talking about *Phantom Menace*.

Art: And people have to be like, "The Jedi have been incompetent for a very long time."

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Ugh! Ugh!

Austin: A friend of mine, someone—

Keith: You're talking about the group that couldn't stop themselves from being killed off? That group?

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: A friend of mine messaged me to say that they were really psyched to see the

Jedi before they got too high on their own shit and fucked everything up, but I guess they're just shitty cops. And it's like— and I like this friend. I'm not dissing this person. They've always been shitty cops.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: When you've got someone with a sword and authority, and they come to your town to go, like, “Wait a second. You're doing it wrong over here.” That's a cop. That's gonna be a cop.

Art: Well, and the examination of this that is too thorough for me to ever go into, there's, like, two phases of thinking about Jedi.

Austin: Yes.

Art: The, like, pre-prequel extended universe [**Austin:** Yes.] where the Jedi are inherently flawless.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: And the post-prequel extended universe where they are what they are in those movies.

Austin: Fundamentally compromised. Yeah.

Art: Fundamentally compromised and, like, I don't say this...like, an ivory tower sort of function.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: But that has been...you know, *Knights of the Old Republic* has a Jedi Council that's... [cross] incompetent.

Keith: [cross] Dogshit.

Austin: [cross] Disconnected from reality and—? Yeah, uh huh.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: It's old.

Keith: They're dogshit.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: The Old Republic comics we just read on AMCA, over the last year or so, have a back-at-home Jedi Council that is disconnected from the realities of what's happening on the ground, and they're, like, on the right side of history, generally speaking, in those stories. They're just, like, slow as shit to get active.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Ugh.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Anyway. I'm sorry.

Art: Anyway. [laughs]

Austin: The world out there is filled with bad *Star Wars* takes.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Yeah. I'm sure one day I'll watch *The Acolyte*, but.

Austin: Yeah. Eh...

Art: It's not today.

Keith: I have one more plug. Listen to *Media Club Plus*. It's great. It's really good.

Austin: It is.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: If you want to hear people on *Friends at the Table* talk about media that they like and— I mean, generally like, because over there, it's *Hunter × Hunter*, which is good, and so... [Ali laughs]

Keith: Yeah. It's so easy to be positive, generally, about *Hunter × Hunter*.

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Ali: I want to see Dave Filoni's *Hunter × Hunter*. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Shut up. Shut up.

Keith: Why are you saying that? [Ali cackles]

Austin: Don't put that in the air. Ugh. I want to see Togashi's *Star Wars*.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: Okay, sure. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That'd be sick.

Setup [0:06:43]

Austin: Today, we are playing *Realis*. We're kicking off our campaign.

Art: Woo!

Austin: *Realis* prizes passivity, except after wisdom gained. It recognizes friendship's strength, but rewards solitary achievement. It shifts in scope and scale according to the

needs of the story or the whims of its tellers, and it demands honesty in consequence but care at the table.

We have some Foundation Sentences, which are the sort of, like, classic Lines and Veils type rules for us to play by. Our Foundation Sentences are: “Our story never depicts sexual assault or sexual violence,” “Our story never describes injury,” and “Our story always depicts violence in stylish and Romantic ways.” Romantic in the broad literary sense, not in the interpersonal relationship sense. We’re talking about swashbuckling. We’re talking about Star Warsy adventure, right? I think about *Realis* or this game of *Realis*, this campaign of *Realis* as being a little bit Star Warsy in that way, a little bit of a pulp action story, pulp adventure story.

And with that said, we should maybe get into it a little bit, and we’ll talk about characters in a second, but I’d love for y’all to picture those moons in your head again, all those Thousand Moons, and then zoom in on four of them, and then zoom in on this big marble that I’m sending you. I’m not joking when I say I have a marble for each of these planets or each of these moons. They’re moons, not planets.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: I’d say this is probably the most mundane or most...I don’t want to say ugliest, but it’s a, you know, it’s pockmarked a little bit. There’s—

Ali: Yeah, this is real geode-coded.

Austin: It is geode-coded. It is. There’s beautiful blues, and like, the yellow-browns are an okay color, but this is not a shining gem of a planet. This is Ulled. Ulled is a— I said planet again. Give me some time to get into my moon— [Ali chuckles] I gotta get moonpilled. I gotta start moonmaxxing and get my head right on this.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Ulled is an agricultural moon. It’s one of the four moons of this kind of quartet of moons, this tetrad of moons that, again, what they do is they, like, move close enough that you can take a little shuttle bus basically from one moon to another, instead of

needing a real spaceship to do it, which is what most of the moons need. You can't get from this moon to one of the moons you see out in the sky, the other Thousand Moons of Realis that you see in the sky without, you know, what's called an Orphan Vessel. This is a kind of special living spaceship. You need something like that to really do that long distance travel. But here on these four moons, you know, you go to the space station. You get a little space shuttle. You get on board it, and then it takes you to the arena moon.

And I think that you all, [chuckles] the members of Those Nerveless Chancers, The Krinsky Family Circus And Traveling Curiosity, have such a little shuttle. Not big enough to go out beyond the tetrad, these four moons, but effective enough to get you between the four moons, which you do on your circus tour of this world. So, again, zoom in on this marble, and then picture somewhere on this marble, maybe in one of the big yellow patches, kind of maybe near the cool circle lake. I'm calling that a big lake on the right, you know? I should drop this in Roll20. I know I said we probably won't need Roll20, and then I invited you all into Roll20 anyway. And why not? I got this big marble. That could be a map.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: Take notes, people at home. You can just use a picture of a marble and say, "That's a map." I'll drop that in.

Keith: That's a map.

Austin: That's a map.

Art: While we're on the topic, you mentioned in the intro, assuming the intro stays the same [**Austin:** Yeah.] as it was when you read it just now.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: That the moons are lit by the reflection of the planet?

Austin: The planet.

Art: And you know me. I fucking love science.

Austin: Yeah. [Keith and Ali laugh] I know what you're thinking: "That's a star, Austin."

Art: No, no. Is it true? Is our moon lit by the reflection of the sun off of our planet?

Austin: No.

Art: Okay, cool.

Austin: Sorry, sorry, sorry. No, no, no. In Realis, there are two light sources. One is the Corpse Sun, which produces a faint dark red color.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And really only the moons up near it get that dark red color, or like, they'll get, like, a faint yellow if they're a little bit further away. You know, you think about it as, like, vertical, right? You think about it as, like, go to the north pole of Realis and keep going, and there are some moons up there, right?

Art: Okay.

Austin: And above that is the Corpse Sun, which is smaller than Realis.

Art: Sure.

Austin: It's a dying tiny little sun. It used to be a star. Or it's made up of countless bodies, it's made up of corpses? I don't know. I haven't been there. And that produces this, like, sickly red light. Realis-Itself is iridescent. It produces its own— iridescent is the wrong word, isn't it? [typing] 'Cause iridescent just means it's, like, colorful. What's the one that's like, it produces light? Uh...

Ali: Luminescent?

Austin: Incandescent.

Art: Luminescent, yeah.

Keith: Luminescent, yeah. Or incandescent.

Austin: Or luminescent, yeah. Or luminescent, yes. It produces its own light. So most of the moons are lit by this bright blue colorful light from Realis-Itself, which, if you've seen the postcards from Sam Beck, one of those has a very clear picture of the, like, bright blue Realis surrounded by the kind of Thousand Moons. Sorry, I was scrolling to see if I posted it recently, but instead, what I posted is lots— is a really big sword and then that time that we got really into Tuff Ghosts. [Austin and Keith laugh] And then it's just us posting Tuff Ghosts images for...ever.

Ali: Mm-hmm. [Art laughs]

Keith: 25 minutes?

Austin: Just for 25 minutes. [Ali laughs quietly] That was a good episode, IMO. Some birds. Anyway. So, that's the...does that answer your question, Art? About the...? Okay, great. Okay, here we go. I'm going to re-link this. Copy message link. Boom. I've linked my own message from before, and you can see the fifth image here is kind of, like, the red is the Great Void, and then the blue of Realis in the distance that is luminescent, as Ali said.

Where was I? We're zooming in? Zooming in. Right. And so, I think, yeah, over on this...I think, like, here, this place I've just marked on this map, is where y'all are. I think that on the western side of this area I've circled are a bunch of little mountains. On the eastern side is a lake, so it's a really, like, defensible position, in that way. And this is like, this whole area is kind of under the auspices, the protection of a citadel, the Citadel Bein, B-E-I-N, which runs right up against one of the mountain cliffs on the west. And if you see that citadel, you know, you see a bunch of other— maybe there are some Orphan Vessels, these big expensive living spaceships that are parked out front, basically. Visitors to negotiate over...I don't know. I don't know, whatever negotiators negotiate over.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: That's maybe above your paygrade or you're just not interested, or maybe you are, and we can talk more about that later. Importantly, out in front of the Citadel, maybe between the kind of residential and the kind of, like, feudal holdings of that Citadel and the Citadel's main gates is the circus. The big tents and the parked, you know, locomotive-style, you know, space shuttle of the Nerveless Chancers, The Krinsky Family Circus And The Travelling Curiosity. Y'all are parked out front. You have been invited here today—or like, maybe for this week, this whole week—to be entertainment for whatever these big negotiations that are happening inside of the Citadel.

You normally just go on your normal route. You know, you kind of bounce around a moon, one of these four moons, for some amount of time, some amount of months. And then you go, "Okay, now let's go over to another moon," and then you do that on the other moon, and you know, there's the circuit. You have the circuit. But every now and then, someone pays you extra—and by "you," I mean pays your bosses, the Krinskys, extra—to take a side, you know, a sort of side job, to run the circus for some sort of important political envoy or a king or some other sort of famous person or a demon or a demigod. You know, normal stuff. And you just set up shop and do that.

And we are here now, doing that, and I'd love to zoom in on your characters here. I'd love for you to introduce, for me, your characters. Read me basically...maybe not your whole sheet, but you know, names, pronouns, Look, Dream. Give me your Bonds. Tell me what Class you are and your Sphere and Impulse, which if you don't have, I will quickly add to your various things, because I realized that it might not be in there. Who wants to go first?

Ali: I can go. I'm the first tab here.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: Did I misinterpret which is the ocean and which is the land on this? Which one is which on the marble?

Austin: The white is the land.

Keith: Okay. I did misinterpret it.

Austin: Yeah, the blue is the ocean or the water, because the blue is the...

Keith: It looked black to me, [**Austin:** Okay.] so I was like, this could go either way.

Austin: Yeah. That's fair.

Art: It's not that Keith had never seen a map before.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Mm-hmm. [Ali chuckles]

Keith: [feigning defensiveness] It's not that, by the way. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Mm-hmm. We all believe that you've seen a map before. No one's questioning.

Keith: Thank you.

Characters

Hye Malis [0:16:52]

Ali: Okay. So, I'm playing Hye Malis. My Class is—

Austin: Please spell it for the listener at home.

Ali: Sure. That is—

Austin: Thank you. [Ali laughs]

Ali: H-Y-E and then capital M-A-L-I-S. Hye Malis.

Austin: Hye Malis.

Ali: Hye Malis.

Austin: Hi, Malis. [chuckles]

Ali: My Class is the [stumbling over word] Syzy— aah! I thought I was going to— I was so—! The Syzygist.

Austin: Boom.

Ali: The Syzygist. Uh huh.

Keith: There you go.

Austin: You got it. Yeah.

Art: Got it.

Ali: [laughs] My pronouns are she/they. My Look is, I've written here, "a big feathered cloak in the style of a man o' war." The bird, not the...

Austin: Not the jellyfish?

Ali: Jellyfish.

Art: Or the human concept?

Ali: [laughs] Sure.

Austin: Right, the boat, right. Or the guy, right.

Keith: Or the guy. Yeah.

Art: Like, a man at war. Guy in a war.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Oh, sure. Yeah, no. Like a bird. Like a big brown bird.

Austin: Oh, with a big red...

Ali: With the red near the chest and stuff.

Austin: That's cool.

Ali: I've written here, "ritual hairstyles, Queen Amidala-esque."

Austin: There's that *Star Wars*.

Ali: [laughs] And I feel like I've explained that third one by explaining the big bird jacket, I think.

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Ali: It's all coming together for everybody, I think, now.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: My Dream is that I will witness the alignment of the moons and bring fame to my sponsors. The reason I have sponsors is because I'm from the Crux moon, [**Austin:** Yeah.] which is the coliseum one.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And I do predictions there. [chuckles] Important to the society there, I think. Do you want me to read the Bonds too?

Austin: Yeah, read the Bonds too.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Or do you want to go around first and then read Bonds? What do y'all want to do?

Ali: I don't want to— I don't want to introduce these characters.

Austin: Yeah, let's— yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Everybody else, let's go around first, and then we'll come back around for Bonds.

Art: Wait, and what are we doing in this—? Didn't we want to start with an image of—?

Austin: Yeah, I want an image of you at work here in the circus. What's our image of you in the circus?

Ali: Oh, of me?

Austin: Yeah, what are you doing? What's the average day, or maybe not the average day? What's happening here? Here, out front of the Citadel Bein. What's your day-to-day?

Ali: I mean, I've gotta have a table set up, doing readings for people, right?

Austin: Yeah. Is it like— are you out in the air? Are you inside of a tent? Are you— do you have a little structure?

Ali: I mean, I guess if this— okay. Are we— [laughs]

Austin: Are you—? Yeah, mm-hmm.

Ali: Are we, like, a big circus tent circus? Or are we, like, a traveling carnival circus?

Austin: I think you're a traveling carnival circus, so I think there is a big tent, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] where the show happens.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: But there's probably also...I don't know. Maybe there's not rides, per se, but you tell me.

Keith: Has anybody been to a renaissance faire?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: The one that is near me, the King Richard's Faire, you go there, and there's, like, a bunch of, like, hand-powered rides. Like, it's like, classical—

Austin: Mm.

Keith: I don't know if this is a common thing. There's, like, classic carnival rides, but it's, like, a really strong guy, who, like, spins a gear that, like, makes the ride go, and it's pretty sick, and we should have that. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Cool.

Ali: Okay. I think my day-to-day is that I probably have, like, a stand set up [Austin: Mm.] somewhere near the food stands.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: Because it feels like I would want people to engage with me in a casual way when they're, like, already looking for—

Keith: Eating fried dough.

Ali: [laughs] Looking for an opportunity to, like, sit down or kill time, for instance, right?

Austin: Sure.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Austin: And I guess you have to be outside, because you are a star reader.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: The Syzygist looks up at the moons and kind of says, "Hmm, how are things aligning right now?" So, you can't really be in a closed-top tent to do your job, I guess.

Ali: Right, yeah. And I think that my, like, customer-off day-to-day situation here [Austin: Yeah.] is that I probably have to help people set up. I probably have to help the food people set up their, like, little traveling kitchens or whatever.

Austin: Oh, sure. Yeah.

Ali: And then once it's opened, I go to my relatively simple little stand that's just a sign and, you know, me looking at the stars or whatever.

Austin: Yeah. Do you have any, like...I mean, I'm going to guess the answer is yes. You have friends among the kind of food staff? Is there anybody who, like, is your bud? I know we're going to go over our personal Bonds now, but... [Ali laughs] Is there anybody you're, like...

Ali: If I have a...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah, a special connection amongst the...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Sure. What's the most interesting sort of food that you could have in a...?

Austin: Wow. Damn. [Ali laughs]

Keith: What's the most interesting sort of food? Tableside guac?

Ali: Did you say tableside guac?

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: That's not— okay. I probably—

Keith: Just a weird one to have. It's a very interesting choice for a carnival. [Ali laughs]

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: I don't know if this plays here, but "tableside guac" sounds like a thing Westside Gunn would brag about in a song. [Ali and Austin laugh] [imitating] With the tableside guac!

Ali: Uh huh, uh huh.

Austin: Doot doot doot doot doo!

Ali: This is a simpler answer than is fun for storytelling, I guess, but I think that I have an in with the meats-on-a-stick guy.

Austin: Oh, sure.

Ali: You don't have to get complicated. I could think of a high concept food item.

Austin: Yeah, no. I get you.

Ali: But you want to...

Keith: Do they call it meats on a stick, or do they have, like, one of the real names for that kind of food?

Ali: [laughs quietly] I'm sure it's a real name. I'm sure it's different sorts of things. But it's a thing that you find and that people want.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Having an in with the meat-on-a-stick guy is, like, the least cool you could say it.
[Keith and Ali laugh]

Austin: Wow. You say that now, but when you're hungry later and a little drunk...

Ali: Uh huh.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Hye is going to be like, "I know a guy who can get us some meat on a stick right now."

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: And you don't even need a fork to eat it.

Austin: Yeah!

Ali: It's handheld.

Austin: You can keep holding your beer with your other hand. [Keith laughs]

Ali: Because the thing, you know, you think of, like, the sensational carnival snacks, and they're a little fussy, you know?

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. [Ali laughs quietly] Do you think that's part of why you vibe with this guy, is like, you're both kind of lowkey, all said? 'Cause, like, you're a fortune teller, but you're describing yourself as not being, like, pomp and circumstance, and like...I'm sure maybe you— not saying you don't do a good job of it, but you're not, like...I know you dress fancy.

Ali: Right. I think the pomp and circumstance comes from my style.

Austin: I see. Right.

Ali: And from the seriousness with which I take my predictions. But I think I can just kick it. [laughs quietly] You know what I mean?

Austin: I love this. I do. [Art laughs]

Keith: “Kick it”, like, hang out?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: Ali, what is your Sphere and your Impulse?

Ali: Oh, sorry, guys. I said my planet, Crux. My Sphere is Sorcery, and my Impulse is to respond to a mundane problem with magical means.

Austin: Yes. And let's go to another character.

The Sense of Dread Observed Near the Back Staircase in the East Wing
[0:24:02]

Art: All right. I'll go next. I think I'm the next tab.

Austin: Let's tab over.

Art: My character is The Sense of Dread Observed Near the Back Staircase in the East Wing, or Donnie for short.

Austin: Oh, yeah. Donnie.

Art: Donnie uses they/them pronouns. We want Look now? We're just going straight down?

Austin: Yeah, let's go straight down.

Art: Uh, the look. Hazy. Hard to see at the best of times. Translucent. Looks like they might be wearing a formal jacket and a collared shirt, but it doesn't go below the pockets.

Austin: Mm. Your Dream?

Art: I will reunite with that which I was separated from.

Austin: Interesting. Interesting. Art, you should also say your Class. Your Class and then also your Sphere and Impulse.

Art: Oh, yes. My Class is the Quintessent.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: The Sphere of Spirit, and the Impulse is respond to a practical problem with ritualistic Means. And I think Donnie is helping them cheat at the carnival games.

Austin: [sighs] Is that what you always do? Is that, like, your role, is to be the house?
[Ali chuckles]

Art: I think Donnie is sort of a floater, if you'll... [Austin grumbles]

Ali: Whoa.

Art: Excuse the term. Not like that. Not like...

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. Uh huh.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: The pun here being that you're a ghost who floats around.

Art: Yeah, a ghost, yeah.

Ali: No, yeah, we got it. [laughs]

Art: Yeah. It's not poop.

Austin: Ohh, I see.

Art: And yeah, but I think today is, like, sort of like deflecting kids' basketball shots or whatever, making the milk bottle stand up.

Austin: Can you make yourself less...I mean, I guess you— I'm looking at your Class Sentences, and sure, why not? You could make yourself less visible to do that.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Okay. Great.

Art: I'm not totally— [chuckles] "I will always force others to confront the truth," is not, like, the most in tune with cheating at carnival games, but.

Austin: I was looking more at "I always wield a spectral or elemental power."

Art: Oh, yeah, sure.

Austin: Which, in retrospect, I actually think that we need to define what that is. There

is a— in the Character Creation section of the book, there is a thing that's like, "Hey, sometimes while you're creating a character, many Classes have a Sentence describing some specific piece of equipment, like a unique weapon, distinct armor, or vehicle. If playing such a class, take some time during Character Creation to describe how that equipment looks and works." And I think that's actually probably this too. Like, Quintessent's broad enough to include, like, as the Class is written with the description and the Class Sentences, you know, a lake spirit or something, right? And so that's why this is so broad. "I wield a spectral or elemental power" could include "I do water magic," right? But presumably you do ghost stuff, right?

Art: Ghost stuff.

Austin: Ghost stuff. Can we put that in brackets here next to it? Just "ghost stuff," so that we know what that spectral power is? And we'll play it by ear, you know? It's meant to be broad. It is meant to be broad. But I think, in other words, you're not summoning firestorms, right? That's not the thing that you do?

Art: No. More second act of an exorcism movie.

Austin: Right, yes. Yes. Yeah. Feel free to come up with a way of describing that if you like, in a couple of words. "Ghost stuff" works, though.

Wellaway Piaster [0:27:20]

Austin: All right. Finally, Keith.

Keith: Hello.

Austin: Hi.

Keith: My character's name is Wellaway Piaster. His pronouns are he/him. He is a Zanni.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: His Look, I've got a couple pictures here that I can send. He's wearing bright red

pants with a button up long sleeve shirt, subtly off-white cotton shirt with big red buttons.

Austin: Mm.

Keith: He's wearing a mushroom hat.

Ali: Oh.

Keith: Like, with scaffolding. Like, it's big. It's, like, not like a knit cap. [Ali chuckles]

Adorned with gold cufflinks and sort of, like, a gold bolo tie.

Austin: Huh.

Keith: But the pendant part of the bolo tie is just, like, a plain button.

Austin: Mm.

Keith: But the tie part is gold. And I spend my time doing, like, tricks and gags in a sort of, like, a high traffic area outside of the tent.

Austin: So you're not part of the big show inside the tent? Or are you also part of that, when it's go time?

Keith: Uh...

Austin: Where are at in the hierarchy of the circus?

Keith: Um, I sort of consider this a kind of barker position.

Austin: Interesting. Okay.

Keith: This is, like, an attraction. This is like a go inside type of thing, but this is also like a hat on the ground getting tipped extra money kind of thing. Maybe he'll run a shell game.

Austin: Mm.

Keith: Maybe he'll do some card tricks. I picture a lot of juggling comedy. Like, there's

a...one of my first favorite bits of comedy from when I was a little kid was Steve Martin doing a bunch of juggling gags where he, like, pretends to not know how to juggle and is like, "Let me do this trick," and it's the same trick six times. It basically becomes the movie *Zoolander* but with juggling tricks.

Austin: Oh, okay.

Keith: And...let's see. Yeah, I think that that's it. The, like, sort of gathering a crowd and then, like, try and get that crowd to go into the tent.

Austin: Right, right. I gotcha. I have— sorry. Let's get your Dream and your Sphere also.

Keith: Oh, my Dream.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: "I will hear, in whispers and shouts, an entire world speak my name together."

Austin: Great. Love to dream big. And your Sphere and Impulse?

Keith: Sphere of Stagecraft. Impulse: "Respond to a personal or private problem through performative or public means."

Austin: Great. Love this. Also, I need people that both, Wellaway, you and Donnie know here. What type of people are you dealing with here on the day-to-day? Do you have friends among the circus folks?

Keith: I do. Yeah. So, I think that there's a sort of, like, tag-in-tag-out duos thing here.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: I think that I have another, you know, sort of clown character. And I think, I imagine us running, you know, like, light carny scams together. You know, needing someone to be really impressed in the audience, a first person to go in with, like, a \$20 tip, to be like, [**Austin:** Right.] this is the appropriate. Like, tipping high to make it look

like you've gotta tip high. Maybe some light pickpocketing.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Misdirection and stuff like that.

Austin: Yeah, the name of this clown is Plenny Plantain, the banana clown.

Keith: [chuckles] Okay.

Austin: Their real name— he/they. He/they pronouns on Plenny. Real name Grent.

Keith: Real name Grent.

Austin: Real name: Grent.

Art: Real name: Grent.

Keith: Real name: Grent.

Austin: Donnie, who do you know?

Art: Probably fewer people.

Austin: Sure. Yeah, is it...I have a thought here, but I don't know. How do you do with kids?

Art: Oh, real well, I think.

Austin: Yeah, okay. There's a stowaway you know.

Art: Sure.

Austin: Who, like, became— I think there's a sort of similar overlap here. One, you've both only been conscious for some amount— for a few— I guess, wait, sorry. You've been actually conscious for quite some time, we realized, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: You've been a ghost for a while. This is not a new thing.

Art: But, like, a really vague ghost for a fair bit, yeah.

Austin: For a while, yeah. So, both of you are, I guess, outsiders in some way. You know this kind of, like, uh...let's say 12-year-old, something like that? Named Candide, Candide Morata [sp], who is a stowaway. Claims to be an orphan, but who knows. Could be a runaway, right?

Art: Sure.

Keith: I have a mechanical question about this.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Can the kids not sense the dread? Do they not mind the dread?

Austin: Great question.

Keith: Is it something that you have to be older to pick up on?

Art: Oh, I think that once Donnie got a little more together, the sense of dread is a little more controllable.

Keith: Okay. Oh, so you've used the dread to manifest, and so there's less ambient dread.

Art: Right, yeah. There's less ambient dread. It's more of a...it's just a name.

Austin: Mm, I see. Right, well, that was a name that was given to you based on the way other people were feeling.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: It's not necessarily where you're at, you know. You're not always exuding dread, right?

Art: Right.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Sure.

Austin: I like it. So yeah, Candide. Candide Morata. You know, 12, 13. She/they pronouns on Candide. Real, like, gets into trouble but gets out of trouble type kid. Real always looks for trouble when a day is boring, you know? But also someone who, like, will sometimes show up with a pocket full of, like, minor treasure, right before you leave the moon to go to the next moon, and it's like, "Well, where'd you get this?" and she's like, "Don't worry about it. Don't worry about where I got it. I'm sharing it with you." And, like, okay, I guess.

Keith: Precocious.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. A little precocious. A little in search of a found family but doesn't quite know that, you know, this is it, but like, maybe one day. Maybe one day, she'll feel, like, comfortable here, you know? Wants—

Keith: I'm sorry if this was answered. Can people see Donnie, like, all the time, or sometimes, or what's the...?

Art: Sometimes I think is right.

Keith: Sometimes. Okay.

Austin: Yeah. Well, speaking of seeing each other— sorry, Ali, were you going to say something?

Ali: How frequent are ghosts?

Austin: Ghosts are real.

Keith: Every day.

Austin: Ghosts are not a thing that, like— they're not a species of being, in the way of,

like, “Oh yeah, I know three ghosts.” [chuckles] You know what I mean?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: They're not like elves in D&D or something. But they are like ghosts in fantasy worlds that have ghosts, right? You hear stories about ghosts. You've probably run into another ghost or two. Many ghosts are not as stable as Donnie is and not— I don't mean that in, like, a mental sense. I mean that in a lasts sense. Like, exists beyond a haunting, you know? Most ghosts don't keep jobs, is what I would say. Most ghosts don't, like, travel from moon to moon. Does that help answer that a little bit?

Ali: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Austin: Okay. And there are other types of beings that are...ghost is a broad word, right? 'Cause like, explicitly, Donnie is a Quintessent, which again, is a sort of spirit that is a playable character type being, right? Which means has a great deal of autonomy, is not beholden to being in a single place forever, is the fully embodied spirit of something or someone or some force but is not, like...you know, there are things that are more like demons that exist in this world, right? And those might haunt you in the way that we think of a ghost haunting you, but they're not the same thing as the type of spirit that Donnie is, right? So, yeah. Many other things. You know, this is a world where people will talk about other realms existing and those realms have spirits in them, the way that...you know, if you talk to somebody in real life, and they said, “Oh, I think my house is haunted,” that might mean one thing. That might mean something that's different than if they said, “Oh, I think there's a demon in my house,” right? [chuckles]

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And this world has both of those things. Things like Donnie are...people like Donnie are fairly rare, is the short answer.

Bonds [0:36:30]

Austin: So, those are our three little images of y'all. Let's go over relationships, now

that everyone's been debuted. Ali, let's come back to you. What are your Bonds with Donnie and Wellaway?

Ali: Yeah. So, my Bonds. My Bond with Donnie is, "Donnie's fate has been shattered and diffused. I will guide them towards favor in their second living." And then my bond with Wellaway Pastier? Pastier?

Keith: Piaster.

Ali: Piaster? [laughs] "Wellaway's fated glory will not come without hardship. I will walk with him to assure his safety."

Austin: Amazing. Art.

Art: My Bonds— and that is Ali's page. My Bond with Hye Malis is, "Hye is terrified of the truth I embody. I will make them face it."

Austin: Mm.

Art: And with Wellaway, it is, "When I am with Wellaway, I remember what I once was and feel at peace."

Austin: And Wellaway.

Keith: My Bond with Hye is, "Hye showed me a straight path to my destiny, but I will show them how to bend any path," and my Bond with Donnie is, "What's wrong, Donnie? Can't they take a joke?" Oh, sorry. "What's wrong with Donnie? Can't they take a joke?"

Austin: I do think, "What's wrong, Donnie? Can't take a joke?" is also very good. [Ali and Keith laugh]

Art: Yeah.

Austin: So, maybe...

Art: It's a little more hostile.

Austin: It's a little more hostile but kind of fun.

Keith: I'll think on that.

Austin: Yeah. I will...

Keith: I also put my hat picture and my pants picture in the chat.

Austin: Oh, in the— which chat?

Keith: Oh, just the Realis thing.

Austin: Oh, I see. Yeah, you're kind of a classical clown. [Ali laughs] These big red pants.

Keith: Yeah, that's what I think of. Classical clown.

Austin: Well, you know what I mean. There's like— what's this from?

Keith: These guys were described as tudor servants.

Austin: Oh, sure.

Keith: And then this guy, I was just looking for mushroom hats, and I was like, "This is the mushroom hat."

Austin: I love the mushroom hat.

Keith: What if, like, Qui-Gon Jinn had to wear a big mushroom hat. [Ali laughs]

Austin: That is what it looks like to me.

Ali: This is like if a clown was an *Elden Ring* invader.

Austin: Damn. So true. [chuckles]

Keith: I think I might have a big— I don't think I said this, but I wrote it in my thing. I think I have a big white feather in this mushroom. I don't know.

Ali: Mm.

Keith: Like a huge, like, fluffy feather.

Austin: Great. I love this.

Setting the Scene [0:38:53]

Austin: While you're all doing these things, I'm going to say that it's, like, the equivalent here of an early evening. You know, we're at, like, 5:00 p.m. or the equivalent on this moon. You know, it's starting to dim. And you're probably halfway through this weeklong visit, right? Circus has been up for a few days. Based on the way that y'all have been describing what your days are, you know, you're past the initial boom of a bunch of villagers coming to town.

And I should say also, I started to say this before, but the Citadel Bein is— you can sense the layers of history on it. You know, we see it maybe in the background here, up and behind the circus. It is an ancient citadel. Like, it is pre...you take, like, an old building on this planet that looks sturdy and, like, you know, oh, this has been a castle for a thousand years or whatever. This looks like pre-that. This looks, like, ancient and not just old, right? Except that it has been layered atop by every generation of history that's come forward from it, right? So, you see the move from...

You know, in our world, this is a move from a structure that looks, you know, ancient Greek or ancient Chinese or something or ancient Egyptian forward into, you know, thousands of years later where the stoneworking changes. And like, okay, some of the old stairwells that had been carved right into the side of the mountain are now supplemented by additional stonework stairwells. And then, on top of those, are, you know, complex pulleys and levee systems from whatever the kind of middle ages period of this place was, or those have been replaced, or some of those are kept as simply historical artifacts. Oh, look, this is where we did blank.

And then, you know, parts of this is like, this is a castle that has automatic sliding doors installed on it, you know? This is a castle where, like, the doors go, “whoosh” as

they open up, because the motion detector sees you approaching. This is a castle with, like, wires and metal power boxes, you know, effectively stapled onto the side of it. Quite literally, this is a castle that has a courtyard that has some spaceships parked inside of it, but it's never stopped being an ancient castle, this ancient citadel that protected this little region from, you know, presumably, at some point, other forces here on the planet or on the moon, on Ulled. At some point, this was not a unified group of four moons. At some point, this wasn't a unified planet, and this citadel dates back to those times.

And you get the impression now, about halfway through this week here, that some of the people who have been doing whatever this big negotiation is inside the citadel are getting bored. And you specifically get that idea—and I think, Hye, you're the one to pick up on this first—because you see the types of people who you haven't seen yet beginning to move through the circus. Maybe you each get eyes on people from different groups or delegations. I'll come— actually, I'll wrap back around to you last, Hye, because yours are the people who are most intricate and weird. Let's see. Wellaway, you see two members of a group, a faction called the Killiad Consortium. They have, like... [chuckles] This is a very stupid touchstone. Have you seen the *Street Fighter* movie?

Keith: The *Street Fighter* movie. No.

Art: With Raul Julia?

Austin: With Raul Julia and Jean-Claude Van Damme?

Art: I mean, yes, but a very long time ago.

Austin: Okay.

Art: It's very worth seeing once, [**Austin:** Yeah.] especially if you're 10 or whatever. [Ali snorts]

Keith: I believe that I saw the old Giant Bomb "This Ain't No Game" video about it.

Austin: Oh, well, there you go. That's kind of all you need, right? Jean-Claude Van Damme is in that movie as Guile, which... [chuckles] Sorry, I'm just— I've found this image of him and his crew, and this image is from— I don't know what the image is actually from. I guess it's probably a promotional image, but I got it from an old *Vice* story. Headline: "Jean-Claude Van Damme Was 'Coked Out of His Mind' During 'Street Fighter,' Director Says". Great.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: Wow.

Austin: Cool.

Ali: Shoutouts.

Art: The thing, if you do watch that movie, the really sad part of it is that Raul Julia is about to die while filming that movie.

Austin: Yeah, it sucks.

Keith: Yeah, I did know that.

Art: And you can sort of tell.

Austin: It sucks.

Art: And he's just getting the shit beat out of him. [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah.

Art: But the "For me, it was Tuesday," speech is...no other actor could have brought that home like that.

Austin: Oh, yeah. A banger, for sure. But, so, I think these guys have this specific sort of kind of uniform vibe. I don't know that it's literally blue, green, and red camouflage, but it is big blue berets with a big logo on the front. It is, you know, kind of, like, blue shirt with, like, dark pants. They're from the Killiad Consortium, which is, I think I've

described to y'all before in the character creation episode as being, like, big space bureaucracy; big, like, "Hey, if we're all part of the same extremely centralized government; if you all agree to, like, our trade deals, then war will stop in the moons."

Keith: Oh, I remember.

Austin: These guys.

Keith: Yeah, I remember these guys, yeah.

Austin: A little UN, a little NATO.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Very IMF.

Keith: Yeah, we talked about these are the "two nations with McDonald's can't go to war" guys.

Austin: These are the "two nations with McDonald's can't go to war."

Keith: Right.

Austin: And they are here, because they would love to put a McDonald's on Ulled. They would love to put a McDonald's on all four of the moons of the Tetrad, and they think Ulled might be the— I mean, they're trying everywhere, but today, they're trying Ulled. And so you see two of them, and they look just, like...there's a real "can you believe this place is so dirty?" sneer on one of their faces. The other one...you know, one of them is kind of like...one of them is built the way people who go to the gym are built, and one of them is built in the way that someone who kills people for a living is built, and that's different.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: They're built in different ways. One of them—

Keith: This blue camo looks sick. I love the— this is a great color. This is like if Violet

Beauregarde went and started her own country. [Austin and Keith laugh]

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. And in many ways, that is how the Killiad Consortium is, you know? So, those are the two people you see coming around, and you're like, "Oh, I haven't seen people like this at the carnival/circus quite yet."

Donnie, you pick up on some locals who you...there's something about this place. You feel a sort of deep resonance with Ulled. I don't know that you like it necessarily, but there is a vibe here that feels— you think something about your past connects you to this moon, right? There's something about this place that is— it feels different than it feels. And it's not— you've never been able to tune it quite right, historically. You've never been able to, like, turn it into a dowsing rod, where you go, "This is the one place on this moon that I'm from," or something like that. And it's not where you woke up. You didn't wake up on this moon, right? So what's going on here? Who knows? But you see people who you recognize as being kind of, like, high powered lords from— I mean, I don't think that you see the Lord Bein, the guy who, like, is the lord of this citadel, but you see people who are closer to him walking around here, and they've been holed up in the negotiations probably all week also.

Hye's Scene [0:46:51]

Austin: And then, finally, Hye, you see two people who are made of carefully constructed, carefully hewn, intricately detailed wood. Two, like...what I'm really picturing is, do you know those guys in *Elden Ring* who are, like, the crystal body people? Where you gotta use, like, maces and stuff to break them?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: They're like that but made of wood. Tall, elegant, thin, weird wide heads in a similar way, but their whole bodies feel like they have been carefully carved out of wood. They are called Crystalians in *Elden Ring*. And this wood is, like, sanded and polished to a very smooth, beautiful, you know, sheen. You can see gradations in their bark skin or their wood skin. You can see lots of, uh— they each have— there's two of them, and

one of them has, like, more knots and stuff, but even the knots have been polished and, you know, there's something really beautiful about the knots in the wood of their body. The other one has, like, feels like they're almost made of different types of wood, and you'll get, like, this kind of light tan color and then, like, a darker brown in stripes throughout their body.

I don't know that you've ever seen people like this before. You tell me. But you suspect that they are here from the other political entity, the Freemoons Assembly, which is this kind of, like, hodgepodge, vaguely libertarian, vaguely anarchist, kind of. Unfortunately, big tent, you end up with both of those people inside of the same group, political group. And they are here representing them in whatever this ongoing negotiation is. But yeah. And one of them, I think, begins to approach you, and says—speaking without lips moving. Like, looking down at you. She has a face, but her lips do not move. And she says:

(as **wood person**): Are you a star seer?

Ali (as **Hye**): Yes. Yes, I am.

Austin (as **wood person**): Are you working?

Ali: Uh... [chuckles] Glancing around.

(as **Hye**): Yes. Yes, I'm open for readings.

Austin (as **wood person**): You simply do your readings here at this table? There's no device? You don't need to see the stars with a telescope or an observatory. There's no orrery for you to consult.

Ali (as **Hye**): No, no. The connections made are very organic. A device would separate the truth of what's to be seen.

Austin (as **wood person**): Hmm. Interesting. I wonder: can you tell the future better than me?

Austin: And she sits across from you to have a reading, and the person with her places some...what's money like here? What's up with money in this setting?

Ali: Chit system.

Austin: Chit system? Some sort of, like...

Ali: A nice little inch—

Keith: It always is, isn't it? [Ali laughs]

Ali: Like an inch by half inch, different denomination and different types of metals.

Austin: Yeah. Do they have holes in the middle?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So you can, like, put them on a string or something.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Okay. So, yeah, so—

Ali: One of those bike locks or whatever.

Austin: What? [Ali laughs] Those bike locks. No, I'm thinking, like, a... [typing]

Keith: Like a wire keyring.

Austin: I'm thinking of, yeah, look at— yeah, like a wire keyring, exactly. I'm thinking of— why is this just the sad person? What you put in here, Keith. This sad statue. Oh, this is your...

Keith: Oh, wooden people.

Austin: Wooden people, yeah, sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm talking about, like, these, these coins. They had, like, big holes in them.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah. Ooh, what are these? These are great.

Ali: No, I was just thinking, like, you could link them onto, like, one of those...you know, like, those metal things that are a loop?

Austin: Oh, sure. Yes. Yes.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: What are— now I don't know what you mean, if we're not...

Ali: Like a carabiner or like a bike lock or like a...

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Right. This is what I was thinking, these keyrings.

Ali: Yeah, that too.

Austin: Yeah. That totally works. Yeah, 100%.

Art: Sure, yeah.

Austin: Or a necklace or whatever. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah. And I think maybe a loop of them, you know? When you talk about a loop being, like, a certain amount, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You get paid a loop of 10 \$10 coins, basically. It's like 100 bucks.

Keith: Yeah, 10 coins is a loop.

Austin: 10 coins is a loop.

Ali: I'm all about my loops.

Keith: 10 loops is a lope.

Austin: Yeah, you know I'm stacking them loops. [Ali laughs] And, you know, the—

Art: Stacking loops to the ceiling. [Austin laughs]

Austin: Yeah, a loop gets put on your table by the other person who's there. These are— there's two people here. This is Aspen Contrapposto and Birch Contraposto, and they are...eh, I don't need to get into their whole deal right now. But I do need to know, as we do our very first Conflict, if you can— actually, let me walk through this whole thing, 'cause this is the first time we're doing *Realis* Conflict, right?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And you're defending, so I want to make sure I do it as clearly as possible. I have run this game before, but y'all have not played it, so I need to remember that [Ali laughs] and move nice and slow, so that we're all on the same page. So.

Ali: We also are not holding it in our heads because we designed it. [laughs]

Austin: That's exactly right, yeah. So. Regardless of how your story starts— this is now I'm reading from what is currently page 10 in this book. What follows should be understood as a loosely structured conversation focusing on exploration, drama, and conflict. Play is driven by the natural flow of descriptions, questions, answers, and clarifications. We've been doing that. That's what we've been doing so far. [chuckles] This is the part of the book where I had to write what a roleplaying game is, which is always very fun.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Right.

Austin: You know? [Art groans] Talk about how conversation bounces back and forth, et cetera. Yeah, Art?

Art: Oh, it just always annoys me when I have to read that.

Austin: Yeah. [Ali laughs]

Art: No offense intended.

Austin: No. You gotta write it though, right? You gotta, you know.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Eventually, this loose conversation will reach a moment where there isn't obvious agreement on what should happen next. Whenever an Actor is opposed or if the stakes are interesting and an outcome is uncertain, the story has reached a point of Conflict, requiring the Actor to choose a Means (usually a Class Sentence) in order to achieve their Intent.

So, this is a moment where an Actor—and in this case, the Actor is Aspen, Aspen Contrapposto—is declaring an Intent. Her Intent is to embarrass you by seeing the future better than you can.

Art: A real dick move. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh. This person's a dick, 100%.

Keith: I thought they were a tree.

Ali: Wow.

Austin: I am shocked by the— you're really leaning into Zanni today already. I appreciate it. Committing to the character. [Keith and Art laugh]

Whenever something is uncertain or opposed, an Actor declares a bold and exciting Intent and then explains how one of their Means will help them achieve it. If there is a Counteractor (also called a "Counter"), they declare their own Means,

describing how they want to interfere with the Actor. The ranks of these Means are then revealed and compared. If the Actor's Means are ranked higher, then their Intent comes to pass. Describe what happens. If the Counter's Means is equal or higher ranked, the Counter wins, the Actor does not get their Intent, and the Actor's Chosen Means cannot be used for the remainder of the scene. It is Countered.

There's a bunch of other text in here about what a dramatic Intent is. If you've listened to us play *Friends at the Table*, you've heard me probably have an uptick of demanding that people declare dramatic intent generally, but it really depends on the system. Obviously, some systems are a little more nuanced or a little more zeroed in on simulating a single swing of the hand or something, but in *Realis*, we're really big on big dramatic intentions. Notably, quote, an example here is, "I want to humiliate my rival in front of his peers" is a stronger, more dramatic Intent than "I want to punch my rival." We should be thinking about big, broad, exciting narrative outcomes from scenes because of the way that action is sort of compressed in *Realis*.

So, in this moment, Aspen is declaring her Intent. Her Intent is "I want to embarrass you; I want to embarrass Hye by showing that I can predict the future better." And she's doing this with a Sentence, and that Sentence, a Class Sentence, is "I always hear the future coming." Aspen sits down across from you and sits perfectly still. You know, there's, again, faces don't animate here, so, you know, we don't see her close her eyes and listen, but she does sit perfectly still in a way that still kind of reads as listening to the environment. Aspen is a type of prophet similar to you, except instead of working on moon alignments, she works on sound. She is an Auracle, spelled A-U-R, because that's the type of game *Realis* is. She is an oracle who listens, and so she is using the Sentence, "I always hear the future coming." Now...

Keith: I'm going to say: I think this is looking pretty good for you, Ali. [Ali and Austin chuckle]

Austin: Now, it is up to you to decide if you want to try to counter this. [laughs] Maybe you just want to be humiliated by this wooden Auracle. That could be a thing you want. I don't know. You think it's interesting. I'm not going to say you have to defend from that.

The consequences here aren't life or death, you know?

Ali: Mm.

Austin: Maybe you just want to make this person feel good. I don't know. You tell me. But if you'd like to, you could try to Counter this. Would you like to try to Counter this?

Ali: Sure.

Austin: All right. What are you— what is your Means?

Ali: I think my Means here is probably the Sentence is “I always know how to ritually summon the power of the moons.”

Austin: Ooh, interesting. This is not where I thought it was going. What's that mean? What's that look like?

Ali: Well, I think it looks like...it looks like doing the thing, right? I have another Sentence here that's like, “I always read the future in the stars.”

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: But I think that, like, if there's a question of skill here...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Like, there's the, like, thing of being like, oh, the connection that I have is real. The faith that I have is real. The, like...

Austin: Mm.

Ali: The teaching that I have is real. The authority of this that I have is real.

Austin: Right.

Ali: So, I would like to impress this person, instead of... [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, okay. So, yeah. You declare that Sentence. Now we reveal both the kind

of rank, the current Reality of each of these Sentences. I believe yours is a +0.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: It's a new Sentence. Hers is also a +0, and so it gets Countered. And now I'm going to do the very fun thing of copying this character and her Sentence and stuff into your NPC sheets. I'm actually going to put it not on this first one, because I think probably, long term, more important NPCs are going to end up on the Band Faction NPCs page. But here, over on the second NPC, the kind of second-to-last one, I've added Aspen Contrapposto. "I always hear the future coming" is the Sentence that you now know that she has, and I'm going to mark it once, because it has been Countered, and the way that this game works is whenever you lose a Conflict, you mark the Means that you used.

There are some special Means that get marked even if they don't lose. Things like Ephemera, which are, like, super special items, or it's not always even items. You know, I think an Ephemera in this game could be a magical sword that you've repaired, but it could also be Goku learning how to go Super Saiyan. It could also be, like, a political alliance. It's anything that's like, hey, this is a big narrative thing that's going to be important for the next, like, three sessions of play, basically. And maybe you'll still keep it afterwards, but it's just not as, like, cool anymore. It doesn't move the needle in the same way, you know? Like, sometimes your mech gets an upgrade, and it's really important for, like, the next episodes, and then no one talks about it in the whole back half of the season, 'cause it's just, like, normal now? That's how Ephemera works. This is not Ephemera. This is a regular thing. Ali, you don't have to mark anything. You succeeded.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: But you do get to tell me what it looks like as you succeed.

Ali: Yeah. I feel like it's almost like we predict the same thing.

Austin: Mm.

Ali: So it's sort of like, oh, I can't...you can't be embarrassed by somebody who is your peer?

Austin: Right.

Ali: You know, I guess you can, but like, not if... [chuckles] Not if it's a tie game.

Austin: Right, right, right.

Ali: But yeah, I think I do the thing of, like, I bet I have a little staff that I hit to the ground.

Austin: Yeah, what's it look like? What do you do, as you...? Like, what's the process for you?

Ali: I bet I have to look up at the sky a little bit.

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Ali: Some of that.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I think that it's, like, a thing of like, you know, it's situational?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And it's sort of bound by location.

Austin: Oh, sure.

Ali: So it's probably a thing where, like, I look up at the sky. I'm, like, reading out all of these, like, spots that the current moons are in right now.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And then sort of synthesize that into, like, you know, "tomorrow, the fates don't feel good about you doing this thing" or whatever, or...

Austin: What do you— what is the prediction of the rest of this week? What are the vibes for this...?

Ali: Uh...

Austin: This is someone who, again, represents one of these big political factions. We don't need to get deep into it. My plan is not for this to be a game about, like, the deep political factions debating on this planet, but it is a fun backdrop to kick things off in, so.

Keith: I'm excited, 'cause Ali told me, actually, off mic, that all of her predictions are going to rhyme. [Ali laughs in surprise]

Austin: Oh. [Art laughs] Interesting.

Art: I actually have it in writing.

Austin: Mm. [Ali and Keith laugh]

Keith: Yeah, I got a— I have a notarized letter from Ali [**Austin:** Wow!] saying, “All of my— [laughs] All of my predictions will rhyme.” And then, “No slants.”

Austin: Mm, no slant rhyme.

Keith: Full rhyme.

Art: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: No slants is definitely in here.

Ali: I don't even know what that means.

Austin: That's the sound of a professional.

Keith: Slant rhyme's like a half rhyme.

Austin: Damn. Ali was like, “Slant rhymes? I don't even know what those are.” [Ali

laughs]

Keith: Right. [laughs] Oh, right, yeah. Sorry, yes.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: That wasn't me telling Ali. Obviously, she already knew, and it was a brag. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Right, right, right.

Art: Yeah.

Ali: Anyway, I think the...I think part of the prediction that I'm giving is sort of, like, you know, "Being aggressive and stubborn [Austin: Mm.] will lead to your folly," or whatever. I think that I'm sort of, like, pushing on some of the anxiety of the negotiations by being like, "The more that you try to force things your way, the less success that you'll have in this thing."

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And like, not to characterize this weird bully, but I feel like that could be an anxiety inside of her heart around this. [laughs]

Austin: Sure. Sure. Yeah. Are there any images that come to you? Are you a fortune teller who can kind of, like, who gets...is there a vision component to this, or is it more emotional and vibes based?

Ali: It's tough, because I feel like I've created, like, clear visions with the Bonds that I have.

Austin: Right, right.

Ali: But I also think that that's hard to...that's a difficult type of thing to do in a circus situation.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah.

Ali: [chuckles] So, I think that it's more the sort of, like, the horoscopy, like...

Austin: Gotcha.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I think that there's a slow kind of quiet laugh from the other wooden person behind her, from Birch, who's like, [chuckles]. You know? Little happy to see his counterpart put into place, maybe. It seems like he is here in a...maybe not a bodyguard duty but a less...not the person who comes up and sits down and talks to you, right? Maybe not the lead negotiator. And maybe a bodyguard. Maybe that is the vibe, actually. You know, you got a success there. Maybe there is a sort of, like, "I am here to watch after this other person" a little bit. Before she stands up, she says:

(as **Aspen**): Impressive. I am sorry to have doubted you. I'm surprised you would waste your talents in a carnival. If you ever desire richer employment, please seek us out.

Ali (as **Hye**): Oh, even common men need connection to their duty, but I appreciate it. Enjoy the festivities.

Austin (as **Birch**): [pointedly] Let's go, Aspen.

Austin: Says Birch. And Aspen, flustered, gets up and walks away in a huff.

Wellaway's Scene [1:05:40]

Austin: Meanwhile, across the circus, let's go to Wellaway. Wellaway, these two Killiad Consortium guys walk over to you and just, like, stop and watch.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: They don't make any statements. They're just waiting and watching for, like, your show, you know?

Keith: Okay. Yeah, I can do a show.

Austin: They don't request anything.

Keith: Right.

Austin: They're not going to ask you for anything.

Keith: No.

Austin: They just, one of them crosses his arms, and he, like, squints and looks at you, like the way people, like, squint and look at paintings in a museum, like, "And what's it supposed to mean?"

Keith: I put a hat on the ground, and I start doing a juggling routine. This is...I start off with, like, a soccer ball, and I'm sort of, you know, rolling it from, like, shoulder to shoulder, like, down the arm, and then I throw it up, and then I turn around, and when I turn back around—you know, very smooth motion—it's two balls, and then I'm doing the same thing, juggling two, and I turn around again, and then I turn back around, and then it's three balls. And then, as I'm juggling, I'll throw a ball up, and it will be more balls. It will just, like, very smoothly, be like, oh, now there's four, now there's five, and it's very difficult. The trick is where the ball is coming from, and they're getting smaller and smaller also, each time that they appear to separate.

Austin: They are not impressed.

Keith: Well, I start re-combining the balls, and the balls will, like, collide into each other. sort of like a reverse ring trick, where you take the two rings and you pull them apart. This, the balls hit each other, and they go together, and sort of they look like they're just swallowing each other up, getting bigger and fewer.

Austin: Interesting. Are you trying to impress them? You want to get money from them, presumably. You want to get paid.

Keith: I do, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. I think that's uncertain. I think you're going to need to use a Means in

order to achieve that. These are not people who are loose with their money.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Or their, you know, sense of being impressed, apparently.

Keith: Sure. I think that I won't try and get money from the trick [**Austin:** Mm.] but will take what I feel like I am owed, if they decide to walk away, and grab a little bit of something out of one of their pockets.

Austin: Oh, I love this.

Keith: Or from a bag or something.

Austin: This is good. You're going to try to pickpocket them as they walk away?

Keith: Uh huh.

Austin: What is your— so, that's your Intent. What is your Means?

Keith: I have this Class Sentence, "I am quick in wit and bone."

Austin: Yeah, that sounds right to me. You're being quick. You're quickly reaching out [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] with the bone in your hand to pick their pockets.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Again, Sentences in *Realis* start very broad, because you want to allow people to do exactly this. Unfortunately, you reach for the— which one's hand— or who are you trying to rob here? Which one of them? The lead one, who's clearly the negotiator, or, again, the one who looks like he kills people? [pause, Austin and Keith chuckle] Which one?

Keith: You know, this does feel a little bit like, you know, the Indiana Jones thing where you want to take the cup that looks the nicest, because that's definitely the good cup.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Sometimes, you want to take the cup that it looks like you're not supposed to take.

Austin: Mm.

Keith: I'm gonna take the killer cup.

Austin: Okay. As you pull— so, I'm Countering this.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: I'm going to Counter this with—

Keith: Now, this is the trick. This is the trick here.

Austin: What is?

Keith: As long as you can Counter it, [**Austin:** Yeah.] at level 0, it's an automatic loss.

Austin: That is correct. Though, again, at this point, I guess I should say, because we kind of moved past this too quickly last time.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Because, you know, I kind of stacked the deck in that first one, so that we could get an example of what *Realis* conflict looks like.

Keith: Right.

Austin: You do have a resource here.

Keith: And I see myself as an example of losing. That's how I'm seeing this.

Austin: I appreciate it. But there is a resource here that you could— there are a couple of resources here that you have at your disposal to maybe tilt this, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So, obviously, you're using a +0 Sentence.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: There's a good chance I have a +0 Sentence that can Counter between these two characters, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: But it's not as simple as that, right? You have a Token that you could spend. In fact, I'm going to click on the Tokens to make sure everybody has their Tokens. If that Token thing—it's under your name—is checked, that means that you have your Token. That is the way we're going to play it. I know it's kind of weird to be like, "Okay, well, does that mean I've spent my Token or I have my Token?"

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Austin: If it's checked, you have your Token. So, you could spend your Token to boost your Sentence to a +1, right? You then spend that Token. There's ways to get your Tokens back. But it would give you a +1. Now, maybe that's enough to get a win here. Some NPCs start with some higher Sentences already.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That's simply true about the setting. Or maybe it ends up being that these ones don't have those or the ones that they would have that are +1 aren't useful, you know? I'm just going to scroll down and click on a random NPC in the book really quick. The Kingpin has, "After I've displayed my willingness to be cruel inside my territory, I always have absolute power." They haven't done that, right? So, if one of these people was a Kingpin—they're not, but if one of them was—they couldn't use that Sentence here, because they have not yet displayed their willingness to be cruel.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Nor are they inside of their territory, right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: That's a +2 Sentence. That couldn't trigger here, for instance.

Keith: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Austin: Go ahead. What were you going to ask?

Keith: Um...

Austin: So, you could spend your Token. You all also have a Band Sentence, which is, "When we work together, we always hide our true Intentions with spectacle." You're all not—

Keith: Which is what I'm doing.

Austin: Which is what you're doing, but you're not all working together, and you can only use that once per Sentence.

Keith: Right.

Austin: You are not all working together, so you couldn't use it, 'cause that—

Keith: Oh, right.

Austin: You know, that qualifier that is part of the sort of trigger of the Sentence isn't happening right now, right? So, without that, you can't use the Sentence. This is a real "to do it, do it," game.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You have to do the thing your Sentence says, in order to get the effect.

Keith: So, right now, my bet is either that there is a +1 Sentence or there isn't. I can either turn this into a tie, which would be a loss for me, or turn it into a win based on how much I think the killer could Counter "quick in wit and bone."

Austin: It's not just the killer. Anyone in a Scene can Counter, right? Explicitly.

Keith: Oh, so it doesn't matter who I've picked.

Austin: It matters narratively who you've picked, but it doesn't matter in terms of who could step in and Counter, and that's important for you all also, right? Like, if a big monster was trying to kill Candide Morata, the little girl, it's not just the little girl who gets to respond to that, right? You could also be like, "Oh, I'm going to Counter on behalf of this 12-year-old," right?

Keith: Sure. Well, I'm going to metagame this a little bit and say Austin's not going to make me burn my Token on the first guy that I meet to then lose right away. I'm going to spend my Token.

Austin: Wait, so you are going to spend your Token. Okay.

Keith: I am going to spend my Token.

Austin: Yeah. All right, yeah. You slip out a— they try to— they do try to Counter you, which means you do get a Sentence. You do learn about one of these people. But they don't stop it from happening, right?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: The Sentence that they are trying to Counter with, this comes from the one who is the kind of lead negotiator here. And you know their names now. You know this one's name now, because along with the money that you pull out, you also get their card. This is— and I will, again, put this on the second page, the NPC page. This is, uh...why is this so big? Jason Jetsonia Junior.¹ Six N's in that name. You figure out where they are. Who is a Killiad Senior Integration Analysis Officer. And they tried to use the Sentence, "I always turn someone else's resource into my profit," on you. It's only a +0 Sentence.

Keith: Okay.

¹ The location of the N's has been left as an exercise to the reader of this transcript.

Austin: And their hope was: if someone is smart enough to— and, sorry, you've pulled this from the killer's pocket, [**Keith:** Yeah.] not from Jasonnn Jetsonnia Junior's pocket.

Keith: Right.

Austin: And the hope was that, you know, this is the motherfucker who has built this scene out in his head and has figured this all out, and it's like, "Ooh, if someone tries to pickpocket one of us, they'll get my card, and then my bodyguard will grab their hand, and they'll realize, ooh, they only got my card, they didn't get any money at all. And then I'll say, 'Hey, I'm Jasonnn Jetsonnnia Junior, Killiad Senior Integration Analysis Officer, and I can offer you a job,'" because of your intense skill at being a pickpocket, right?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But that doesn't happen. What happens is you pickpocket this guy, and you take his money. [laughs]

Keith: Right, the one that had the money. Right.

Austin: And you also get his card.

Keith: I did it! So it was Last Crusade.

Austin: It was Last Crusade.

Keith: I Last Crusaded him.

Austin: Well, I mean, you know, you used a— I did not reveal a +1 Sentence that could beat you here, is what happened, right?

Keith: Right. Sure.

Austin: But it does mean that I get to advance— I get to mark the Sentence, "I always turn someone else's resource into my profit," so. So far, so good. You all are killing it on these outsiders coming in here to, you know, have fun at your behest, I guess. How much money did you get? What's the score here?

Keith: Two loops.

Austin: You got two loops. You got 200 bucks.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And you know what? You get some Killiad money too. You get, like, a Killiad credit chip or, like, a credit...card, but that doesn't sound fun.

Keith: Right.

Austin: A credit card is, we have credit cards. I want the thing—

Keith: But it's like a fun credit card.

Austin: I want the thing—

Keith: It's like a USB. It's like a money thumb drive.

Austin: It's a money thumb drive, yeah. It's a money drive, yeah. Exactly.

Art: That's just Bitcoin, I think, is...

Austin: [sighs] Yeah, I guess it is. I guess...but this is different.

Art: Okay.

Austin: The data is valuable? The data is money? The...hmm. How does this work? Let's invent new currency real quick. What's a way to have digital money that's not—

Keith: That isn't Bitcoin.

Austin: But is— the thumb drive itself is valuable.

Keith: It's, uh...

Austin: I got it. You can plug it into certain types of computers, and you can spend it on the computer to make the computer go faster.

Art: Oh.

Austin: And that's fine, but like—

Keith: So it's like an expendable graphics card.

Austin: It's like an expendable graphics card. It gives you a little boost. But people use it as currency, because it's easy to, like, move around, you know? You use a little thumb drive, it's like, oh yeah, that's worth 500 bucks, you know? People put it into, like, a spaceship, to like, make the spaceship do navigation more quickly. You know what? This is an Ephemera. What is this called? What's this, uh...what is this?

Keith: Credit union.

Austin: It's not a credit union. It's a...

Keith: They've changed— what credit unions are have changed. They got smaller and smaller, and now they're just on a thumb drive.

Austin: We need the word “boost” in here. Like, we need the word...like, what's the equivalent of in *Fast and the Furious* when they hit the Nitrous button but for your computer?

Keith: Silicon boost.

Austin: That sounds like it's silicon. I think it's, like...

Keith: Sand.

Austin: Sand boost. Cyber boost. We need another word for cyber. Pitch me fun...

Art: Like a data boost.

Austin: A data boost. A boost drive. A boost pen. A data booster. A data booster! You have a data booster.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: I'm typing "data booster" in here. And the Sentence with it is, uh...let me look at some Ephemera so I can get my own mind around how this system works again and how to write Ephemera. Uh, here we go. Ephemera don't need additional— so, I think this is a +1 Ephemera. And, importantly, Ephemera don't need to have extra limitations to be more real. So, for instance, you could have a +3 Sentence that says, "The index key always opens any lock." That could be +3. It doesn't need a bunch of other qualifiers, right? Or you could have one that's lower, you could have a +1 Sentence or Ephemera that is like, "When held by loving hands, the living razor is always lethal against the ancient undead," which normally that's, like, a +3 Sentence, right? There's all sorts of qualifiers in there.

Keith: Right.

Austin: But Ephemera don't need that. Importantly, every time you use an Ephemera successfully, you mark it, and once you've marked all three times, it stops being able to be a thing you can use as a Means. So, it's limited.

Keith: Spent.

Austin: It's a consumable, right? But in this case, it's a +1 consumable, and I think it's like, [typing] "The data booster always...always get a little extra from computerized systems."

Keith: And remind me. You normally only have, like, one Means going on, plus your Token, if you have a Token.

Austin: That is correct.

Keith: Can you use Ephemera in conjunction with a Class Sentence, or is it either/or?

Austin: No. It is a Means, right? It's another type of Means.

Keith: It's a new Sentence.

Austin: Right, exactly.

Keith: Right, okay.

Austin: The same way a Bond is a Means or a Class Sentence is a Means or your Dream is a Means, an Ephemera is a type of Means to get your ends, right? To win a Conflict [**Keith:** Yeah.] and get your Intention or to Counter someone else's.

Keith: Does it still get marked, even if it's used to Counter?

Austin: It does, if you're successful.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Yes. Yes. Yes. You get three successful uses of it, basically. And you can keep it after that. I mean, in this case, I think you can't, right? You have three uses of a data boost on it, you know?

Keith: Right. It just would be trash.

Austin: It would be trash. But again, if this was, like, a jetpack, you might keep the jetpack and can still narrate with the jetpack, but it doesn't matter anymore narratively. *Realis* is a setting, it's a universe of stories, right? Like, story logic is a real spiritual thing that is maybe working here in this world, kind of. I'm being vague, because really what it is is that the in-fiction people who made the game *Realis* believe that to be true and so have made a game in which that is true about the world of *Realis*.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: There are other people in the world who believe different things, so. Anyway.

Keith: [feigning surprise] What?

Austin: What's up?

Keith: Other people believe different things?

Austin: I know, it's weird. Maybe one day we'll talk about the Mechanilogica, but until then, just think about the way the story— I think they call it the Narrasoullic, something

like that, which is like, they believe that the world has a narrative soul that kind of aligns things towards, you know, five act structures and story beats and character arcs. That's how they see the world, and they made a game that supports that vision of the world.

Donnie's Scene [1:21:48]

Austin: All right, so, we got two example Conflicts here. How are things going over at the ghost cheating world?

Art: Great.

Austin: Yeah?

Art: I mean, a few people are winning. You gotta let a few people win.

Austin: How do you know who to let win? What's your criteria?

Art: It's just, like, every few people.

Austin: Okay.

Art: Like, you know.

Austin: Don't get invested.

Keith: It's like a claw machine works.

Art: You know, if 50 people lose in a row, people start getting real upset.

Austin: I think this is in character, actually. I think Candide is like— I think no one's come up for a little bit, and Candide is, like, hiding— you said this was, like, a basketball game? What is this?

Art: That was the first thing I said, yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Art: That it's, like...you know what I'm talking about, when you're at, like, a carnival

[**Austin:** Yeah.] and you have to shoot, like, a shot, and the angle's always weird.

Keith: Yeah. Hey. Yeah, you know how they cheat on those? They make the hole obular, so it's like, it looks like it's a normal hoop, but unless you get, like, a swish it, it'll just bounce weird and come right out.

Art: Yeah, it's a lot like that. You have to get it exactly perfect.

Keith: Yeah. It's legal.

Austin: But also, in this case, we have a ghost.

Art: But then also there's a— yeah, if someone's exactly perfect, it's just, get the hell out of here.

Austin: So I think Candide is like:

(as **Candide**): So yeah, how do you know...? You let that last guy win. Was it 'cause he had a kid?

Art (as **Donnie**): I mean, you have to let a certain— if no one wins, they run you out of town.

Austin (as **Candide**): Right, but...do you make a judgement?

Art (as **Donnie**): But that one, yes, it's 'cause he had a kid.

Austin (as **Candide**): Well, what if the kid's, like, a jerk?

Art (as **Donnie**): Well, then they don't win.

Austin (as **Candide**): Okay, so you don't let jerks win.

Art (as **Donnie**): Well, it's—

Austin (as **Candide**): What if it's a whole town of jerks?

Art (as **Donnie**): I mean, there's never a *whole* town of jerks.

Austin (as **Candide**): There's *never* a whole town of jerks?

Art (as **Donnie**): There's never a *whole town* of— no.

Austin: Takes out a pencil and writes this down in a little handheld flip notebook.

Art (as **Donnie**): It can't be all jerks.

Austin (as **Candide**): [writing] It can't be all jerks.

Austin: Period. Big...

(as **Candide**): All right.

Austin: And then this group of people from the citadel show up to, you know, the basketball game, and they are wearing...you know, I think we—

Art: This is the second sci-fi setting in a row I've just put basketball in. [Art and Keith laugh]

Austin: Listen. It's the NBA Finals right now, tonight. Basketball is on the brain.

Keith: Who's in it?

Austin: It is the Dallas Mavericks and the Boston Celtics.

Keith: Oh, they didn't get knocked out?

Art: Some really unlikable teams in the...

Austin: [laughs] Some real unlikable teams made it. I don't know how, but I'm rooting for a Dallas team, I think. Nightmare scenario.

Art: It's hard, 'cause it's like, it's antisemitism versus racism.

Austin: Regular racism. Regular old American-grown, the most racist crowd in America.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Yep! It's bad out there.

Art: Terrible. Yeah.

Austin: Mm-hmm. But you know what's great? Basketball.

Art: Basketball? Yeah.

Austin: We should get rid of all the business around basketball and let people just hoop. And then also find a way to pay them for their hooping.

Art: What if we just got rid of the Celtics?

Keith: Sounds like, what, you get rid of the business and then put the business back.

Austin: Fuck. Damn it.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You have to understand, Keith, some of these people hoop real good.

Keith: I believe it.

Austin: So.

Keith: I believe that there's no one better on Earth at hooping.

Austin: That's what I'm saying.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: So, yeah. A group— let's say it's, like, four people, five people arrive to the basketball game here, and you can tell that they are representatives of the lord of this castle, this kind of...it's tough, because this person isn't the lord of Ulled, right? But he's a really powerful member of the Ulled hierarchy or of the overall Ulled political sphere. This is— you know, I think it's one of those things that was, you know, it was once said, "If you control the Citadel Bein, you control Ulled," or something, and that was, like,

many, many, many, many ages ago.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But there is still something true about that politically, and so this is a group of people who represent that part of this nearby citadel, but you don't necessarily know if they are, like...are these, like, knights? Are these high-ranking aides? Is this the member of the *Crusader Kings* council, you know?

Art: Sure.

Austin: Is this a functionary, or are these the dudes, you know? Are these the people who run this place, you know? And they're going to step up one at a time here to...actually, no, I think that they're going to pick a...they kind of, like seem to talk amongst themselves about who should do the basketball game. At this point, no interference. Right, 'cause presumably there's another person running the game, right? You're not running the game.

Art: Yeah, someone's, like, taking the tickets or whatever.

Austin: Right, right, right. So yeah, they take the ticket, and then someone steps up—

Art: Maybe there's even, like, a signal involved too, yeah.

Austin: Oh, interesting. So you don't make the call yourself.

Art: I think I...I think Donnie does make the call.

Austin: Okay.

Art: But then, like, there's an overrule.

Austin: I see. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: Like, the person running the game can call an audible, can say, "This person wins, this person loses," and then they have to go with that, you know?

Austin: Yeah. I get you. I got you.

Art: 'Cause they're the ones taking all the heat.

Austin: Right. I think that eventually one of them steps forward, and the person who's running this game for you, she is, like, shook by the arrival of people from the nearby castle, and she does not...she does not give you what should be the normal signal. You should get a signal normally that's like, "These are important people." You know they're important people, but she, like, forgets to do the signal.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And this person steps up. You think that maybe they are, like, a magistrate or something, you know, a high-ranking magistrate of the citadel. That's the vibes you get from the colors that they're wearing or, like, the fluffy arm sleeves or whatever. I don't know what the vibe is here. I think that they are wearing, like...I started to say this before, and I got distracted. They are, like, extremely— do you remember *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*, the one from, like, 2010? Where they're like, what if renaissance garb came back, but also it was like techwear?

Art: Mm.

Austin: It's like that, except you split those two things out and then layer them on top of one another instead of them combining. It is straight up renaissance outfits and then also Google glasses.

Art: All right, all right.

Austin: Also, you know, cyber belts, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Real Peter Chung aesthetics here. Real high maximalism bullshit. And this guy is going to step up and feel the ball, like, bounces the ball twice to be like, "Okay, I'm getting a feel for this thing." Requests a free shot, like a test shot, to which the operator

says:

(as **carnival worker**): No, that's not allowed.

Austin: And he goes:

(as **magistrate**): All right. I'll just have to do it naturally then.

Austin: Bounce, bounce. Bounce, bounce. And then takes the shot. Do you interfere with this? I think this is uncertain. I don't think that this is...I don't think a Sentence is being used here, you know? I think it's uncertain if it goes in or if it goes out.

Art: Yeah. Um...

Austin: Which means that you would be the Actor in this scenario, you know?

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You'd not be counteracting. You know, he is not using a Sentence to try to shoot this ball in the hoop.

Keith: I have a question.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Let's say Art chooses not to act, [**Austin:** Yeah.] because it's uncertain.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: How does an unacted upon uncertainty resolve?

Austin: I resolve it. GM resolves it.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Classic tabletop game stuff.

Art: Is it going in?

Austin: Hard to tell. It's on the right arc. If it was a...they're not fixed hoops, right? They're not actually trick hoops? They are regular hoops, 'cause they have the ghost? Is that correct? Or are they also tricked hoops?

Art: I think that they— you know, some days Donnie's not working here. Then it's...

Austin: Sorry, gimmicked hoops, probably, right? Gimmicked?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: That's the word that the carnies would use here? Okay.

Art: There are gimmick hoops for the days that Donnie's doing something else.

Austin: Right. Okay.

Art: But I think these are legit hoops.

Austin: Then yeah, I think it's going to go in. If it was a gimmicked hoop, it would bounce, but it's not.

Keith: Hot solvable hoops.

Art: All right. I mean, I was going to let it go. I was going to put it in.

Austin: Oh, interesting. Okay.

Art: Because there's, you know, some people think that they're...some people think that they're good.

Austin: Mm.

Art: And if you let it go in, they think it's not...it's on the level.

Austin: Right. Right. So, you let it go in. You don't interfere. I guess this is the thing. It is uncertain.

Art: Yeah, I think...

Austin: Maybe it doesn't go in. I shouldn't have resolved the uncertainty for you, is what I shouldn't have done.

Art: If it's going to miss, I'm going to put it in.

Austin: What is your Means for that? I think, again, it is uncertain if it's going to to in or out. That is what we have to stick by, because you're going to decide the uncertainty, or then I will decide it after the case.

Art: Well, I always wield a spectral or elemental power, parentheses, ghost stuff.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And if it, like, if it hits the rim, it's going to roll in.

Austin: Yeah, okay. And that's what happens. This is uncontested. So, you 100% get that to go in. And then the magistrate says:

(as **magistrate**): You're cheating. I missed that shot. I feel it. I missed that shot. Guards!

Austin: And [mumbles as guards] and, you know, some guards come over this way, and he points at the woman who is running this place. Not Candide; I think Candide is just watching from the shadows as this happens. But, you know, the whatever, the carnival worker here who is presumably, like you, just a regular-ass seasonal worker who hangs out in this carnival and runs the damn basketball game. And the magistrate now has a new Intent. That Intent is to arrest this woman for cheating to try to get on his good side, and I think the actual broader Intent is to drag the name of the carnival through the mud, to make it known that there are cheaters here, you can't trust the people here. And he is using the +0 Sentence—I shouldn't have said this, but this is a pretty clear one—"I always assign guilt." I think it's pretty clear that's a +0 Sentence, [Art laughs] so I will not feel bad about having slipped on that one. "I always assign guilt."

Art: Okay. I think it's more important to save this worker than to keep the gimmick, keep the integrity of the scam.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: So, Donnie will use the Sentence, “I always frighten those who perceive me.”

Austin: Oh, interesting.

Art: And will, like, come up behind— or I guess you can't really come up behind.

Austin: You're a ghost. You can do whatever the fuck—

Art: Come up in front of the— as the guards—

Austin: I see what you're saying. Yeah, uh huh.

Art: As the guards try to, like, grab this worker, Donnie becomes visible in a sort of demonic countenance and, you know...

(as **Donnie**): [growly, threatening voice] This circus is under my protection!

Austin: Oh! This is a more direct haunting than I imagined. Yeah, this is going to Counter that. The guards go running. The guards flip out. I'm guessing this is what you want here. You tell me. Is that accurate, that the guards lose it at this?

Art: Yeah, I'm going for a Spooky the Tuff Little Ghost.

Austin: Oh, right, your number one inspiration for this character.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Do the— is your Intent here— I mean, I guess you're Countering, right? So, Castigon has lost the ability to assign guilt. The guards are too frightened to respond in this way. But I don't know that Castigon specifically is scared off by this. The group that— sorry, this is Magistrate Castigon. I've added him also to your list here. The magistrate is furious at this. [chuckles] He's like:

(as **Castigon**): Cheaters and ghosts, both! Unbelievable. I can't believe—

Art: Well, I don't mean to tap the— but he has to be frightened.

Austin: Why's that?

Art: By perceiving me, he is always frightened.

Austin: I guess if he sees you. You said the guards. You snuck up on the guards.

Art: Oh, but I was, like, visible.

Austin: Okay. Then, yeah, if he's always— yeah, okay.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Then I will— yeah.

Art: If he can hear the ghost, he perceived the ghost.

Austin: I'll give it to you. Then, yes. He is frightened, and it does not say that he has to flee, right?

Art: No.

Austin: Yeah, okay. It does say that he is frightened. He's always— read me the Sentence once more time?

Art: "I always frighten those who perceive me." Just get a little shake in that voice, you know? Just a...

Austin: Yeah, no, it's...

(as **Castigon**): [frightened] Cheaters and ghosts!

Art: There it is, yeah.

Austin: Much different.

(as **Castigon**): [stammering in fear] I will have the lord know about this, and you'll

all be sent away!

Austin: And is, at this point, vaguely threatening you. I don't think this is an action. There's no explicit move happening here, but does begin to, I guess, at this point, flee with a plan to tell everybody about something, about the fact that there's a ghost here who is maybe also a cheater. But as he's leaving, I think you hear Candide gasp, and you're not necessarily sure why. It's as if she saw something.

Art: Mm.

Austin: And I think, in the chaos, as guards flee, she slips away into the night. And I don't know that any of this is actually new. This has probably happened before. You know? You scare some guards to protect a worker. The guard goes and says, "There's cheaters at the carnival," and someone higher up the ladder goes like, "Yeah, it's a carnival? Don't get cheated. Watch your money."

Art: Yeah.

Austin: You know? And then, especially in this case, he explains, like, [chuckles] "I missed a shot, but they made it go in!" and the boss is like, "Yeah? That sounds like a win for me, bud." And so no one ever comes to check up on this, but among the guards at the citadel, it is now known: hey, they might be cheating, and there's definitely a ghost.

End of Day [1:37:20]

Austin: What's the end of night like for the circus? As people wrap up. Is there a big circus meal together? Is there a sort of, like, relaxed decompression mode? Is it a party? I know some carnivals do a big party at the end of a night.

Keith: Hell yeah. I like party. [Ali laughs]

Austin: What's your role in the party?

Keith: Um...loud guy?

Austin: I like that. I like that. I like loud guy. But there's one louder than you, and this is one of the Krinskys. There are three main Krinskys who are part of the circus, at this point.

Keith: Reveler. That's the word for loud guy.

Austin: Oh, reveler, yeah. Okay, I gotcha, yeah. The three main Krinskys here at the party tonight, along with the rest of the workers. There's, like, a strong man type. Carlo the Cobbler. Sorry, the Clobberer. Not the cobbler. He doesn't cobble shoes. He clobbers people or clobbers, you know, whatever.

Keith: Clobbers expectations.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Carlo the Clobberer. Mm... [Keith and Art laugh] That's not right either.

Keith: Peach clobberer. He bakes peach clobberer.

Austin: [laughs] He makes peach cobbler. "The Clobberer" Krinsky. Carlo...hmm, I'm going to see if I can get it right this time. Carlo "The Clobberer" Krinsky, who's a big strongman type. Crystal Krinsky, who is a singer. And then the one talking, Curtis "Curly" Krinsky, who is the head of the carnival, the head of the circus, and the kind of, like, big promoter at the heart of it all. And every night, you know, he stands up, and he goes:

(as **Curly**): Hey, everybody!

Keith (as **crowd**): Woo!

Austin (as **Curly**): 700 loops! That's the take tonight!

Keith (as **crowd**): Wooo!

Art (as **crowd**): Yay!

Keith (as **crowd**): Woo!

Austin (as **crowd**): [distantly] Woo, 700 loops!

Austin: That's, like, a lot of money. I don't know, that's high loops.

Keith: That's 70 lopes!

Ali: Yippee!

Austin: Are you saying that lopes are one higher than loops?

Keith: Yeah. 10 coins is a loop. 10 loops is a lope.

Art: 10 loops is a lope?

Austin: Great.

Art: Yeah. [Ali chuckles]

Austin: I'm going to write this down so that I don't forget. [typing] 10 coins is a loop. 10 loops is a lope. L-O-P-E? Is this how you're spelling this?

Keith: Yeah, L-O-P-E. And then 10 lopes is an oop.

Austin: [chuckles] It is an oop. And we don't go higher than 10—

Keith: We don't go higher than oop.

Austin: And 10 oops is the most it's ever been! [Keith and Art laugh]

Art: You win money, at that point, and you're not allowed to get any more.

Austin: That's it! [sighs] Everybody claps. You know.

(as **Curly**): We got beef stew on the fire! We got a beautiful song coming from my daughter Crystal, and we got another day of work tomorrow, so everybody dig in. Drink up. Get some rest. And a little special announcement. I had a meeting today with the lord of the old citadel, Lord Bein, Lord Theragon Bein himself, and he has invited us to do a little, uh, a little internal show tomorrow night, so I might be picking a few of you to come in, do a little— you know, he doesn't want to

come out himself. He's really about that citadel life. You know how these lords are.

Austin: A couple scattered laughs at that.

(as **Curly**): And, uh. [claps] Yeah, so, if I see you in the morning and I give you the golden ticket, that's 'cause you're going to be part of the special show. Any other— any questions from anybody? [brief pause] All right, dig in. Enjoy the stew.

Austin: Everybody gets to eating the damn stew. That's what they say in the carnival at the end of the day: It's time to eat the damn stew.

Ali: Ohh.

Austin: It's kind of a classic carny slang here in Realis.

Keith: Is that even if you're not eating stew?

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, 100%.

Keith: Stew is just the name of the meal that comes after doing a carnival.

Austin: That's exactly right. You eat the damn stew, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: It's like one of those things where it's like, you have a bad— you're in, like, a bad, you know, town or whatever, and it's like, [**Keith:** Yeah.] you just do the show, and you eat the damn stew.

Keith: You eat the damn stew.

Austin: And you get out of town, you know?

Keith: Sort of like British pudding.

Austin: It could be like a British pudding.

Keith: Well, just everything is a pudding. Doesn't matter.

Austin: Everything is a stew on the— yeah, exactly.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: On the circuit, everything's a stew. Anybody getting up to anything extra in town tonight? Are people just sticking in the circus tents and such? Do y'all have quarters? Do you have, like, rooms on the little shuttle?

Keith: Oh.

Austin: Or do you live in your tent, or like, what's the vibe?

Keith: I like quarters. I'll have a quarter. [Ali chuckles]

Austin: On the ship, yeah. Clowns' quarters.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Is it you and the other clowns [**Keith:** Yeah.] share, like, the clown bunks?

Keith: Yeah.

Art: The clown bunks.

Austin: Yeah, the clown bunks.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: Mm.

Keith: It's actually— the room's really small, but it fits a ton of clowns. [Art laughs]

Ali: [chuckles] Okay.

Art: Yeah, that's how clowns work.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah. Hey, it's all right. That was good. That makes up for the other one. [Keith laughs]

Art: Uh huh.

Ali: What's there to do in town?

Austin: I don't know.

Ali: Is this town especially known for anything?

Austin: Great question. It's near some water, so there's probably some really good fish.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: I think there's a big library in town, like an old one. Again, this is a pretty old town, all said. And so, there is a big, like, antiques market. There's a big library that has, like, old, old, old, old, old stuff. There's probably some, like, historical, you know, like, "This is a historical square. This is, like, a protected, you know, Ulled's first fountain," or whatever, you know? Stuff like that. Museum. There's probably an old museum.

Ali: I'm not going out after a long day to go antiquing. [laughs]

Austin: Okay. You just asked me—

Keith: What?

Austin: I mean, there's bars.

Keith: They don't bring out the good antiques until nighttime!

Ali: Really? [laughs quietly]

Keith: They keep all the good stuff locked away until everybody goes to bed.

Austin: Mm.

Ali: They don't just close?

Art: Yeah, not for the lookie-loos.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Well, you know, you actually probably have some free time in the morning, right? The carnival probably doesn't open until near, you know, late afternoon.

Ali: Sure. Sure, sure, sure, sure.

Austin: That's the kind of classic.

Ali: We're not carnivalling for the early birds? [laughs]

Keith: We don't do lunch? We don't have a carnival lunch?

Austin: I mean, if you want to set up early birds, maybe, you know? But. You know, the big circus show isn't until nighttime, so.

Ali: Sure. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: 11 a.m.

Austin: So, not going into town to any of the— what would pull you into town?

Ali: [chuckles] I don't know. I was just curious what was out there.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I think, like, you know, we're already having stew, so I don't really know that you go to a bar.

Austin: Yeah, sure. The stew is always— yeah, the stew sometimes has a little— sometimes they spike the stew, you know?

Ali: They spike the stew?

Austin: Sometimes. [Art chuckles]

Keith: Sometimes.

Ali: Oh.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. If everyone's on board.

Keith: I think that I would do a quick skip into town.

Austin: Yeah. What are you looking for in town?

Keith: Yeah. Uh, I'm looking for buzz. I'm looking for buzz on the street.

Austin: Sure.

Art: I think I might tag along.

Austin: All right.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: If you're looking for street buzz.

Ali: Oh, well, if everybody's going out...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I might as well pick up an antique while... [laughs quietly]

Austin: Let's go. [Art laughs]

Keith: Yeah, we got— hey, but we got three loops between the two of us.

Austin: That's right. [Ali laughs] Y'all got paid today.

Keith: Yeah. And that's just my— that's extra.

Austin: That's extra. It's on top of your normal payday. Yeah.

Keith: Right.

Austin: And I think, sneaking out, staying up past their bedtime, Candide will come with you. I think that the other two folks that we've talked about—

Keith: I thought you were talking about us. I was going to say, "Clowns do not have a bedtime." [Ali chuckles]

Austin: No, no. [Art laughs] And Plenny Plaintain, real name Grent, has actually already gone to town.

Keith: Grent.

Austin: Cut out early on stew to get to the bar in town. And I think the name of—

Keith: Where sometimes they dose the liquor with stew.

Austin: That's right. It goes the other way.

Keith: So you could get spiked stew at the carnival.

Austin: Right, but then you get—

Keith: But you can get stewed vodka at the bar.

Austin: That's right.

Ali: Disgusting. [all laugh]

Austin: I think...

Art: You're right. It's disgusting.

Austin: And also, Hye, the name of your bud back at the circus is Kenneth. Kenneth

Charms, the meat-on-a-stick guy. He's going to stay home and listen to the game, you know?

Ali: All right.

Austin: Turn on the old radio. Big radio culture in Realis. A lot of the moons have big, like, giant radio antennae that broadcast stuff.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: And I think listen to the fight, not the game. Listen to the fight from The Crux, right? Like, listen to— there's a big prizefight over on the arena planet, the arena moon. He's listening to the live broadcast of that but is, like, you know:

(as **Kenneth**): Have a good time in town. Bring me back, uh...bring me back a cool urn.

Austin: Says the meat-on-a-stick guy.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: That's what he would love for you to find for him in the antique—

Ali (as **Hye**): I'll keep an eye out.

Austin: The night antique market. The town is interesting. The town's vibes are...you know, despite the— you know, you're from the carnival life. Everything is kind of jacked up to 11 in the carnival life. Vibes are always people are there to have a good time. People are there to—

Art: It's the start of the carnival *Goodfellas*.

Austin: [laughs] As long as I can remember, I always wanted to be a clown. [Art laughs] You know, the vibes in this town are a lot more placid than that. You know, that's kind of the keyword with Ulled. The town has been built around some big trees that cast this, like, even here at night, this kind of big huge shadows, kind of a deep shade that puts

everyone kind of at ease as you start to move that way, and doubly so with the kind of lake on the eastern end of town, right?

The lake reflects the sky, you know, in it. And so there are points where you're walking through town where you can, you know, look down a hill and see this huge lake that reflects all the rest of the moons back up, which, Hye, you immediately go, like, "Oh, this is like—" I don't know what the ley line equivalent is for Syzygists, but this is a place of great power because of the way that it doubles the sky, right? There's, like, twice as many alignments, if you could set up shop closer to the lake, and you could find, like, rare alignments, because the reflections of planets count— or the reflections of moons count as moons, basically, when it comes to what you do. And so there's, like, some extra possibilities here if you could go do your stuff down there.

But otherwise, it feels mostly like a town, you know? You've parked and gone to towns many times, and this is like that. You know, the bar is a kind of crappy bar. The marketplace, again, leans more antiquey but is a marketplace. And other than that, without any sort of Means usage, you're going to have a nice night out, but otherwise, it's going to be just, you know, another one of these. Is anyone looking for anything special here?

Town Activities [1:49:05]

Keith: Um...is there anyone doing, like, games on the street? Is there any...are there any off-circus, like...?

Austin: Oh, right. Some locals running their own shell games or whatever.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, and I think that they're a little pissed to see you. I mean, are you still in your Zanni gear? [Keith laughs] Do you...are you...?

Keith: Yes.

Austin: Do you ever not dress like a Zanni?

Keith: Uh, no.

Austin: This is not a costume for you.

Keith: No. This is my outfit.

Austin: This is a way of life. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, okay. Yeah. I think that, seeing you, there's a local who starts to get a little grumpy.

Keith: Okay. What's he running?

Austin (as **conman**): Oh, look who it is.

Keith (as **Wellaway**): Oh.

Austin (as **conman**): New to town, taking all the game away.

Keith (as **Wellaway**): There's a lot of game. Every town's got a lot of game.

Austin (as **conman**): Eh, there's not an infinite amount of game, buddy. There's only so much game to go around. And you come to town with your big bright lights and your tents, and I hear there's a ghost amongst ya.

Keith (as **Wellaway**): So?

Art (as **Donnie**): Ridiculous.

Art: Comes a voice from nowhere. [Keith laughs]

Austin (as **conman**): It's not ridiculous!

Austin: Looking around for who said that.

Austin (as **conman**): I heard from one of the guards who arrests me every week that there's a ghost amongst ya.

Art (as **Donnie**): That's not what I heard.

Austin (as **conman**): Who is saying it? [Art chuckles]

Art (as **Donnie**): That's just what people are saying. [Ali chuckles]

Austin (as **conman**): Being bamboozled by a bunch of bamble-baloozle, uh, bamble-baloozlers.

Keith (as **Wellaway**): Nice.

Austin (as **conman**): It's not nice.

Keith (as **Wellaway**): Oh, I thought bamble-bamble-baloozlers are nice.

Austin (as **conman**): Would you get off my street corner, buddy?

Keith (as **Wellaway**): I'm just walking past.

Austin (as **conman**): [mutters] Keep walking!

Keith (as **Wellaway**): Look, you want some game, I'll give you some game.

Austin (as **conman**): Is that a threat? You threatening me?

Keith (as **Wellaway**): No. No.

Austin (as **conman**): You putting a threat on the table?

Keith (as **Wellaway**): No! [cross] I'm just trying to help out.

Austin (as **conman**): [cross] 'Cause I'll put something bigger than a threat on the table.

Keith (as **Wellaway**): I just want to help out people in my line of work.

Austin (as **conman**): We're in different lines of work, pal.

Keith (as **Wellaway**): [quietly] Okay.

Austin (as **Candide**): [quietly] Hey, I think this guy's an asshole.

Austin: Says Candide. [Art laughs]

Keith (as **Wellaway**): [quietly] Yeah, this guy's an asshole.

Austin (as **Candide**): Are you sure there's no towns that are completely full of jerks? 'Cause I'm getting a jerk vibe from this town.

Art (as **Donnie**): [quietly] You can have a person who—

Keith (as **Wellaway**): Hey, are you a jerk?

Austin (as **conman**): What'd you call me? [Ali laughs]

Keith (as **Wellaway**): I didn't call you anything.

Austin (as **conman**): [annoyed] Oh. Oh, it was rhetorical. It was a question, so it doesn't count.

Keith (as **Wellaway**): No, I'm just asking. Are you a jerk?

Austin (as **conman**): Are you a—?! Hey! How 'bout you come over here and see if I'm a jerk?

Keith: Walk over.

Austin: I think... [chuckles] I think this guy's gonna try to punch you in the face.

Ali: Whoa!

Keith: I got a move.

Austin: I think that his Intent is to knock you out.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: So, that's the Intent. I think the Means here...give me a second to find this person. This was not a person I knew existed until a few seconds ago, obviously.

Ali: Sentence: "Great at punching."

Austin: That's right. "I always punch to win."

Ali: "Trained puncher." [Keith laughs]

Austin: That's right. Yeah, I mean, I think this is a...

Keith: Kind of a waste of a Sentence for someone trying to do shell games on the street.

Austin: I agree, you know? But ain't that the way sometimes.

Keith: Mm.

Austin: I think that this is... 'cause they're not a Zanni, you know? And there's always a default here that I could use, which is always good to have, but. There's a really funny one here, but I'm not going to use that. I'm going to use...yeah, I'm going to default to this. This is fine. Can you...sorry, I've lost them here. There we go. [chuckles] Can you Counter the Sentence— or would you try to Counter, would any of you try to Counter the Sentence, "I always find the strength to get the job done."

Ali: Whoa.

Keith: Yeah. I have two possible— I have an obvious Counter and the one that I actually want to do.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: But it's a little bit more abstract.

Austin: But you want to say them both out loud. Yeah, sure.

Keith: Yeah. So, I have, “I’m always quick in wit and bone,” which I’ve already used. I think that would be a perfect Counter for this, and it feels like it would work. But I also have— this is sort of like, we’re kind of out in public.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I would love to use, “I always bring joy with my antics,” here.

Austin: Oh, that’s fun.

Ali: I was praying you would say that. [laughs]

Keith: And, like, draw a crowd of people who are now, like, having fun watching me. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Let’s— yeah, pick one of those. Is that the one you’re picking? You’re picking that one?

Keith: Yeah, that’s the one I’m picking, yeah.

Austin: All right. That is going to work here. I’m going to Counter “I always find the strength to get the job done,” from this poor local conman. What’s this look like? How do you begin to entertain with your— bring joy with my antics?

Keith: Stage fighting. I’m, like, making it look like this guy’s connecting.

Austin: Oh my god.

Keith: But I’m actually, like, moving at the last second with his punches, and so he’s, like, exhausting himself trying to get me and hit me, and I’m, like, you know, falling and bouncing back or, like, pretending to take one on the chin and, like, spinning around.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: But like, and then just finishing the spin and doing, like, a ta-da.

Austin: Someone in the slowly gathering crowd goes:

(as **onlooker**): [applauds excitedly] Yeah! [Keith laughs]

Austin: And suddenly, yeah, you find yourself at the center of attention. The four of you, theoretically off for the night, and Wellaway has yet again put the spotlight on you, as a group— I'm going to say this is probably close to the big outdoor antique market that suddenly exists now, and some people, like, begin shining lights over on you, and it's like, almost as if the fight happened in a big spotlight, but the spotlight was just from a really powerful, you know, flashlight, you know?

Keith: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: You do your little bow, and someone says, like:

(as **onlooker**): Do another one!

Keith: Here's what I want out of this scene now, is I want to start collecting on this. I want to pass a hat around, but I want to— I want to split the take with this guy.

Austin: I love this. So, your Intent here— what is your Intent?

Keith: My Intent is to keep entertaining the crowd and to bring this guy in on the act.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Like, I want to do a, like, [hushed] "We got 'em right where we want 'em!" and then see if he'll join in.

Austin: Yeah. I think that's the big— I have no doubt that you could entertain the crowd, at this point.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I think the question is, can you bring— the uncertainty here is: can you bring him back on board, you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Art: I believe we're trying to keep in carny lingo. Can you effectively stooge this guy?

Austin: There we go.

Keith: Sure.

Austin: Yeah, I love this. This is great. And I don't think that this is going to get Countered. I don't think there is an attempt to Counter this. I think— yeah, but there's, like, a...

(as **conman**): [hushed] But this time, I gotta get a little of the action.

Austin: Right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And then kind of, you pull him back up, and you lift his hand in the air and then he gives you a sucker punch right in the gut, you know?

Keith: [laughs] I think I fly back like a front flip and, like, belly flop onto the ground.

Austin (as **onlooker**): Woo! [applauds] We're inventing wrestling, live on Ulled!
[Keith laughs] No one's done this before!

Keith: The far wrestle-less future.

Austin: Somehow, wrestling was obliterated. Only we can bring it back. As this is happening, Candide slips out from the four of you and disappears into the crowd, into the antique shop or into the antique market, presumably— seemingly in search of something. What are the rest of you up to? I'm going to say let's focus in a little bit now. We have a pretty good shot of what Wellaway's going to be up to, but for Donnie and for Hye, what are y'all getting up to here in the market?

Ali: I think I'm looking for an urn.

Austin: Yeah, for your bud, for Kenneth.

Ali: I think I'm on an urn errand now.

Austin: [chuckles] Do you have a Sentence to help you? 'Cause, you know, there's a lot of urns out here, but like, getting a good antique urn...

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: How do you make sure that you're not getting screwed?

Ali: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Wow. I don't know that I have the magical prowess to find a good urn.

Austin: You're just—

Ali: I don't know that that's my specialty. [laughs]

Austin: You know, I don't— I mean, this is—

Keith: They might not be trying to hide an urn from you.

Austin: Yeah, no one's trying to hide it. It's not about hiding an urn. It's the opposite, you know? It's like the Last Crusade thing. There are so many urns. How do you decide what the good urn is?

Keith: Right.

Austin: You know?

Ali: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Keith: Well, I have a tip from *The Last Crusade*. [Ali laughs]

Austin: I've heard.

Keith: It's the shitty looking one.

Austin: It's the shitty looking one.

Ali: Oh, right. Sure.

Austin: Totally. But I think it's an important character thing, right? 'Cause it's like, you're not using your oracle powers to decide "what's the good urn to buy for my friend?" Right? Like, I think that's an interesting beat for— that's an interesting thing to know about Hye, right? Is that you're not like, "Oh stars, show me the way to the urn my buddy wants." [Ali laughs]

Keith: Which you could do.

Austin: Yeah, of course. Of course you could.

Ali: It just feels like it's both not Sentence-applicable, and it's also...like, I respond to mundane problems with magical means, but...

Austin: I mean, that is...

Keith: Isn't that exactly?

Austin: That is exactly. Yeah.

Ali: No, yeah, and I was saying, but... [laughs]

Keith: But.

Austin: But that is meant to be a thing that, one, recharges your Token, which you have your Token currently.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: And two, is like, you know, it's meant to be this is one of my vices or this is one of the things that, like, gets me into trouble is that I do that, you know? It's a thing that you decide when you want to use it, but it is not meant to be, like...I mean, it's an impulse, right? It's not a...it's not meant to be, like, a thing you do when you're...you know, when you have it all together.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Though some characters might lean into their impulses, so.

Keith: Austin, did you give me my Token back, or did I just click it and leave it on?

Austin: Oh, I think I forgot to unclick it, or you forgot— yeah.

Keith: Well, I did just, by the way, use my Impulse, “Respond to a personal or private problem with performative/public means.” [Ali laughs]

Austin: You sure did, so that would get it back, I think. Yes.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yes. Yeah, there's a few ways you can get your Sentences back. One is you can use a Sentence in pursuit of an Impulse, which is what you just did.

Keith: Yeah. Get your Token back.

Austin: Yep, totally. You can use a Bond to introduce a new complication. Or, you know, there's...specifically, there's also this idea of Tragic Success. You could use a Means to lead the Band deeper into chaos. When you do this, describe something consequential and undesirable caused by one of your Sentences, then recharge your Token. So that would be like, Hye, if you were like, “Actually, I need my Token back. I'm going to use ‘I'm always bound by my own destiny,’ to go pick up the cursed urn,” you know?

Ali: Mm.

Austin: And you would get your Token back for that, for instance. Or if a Bond receives its third mark, both PCs in the Bond get to recharge their Token at that point. Which, right now, no one's used a Bond, so nothing's been ticked yet there, but pay attention to that as we move forward. So yeah, you're going to go urn shopping. That's cool. Donnie, what are you up to?

Art: I think I'm sort of passing through the crowd.

Austin: Mm.

Art: I'm really looking for information.

Austin: What type of information are you looking for?

Art: Um...you know, I think I'm on two different fronts.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: Just, like, a hint that might get me somewhere that I'm trying to go.

Austin: Sure.

Art: And also, we had an incident at the circus, so is that going to turn into something?

Austin: Sure. Okay. Yeah, I think that's a great uncertain question. Is there a Means you're going to use to try to Confront it?

Art: Um...

Austin: It sounds like narratively what you're doing is, like, passing through the crowd and eavesdropping. Is that right?

Art: Yeah. So like, yeah, just like, you know, a ghost is the best eavesdropper in the world, right?

Austin: Mm-hmm. What Sentence are you using? [Keith laughs]

Art: "I am always intangible."

Austin: Seems like that should work. Let me see if anyone is going to try to Counter you in this moment. I don't—I could, but I don't think—you know, there's a sort of, like, they have to know you're there to Counter you, you know? And in this moment, no, no one is aware of you trying to learn this information, so. So, yeah.

Art: Well, it doesn't say invisible.

Austin: That's true.

Art: So it doesn't necessarily...

Austin: That's true, but you do also have the spectral powers, and thus far, we've seen...we've seen that you've been invisible enough to cheat at basketball without getting caught. I mean, you got caught this time, but kind of bad luck, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: You overhear that the— all of this— okay, so, one, it does sound like the word has spread about the ghost stuff and the cheater stuff, and no one cares, because the person who is beginning to spread it is not someone anyone really cares about deeply.

Keith: Yeah, seems like someone who goes around accusing everybody of everything.

Austin: That is exactly what they are. And so, especially the regular folks are, you know, there's almost a sort of folk story brewing. It started at the truth, which is the magistrate accused the place of having cheaters and that it was haunted. And it has now turned into a big story about how he got into a fistfight against the strongman at the circus—again, his name is Carlos, Carlos Krinsky—and got his ass kicked, and so that's beginning to spread. People really love the idea of this guy getting scared and running away, but they really wanted also an element of physical violence associated with it. They want him to get knocked upside the head like in an old silent movie, you know? And so that's gotten kind of woven into that.

But I also think one of the extra lines you kind of pick up is— you get two other pieces of info here. One is you hear that the kind of two rival political groups that are here aren't really interested in Ulled. They're not even really interested in the Tetrad, the four moons. They are interested in finding something here. They're looking for, like, a treasure of some sort, something in the castle vault. And then the other thing that you hear is some people laughing about how tomorrow the lord will invite them to the feast.

Art: Hmm.

Austin: Classic—

Keith: We're invited to that feast, right?

Austin: Maybe not you specifically, but yeah.

Keith: But, like, the circus is.

Austin: The circus is. Yeah. And there's some real, like, "You know how the feasts go! Hehehehehe!" You know? Bad, you know, horror movie or horror game NPC laugh, you know?

Keith: Okay. This town maybe is full of jerks.

Art: Yeah, maybe this is a jerk town.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Learn something new every day.

[["Realis"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]