

Autumn in Hieron 08: On The Tip Of Your Tongue

Transcribed by: Jackie @astronbot

KEITH: Previously, on Friends at the Table:

ART (reading): "You dream of the crowned boy looking up into your eyes. His expression changes the first few times: a scowl, a smirk, a look of sadness. [THEME SONG STARTS] And then, for night after night, his eyes look past you, into some future only he can see."

NICK (reading): "Fantasmo, the council is pleased with your performance as a consultant in the tower. They pay you an extra twenty five coin. You try to convince them to let you keep the book."

AUSTIN: So, the council has requested the help again of Fantasmo and Hadrian, and they've enlisted the aid of Throndir to head into the center of the mark of the Erasure.

DRE (reading): "Throndir, you fled these woods ages ago, and swore to never come back, not until things could change."

AUSTIN: The closer you get to the Erasure, the colder it gets. There are some fields in Velas, but like, this is a bunch of what would be great farming land that's ruined by the colder climates.

AUSTIN: How many rations do you guys have?

(overlapped)

DRE: I have five.

ART: I have six.

AUSTIN: Okay, that's not that many.

AUSTIN: When suddenly landing right in front of you, is a beast about— How tall are you?

DRE: I'd probably say like 5'10".

AUSTIN: Two to three times your height, let's say?

DRE: Whoa! That's large.

[NICK whistles]

AUSTIN: This beast falls to its knees and then collapses into the snow, it's blood draining out around it.

[THEME SONG FADES OUT]

AUSTIN: You can make out their bodies, still. So you can totally follow them, but you're not gonna be able to see the ground.

NICK: Can I— I'm not trying to move at all.

AUSTIN (over Nick): Right, right, right, that's fine. That's fine.

NICK: Can I try to do a "spout lore"—

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure!

NICK: —to see if I remember anything about this?

AUSTIN: Sure.

[pause]

NICK: Um, I guess I don't have use of my books for this roll, huh?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, you super can't! 'Cause they're gone, you can't read them—

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —That's really interesting. I haven't thought about that!

NICK: [laughs]

[pause]

NICK: Um... Where's the... hang on I need to— I can't find my basic moves sheet, here...

AUSTIN: It's plus INT

NICK: Spout lore. Okay, plus INT

ART: You should be pretty good at that to start, though, right? I mean, books or no books—

AUSTIN (over Art): Yeah

ART: —you're a smartie.

DRE: You know things.

NICK: Eight.

AUSTIN: You know that there are... Places, creatures, spells... days of the year. Where sometimes a spell doesn't do the thing it's supposed to do exactly, even when it's done right. There are things that can just throw it off, or misinterpret it.

NICK: [light, affirmative hum]

AUSTIN: You're not sure what the *cause* of this effect is, in this specific case. You don't know *why* this is the result.

[everyone starts to talk at the same time, and then stops]

DRE: Could it be also because we're near the Erasure, would that be something that I could "spout lore" on?

AUSTIN: You don't even need to "spout lore" on that you can just say it.

DRE: Hmm...

ART: Yeah, it just sounds right, right? Like...

Dre: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It could be, yeah.

ART: I'm a lay person and that's what I think it is.

DRE: Yeah. So I guess— I think at this point, Throndir is reaching out through the mental connection because to him that seems like it would be stronger than just talking.

[AUSTIN chuckles softly]

DRE: And he's saying:

DRE (as Throndir): Y'know... sometimes in my village we've had some people who attempted to use magic and it just— it goes wrong, and no one is sure why.

NICK: Wait, wait. Actually, I think... [pause] Oh no, nevermind, okay.

AUSTIN: What's up?

NICK: I was just making sure telepathy persisted.

AUSTIN: Oh it does, it does.

NICK: 'Cause other things, like invisibility gets interrupted as soon as I cast a different spell—

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Telepathy's good.

NICK: —but telepathy keeps going until I shut it off.

AUSTIN: I think it's until you— I think the rule I've looked into this, it's until you sleep again, basically. Until you (NICK: Oh, okay.) re-memorise that's when it breaks and you have to recast it.

NICK: Sure, Um.

ART: We were just... asleep...

AUSTIN: That's true.... Well, yeah, that is true. I don't know if he does the preparation before or after. It's not, like, sleep. It's whenever you prep your spells. So I'm gonna say it's—

ART: Alright, it's not important.

AUSTIN: Yeah, whatever. He still has it. He's gonna recast it when he wakes up or does his prep. I'm fine with letting that hang for now.

NICK: Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: Though, we should roll it the next time that you cast it. We forgot to roll it this time. That's okay

ART: Unless he, like, lost it in...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Invisi-land.

ART: (slightly amused) "Invisi-land."

[DRE chuckles in the background]

AUSTIN: So, what do you do at this point, as a group?

ART: I imagine the rest of the group is going back to bed, right?

DRE: Throndir's not. He's fascinated by the fact that Fantasma who's just literally disappeared, and seemingly... Can Fantasma *not* come back or is he *choosing* to not come back?

AUSTIN: We haven't— he hasn't tried yet. He said he was choosing...

ART: Yeah, he's chosen to not try to come back.

NICK: Um, Has anything changed in the last couple of minutes?

AUSTIN: All the stars are gone.

NICK (worried): ooh...

AUSTIN: And that means you can't catch the bodies in your vision anymore, 'cause they're not— (NICK: Sure.) there's nothing to block them out with...

NICK: Um...

AUSTIN: ...when there's no light shining on them.

[pause]

NICK: Alright, Fantasma's gonna give it... another couple of minutes just in case—

AUSTIN: Nothing else happens.

[NICK, AUSTIN and ART talk over each other]

ART: Can we like— try feeling for him?

AUSTIN: I've figured it out. The next thing is, you realize, you don't see your own feet anymore.

NICK: ah...

AUSTIN: And then your legs, and then your hands, and your elbows...

NICK: Alright.

AUSTIN: Bit by bit, you also lose sight of yourself.

(overlapped)

ART: We should tie a rope around him.

NICK (over Art): He's starting to freak out now so he tries to end the invisibility.

AUSTIN: You *can*. So long as it's ended. You're talking a "stunned". You're stunned. You get minus one INT

NICK: Oh... okay.

AUSTIN: It takes the sort of concentration that *holding* a spell would normally would.

NICK: Oh, Alright. Interesting.

ART: Shit's weird here.

DRE: Yeah. (chiding) I tried warning y'all. You didn't want to come here.

ART: I think I still wanted to come here. This is the kind of... This is the kind of closure I think I need... "closure" is the wrong word. There's a better word than that.

AUSTIN: Sure. So everyone—

NICK (as Fantasma): Fantasma definitely needs to study this phenomena further!

[long pause]

NICK (amused): What was that?

DRE: (away from the mic) What was that?

ART: That's a groan.

AUSTIN: [laughing]

ART: That's— That's the dawning realization that we're just gonna keep cleaning up weird exploration messes.

[AUSTIN, DRE, and NICK laugh]

AUSTIN: That is the game.

ART: This is my life now. [Austin laughs] Just waiting for Fantasma blunder into more nonsense.

[NICK laughs]

DRE: Is Fantasma back? Is he visible now?

AUSTIN: Yes, yes. [pause] And he can see things again.

DRE (over Austin): Kodiak goes over and tries to lick his hand.

AUSTIN: (jokingly) Kodiak just— no. Kodiak's still there. Everything's fine.

DRE: Well no, but Kodiak tries to go over and lick Fantasma's hand,

AUSTIN (over Dre): Yeah, yeah. That happens

DRE: Like (excited) "Oh hey you're back! You're back! Hey!"

NICK: It doesn't show on his face, but Fantasma is actually quite relieved and appreciates the physical contact. And pets... and gives Kodiak a good rub on the head.

DRE: Aww...

[pause]

NICK: But his face is still stone cold, as always [chuckles].

AUSTIN: So the next day, I'm guessing everyone relaxes, reprepares, eats a ration, so another one should be gone unless you're Hadrian at this point.

DRE: Do I heal after eating a ration? Or is that something—

AUSTIN (over Dre): Yeah, so that's a basic move, that everyone has... Sorry, It's a special move. (reading) "Make camp: When you settle into rest, consume a ration. If you're somewhere dangerous choose a watch order as well—which we already dealt with—If you have enough XP you may level up. When you wake from a couple of uninterrupted hours of sleep, heal damage equal to half your max HP"

ART: Wow!

[pause]

AUSTIN: That's big part of why you don't get more HP, Right? Like, it's not that hard to heal in between encounters in this game.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Also other things don't get tons HP. You know, like a dragon might have like 20 HP—which is a lot— but not that much, you know? There are other reasons why you can't hurt a dragon, though, like the fact they're invulnerable? [laughs] So they have 20 HP, but, like, good luck doing damage to it.

ART: They're also up in the air a lot.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

NICK: Are there any mechanics for... What are the mechanics for healing conditions?

AUSTIN: You have to recover. (reading) "When you do nothing but rest in comfort in safety, after a day of rest you recover all your HP. After three days of rest you remove one debility of your choice. If you're under the care of a healer, magical or otherwise, you heal a debility for every two days of rest instead"

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: To be clear, when you wake up the next morning, everything is gone again.

NICK: Oh...

AUSTIN: You then have to concentrate *again* and step into this stunned state to (NICK: Sure.) like, keep everything visible again— Which is not bad! Right? On one hand, now you can be just invisible at will! But on the other hand you lose complete situational awareness.

ART: Okay, and this probably isn't a disease, right?

AUSTIN: Naw.

ART: (flat) Alright I tried.

DRE: [laughs] (mockingly but amused) Tried so hard!

[NICK laughs]

ART: I can heal diseases. Why don't you guys ever have diseases?

AUSTIN: I'll work some diseases in, don't worry.

ART: Don't— No that's not what I wanted!

DRE: [laughs] careful what you (wish) for.

NICK: I mean Fantasma—when you can see him—he seems just *ever so slightly* a little slower on the uptake... than he usually— Like usually, he’s just always [NICK snaps his fingers rapidly] like, right there with whatever. But now, it takes him a beat to answer anything but the simplest questions. You guys are noticing this.

[pause]

NICK: So, is it gonna be an action to drop my guard?

AUSTIN: What do you mean “to drop your guard”?

NICK: Like, do I have to... cast invisibility again, basically?

AUSTIN: No, no. It’s a move, do you know what I mean? You now have a move that says— (NICK: Sure, sure.) that says “become invisible, lose sight of everything”

NICK: But I’m not rolling anything for that, am I?

AUSTIN (over Nick): No, no.

NICK: Okay.

ART: We should— Oh... Fantasma,

NICK: It’s like sucking in your gut.

ART (over Nick): If it weren’t for your ego we could be doing so much right now. We could tie a rope around you, [Austin, Dre and Nick laugh] we could— we could figure this out, but I know you won’t let us.

[DRE giggles]

[AUSTIN, DRE and NICK begin to talk at the same time]

Dre: Maybe uh—

NICK: Well I mean— I don’t know, maybe?

AUSTIN: Well his books don’t— His books aren’t invisible, right? His book are still floating by where he is. You have a general idea of where he is [laughs].

ART: Yeah.

[pause]

ART: But he can, like, follow us while invisible if we tied a rope around him, like, yeah. Just follow where the rope pulls you.

AUSTIN (over Art): I just thought of something. What's your servant look like, Nick?

NICK: Um, I mean...?

AUSTIN: They're invisible. Right?

NICK: Huh... Yeah they are invisible.

AUSTIN: Let's say you could see your servant. What do they look like?

NICK: I imagine him as a little stone golem.

AUSTIN: You see a little stone golem when you're invisible and that's it.

NICK: [laughs] Awesome.

[DRE laughs]

NICK: It kinda freaks me out because I've never actually *seen him* before, *ever!*

AUSTIN (over Nick): Right, right.

NICK: Also for the record, he looks remarkably a lot like the golems from Dragon Quest.

AUSTIN: Mmm, okay. Now I have that in mind. Weird coincidence, that.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, you continue traveling and—

NICK: Fantasma patterned him after some, like, tomes... some ancient tomes he found from, you know, some lost civilization, so...

AUSTIN: [laughs] Perfect.

[[TIMESTAMP: 00:13:18]]

AUSTIN: One day, while traveling closer and closer through the deep woods, you come to a long, frozen-over lake. Throndir sees this first as the person advancing, and there is two things here that are worth your time. On one hand, on the far end of the lake, I'd say this is.... [pause] a couple hundred yards? So, far— but traversable. You see a little hut on the lake— on the lakeshore, with some smoke coming out of its chimney. It has lights in its windows and you see on the outside there are a couple of animals leashed to the side of the building—

[clatter in the background]

NICK: (surprised) oh!

AUSTIN: The second thing you see—

NICK: My cat tried to jump on my lap, sorry.

[AUSTIN chuckles]

AUSTIN: The second thing you see is, a humanoid figure frozen in place, sitting on the dock where the lake is, its feet dangling into the water— into what was the water before it had frozen over.

NICK: Like *literally* frozen? Or are they just not moving?

AUSTIN: *Literally* frozen over.

NICK: Oh, okay.

DRE: Yeah, like his foot is, like, is *inside* the frozen water, right?

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: You can't make any particular features, it's icy to the point of... Like, a layer of ice so thick has built up around this body that it distorts what's inside of it.

DRE: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: It's getting... You also notice—I don't think you need to roll for it— that its a couple of degrees colder here, than it was just, you know, 15 minutes ago.

DRE, NICK and ART: Hmm...

DRE: So, the guy is on the other side of the lake from me, right?

AUSTIN: No, the guy is on the near side. The docks are only a couple of— I mean like 20-30 meters away.

DRE: Okay, and the house is on the other side...

AUSTIN (over Dre): is on the other side, say, four football fields away.

DRE: Okay. Is the shore, like—

AUSTIN: (jokingly) Football's a big spot in the world of Hieron [small laugh].

DRE: Yeah, no, snow elves are really good at it. We've got a really good offense this year, we could go all the way.

[NICK chuckles]

DRE: I'm trying to get—

Art (over Dre): The Frost Fighting Fish are going to kick your ass this play-offs

[DRE wheeze-laugh]

DRE: I'm trying to get a sense for how big this lake is, like, can I see the the entirety of this lake?

AUSTIN: No, I think it's probably longer than it is wide, for us? Like, you can cross to— you can see where you can cross to the other side. But you do see, let's say to the south, it fades off to the horizon. To the north let's also say its a few 700 meters away, or something.

[everyone briefly talks over each other]

AUSTIN: But you can see the tree line to the north, but you can't see the tree line to the south, past it.

NICK: There's no way it's the Fighting Fish. It's the Velas Bay... Fish Packers.

AUSTIN: (amused) Hah!

DRE: [giggles] Nice, nice.

NICK: Sorry.

DRE: So it would be a trek to, like, *go around* this lake.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Do it! You could do it. It'd probably add, you know, some time. *Especially* with Hadrian leading.

DRE: Hoh, Jesus Christ.

[NICK chuckles]

ART: (amused) I'm just walking through the lake pass!

NICK: (deep) Poor Hadrian...

DRE: Yeah, in your full scale, just *chomping* across this ice! What could go wrong! Um, I guess I'm gonna—

ART: (interjecting) It looks pretty thick!

DRE: [short wheeze laugh] Well, I'm gonna go find out how thick it is. I'm gonna telepathy back to Fantasma, you know, relaying back what I've seen. But I wanna go check out this frozen guy, can I figure out how long he's been frozen or anything like that?

AUSTIN: That sounds like a “discern realities” How are you checking for that stuff? You're just like, examining, basically?

DRE: Yeah, I don't wanna touch it. Like, I've got enough alarm bells going off in my head that I'm like “I don't wanna touch anything.”

AUSTIN: Are you standing on the dock, or on the lake?

DRE: I'm gonna approach the dock but not step on it.

AUSTIN: Okay. So, you're not even on the dock? It's hard to tell. You have to get closer. You have to be either on the dock, or on the lake just to see him, right? Picture a fisher with his feet dangling, do you know what I mean?

DRE: [affirmative mhmm] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, I'm gonna slowly approach it on the dock.... So, a “discern realities” check?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Are kinda doing the “heads twisting and peeking around?”—Oh boy...

DRE: Aw geez. (sarcastic) Good rolls for here. A six...

AUSTIN: That's a six...

DRE: Well, hold on, hold on...

[pause]

AUSTIN: Hmmm....

DRE: (mumbling) I don't have any....

AUSTIN: That's a stretch. [DRE starts to talk then stops] Go ahead.

DRE: Yeah.. yeah. I was gonna see if "animal companion" does anything but I don't think it's trained in anything. It's only training is standing guard and fighting monsters, so I don't think it'll be able to help me out here.

AUSTIN: Kodiak kinda whimpers as you go on to the dock, scared for you, like—[imitates sad dog whining] and you're like "It's fine, it's fine." You kneel down to look at this thing, again, like move your head around it and look at it from different angles, trying to discern some features. And then, Kodiak barks twice, and you look over to the right and (you're) like "Kodiak, calm down!" and when you look back, you see that this thing has moved its head to face you.

DRE: Perfect.

NICK: (creeped out) Aah!!

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: What do you do?

DRE: I try to back up, I'm back-peddling off of this dock.

AUSTIN: Mhmm. You do so. And with each step you take, you feel in your bones that you're getting colder and colder, and colder.

DRE: Yup... yup.

AUSTIN: Every time you look back, it's in a different place. Its feet lift up out of the frozen lake, then it's at the edge of the dock.

DRE (over Austin): Am I seeing it move?

AUSTIN: No, you're not.

DRE: Okay, so it's like I glance back—

AUSTIN (over Dre): but you're not sure— Right. But if you like, stopped and stared, you might see it move. This is just a really good cinematic effect.

DRE: Yeah, no, I appreciate it.

[NICK giggles]

AUSTIN: What do you do? Have you “radioed in”?

DRE: Yeah, I mean I'm telepathing back to—

AUSTIN: How far *ahead* are you?

DRE: That's a good question. I mean, if I'm scouting out ahead, probably... You know probably like a hundred yards or so, I would imagine? Two hundred yards maybe?

AUSTIN: Okay, so they—

ART (over Austin): It probably depends on the amount of cover, right? Like, the scouting doesn't help if you could see the threats coming up and we're just like “Oh but there's those guys there!”

AUSTIN: [laughs] Right. I think this is probably, you broke from the treeline to see the lake, right?

DRE: Yeah, absolutely.

AUSTIN: Dre, go ahead and give me a “defy danger: enduring” because the cold is really getting into you right now.

DRE: Alright.

AUSTIN: Also, everyone mark down every time you fail a roll. That is XP. I always forget to say that in the beginning of the game.

DRE: Oh geez. So how many times have I failed a roll now? [AUSTIN laughs]

NICK: So, failed is like, six or less right?

AUSTIN: (confirming) Six or less. Dre you've failed at least twice, Art failed *at least* once.

[someone quietly wheeze-laugh]

ART: Yeah, I think it's only the one, but it was a great one.

DRE: I've failed "spout lore" (AUSTIN: [affirmative "mhmm"]), I've failed shooting my arrow, and I just failed this "discern reality".

AUSTIN: See! *I told you* you would catch up with XP! [DRE laughs loudly] I just knew it in my heart—In my heart of hearts. I should also note, this is the one thing I did forget to do at the beginning of the game. I always wanna say what the *agenda* of this game is, it is "to portray a fantastic world, to fill the characters lives with adventure, and to play to find out what happens." Thankfully, I think we've done all of those so far.

DRE: Yeah, I'm finding out what kind of terrible things can happen to this poor ranger! I rolled an eight on my "defy danger".

AUSTIN: Hmm... Okay. [pause, exhales] You are able to maintain control of your body, like you're not frozen in place, let's say. But in the middle of your communication back to them about what it is, you can't form the words anymore.

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: [weird mumbling sound?]

DRE: [mimics NICK]

ART: [laugh-scoffs] You never wanna be in a (situation) where your *brain* can't form words anymore [lightly laughs].

AUSTIN: Yeah. You can hear him shivering through the telepathic link, Fantasma.

NICK: Uh.... I'm sorry, what?

AUSTIN: You can hear him *shivering* though the telepathic link.

NICK: Oh... (amused) Oh, Okay.

AUSTIN: (matter-of-factly) Which you didn't know that could do, but apparently, it can.

[NICK and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: It's approaching— Are you just running back towards them or are you... What are you doing?

DRE: Yeah, I think at this point I think I'm just booking it.

AUSTIN: Okay, yeah. Hadrian and Fantasma hear Kodiak's barks before they even see either of you, but quickly, you're together again. As a group, what do you do?

[pause]

ART: I mean, I wanna see this. I'm immune to cold. I wanna see this with my eyes. That's what I want.

DRE: What comes in my adventuring gear pack? What all is in there?

AUSTIN (over Dre): Whatever you want. What do you want?

DRE: So, I would have a flint and a torch?

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure! So the way adventuring gear works is, when you wanna do something that's a thing an adventurer would do, you tell me what the thing is that you want from in there, and then you have it. And then, you mark down a "use" of adventuring gear, and you write down the thing that you had. You know what I mean? So, now, instead of having... I think adventuring gear has... How many uses does adventuring gear have? Does anybody know from the top of their head? I think it's.... five... I think...

ART: Aw... it doesn't say in the gear...

AUSTIN: Yeah, it doesn't.

ART: Also, I didn't take it.

AUSTIN: Okay, great. I'm just gonna check I have the book right in front of me so, I may as well grab it...[pause] Uh...

DRE: Yeah. Five uses.

AUSTIN: Five uses? Okay. So, mark that down to four uses, and write down— I guess those are two different thing, huh? Torches and the flint and steel? (DRE: Yeah.) Yeah, so mark that down to three.

DRE: Okay, I take out the flint and steel and light up my torch.

AUSTIN: Good call. [pause] What are you doing in terms of where you're at... as a group? Are you just standing ground, are you going forward?

[[TIMESTAMP 00:24:31]]

[ART and NICK start talking at the same time, then stop]

NICK: I mean, I can warm things for "prestidigitatation cantrip"?

AUSTIN: [sound of acknowledgment] That's interesting.

NICK: So, I'm gonna try to— but it requires me to touch him.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

NICK: Uh... so...

ART: [laughs lightly] ...sorry

NICK: I don't know if Fantasma wants to, like...

AUSTIN: I love it. This is the best.

[DRE and ART laugh]

NICK: I don't know if Fantasma wants to risk catching his "cold disease" or whatever it is. I mean it spread through touch.

AUSTIN: What if you heat up, like, a cup of water for him?

NICK (over Austin): Oh that's a good idea. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm just gonna let you do that. I'm not gonna make you roll on it at this point.

NICK: Okay.

DRE (over Austin): Fuckin' germaphobe!

AUSTIN: You should, again, there are times where I think it's important, but at this moment I like it too much to make you roll on it.

ART: I can try to cure it, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Although, it's weird 'cause it's— maybe we'd just know? I could touch someone's skin, pray for their wellbeing, and try to heal them. If I roll a seven to nine on that, the damage or disease is transferred to me. (AUSTIN: Oh hoh!!) I'm divinely immune to cold, but I don't know if that covers “magic cold disease”.

AUSTIN (over Dre): If that's what it is.

DRE: Austin, does Throndir— like he's been cold before—

AUSTIN: This is colder than that.

DRE: This is something different? Okay.

AUSTIN: This is like, the coldest night of the coldest year, of the coldest generation. And it's sticking with you. (jokingly) The coldest generation is my favorite generation from the 20th century.

[NICK chuckles]

DRE: Should I be marking myself as “shaky” or—

AUSTIN (over Dre): Hmm, no. I don't think so. No, no, 'cause you *passed* that roll. I wanted there to be a good, kind of, narrative note on how cold this is. You're holding up okay largely because you're from the snow elves. You have been trained to... live through this sort of cold. It's just that— this is the sort of cold day you hear about and think, “No, never in my lifetime.” You know?

ART: Alright, Hadrian needs to see this. And I think I sorta start moving towards that treeline.

DRE: I'll go back with you

AUSTIN: As you come to the treeline, you see a man sitting at the edge of the dock with his feet dangling in the water, covered in ice, as before.

ART: Okay... and he's not movin'?

AUSTIN: No, not right now.

ART: I wanna approach.

AUSTIN: Okay. Give me a “defy danger: constitution” because of the cold.

ART: Alright...

AUSTIN: No, wait! You don't have to do that. You're immune to cold. I forgot. My bad. Right. How do you think that feels? Is that you're *aware* of the cold? Or is your body heat just always good.

ART: I think it's like... [sigh] it's weird. It sorta requires you to think about what it *is* to feel cold? Like, what if you could feel cold— you knew it was cold but it didn't bother you.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: But you knew it *would* bother you.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ART: Like, oh yeah, it's cold but my teeth aren't chattering. I don't feel bad.

AUSTIN: Like no matter how cold it gets... Right, right. I know what you mean. It's like a forty degree day.

ART: Yeah. Like, it's not pleasant. It doesn't feel good. Like, I'm not warm, but cold doesn't bother me.

AUSTIN: Okay. You approach it just like Thrandir did, and as you get close, it's not moving.

ART: Alright, I wanna call out to him:

ART (as Hadrian): Sir!

AUSTIN: Nothing.

[pause]

ART: I should try divinely commanding him.

AUSTIN: Hmm.

ART: Yeah, I'm gonna try that. I'm gonna try “I am the law”

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: You know, I say

ART (as Hadrian): Sir! I represent Samothēs, the once and future king of this land, y'know... may his divine light... heat this land. Please, if you can hear me, answer me.

ART: And then, I roll plus CHA.

AUSTIN: Yup.

[pause]

DRE: Damn.

ART: So I have a plus one forward with him, and he gets to either: do what I say, back away cautiously and then flee, or attack me.

AUSTIN: It stands up in full— it like, lifts its legs out and the way it does this is, as it moves its legs out of the water, it forms long icicles that then *snap* as it finally lifts its legs off, and it does the same with the other one on to the ground,

ART: Aw, that sucks.

AUSTIN: it moves in very avian motions, actually? Like, quick— you know what I mean? Like, really quick sudden movements? Like, very snappy. And turns to face you, and it opens— so it has a head, right? And you can see what looks like a human face inside of that kind of a deep cover of ice, a deep layer of ice.

ART: Great.

AUSTIN: But about where the nose or eyes are, opens up like a mouth, and [makes gritty whoosh sounds] like a really... silent scream, or a quiet scream. And you feel it get like, deep, deep, deep, deep, deep below zero. It's fine, you're okay, but this would not be good for you, otherwise.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: In fact, Throndir and Fantasma get colder even at their distance. (DRE: Hmm.) There's no “defy danger” here, but it's not good. What do you do?

ART: So he's attacking--

AUSTIN (over Art): That was an attack.

ART: He chose not to talk to me? (exasperated) These people. Fuckin' low stakes commands and they flip the fuck out.

[AUSTIN, DRE, and NICK laugh]

ART: How far apart—

AUSTIN (over Art): *Very* close. You're probably too close for the halberd at this point. (DRE: Punch it!) Like he's in your range, you know?

DRE: Punch it!

ART: I'm not gonna— I guess I could just punch him (starting to laugh) it's not that less damage! [DRE laughs] Alright, yeah. I'm taking a swing!

AUSTIN (over Art): Which hand are you using?

ART: My right hand with my holy symbol.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: And it's a haymaker, right? Like, this is a punch that I wanna create *distance* with.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Like, I don't wanna like bloody his nose, I want it to stagger back so I can use my weapon.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. Go ahead and give me the “hack and slash”.

ART: There it is. Nine.

AUSTIN: Alright, yeah.

ART: And then I roll eleven d10, right?

AUSTIN: [scoff-laughs] (sarcastic) Yeah, just, eleven d10.

[NICK and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Now go ahead and do your--

NICK (over Austin): Your eleventy isn't a number.

ART: Uh... hold on I still need to add on that d4... This isn't great. Oh that was okay I guess— Uh, six!

AUSTIN: You do land that punch, and it does go backwards, it totally does. The thing is, it carries you with it. Your hand is stuck to its face now.

ART: Right, 'cause it's metal and it's cold.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: Ooh... it's like he licked the fire pole.

AUSTIN: What did you roll again? You got a... to hit was a nine? (ART: Nine.) Okay, so that means does three damage.

NICK: Fantasma dares Thrandir to lick him.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN (to himself): That's good, that seems right.

DRE: Triple *dog* dare you!

AUSTIN: It slams its other free hand into *your* face, and—

ART: My armor soaks that.

AUSTIN: But, yeah— actually, you know what? Maybe it's like trying to grip *through* your helmet with its hand— it has a hand now. It was once a solid block of ice, now takes the form of a kind of jagged claw—

DRE: With like, icicle fingers?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. It's like, scraping— you can hear it scraping at your helmet. It's really loud and weird. Thrandir and Fantasma what's up with y'all? What are you doing?

NICK: Did anything happen after I warmed up the water—

AUSTIN (over Nick): Yeah yeah, it comforted him.

NICK: Okay.

DRE: I appreciate it.

AUSTIN: He appreciates it. That was a nice character-building moment. Like, he's warmer now, but he didn't a debility or anything, you know what I mean? He was alright.

NICK: Oh, alright. Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: So what are you doing now?

[NICK exhales]

[pause]

DRE: I will let you go first, Fantasma. Age before beauty.

[NICK laughs]

NICK: Aw, gosh. I don't know. Um...[pause]. This thing is probably a beast or monster, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah! I think it's fair to say that! [starts to chuckle]

NICK: [lightly laughs] Okay.

[DRE laughs loudly]

AUSTIN: No, it's a fair--

DRE (over Austin): No, it's Joe! From down the street!

ART: Yeah, if this is a person I'm gonna be weirded out.

NICK: Yeah. [chuckles]

[DRE laughs]

ART: Maybe "I am the law" wasn't appropriate.

AUSTIN: You didn't— Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

DRE: You try to be a nice person.

NICK: I don't know! Whatever! I'm gonna cast magic missiles at it!

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AUSTIN: Do it.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: That seems right.

NICK: Oh, five. Ouch.

AUSTIN: Woof... What happens when you miss, again? Oh, I just get to--

NICK (over Austin): I get an XP!

AUSTIN: You do get an XP, that is what happens. [pause, laughs]. It steps with strength, Hadrian, that you didn't know it had. Your fist still stuck to its face, you're dragged off the dock towards Fantasma.

[NICK laughs]

ART: That's not great.

AUSTIN: It screams again, this time with a focal area? Like, way more narrow. You can see the snow in the ground *buff it up* from the strength of this thing's wind.

ART: Yeep...

[pause]

AUSTIN: Fantasma, take five, and take the debility "shaky".

NICK: Okay.

[pause]

AUSTIN: What do you do?

NICK: Um...

AUSTIN: I think Throndir, at this point should be... What's up with Throndir? 'Cause everyone else has done some stuff.

DRE: Yeah, um...

ART: [laughs] I know my next move is gonna go bad no matter what!

AUSTIN: Aww...

ART: I know what it is, I know how it ends, and I don't want it!

[DRE laughs]

DRE: I've got two things in mind and I don't think I could make one of them happen, so I'm gonna go ahead and—

AUSTIN (interrupting Dre): What's the one you don't think you can make happen?

DRE: I'm trying to think of what I have on me that I could use to fashion a fire arrow out of. And the closest thing I can think of that would work, is if I tore a piece of cloth off of something and wrapped it around one of my arrows.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think it would just take an extra turn, do you know what I mean? Like, you could do that and it would be, you know, jerry-rigged together. This would not be a good fire arrow [laughs].

DRE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: And it would take you a turn to do that, if you wanted to do that. What's the other idea?

DRE: Well I got this torch. I could just go at it with this torch.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. To be clear you did also pick your other weapon back up, your spear. I just wanna make sure.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, are you gonna charge at it with that touch?

DRE: Yeah. I'll say I've got torch in one hand and spear in the other.

AUSTIN: Okay, sounds good.

DRE: That would be “hack and slash”?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it would be “hack and slash”. What are you hitting it with?

DRE: The torch.

AUSTIN: Okay. [pause] Give me that strength roll.

DRE: ...I will as soon as Roll20 decides to work.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you have not been on, you might wanna refresh. Because you've not been here for a minute. There you are.

ART: There you are.

DRE: I don't know what happened. Things are weird.

[pause]

DRE: It's giving me ads.... [pause] And.... Maybe here I am?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're listed.

DRE: It won't let me click on anything.

ART: That's weird.

DRE: It's super weird... and I can't type anything either.

AUSTIN: Hmm... Try relaunching the browser?

DRE: Yeah I will.

AUSTIN: Do you want me to make a roll for you so we can move along while you're doing that?

DRE: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I trust you.

AUSTIN: Alright, you hit that strength... Look at that! (ART: ooh!) Eleven!

DRE: YEAH!! I'm gonna mess this thing up! This is for breathing on my face you big jerk! [NICK chuckles]

AUSTIN: You catch it with the torch, and it immediately-- it doesn't just melt away, like the ice doesn't melt in the traditional sense where there's gonna be a pool of liquid. This is surprising. Your "A" scenario is like "Aw, I'm gonna melt this thing, and there's gonna be a person underneath, and they're gonna have some stuff to tell us. And then we're gonna be able to keep

going on our journey!” [DRE laughs] That's like, your “A” scenario. Your “B” scenario is like, “Oh it's gonna melt and there's gonna be water on the ground, and maybe that dude is dead, but like whatever” It doesn't melt the way ice melts into water. It is closer to evaporation? But, it's not just steam going into the air, it's little bright blue particles, that kinda go into the air like cinders burning off of a fire, and then disappear.

DRE: Okay.

NICK: I wanna “detect magic”.

AUSTIN: You should. To be clear, you know that thing is magic. (NICK: Okay.) You don't need to detect magic to know that.

DRE: Do I need to roll damage for that?

AUSTIN: No.

ART: Oh! was that the evil?!

(overlapped)

AUSTIN: (hesitating) Um..... Yeah....

DRE: Probably?

ART: (intelligible) my evil sense

AUSTIN: It was.

DRE: [laughs] “My evil sense”

NICK: Well, if I know it's magic do I recognise a spell that associated with it? [pause] According to my quick study?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think it's fair to say that you know that wasn't— You know that it's like, in a *class* of spell, let's say. That thing was conjured somehow, or it was, you know... something made incarnate, maybe? Do you know what I mean? Like that wasn't a yeti or something. You know that was probably... You know that was either a thing someone conjured into being, or summoned into being through a ritual or a spell, or that it was the manifestation of something, of a force, of something like that.

NICK: Hmm..

AUSTIN: You're not sure what. The obvious thing would be like “Oh, it's a manifestation of cold itself” or something. But then you're like “Aw, no. That seems like it would be way stronger, like maybe the manifestation of cold wouldn't die being hit by a torch” You're not sure but—

NICK: Is the implication here is that there's something else behind it?

AUSTIN: You're not sure. There could be.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or, rather. Yeah, there's something else behind it, but you don't know if it's a "who" or "what—

NICK: I don't know if you actually told me anything there [lightly laughs].

AUSTIN: You know it's not a natural creature, do you know what I mean?

NICK: Okay, alright.

AUSTIN: the other thing is, your library doesn't know exactly what that was. There is a limit... I guess that's the thing. This isn't a "known unknown", so you know that in your huge collection of tomes and books, there wasn't a spell there that would've made that thing.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: The spells that you have wouldn't have ended the way this one did. The spells that *you know*, that you could go back to your tower fifty years ago and look up, would have encapsulated a man in ice and turned him into some sort of ice golem. You know what I mean?

NICK: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: So, you know it's not one of those things. This is something else altogether.

NICK: Do I still get the +1 forward? In relation to—

AUSTIN: Yeah. And I'll tell you when it comes up— and I'll let you know when that's valid. Do you know what I mean?

NICK: Okay, yeah.

.

AUSTIN: So, also you can lose the "shaky"— the dexterity debility.

NICK: Oh okay. Cool.

AUSTIN: As it fades away, the nearby area warms just a little bit. It's still snowy, icy region. Like this isn't suddenly a spring meadow, but things are a little less cold than they once were.

ART: And when he's not there my hand's not stuck to him—

AUSTIN: That is also true!

[DRE laughs]

ART: (jokingly) But enough of his head remains that you have to carry it around forever!

[DRE chuckles]

AUSTIN: What do you do? There's still that house in the distance. I feel like we'll deal with that house and then call it for the week? Is that fair?

NICK: Yeah.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: If you want to deal with the house, you can also just not deal with the house.

ART: I think I plan on dealing with the house. I was just gonna say this hasn't felt like— this hasn't felt as long. (unintelligible) having fewer people?

AUSTIN: That's what it is. Everyone's gonna need to talk more— the other thing is we've done a lot of like, broad talk about stuff. And who the characters are or where we're at, and metaphysics and philosophy of this world, and not much action. Do you know what I mean? We'll see where it goes.

NICK: I am absolutely running on stream, so [chuckles]. Like, I think I have the house in me and that's it.

ART: Alright, let's get to that house.

DRE: Before we decide to chomp all over the ice, can I do a “discern realities” to see if it's thick enough to walk on?

AUSTIN: So “discern realities” specifically gives you those questions to ask. It's not just a general spot check? (DRE: Oh...) but that could be one of those things, do you know what I mean?

DRE: I could ask “What is about to happen, if Art steps on this in full scale armor” [laughs].

AUSTIN: Right, right. Go ahead and give me

ART (over Austin): We're gonna have talk about that pretty aggressively.

DRE: Wisdom check is eight.

AUSTIN: Okay, which means you get to ask one of the questions here which is: "What happened here recently? What's about to happen? What should I be on the lookout for? What here is useful or valuable to me? Who's really in control here? or, what here is not what it appears to be?"

DRE: Hmm...

ART: Oh, some are those are better than "is Hadrian gonna fall through the ice?"

DRE: Yeah...

ART: 'Cause I mean like, whatever. You can fish a man out of the ice. [DRE laughs]. But finding out who's in control here, that's a big question.

AUSTIN: But there's also a limit to that stuff, right? Like, you know, if you were in the words of Pennsylvania and you say "who here is really in control?" You're not gonna get the governor's name.

[NICK and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: (jokingly) because obviously *federal* law is more— no [laughs]. So,

[DRE laughs]

ART: Right! You get Barack Obama.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Right, obviously.

[pause]

AUSTIN: Barry!— it just says "*Barry*"

[NICK, ART and DRE laugh]

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AUSTIN: Alright, so what do you ask?—

DRE: —also vote Tom Wolf for Pennsylvania governor 2014.

[ART and NICK laugh]

DRE: I'm gonna ask... I guess I'll ask "what is about to happen?" because we're about to step on this ice and try to walk across it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. In the near future, the loss of that "thing" is going to lower the temperature such that the lake is not as—

DRE: You mean raise the temperature?

AUSTIN: Sorry, yeah. *Raise* the temperature here, such that the lake is not as frozen as it once was.

DRE: Ugh... [sighs].

AUSTIN: So, you take +1 forward acting on that.

DRE: Yeah. I guess I warn both of them:

DRE (as Throndir): If we try to cross this lake, it could get dicey.

AUSTIN: Well it's two things too, right? It's "if we wanna cross this lake, we have to do it *now* and also it could get dicey" You know?

ART: Great! So we'll just run across the lake, I hear you.

[DRE and AUSTIN laugh]

ART: I'll just move as fast as I can in this big heavy armor, and we'll be across that lake in no time!

DRE: Alright, yeah. Sure, sure [ART laughs].

AUSTIN: Who's leading it? ...I think this gonna be a one "defy danger" roll, for the person leading the path across this lake, and then, "aid/interfere" roll for people who want to aid.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Is it Art by default? — Is it Hadrian because he's the trailblazer?

DRE: Because he's just taken off? Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or is it Throndir, because he's the scout?

ART: If it's Throndir he could lead us away from the lake. Right? This is just my weird thing, It doesn't need to be a big thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. That's true. It would take an extra day of—

ART (over Austin): You'd be like "I'm the scout! Oh, this isn't good, let's go over there." Whereas if it was me, it's gonna be like, "I'm invincible—

AUSTIN: No matter what you're gonna have to make a roll. This is a "defy danger" roll to cross this lake, if that's what you wanna do. Do you know what I mean?

DRE: I think we should walk around. I don't wanna walk across this lake.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's gonna add— So, everyone subtract another ration. [pause] And, you go around this lake... (messing with Roll20) Let's see if I could do that here, that'd be nice if I could... Oh oops thats the wrong color entirely. Undo..undosies.

NICK: We're getting a full camp then, right?

AUSTIN: No, it just takes that whole day to get around.

NICK: Oh, okay. I see.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean?

NICK: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: (still messing with Roll20) Uh... that's not what I want. The last one's wrong... Fuck. This map thing is weird— This map thing I'm using's weird. (to the group) So you get back around to the little cottage— Not late at night, but as the sun has begun to set.

ART: Creepiest time to go into strange cottages.

[NICK chuckles]

AUSTIN: It is.

DRE: Exactly. What could go wrong?

AUSTIN: What *could* go wrong?

DRE: Besides everything.

AUSTIN: From up close, you can see that the cottage is definitely built by skilled-if-unsophisticated hands. Which is to say it looks like a sturdy construction, but not really the sort of construction that feels... like, made by someone who knows how houses are built? [DRE laughs] Like, this is—

ART: Okay, so it's like over-built kind of?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yes. Good call. It's a good way of saying it.

ART: Like the way they used to make houses.

AUSTIN: Right, yup. What do you do? The lights are warm, yellow. You can hear the braying of some of these animals that are tied up outside.

DRE: Are there windows?

AUSTIN: Yeah, there are. They are mostly iced over, though.

DRE: So I can't see anything through them?

AUSTIN: You could peek? Are you trying to peek stealthily?

DRE: Yeah, yeah. I wanna peek in one of the windows—

NICK (over Dre): Hee hee hee.... (sing-song) you're peeking~

[ART laughs]

AUSTIN: Give me a “defy danger” — I guessing that's a DEX, right? That's like the traditional—

NICK: Phil has ruined that word forever for me. (AUSTIN: I know.) Forever and ever and ever.

DRE: (sing-song) peeking~ [laughs]. Uh, I rolled a nine.

AUSTIN: Hmm. You're able to look in but, let's see... the “defy danger”s are always the hardest. Like, for people listening, the way this game works is that I get to— “when a ‘defy danger’ fails

the GM offers a worst outcome, hard bargain, or ugly choice” Which is like one of those moments of like “Oh hey, that’s a *lot* of open space for me to play with.”

DRE (over Austin): A lot things that can (go wrong)

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. [pause]. Hmm, how does this come back around. Let me look at some stuff real quick and think like an adult. [pause]. Okay, yeah. As you’re peeking—you do get to peek in—you see a little leathery goblin man sitting in a chair, wrapped up in a big furry blanket, flipping through a book. But, you also hear in the distance the yelling and hooping and hollering of that goblin hunting party.

ART: In the distance of that house?

AUSTIN: (confirming) In the distance of the house. Like, you know, probably five/ten minute away of travel.

DRE: Throndir’s very confused, because everything he’s heard about goblins— like, they should not be able to build a house like this. So, in his mind they’ve probably killed whoever lived here and stole it. Like, they just took it. In Throndir’s mind there’s no way they could’ve built this. [pause]. Because the way he was taught about how goblins are.

AUSTIN: Right, right. [pause] What do you do?

DRE: Well, so, I relay kinda what I see— I tell Hadrian and Fantasma:

DRE (as Throndir): There’s a goblin inside. He doesn’t know we’re here.

DRE: Did everyone hear the party?

AUSTIN: Yes, everybody heard the hunting party for sure.

DRE (as Throndir): —and we’re about to have some company, so whatever we do we need do it quick.

NICK (as Fantasma): What book is he reading?

DRE (as Throndir): (in disbelief) There’s—There’s like a picture book, I don’t know!

ART: [laughs] Okay, we have to act quickly. They’re coming from behind us.

AUSTIN: Let’s say they are coming from the east of the house. So, not behind you, like they weren’t— no. Not from the other side of the lake. From further east from where this house is.

ART: Okay. [pause] If I'm to believe that these goblins have stolen this house then I think I have to act decisively.

AUSTIN: Mhmm. Sure.

[pause]

ART: Uh, that was everyone's chance to stop me. [DRE laughs]. You failed.

DRE: Listen, Thrandir isn't a gets going taken down some gob-o's so [NICK chuckles].

ART: But there's ways to do this right? Like, I can assert authority. I can, you know, bang on that door, use "I am the law" and be like, "I command you to give up your ill-gotten goods and surrender" and then they're gonna attack us. *But*, maybe I get a +1 forward on it.

NICK: Is Thrandir sharing— Is he being vocal about his beliefs about goblins?

DRE: Yeah, *absolutely*.

NICK: Well in that case, I'm gonna try to do a "spout lore" on goblins. Because I think Fantasma would probably at least have an inkling that it might not be exactly...

ART: Oh, I guess there's a move I should make too.... but go on.

NICK: [papers rustling] I keep losing my basic moves page... I don't know where I keep... Oh there it is.

AUSTIN: It's plus INT

ART (over Austin): The PDF version isn't super great.

NICK: I have a bunch of actual physical pages here in front of me... 'cause I'm a dork.

DRE: How Fantasma of you.

NICK: (amused) Yeah, exactly! [laughs].

AUSTIN: If you ever just desperately need it, you can just click on your character sheet in the thing and it'll show you. The text is all there.

NICK: Oh yeah! Duh, okay. There it is. So, I'm rolling an "INT" use my books for this.

AUSTIN: Remember you're at -1 from whatever—

NICK (over Austin): Yeah. Nah, I got the stun checked and this sheet is pretty good it puts it in there automatically.

ART: (impressed) Oh, look at that!

AUSTIN: That's really nice.

NICK: Shoot. That's a seven. So, I *just barely* did not completely fail it.

AUSTIN: "I tell you something interesting and it's up to you to make useful" Your stuff is mostly inline with what Thrandir said, which is to say they are pathological hoarders.

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: They take things, it's what they do. I'm trying to think if there's anything slightly more interesting for you... Hmm... How much to give here... [pause]. You know that they... That there was a time when the goblins— and this is the sorta thing you know in sort of a dismissive way—

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: When there was a group of elves once, that formed a close relationship with some goblins *in* this area. Whether or not that continues still— you're not sure.

NICK: Okay.

ART: Alright, I have two moves I'd like to make.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: First, what here is evil?

AUSTIN: Well, Hella's not here. Dre what's your alignment?

DRE: I'm chaotic.

AUSTIN: Okay. What is your actual alignment move, so we know. We should've brought that up.

DRE: "To free someone from literal or figurative bonds"

AUSTIN: Okay, that's good.

ART: That's a good one.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it is. Nothing here is evil.

ART: Okay, that's a good start. And, in my ongoing attempt to display better judgement, [DRE laughs] this is something I've been observing about myself in this game. I'm running off half-cocked too much. I would like to "discern realities"

AUSTIN: Good call [DRE laughs]. How are you doing that? What's your actual...

ART: I'm trying to like, observe. I'm using what he's told me, which is, you know, that goblins are evil. I'm using what I just discerned divinely, which is "nothing here is evil". And I'm trying to figure out, is kicking this door in and starting shit, is that *really* the good thing to do?

AUSTIN: Good call. Give me your "discern realities" check.

ART: Yeah, it's not gonna go well. I'm not good at this. Seven! So, I get one?

AUSTIN: Uh huh, what's your question?

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ART: "What here is not what it appears to be?"

AUSTIN: This is a tricky question, because are we addressing the... Everything Art and I say end up in this weird like, [laughs] metaphysical, philosophical [NICK laughs]. When we say—

ART: Like, are you asking if we're addressing the kinda, weird goblin racism?

AUSTIN: Right, exactly. Do we say that appearances are always biased by your experiences. Which is to say— Can I answer that question by saying "You should get away from that weird goblin racism."

ART: You could, but that would be a weird way to get that, right? Like, "I looked around and thought about it for a second and realized racism was bad"?

AUSTIN (over ART): Well, here's the thing, the equivalent is—I'm saying this as a black dude— This is walking into a store with another black friend, and the shopkeep starts following us around the store and keeps asking us questions "Is everything alright here? Is everything alright here?" If they pass their "discern reality" check and say "What here is not as it appears to be?" Do they realize that we aren't thieves, we are just humans? Is that a thing that could happen, do you know what I mean?

NICK: Hmm.

ART: I don't know?

AUSTIN (over ART): Is the thing like "Oh these aren't 'thugs'" quote-unquote. "These are just two kids hanging out" — I'm not a kid I'm twenty-nine. "These are just two friends hanging out"

ART: Right. I don't know.

ART: There's part of me that hopes that's the world is like, right? Like everyone's just one good "discern realities" check away from being a better person—

AUSTIN: But that ends up leading to this big debate about like "Oh, if we're just reasonable about things, things will get fixed" and that's not a great thing either.

NICK: Well, I think there's some wiggle room. Like, it doesn't have to necessarily have be like "Art realizes that all goblins are the best people in the world."

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: But, I could realize that like, "Oh that's probably this guy's house"

NICK: Yeah, you could realize that—

AUSTIN (over NICK): Yeah, that's fine.

NICK: —you have some preconceived notions about goblins that are maybe coloring what your— your perception right now.

AUSTIN: Then, "What here is not what it appears to be?" is— for *you*, this appeared to not be his house, at first. That this was something that he *took*, but you notice the size the of the craftsmanship fits his hands. You notice he's comfortable in this space, in way that a thief might not be. You notice the inside the house—as you look through windows the same way that Dre did— is decorated with things you would associate with stereotypical goblin culture, right? The sort of like, adornment of hand crafted little totems, things like that. Some feathers—

ART: I mean, the really shitty part of this is, what I'm gonna do is still gonna end up with fighting this goblins [nervous laugh].

AUSTIN: I don't know, maybe. We'll see.

ART: I mean, I get a +1 forward acting on this answer, but I think my bold action is instead of kicking in this door I'm gonna knock.

AUSTIN: Okay, so go knock.

NICK: Yeah. Also, if any of the three of us are going to be open to maybe, you know, questioning their preconceived notions about a situation, I think it would be the studied, learned, religious guy, right? Hopefully.

[ART starts to talk]

AUSTIN (over Art): It helps that he's not evil.

ART: It helps that he's not evil, and I actually have been doing a lot of thought about how educated Hadrian really is, and this isn't really the time or the place for that.

NICK: Okay, well, but I mean like—

ART: I was thinking about how many books I think he'd read and I don't know if I like that number—

NICK: You're gonna *probably*, like err on the side of "people are good unless they prove otherwise", right?

ART: Yes, and especially because I've taken a vow of hospitality. And, hospitality is not "not attacking a man in his house" [NICK laughs]. But it's a move in that direction.

AUSTIN: Yes. So, you knock.

ART: I knock, you know, my weapons aren't out. I'm in a position of supplicat....tion?

AUSTIN: Supplication, yeah. Your knock gets like, a grumble at first, and a (croaky and nasally) "Get outta here!" And then, there's kinda like a "huh?" and it stumbles over— oh, not stumble over. You hear a "clop, clop, clop"— like a "step, step, step, step, step" and really mouthy sounds behind the door, as it creaks opens and a little goblin wearing wire-framed glasses looks up to you. [quiet annoyed grumbling]. Kinda does a little— does a little head bob backwards as if to pull you inside. And peeks around the corners as the hooping and hollering of the party—the hunting party— moves through.

ART: So, he like—

AUSTIN: He's *ushering* you in.

ART: Alright, so, I go in. There's no childhood tales about how awful goblins are that I've heard [DRE chuckles]. Well, I really hope that he speaks the tongue that I speak.

AUSTIN: Well, he did. He did. You heard him say “get outta here” at first.

ART: Oh, I heard him talking. Alright, yeah. So, yeah—

ART (as Hadrian): Thank you.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): (annoyed) Mhmm.

ART (as Hadrian): We’ve been traveling for a long time and it’s great to see a friendly face.

AUSTIN: He shakes his head, as if like, “here we go again.” [NICK laughs]

AUSTIN (as the goblin): (lightly croaky, nasally voice) You adventurers come through here every— [DRE laughs] uh, [sucks air in through teeth] six months or so, and uh, I just... [sighs]. There’s nothing here. I don’t know what it is you think you’re gonna get, but you’re wasting your time. I’ll give you a warm meal and you can leave in the morning.

ART (as Hadrian): Thank you for your hospitality. I obviously disagree with what we’re going to find out here, but—

AUSTIN (as the goblin): You always do and you die. Then— then they die. If it’s—

ART: [laughs] That’s bleak.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): —If it’s not the owl bears, it’s the—

DRE: Throndir kinda grumbles in the back and goes:

DRE (as Throndir): Well, he’s not wrong about that one.

ART: Wait, if it’s not the owl bears it’s the?

AUSTIN: He mumbles off into the distance (ART: (pity) aw...) as Throndir interrupts him. He walks over to his little kettle and adds some more water to it from a— he probably has some sort of system he has snow that melts into the kettle, as he pulls it over the fire to melt it into fresh snow-water.

ART: That’s very clever.

AUSTIN: They’re very clever.

NICK: Fantasma's just looking at everything like this is a new situation for him so, he's—
(amused) he's never been in a goblin house before, so!

AUSTIN: The house is small. His stature's like three and a half feet, let's say? Maybe four feet. Four feet. And, everything's sorta to that scale? It's a little taller, you guys can stand here, but your heads are near the ceiling, especially Hadrian who is the tallest, I guess.

DRE: So, it's like a hobbit hole almost.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it even reminds you—the people who are in that dwarf house on the island— it reminds you a bit of that? (But) a little less cramped. Partially because, you know, it wasn't built into a rock, you know? It's easier to cut longer, more wood, than it is to chisel out the side of a thing deeper. So,

ART: I wanna know so much about— I wanna know how long he's been here.

AUSTIN: There are some cabinets, a handful of books— not like a library. Again, a number of what looks like religious artifacts are in one of the cabinets, some totems, little carved things—

ART: What religion?

AUSTIN: You recognize them as pagan religions, you know? Faces carved into wood and polished. You know—

ART: Primitive nonsense, got it.

AUSTIN: Yup. Primitive nonsense. Maybe— listen. (DRE: Can I—) Maybe you can convert him one day and you could incorporate his “primitive nonsense” you think, but right now it's still that first thing. What were you gonna say, Throndir?

DRE: Can Throndir do a “spout lore”? Maybe he recognizes some of the religious things.

AUSTIN: Yeah, go ahead. That's a good call.

NICK: Fantasma, as he's looking around, he just sorta mutters under his breath:

NICK (as Fantasma): (quaint) What a charming little abode!

[DRE giggles]

NICK: Then, he makes his way over to the books [chuckles].

DRE: I got a nine.

AUSTIN: You recognize one of the— so, he has a number of little figurines that are carved into really smooth mahogany wood in one of the cabinets. And, you recognize one of them— We really didn't talk about what the snow elves worship. So, really quickly, do you have an idea in your head?

DRE: I feel like they worship the old gods, but I had this idea in my head that they don't name them. Because names have power and if you say the wrong name, bad things could happen.

AUSTIN: Man, you are good at this. This is all the best.... for reasons.

DRE: Unless you're a religious scholar. Unless you're like "the Hadrian" of the people, you don't get the learn the names, because if you say the wrong one, bad things happen.

AUSTIN: Yup! This is all— yeah. One of the figures that you see, is similar in terms of— it has a face— but, if you remove the idea that it was face, that it's eyes and a nose, and a mouth, and just looked at it as geometry, and connected them together, you would see that it would be the runic symbol of safety, of your people. Do you know what I mean?

DRE: Yeah. Throndir kinda like, picks it up and looks at it—

AUSTIN: He reaches out—

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Put that down!

DRE (as Throndir): Where'd— Where did you get this?

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Put that down, *now*. It's not a toy.

DRE (as Throndir): But, I recognize this— No, I *know* what it is! My people have this! Where did you get this?

AUSTIN (as the goblin): *Your* people... [angry grunt].

[ART laughs]

AUSTIN: He stumbles over to a pot and stirs it. There's a little bit of stew in the pot that he's warming up.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): (mildly angry) *Your* people... Your people took that from *me*.

DRE (as Throndir): What do you mean?

AUSTIN (as the goblin): You one of the snow ones? Hmm?

DRE (as Throndir): ...Yeah.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Hmm.. hm... So, are you bringing these ones back to, uh, torture them? Hmm?

DRE (as Throndir): No, I left. I left a year ago. I didn't want to come back, but I have to.

AUSTIN: He laughs to himself a little. To be clear, he did just suggest that Throndir was leading you back home to be tortured.

ART: I heard that, yeah! That did not go over my head.

[DRE laughs]

NICK: Yeah. At that, Fantasma snaps the book shut, and is suddenly attentive.

ART: Yeah, we should pay attention to this. This seems important [DRE chuckles].

AUSTIN: The howling gets louder from outside, and he gestures to the door, like as if you would know what that means? If you look over, you can see there is like— It's set up to be *barred*. If someone wants to go do that, if you understand his meaning.

ART: Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): The Nameless are coming... [sighs]. Another long night.

DRE (as Throndir): What do you... "The Nameless"? Who are The Nameless?

DRE: Should I "spout lore" on that?

AUSTIN: I think... I think that Fantasma should "spout lore" on that. He's the one that would have the information.

NICK: Hmm, okay.

AUSTIN: Given some previous rolls.

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: Specifically. There's a chance, anyway.

NICK: I'm gonna use my books again, too.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Please, please.

NICK: Aw, god dammit.

AUSTIN: Oof. hoh..

NICK: I mean that's a six with my book, but that doesn't matter.

AUSTIN: It does not matter.

DRE: Could I aid? Could I peer over his shoulder—

AUSTIN: You could totally aid! Yeah, you could totally aid with a combination of your local knowledge and his book smarts? Give me a “bond” roll.

ART: I like that Austin didn't say “street smarts”

AUSTIN: I didn't. I didn't say “street smarts”

DRE: Wood smarts. I got them wood smarts.

[ART laughs]

AUSTIN: I got them *wood* smarts!

[NICK laughs]

DRE: Seven.

AUSTIN: Okay, so you are now open to “danger, retribution, or cost.” Hmm...

ART: Stop helping him!

[AUSTIN and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Right, no, there is definitely... Sorry, I have to keep pop up your stuff so I can see what you have here. [pause]. Okay, here's what it is. It's a thing you work out over the course of a long meal.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: And, you have to use your feast to get the strength— [NICK laughs] to dig through these books over the course of a long night. Throughout the night, you hear the hooping and hollering, and at one point you hear the braying of animals outside. As this is happening, you realize what these are. Fantasma, you know that “Nameless Ones” or “The Nameless” or “Those Without Name” or things like that, it’s a term used by some magical theorists, but also it’s a very local term— this is a thing that Throndir’s able to tell you, or help you figure out— that’s used to represent people who’ve lost their identity. They once had names, but they were plucked from them, along with their sensibilities, along with their reason, and their sociability. They’ve been forcibly reverted to this other thing. You hear braying from outside, the man doesn’t seem to make any moves.

ART: Oh, I— This is really inconsequential— but like, while they’ve been pow-wow-ing over what this thing is, I wanna think I’ve been trying to engage this dude in small talk?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Like, “Hey, how long you’ve been here?”, “What’s it like here?”, “Nice house here.”

AUSTIN (over Art): You get a picture of this. He’s been here for a very, very, very long time.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: He doesn’t— [pause]. Over the course of this talk—

ART: You want me to make some kind of—

AUSTIN: No, no... Yeah, actually, give me a— No. I think if you’re having this talk with him over the course of a long time, I think he would share information. I think that’s true. I think as everyone is here, that’s a thing that would come up.

NICK: That’s uh... yeah.

AUSTIN: Give me a—

ART: It’s not quite “parley”, right?

AUSTIN: It’s not... It’s almost, “discern realities” with charisma?

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: Do that. That seems like an interesting thing here.

[pause]

ART: I did very badly.

AUSTIN: fuck, dude.

[NICK laughs]

ART: Like, about as badly as I could do. As a person with a +2 charisma modifier, rolling two dice.

[ART, AUSTIN, and NICK talk at the same time, then stop]

NICK: At some point, you remember a vaguely— What you think is like, charming— but is actually a straight up racist goblin joke [DRE laughs], and you tell it to him thinking that you're gonna break the ice or something [laughs].

[DRE and ART laugh]

ART: Yeah, that'll do it!

AUSTIN: This is the thing, it's silly we made this roll at all. Because one of the rules of Dungeon World is that you play to find out what happens. You don't want to roll the dice if it means you *don't* get the thing you want or need. Do you know what I mean?

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You roll the dice to see if anything interesting happens. What's interesting is if he gets to tell you something. It's not interesting if you fuck it up and call him a "gob-o" and then he doesn't talk to you. Do you know what I mean?

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Obviously, there'd be costs and stuff at times, but that's just not the game this is.

NICK: I mean, maybe he fucks it up but this goblin seems like he's... I mean he's been around. So...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Or, he's exhausted with it but he's—

AUSTIN (over Art): Yeah, I just don't— This shouldn't have been a roll to begin with. It's just more interesting if Art's narration leads to this guy explaining something, which is:

AUSTIN (as the goblin): I ain't seen a snow elf in, uh, long time, long time. [clicks tongue]
used to live with 'em.

AUSTIN: He's talking to you about this, Hadrian, as you both sip some of his herbal tea. This is also before the braying of the animals outside.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Used to live with 'em... Taught them a lot... Ah... Big fight...
long fight... [sighs] I don't—

AUSTIN: He looks confused for a second.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): I don't remember... Big fight, but we left, and... [clicks tongue].
They were not so good, they did bad things. They did very bad things... [pause].
(warmly) This one seems okay, he seems alright.

ART (as Hadrian): I agree.

DRE (over Art): Do I hear any of this?

AUSTIN: He's very quiet. You'd have to be listening in, do you know what I mean? This is like,
you guys are in the corner *pouring* over books and trying to put together what the *fuck* "The
Nameless" are.

[DRE chuckles]

ART: [scoff-laugh] Which is oddly rude in its own right. Like, he says something and you're like
"We're gonna go read for several hours, and we'll be back."

[AUSTIN, DRE, and NICK laugh]

AUSTIN: But it's a very— Yeah...

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Kindrali remembered...

AUSTIN: He says.

ART (as Hadrian): Who?

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Kindrali, he who remembers the day? Kindrali remembers.

ART: Hmm...

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Well, [sighs].

AUSTIN: He sighs.

ART: Is that a person or a deity?

AUSTIN: Good question. Do you ask him that, or?

ART: Yeah.

ART (as Hadrian): Is that a person?

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Yes.

AUSTIN: Do you also ask if it's a deity?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Yes.

ART (jokingly as Hadrian): Excuse me, sir. I have the market cornered on people who are also deities right now, [AUSTIN, DRE and NICK laugh] and please stay in your lane.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): We left and started building again. We knew... we knew it would not be good. We needed to start building again. We needed more.

ART (jokingly as Hadrian): Okay... You know these orcs? Lem would love to meet you.

[AUSTIN chuckles]

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AUSTIN (as the goblin): They...

AUSTIN: He kind of gestures with hand to outside.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): They were with Kindrali. We were building... and... then they stopped building, and just *took*.

ART (as Hadrian): (sadly) Oh...

AUSTIN: The braying starts, you find out what "The Nameless" are, he sighs. The cattle are heard further and further away— A sharp yelp, he doesn't do anything. He lets them go.

ART: Yikes...

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Kindrali,

AUSTIN: He speaks louder now. I think at this point everyone has gathered together.

AUSTIN (as the goblin): Kindrali, he lives in a cave, big cave... They came for him... The Word Eaters... They took his words, they took his name. [clicks tongue] [pause]. Sleep?

ART (as Hadrian): Yeah, yeah... I think we've all had a long day.... You know, not me but—

[NICK, DRE and AUSTIN laugh]

AUSTIN: (amused) Right! You're just awake all night.

NICK: You have had a long day,

ART: Right.

NICK: for like four days in a row now.

AUSTIN: You're *allowed* to sleep, you just don't need to.

ART: Right. It's probably polite to sleep. Not like— "Nah, I'm just gonna sit here for eight hours while you all sleep."

AUSTIN: Nick, give me one more "spout lore"

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: —on hearing "Word Eaters"

NICK: I'll use my books on that also—

AUSTIN: Use the book, use one more book and that'll make it a ten.

NICK: —run out of books...

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

ART: Always more books.

AUSTIN: Always go buy more books.

[DRE chuckles]

AUSTIN: You know that feeling when there is a word on the tip of your tongue, Nick? And then, it slips away and you're struggling to get it? In that moment, the word that you're looking for is actually on someone else's tongue. It's on the tongue of a Word Eater. And, you realize now that maybe these woods are thick with Word Eaters. It's a hyperbolic term, it's not like they don't eat words, mostly. They mostly dig into someone's mind and *lap* away at a word. It's why you don't actually lose a word, you just kinda "Aah! What is it?" and at that moment there, they're licking it. The majority of them are lazy, it's hard—

NICK: Are they tapping into— Are they actually eating... They're eating the power of the word the same way spells are forgotten?

AUSTIN: No, it's not like that. It's like losing your keys.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Now and then, a person has a thought so strong. They think so desperately, and gutturally, that a word can slip loose and be carried away. [pause]. Hadrian, you're saying your goodnight prayers.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Say them for me?

ART: Uh, shit. I don't know them.

AUSTIN: Just say them.

[DRE laughs]

ART: Uh... y'know... [sighs] I don't know any good... I'm a horrible secular human. Uh...

ART (as Hadrian): Thank you. Thank you, Lord Samoths for—

AUSTIN: Nope! You say "Thank you, Lord" and you've lost his name.

ART: Oh no!

AUSTIN: We're gonna call it there. We'll see what happens next week.

NICK: *Cool!*

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: XP and stuff? End of session?

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Sure is.

AUSTIN: [laughs]. (reading) "When you reach the end of a session, choose one bond— one of your bonds you feel has resolved, completely explored, no longer relevant, or otherwise. Ask the player of the character you have the bond with if they agree. If they do, mark XP and write a new bond with whomever you wish"

NICK: This is weird, since we split the group up.

AUSTIN: It is, it is. I like that because it means when the groups switch up again, there will be these lingering bonds. You know? (NICK: Sure.) Like when you see Hella again and her sword is a little different— 'cause it is— that will be a big deal, y'know?

DRE: Do we get XP from killing the owl bear—

AUSTIN: We'll get to that after we've done these questions. They go in order. So, first up, "bonds".

NICK: I don't think I have any bonds.

AUSTIN: Okay. Are there any you think are no longer relevant?

[NICK exhales]

AUSTIN: Again, it's tough because I like the idea that they'd still be there? But like, is Fero still your little bird?

NICK: I mean, yeah. I guess not. Because I haven't seen him for a while now.

AUSTIN: Mhmm. If you did, would he be your little bird? 'Cause if so, I think keep it. Y'know?

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: If you still wanna know— If you still think Lem King is an open book—

NICK: Definitely think that. (AUSTIN: Keep it.) And I definitely still want to—

AUSTIN: If you still want to figure out what Hella's—

NICK: Yeah. And I definitely still want to teach Hadrian that his shit is backwards, and that science and magic are true way.

ART: Science *and* magic!

NICK: Well, It's the same thing. (ART: Yeah.) In this world, magic is just part of like, getting to know how the world works.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: Right. It's only funny because we live in a world where we don't have magic.

NICK: Yeah.

DRE: Or *do* we?

NICK: I guess Fero, I guess I lost any sort of connection, there.

AUSTIN: Okay. So, go ahead and—

NICK: But I don't feel like it's resolved like—

AUSTIN: Well, this is the thing, we've been saying "resolved" every time, but as written is "completely explored, no longer relevant, or otherwise" There's a lot of flexibility here. That's the thing, if you see him again, and think you should treat him like your little bird, then keep it. But if you think this distance *has* changed the relationship—and it might— then lose it. I think that's interesting, y'know?

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But, keeping it is totally viable. Like, this isn't an XP—

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: There will be plenty of room to get XP—

NICK: No, I really don't think it's applicable anymore, but also at the same time I don't, you know. It's weird to get XP for that, I guess.

AUSTIN: Yeah, well. Think of it as you're freeing up a position for a new relationship in your life. Experience is a *broad* thing, y'know? It's not spending that time once a week calling that friend anymore, and instead hanging out with a new friend.

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: And that's weird, but it's experience.

NICK: Yeah, that's true. Alright.

AUSTIN: And then you can write a new one if you want for anyone. It might make sense for Throndir, since you're adventuring together.

NICK: Yes, I'll definitely—

AUSTIN: Same goes for everyone else. How are—

NICK: —want a bond for Throndir.

DRE: I feel like the bond I written for Fantasma was, "He's an elf, but he's one of the strangest people I've met. I have to learn more about him." I feel like that might have changed because of that moment where Fantasma was talking about how everything can be explained, and Throndir may now see him as someone who can help him figure out who he really is.

AUSTIN: Right, right. Go ahead and write something around that and take one. Hadrian?

ART: This is happened to me two games in a row now, but I can't find where I've written my bonds [NICK laughs].

AUSTIN: You're kiddin' me. I have those somewhere.

ART: I don't know where these are, but now we have this sheet where I could put it. Like it's on some file somewhere, and searching my computer isn't working... It's supposed to work.

AUSTIN: Yup.

ART: Fuckin' Apple.

AUSTIN: As it's written for me, it's "Lem's misguided behavior endangers (his) very soul, Hella is at a spiritual crossroads and only I can see her through, Fantasma's foolhardy nature endangers the world"

ART: I mean, I still think that, but I don't know if we explored it. I think I'm willing to let Lem go, because thinking about it, he's the person in that group who I think I'm most— Y'know I'm realizing I don't have any friends here, really. Yeah, like friend *friends*— and if it's gonna be one of those three it's gonna be *him*. So, I'm gonna pull back on being a judgemental bitch about that.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Especially with regard to the fact that you had that experience with him.

ART: Right, yeah. There's some souls in danger, but it's not because of his beliefs. It might be because of *my* beliefs. I would never put it like that.

AUSTIN (over Art): Let's not use the "B" word. Let's just say "a judgemental Ron." I'm gonna mark down the time so Keith knows to bleep that out.

[NICK laughs]

ART: Oh, sorry.

AUSTIN: No, it's fine.

ART: He could bleep both of those out—

AUSTIN: That is ideal, that is now the funnier bit.

ART: Yeah. Oh god, I hope he's not listening to this. Oh, he wouldn't have listened to this many, we've been so mean to him.

AUSTIN (over Art): No, we've been so mean. I mean, I haven't heard anything. Anyway—

ART: Aw... we're the worst. So, I think I wanna take one with, uh, Thor-ren-deer? Am I doing that right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. To be clear to people listening "Thor-ren-deer" is spelled T-H-R-O-N-D-I-R.

DRE: Mhmm.

ART: So it's definitely "Thron-deer" right?

DRE: Nah, my people say—

AUSTIN: You just call him "Ron" also.

[NICK laughs]

ART: Oh no...

DRE: Don't!

ART: Oh... That's funny... We don't have to bleep that one out—

AUSTIN: (laughing, struggling to talk) But now we do!

ART: Except now we do because I just gave it away [laughs].

[AUSTIN hysterically laughs]

ART: Or Keith can just cut that out.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Keith is great. Oh I just clipped my audio *so bad* from that laugh, it was a real good laugh. Okay, so, what's next. What are you doing for "bond"?

ART: I should write one for Throndir, and... I'm trying to think about this experience— what I want from him—

AUSTIN: Let's think about that. Write down what you have right now on your sheet here, so you have it, and then we'll figure it out. Let's move on, though. Did we learn something new or important about the world?

NICK: Wait, hang on. I wrote a new bond. It's pretty simple, "There's much to learn about Throndir's past and people"

AUSTIN: Yeah, sounds good. Did we learn something new or important about the world?

DRE: I mean, for Throndir he learned that goblins aren't— Like his whole conception of a race of people has been completely changed.

AUSTIN: This is a group decision, so I think if that flies for you—

NICK (over Austin): I think we all learned that here.

AUSTIN: Mhmm, yeah. Did you overcome a notable monster or enemy?

NICK: Yeah.

ART: “Notable” is one of those words.

AUSTIN: I think so! I’ll give you the one.

ART: That’s just gonna be like— we’re gonna think back one day and think “Ah, yeah. It’s just some owlbear”

AUSTIN: Well, you fought a separate thing.

ART: Oh, right that whatever—

DRE (over Art): Fucker, crazy ice-wrath-monster thing. I shoved a torch in its face.

AUSTIN: You might know what that thing is now. Did you loot any memorable treasure? No. You should’ve gotten treasure from both of those things, though. Now that I think about, when you beat a thing, it pops out loot because, that’s how games works (DRE: kids’ games). ‘Cause games. I’m gonna figure out what you guys got here, give me a second. [pause]. I think some probably some sort of rations from that owlbear, if you want them, right?

DRE: Yeah, we cut up it’s meat or something.

[NICK laughs]

ART: Ew!

AUSTIN: Or maybe—

DRE: Listen man, waste not, want not!

ART: Yeah, I’m just saying some of us have gods that protect them from eating *owlbear meat*.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: And some of us are vegetarian.

DRE: Just gotta cook it low and slow.

AUSTIN: Oh boy.

[NICK chuckles]

ART: —some good owlbear brisket?

AUSTIN: Aw, I could eat some *brisket*.

DRE (over Austin): Yeah, snow elves are really good at barbeque.

AUSTIN: Are they? Is that a thing they're good at?

DRE: Sure, why not? Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: I mean, we gotta keep fires burning all the time because it's so cold, right?

ART: Yeah, might as well cook on 'em.

AUSTIN: But, owlbears? Is that the thing you were gonna say earlier? When like, you notice—

ART: (yelling) It's an owlbear!! it's delicious!

[everyone laughs]

DRE: It's an owlbear I haven't had one of these in years! Aw!!

[everyone laughs]

ART: It's an owlbear! Be sure to rub it before you— put a good spice rub on it before cooking!

AUSTIN: [laughs] Oh no...

DRE: Make sure you get some salt water in that wound you just opened because you have to brine it properly!

[AUSTIN laughs, NICK makes a noise of disgust]

AUSTIN: Great, great. Not good. Bad.

DRE: [laughs] Welcome to Friends at the Food Cast.

AUSTIN: Oh boy, we've talked about bread before, I mean. I'll think up some stuff to give you guys over the break. 'Cause like, that's my least favorite thing, maybe, about this game, is that like, "Oh yeah, you killed those owlbears and now look at this chart and say what they got for it" 'Cause like no... it's just an owlbear. Like.. that's what got. A dead owlbear corpse. Congratulations.

[DRE and ART lightly laugh]

ART: I mean, there could be stuff caught— He could've eaten some shit or—

AUSTIN: That's where we're gonna go with it. Anyway, are we all—

ART: —could've eaten a bunch of gold

AUSTIN: It was delicious! Yeah, so, is that it? Are we good on leveling? Did anyone level?

NICK: No.

DRE: So, how many points did we get from the monster hunt.

AUSTIN: One. You get one for defeating a monster, not per monster. One for defeating a notable monster or enemy.

ART: And then one for learning something about the world?

AUSTIN: Yeah, one for learning something about the world.

DRE: And then, I got one for my bond—

ART: I got one for my fail at that roll. I'm up to five.

DRE: And then I failed, I failed three rolls. So I didn't level but I'm close.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Are we ready to sign off?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Thank you for joining us on Friends at the Table. As always, I'm your GM, Austin Walker. You can find me @austin_walker on Twitter, thecalcutec on Twitch, clockworkworlds.com. [THEME MUSIC STARTS]. Joining me today was, for the first time Andrew Lee Swan:

DRE: Hey! Yeah, you can find me on Twitter @andrewleeswan and of course on Stream Friends.

AUSTIN: Nick Son-der— Son-der-ga? I'm gonna—

NICK: Nick Scratch.

AUSTIN: (determined) I'm gonna. Son-ger-ath?

NICK: Sure. Whatever.

AUSTIN: Nick Scratch, yup.

NICK: You can find me on Twitch, Twitter, YouTube slash drevilbones. And also on Stream Friends.... dot TV.

AUSTIN: And, Art Tebbel:

ART: Hey, you can find me on Twitter @atebbel, you can read movie reviews most weeks on comicmix.com— we're getting to the fall season here, it's thinning up a little bit. And, yeah, also on Stream Friends and stuff.

AUSTIN: That's at streamfriends.tv for the archives, twitch.tv/streamfriends to watch us live. You can also, please, subscribe to us on iTunes, give us a review, keep us up in this "New and Noteworthy" category, or maybe even— Maybe we can get into the "What's Hot" category. That'd be the life.

ART: We're gonna need facecams for that.

AUSTIN: Because of how hot we are?

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: We're pretty hot.

NICK: I mean, we'll have facecams, but it'll still be an audio podcast, so, [laughs].

AUSTIN: [laughs] Thanks for joining us everyone—

ART (over Austin): That'll be for our platinum backers [NICK laughs].

AUSTIN: [laughs] Aw, great. Thanks for joining us. Everyone have a good week.

[THEME SONG FADES OUT]

[pause]

AUSTIN: Three, two [someone claps], one, clap!

[very unsynced claps]

AUSTIN: [laughs] Oh, that was *way* worse!

[everyone laughs]

DRE: Yup!

AUSTIN: That's fine. Keith's a genius.

ART: Love you Keith!

DRE: Keith *is* a genius.

--end--