

Winter in Hieron 21: The Shield of Our Will

Transcriber: Mason (until page 21); Cole to finish

Ali: Last time on Friends At The Table:

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): The Archives work, and have always worked on, [sigh] knowing where things go. Knowing how to categorize things and what should and shouldn't be categorized. The schism is one thing, what is real, what is not, but- [sigh] Me, the Unstill, we're an entire other thing.

[Music Starts - "Inside" - 0:24]

Jack (as **Lem King**): Look, Devar, look, this isn't me, putting my foot down or taking sides, but just, maybe what if the plant... looked a bit different for a while. Just for a while!

Austin (as **Devar van der Dawes**): [sucks in a breath, stress] Oooohh. Alright, listen. I got-- there's this dude I know who's good at this stuff. I don't-- I mean, so I didn't know him since he started it. But-

Keith (as **Fero Feritas**): [interrupting] My plan was good.

Austin (as **Devar**): Yeah, your plan was alright, we can do your plan if my plan falls apart.

Jack (as **Lem**): Yeah, we can do your plan if his plan falls apart.

Austin (as **Devar**): His name is Zhan, Zhan Kurr. He's in Lot 27. He's got a small spot there. Meet me there. Do you think the sun's gonna set?

Austin: So what was your room like, Lem?

Jack: Uhm, I think it is a-- It's full of dust and dead plants, and like, books left open [**Austin** hums] and things. It has got instruments hanging on the walls, but some of their strings are broken. It has a window that-

Austin: They've been snapped.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: Your room's been tossed.

Jack (as **Lem**): Okay, I didn't leave it like this.

Keith (as **Fero**): They don't call him More-bash for nothin'.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): [groans]

Jack (as **Lem**): I saw a student say that to his face once.

Keith (as **Fero**): [disbelief] What? I'm not the first?

Jack (as **Lem**): He got bashed.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): I'd rather not stay in the woods.

Keith (as **Fero**): It's on a mountain, it's not the woods. It's like specifically different.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): It- Fero, I just got shot. I'd like a bed, possibly.

Keith (as **Fero**): Do- I don't sleep on the ground outside!!

[**Jack** laughs]

Keith (as **Fero**): What goes on in here?

Austin (as **Devar**): I mean he's a guy who, turns things into other things. You can't, trust what you see y'know?

Austin: And he knocks on-

Keith (as **Fero**): [agreeing noise]

Austin: -the door a few times and, there's no response.

[Music stops - 2:34]

Keith (as **Fero**): But how do we know the door's actually closed? What if we just walk through the door!?

Jack (as **Lem**): Doesn't work like that Fero

Jack: And I try to open-

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Do you want to try it?

Jack: -the door again.

Keith: I walk through the- I walk into the door.

Austin: Fero, you see [**Jack** laughs] waves cros-- crashing against rocks in front of you and a massive statue of a figure-- of a humanoid figure, that has like jagged like, it-- it's cut from rock in a way that is clear that it was meant to be cut this way, but also, it-- it's-- Their body is-- has these jagged stones breaking off from it, in a way that is-- It's not smooth, it's not--- it's not a clean statue. Y'know, it's not flat the way most people's skin is, it's rocky and is-- has these like weird outcroppings built into it, but it seems like that's intentional. In any case-

Keith: Do I see that-- Do I see that instead of the door or have I gone through the door?

Austin: [overlapping **Keith**] No, you've walked through the door.

Keith: Okay, can I poke my head out the door like-?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**) [overlapping **Keith**] I can't believe it worked.

Keith (as **Fero**): I've solved the puzzle, it's fucked up in here.

Jack (as **Lem**): Oh my god.

[**Austin** hums in agreement]

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Alright!

Jack: Yeah, I'm going to follow him through.

Sylvia: Yup!

Austin: So, you do that and you see-- everyone sees the statue that is-- that is--

Jack: Wait, so sorry-

Austin: Uh-huh

Jack: -can I just be a bit clear about what we're looking at here?

Austin: Yeah, I'm gonna keep explaining.

Jack: We've- Oh, cool, okay.

Austin: So you've walked through the door. You see this statue, that's the first thing that you see 'cause it's framed between a bunch of trees facing-- that-- that are kind of like, framing this because there's a walkway through it or a pathway through it. That statue is on rocks in the ocean, looking out to sea, it has a shield in one hand and it's sword in the ground on the other. And the trees that frame it are like a jungle, it's a very tropical climate here. And the jungle goes on in every direction, forever, from as far as you can see.

Jack: What's behind us?

Austin: A-- a door.

Jack: What's-- Can I walk around the door?

Austin: Yep.

Jack: What is there?

Austin: You're in the jungle still.

Jack: So it's just a door in the middle of a jungle.

[**Austin** hums agreement]

Keith: What if I go in through the door from the outside again?

Jack: This is a good question.

Austin: Are you sure you want to do that?

Keith: Yes

Austin: Do you mean-- from the outside-- from the-- from the other side?

Keith: So I walked through the door into the jungle, right? [**Austin** hums agreement] Like, opening the door and walk into it-

Austin: Yes.

Keith: -I go back around-

Austin: Yes.

Keith: -not going back through it, but walking around to the front of the door again-

Austin: Yup.

Keith: -go through it.

[This is 5:05 minutes]

Austin: Good. Okay. You are in a bedroom. There's a-- you are--

Keith (as Fero): This place is cool!

Austin: You're in a bedroom, that is-- Now behind you is just a wall and the door attached, like as if it's the door. There is a-- a small wooden bed, it's like a twin bed, low to the ground, a little desk with some notes. A-- a window looking down on the Archives, from higher up from a tower in the mountains. There are couple of books, and there are some-- there's some food, and there's no one here. And that's like on first glance.

Keith: Can I Discern Realities?

Austin: How do you do that? What do you do?

Keith: I guess I'm looking around to make sure there's actually no one here and that this is a real-ass room.

Austin: So you just like- But what's that look like? What's Fero doing? To-- to Discern Realities?

Keith: I think that I'm trying to stick my hand through stuff.

Austin: Okay. Sure.

Keith: And like, lifting things up and and seeing if the things under the things are actually like, [Austin hums agreement] what I imagine they would be. And if tho-- oh! Specifically here's one, if the letters and the notes have actual writing and they're not just like weird dream scribbles.

Austin: Sure. Give me a roll. Give me a Discern Realities.

Keith: Are we still Confused by the way?

Austin: Yup.

Keith: Eight.

Austin: Alright, so you get ooone question. [Keith overlapping] from this set. Make sure to take +1 forward for acting on the answer.

Keith: [overlapping Austin] Alright, let me look at that list.

Keith: What Should I Be On The Lookout For?

Austin: Ah, there you go. What should you-- what should you be on the lookout for here? [Austin blow air] The-- god, what should you be on the lookout for? The-- I'm trying to be as generous as I can here. You can't read which is a problem.

Keith: I can sort of read.

Austin: [Hums disagreeing] You can't read like, the notes of--

Keith: Fero can read orcish as much as Keith can read Spanish, which is like, you know, I can figure out some sentences.

Austin: Yeah, but like, can you read spanish high-level chemistry?

Keith: No, I can't even read English high-level chemistry.

Austin: Exactly and that's what these notes are. [sigh] I guess the-- the obvious one is like, you should make sure no one else comes in here, but that's kinda corny and boring, I guess one thing that you should-- [**Keith** startup noise in the background] here's the thing you should be on the lookout for, is just like you don't know if the things in this room are where they are as part of one of these weird pattern magic things.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And that changing them could change other stuff.

Keith: I guess I've got to go back and I gotta invite Lem in and Devar because they know what's up in this- like, it's their-

Austin: The door is locked.

Keith: Oh, okay. Well--

Austin: That's the other thing you should be on the lookout for.

Keith: Okay, sor-- sorry, so there's [**Jack** laughs] notes, there's-- what else is in the room?

Austin: A candle, some food, a window [**Keith** overlaps] looking down on the rest of the Archives

Keith: [overlapping **Austin**] Oh!

Keith: [hums to nod] I blow out the candle.

Austin: Uhm, hey everybody else? [**Sylvia** overlaps] The light goes out.

Sylvia: [overlapping **Austin**] Oh boy.

Jack: It's just dark?

Austin: It's just d-- you're now in dark jungle You can see the moon-- the moon suddenly rises in-- in this weird jungle, and the-- when it rises you can see the eyes of that statue light up, like orange gemstones.

Jack: Okay, I'm going to walk around to the backside of the door where I saw Fero go, but I'm not going to go through it, [**Austin** hums affirmative] I'm going to call out to see if Fero can hear me.

Austin: Fero can hear you. [**Jack** overlaps] What do you say?

Jack (as **Lem**): [overlapping **Austin**] F-- Okay Fero? Um, I'd like to apologize.

[**Austin** laughs]

Keith (as **Fero**): For what specifically?

[**Sylvia** snorts]

Jack (as **Lem**): I feel I was hasty in assuming that your plan wouldn't work, when it did. So that's the first thing. The second thing--

Keith (as **Fero**): Do you mean this specific time or every time anyone's ever done that?

Jack (as **Lem**): What? I can't hear you.

[**Austin** laughs]

Keith (as **Fero**): Do you-- do you s--

Keith: I say it louder

Keith (as **Fero**): Do you mean this specific time or how it happens all the time?

Jack (as **Lem**): Oh, this specific time.

[**Austin** laughs]

Jack (as **Lem**): Fero, where are you?

Keith (as **Fero**): In a bedroom.

Jack (as **Lem**): Oh, great! Okay! [**Keith** overlapping] Should I come in? Is it safe?

Keith: [overlapping **Jack**] Yeah.

Keith (as **Fero**): It's locked. Wait, it's very dangerous.

Jack (as **Lem**): In what way?

Keith (as **Fero**): It's dark.

Austin: It's not dark in there.

Keith: Oh okay. Oh, cause there's the window. [**Austin** overlaps] Oh! I say it anyway.

Austin: [overlapping **Keith**] Yeah.

Keith (as Fero): It's incredibly dark all of a sudden, and there's monsters I think.

[**Austin** huff-laugh]

Jack (as Lem): In the bedroom?

Keith (as Fero): Yes, it's a very big bedroom.

Jack (as Lem): Are you sure you're okay? I can come in.

Keith (as Fero): No, I'll fight them off.

Jack (as Lem): Fero, it's got real dark out here all of a sudden too.

Keith (as Fero): I think I can fix it. I-- If I kill this one-- once-- this guy showed up, and then it got dark. If I kill him, then I think it might get light again.

Keith: And I light the candle.

Austin: [huff laugh] Do you have like weird fire powers now? What's the-- how are you lighting this candle?

Keith: [laugh] I have an-- I have like Adventuring Gear, I just have-- [**Austin** overlapping] have like a-- yeah.

Austin: [overlapping **Keith**] Okay

Austin: I want that image of Fero like, yelling through the door while trying to strike, like flint on, paper or whatever, [**Jack** quiet-laugh] [**Keith** overlaps] It's an important image.

Keith: [overlapping **Austin**] Yeah, and I try to do it really loudly too, to like-- so he can hear like the-- the sword swing [Austin quiet-laugh] and the, like, clanks.

Austin: The sun comes back up, people in the-- in the jungle

Jack (as Lem): [overlapping **Keith**] You did it!

Keith (as Fero): [overlapping **Jack**] I got him, the body just disappeared, I don't-- E-- It didn't drop anything.

Jack (as Lem): What did it look like?

[someone taking a drink in the background]

[**Austin** huff-laughes]

Keith (as Fero): It didn't look like a Cyclops but it did only have one eye.

Jack (as Lem): Is it-

Keith (as Fero): It was hard to tell, it was very dark. If you come in, don't close the door, it's safe now.

Jack: I like, turn around to Ephrim and go like-

Jack (as Lem): He just killed a monster or something. He's in like a [**Austin** laughs] bedroom

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Huh

Sylvia: Ephrim just sort of like walks over to where Lem was yelling and just is like-

Sylvia (as Ephrim): He-hey, Fero, it's Ephrim. [**Keith** overlapping] Just want to say good job!

Keith (as Fero): Hi!

Keith (as Fero): Thank you!

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Thanks!

Jack (as Lem): Don't go in there though Ephrim cause like, it's-- it like, the door locks.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Oh.

Jack (as Lem): Is there anything [**Keith** overlapping] else in there cause you--

Keith (as Fero): [overlapping **Jack**] You can come in just don't close the door

Jack (as Lem): Oh can you do that?

Austin: Here's a question: Wait, Fero did you walk through the door or did you open the door and walk through it?

Keith: I just walked through.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Oh.

[**Sylvia** 'um's']

Jack: Can I open the door?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: What's inside?

Austin: You see out into the hall-- back out into the-- the mountain pass that you were looking at originally.

Jack: Okay, I'm gonna close the door.

Jack (as **Lem**): Fero? That doesn't seem to work, I ca-- I think I have to walk through it Fero.

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

Keith: Can I walk-- Can I walk back out?

Austin: No

Keith: Oh, okay

Keith (as **Fero**): I gue-- don't do that because I can't walk back out.

Jack (as **Lem**): Is there anything useful in the room?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): [overlapping **Jack**] Is he? Okay, huh.

Keith (as **Fero**): There's a lot of [**Jack** overlapping] notes I can't read.

Jack: [overlapping **Keith**] Oh sorry.

Jack (as **Lem**): Hang on, sorry. Ephrim just said something. Ephrim, what was that?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): [stuttering] How did-- Is there any way out of there?

Keith (as **Fero**): There's a window.

[This is 12:34 minutes]

Austin (as **Devar**): [overlapping **Sylvia**] Don't climb out that window! That's high!

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): [overlapping **Austin**] Do you have rope?

Keith (as **Fero**): I don't have [**Sylvia** overlapping] rope, I have wings?

Sylvia [sad?]: Okay.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Is-- is- yeah, he can do a bird thing.

Austin (as **Devar**): [**Keith** overlapping] I didn't know he could do a bird thing.

Keith (as **Fero**): [overlapping **Austin**] I also do-- Oh! I also do do have rope.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Yeah

Austin (as **Devar**): Yeah he does. Okay, he has rope [JACK overlapping] and he can do a bird thing.

Jack (as **Lem**): [overlapping **Austin**] Do-- Devar is this-- have you been in here before?

Austin (as **Devar**): No?

Jack (as **Lem**): No, okay, right. So Fero [**Austin** overlapping] just kill-- killed a thing

Austin (as **Devar**): [overlapping **Jack**] But wait--

[**Austin** as Devar disagreeing hum]

[**Jack** as Lem question hum]

Austin (as **Devar**): That doesn't sound true.

[**Keith** cough laughs]

Keith (as **Fero**): It also didn't sound true that you could walk through the door, and I did it twice, you're welcome!

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): He has a point.

Jack (as **Lem**): He does have a point. Yeah.

Austin (as **Devar**): Yeah, okay.

Jack (as **Lem**): Yeah, That's kind [**Austin** overlaps] of why I opened with the apology.

Austin (as **Devar**): It's-- It's humid in here.

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

Austin (as **Devar**): [hum] This reminds me of something, but I can't place it.

[**Sylvia** thinking noise]

Keith: What's out the-- can I open the window?

Austin: Yeah. Ah, in my mind it was just open, it's just an open win- it's just [**Keith** overlapping]
a hole in the wall

Keith: [overlapping **Austin**] It's an open window?

Austin: Yeah

Jack (as **Lem**): Fero- [**Keith** overlapping]

Keith: Okay.

Jack (as **Lem**): -the-- the eyes of the-- okay, remember that statue?

Keith (as **Fero**): Yeah--

Jack (as **Lem**): It's eyes are like, there's light in it's eyes.

Keith: Wait, since the light turned back on, is there still light in the [**Austin** overlapping] eyes?

Austin: No, the light in the eyes-- you can't see it now.

Jack (as **Lem**): Oh, the light in the eyes is gone.

Austin: Eh, they [**Keith** overlapping] might still be lit but you can't--

Keith (as **Fero**): That might have something to do--

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

Austin (as **Devar**): Light in the eyes. Light in the eyes.

Austin: Devar is like, he like goes to take his backpack off to look for a book, but he doesn't have a backpack on, 'cause he like, dressed down. Also I said he had on pants or something, he doesn't. He has shorts on, for sure.

[**Jack** laughs]

Sylvia: Hell yeah

Austin: He definitely has on like, turquoise shorts and sandals.

Sylvia: [overlapping **Keith**] So jealous.

Keith: So, hold on. [**Sylvia** overlapping] Can I-- I have a quick question. While um-- You said that the window just goes-- just outside right? Outside to the New Archives?

Austin: Yes.

Keith: While-- while Lem is trying to explain to me what's going on out there, can I have flown outside, gone back through into the jungle and just been with them?

Austin: There's no jungle outside.

Keith: No, if I-- If I, go outside, [**Austin** 'yeah's] back through the door--

Austin: You're not-- the-- the door is inside of a tower. Like there's a tower, and then inside of the tower there's a door that opens to a bedroom.

Keith: Oh, okay. You don't think I can get there just by walking and [**Austin** overlaps] stuff.

Austin: You would have to land at the base of the tower or some other wind-- you'd have to go in some other window, to then get back into the stairwell that opens-- that eventually reaches that door.

Keith: Okay, then I won't do this.

Jack (as **Lem**): Fero, [**Keith** overlaps] describe to me what is in the room.

Keith (as **Fero**): Hi!

Keith (as **Fero**): Okay, bed, window, open window by the way--

Jack (as **Lem**): Close the window.

Keith: Okay, I close the window.

Austin: Nothing happens here.

Keith (as **Fero**): Nothing happened

Jack (as **Lem**): Okay!

Keith (as **Fero**): Pretty zip.

[0:15:00]

Jack (as Lem): Here there's nothing too. Can you-- Fero, can you-- did it just get dark suddenly? Is there any way you can make it dark again?

Keith (as Fero): I can make it dark again but I'm afraid that monsters will show up. I'll do it.

Keith: I blow out the candle.

Austin: It gets really dark in the jungle again. Fero, it's still light, cause the-- it's still like quote-unquote sunset

Keith: Alright, I'm good

Austin: It's getting darker though. The sun is setting more, quote-unquote

Sylvia: Can we take a look at this-- this statue here?

Austin: Yeah, so it's-- it's-- I want to paint you a slightly better picture of the [KEITH overlaps] distances--

Keith (as Fero): [overlapping **Austin**] Guys he's back!

Austin [unhappy]: Mmm, okay. Great.

[Jack laughing]

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Be careful

Austin (as Devar): You got it, buddy.

Austin: So there are-- with the-- this time you're prepped for this, and in fact when the lights go out like, oh yeah dark and I remember how dark works, you've been in the dark a lot lately. There are a b-- You are, it becomes clear, on the edge of a peninsula or an island or something, and you are looking out in front of you, and there are four islands that you can make out, between you and the statue. And this is like, a matter of miles and miles, but the statue is massive and very clear. And there might also be some other little islands scattered around there but like, there is-- it's definitely like from the point you're looking at, where the jungle reaches a cliff-face that goes into the ocean and the rocks below.

There are four other islands, one of which has this big statue on it. There are-- there are boats, a couple of boats. And there are-- the sounds-- now that like, it's quiet you can hear, like, birds and insects, and then you can see a fire on the-- the shore of the closest island to you and can see some people arou-- you see some figures around the fire. These are-- but they are still

like, you know, two or three kilometers away or something, y'know? They're not-- they're not shou-- well, maybe they're shouting distance, but not communicating distance.

Sylvia: [thinking hum] So, what I wanna do is, because Ephrim has both, y'know, his like--- his entire life was being taught about religious figures as [**Austin** hum affirmative] well as-- this hasn't really come up yet, but Ephrim carries like, a book of fairytales with him everywhere.

Austin: Ooh! Yes, that's true.

Sylvia: So I wanted to-- to see if either of those, like, banks of knowledge would lead me to recognize the statue [**Austin** overlaps], which I guess would be Spout Lore?

Austin [overlaps **Sylvia**]: Sure.

Austin: Yeah that would totally be Spout Lore. Is that book-- does that book convey something? Is that like, [**Sylvia** overlaps] book a mechanical thing or is it just a fictional thing?

Sylvia: [overlapping **Austin**] Um, yeah

Sylvia: That book is a fictional thing, that book is-- it technically, within, like my starting kit, that book was the Symbol of Sacrifice that the Immolator comes with.

Austin]: Oh, interesting. Okay.

Sylvia: Yeah, so, yeah, but otherwise mechanically it doesn't do anything, [**Austin** hums affirmative] It's just a-- a character thing. So, I got a nine.

Austin: On a Spout Lore, I tell you something interesting, but not useful, I believe. When you were growing up, you were taught that the eastern shore was once one whole thing. A single piece of land. That over time the waves crashed against it with such fury and such power that it broke apart, bit by bit by bit. It was torn, into little pieces. And this happened at such a rate and-- and with such surprise. It would happen in the middle of the night. Someone would-- would fall asleep at a farm and would wake up in the middle of the ocean. That eventually the will of the people, their fear and their need swelled up and took shape.

The ground itself came alive and the figure had these beautiful, like sunset opal eyes, and they became a shield for the people, so that they could do their work safely. They would protect them from not only the waves but raiders and from the-- the pains of early death, from terrible storm, from all sorts of things. But bit by bit, the-- the shoreline still became more and more torn apart, and islands did start to form out on the coastline.

And so, one day they left behind one of their legs, and every year for the following 300 years people brought out little stones and added them to that leg. And bit by bit they reproduced the figure, until it stood at a massive scale. A statue that-- that would replicate their power, both the power of that divine being and also the power of the people and would pin the world in place

and prevent it from being torn apart, while the real person, the real shield, went off to save other people. You believe you remember that they are now part of the Grand Tour, whatever that is.

[This is 20:36 minutes]

Sylvia: Is-- we can cut this maybe if it's not relevant but [**Austin** listening hum] we talked a little bit about groups out east, is this tied to the one that Ephrim knows about? I don't know how specific you want me to be.

Austin: No, you can be specific.

Sylvia: The-- The-- I think we called it, like, the Cult of Severeia or something.

Austin: Yeah. No, so the Cult [**Sylvia** finding words] of Severeia- So, this is not to do with the Cult of Severeia.

Sylvia: Okay, I just wasn't sure.

Austin: This is not to do with Severeia but it is to do with the Grand Tour which Severeia is connected to.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: And I think Devar gives name to it from a similar story, and he says:

Austin (as **Devar**): They're, uh, they got two names, I dunno the pronunciation of the first one, Sa-- Samaantine (Sam-en-teen), Samaantine (Sam-men-tine)? I dunno, I only ever read it, I never heard it out loud. But the other one I heard. Pops, Pops told me about them when I was a kid. Galenica, The Shield of our Will, that's what he used to say. It's the sort of story you tell a little boy 'cause he's scared at night. That's what that statue is. Galenica. They ain't real though. I don't think any of this is either. This is-- this is from a book, man.

Jack (as **Lem**): I mean, it-- it feels pretty real.

Austin (as **Devar**): No no no no no! And then--

Austin: And he's trying to recite, like, from memory:

Austin (as **Devar**): And then the explorers came upon that eastern hill

and saw the frolickers on the-- on the shore in the distance [**Jack** overlaps] And then there was the call of the whale

Jack (as **Lem**): Down there.

Austin: And then suddenly there is this loud whale call.

Jack (as Lem): What happens next in the book?

Austin (as Devar): We gotta go.

Jack (as Lem): Where?

Austin: And he turns back like, west to face the rest of the jungle and just like, there's no pathway, there's just the door, and he's like:

Austin (as Devar): The whales start coming. We should not be here.

Jack (as Lem): You think we should follow Fero?

Austin (as Devar): Ahhh, yeah, that would be preferable.

Jack (as Lem): So-- Sorry, hang--

Austin: And there's another whale call.

Jack (as Lem): The whales start coming?

Austin: And this long, weird head pokes up from the sea. [**Jack** overlaps]

Jack (as Lem): Alright, okay.

Austin: It's not what you call a whale traditionally. It's not-- it's like-- it is, like, a sea monster. It's like-- it's like the Loch Ness Monster or something.

Jack: And it's making this horrible sound?

Austin: Ah, and then there's another one and another one

Jack (as Lem): Alright, alright, we-- we're going

Jack: I'm gonna--

Jack (as Lem): Fero!!

Keith (as Fero): Hi! Yeah! What?

Jack (as Lem): We're on our way!

Jack: And I'm gonna step [**Keith** overlaps] through the door.

Keith (as Fero): Okay!

Austin: Everyo-- And Devar follows.

Sylvia: Ephrim like, hesitates for a bit and then follows.

Austin: You see them starting to throw spears up at the beast. And then the last thing you see is the body of Sama-- Samaantine turn from their pedestal. Like the huge rock, like stone statue turns and lifts the sword out from the ground, and then you step through the door.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): It moved. The statue moved.

Austin (as Devar): Yeah, that's what happens. The statue moves, and then it gets into a big fight. And like, it just fucks up all the islands. A lot of people die. It's like this whole moment of betrayal and like, it it feels like- I don't know, I'm not a [KEITH overlaps] religious person.

Keith (as Fero): Is that supposed to be a children's book?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): It's- That is supposed to be a protector is what that's supposed to be.

Austin (as Devar): Yeah, well, it's different stories. [sigh] Anyway, is this-- is this Zhan's bedroom? [Jack start noise] Where's the monster at?

Jack (as Lem): Yeah where's the...

Keith (as Fero): Ah, I was fucking around

Austin (as Devar): [disgruntled noise]

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Man..

Austin (as Devar): You're lucky we're not Morbash

Austin: There's a knock on the door.

Keith (as Fero): Why would I be hanging out with Morbash? Anyway, what's up?

Jack: I'm gonna open the door? No, it's locked, isn't it?

Austin: The door is locked.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith (as Fero): Come in- Come in!

[**Sylvia** wheeze-laugh]

Jack (as **Lem**): Yeah, who is this?

Austin (as **person outside the door**): Zhan, are you there?

Jack (as **Lem**): Who?

Keith (as **Fero**): Who?

Austin (as **person outside the door**): Zhan. [**Sylvia** overlaps] Who-- who-- who are you?

Sylvia [whispering]: Oh christ.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Oh! Nooooo.

Keith (as **Fero**): [Overlapping **Austin**] I'm Fero!

Austin (as **person outside the door**): [overlapping **Keith**] Who's in there?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): [overlapping **Jack**] Oh Fero

Jack (as **Lem**): [overlapping **Sylvia**]: Fero, f-- Oh

Sylvia: Oh Fero!!!

Austin (as **person outside the door**): Fero who?

Keith (as **Fero**): Fero Feritas

Austin (as **person outside the door**): Fer-- alright you stay right there. I'm gonna go get a guard.

Jack (as **Lem**): [overlapping **Keith**] Oh no no no no no! I don't know if that's necessary.

Keith (as **Fero**): [overlapping **Jack**] Okay!

Austin: Step step step step steps, as people are leaving.

Jack (as **Lem**): Ah! Come back please! Come back!

[**Austin** half-laugh]

Jack (as **Lem**): Shit, I don't think they're going to come back.

Keith (as **Fero**): We just walked through the door. We're not trespassing.

Jack (as **Lem**): No, we're in his room. Ah, [**Sylvia** overlaps] fucking hell. Alright, is there stuff--

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): [overlapping **Jack**] We're in--

Keith (as **Fero**): We-- we-- we were able to just walk right in! [**Jack** overlaps] We can't get out-

Jack (as **Lem**): [overlapping **Keith**] Yeah, that-- that would have been the case I was gonna make.

Keith (as **Fero**): : If I knew that- if I knew that I was gonna get locked in, I wouldn't have come.

Jack: What- what are the papers on the desk, Austin?

Austin: Um, they are a description of the thing that you just experienced. Um, they are- So, there's a couple of things. Actually, you will have to give me a roll to- to actually get through them-

Jack: Sure.

Austin: -and find something actionable from this.

Jack: Yeah. Ok. Is this Discern Realities? What is this?

Austin: Oh yes. Oh yeah.

Jack: Uh, yeah. Ok. Fingers crossed.

Austin: So, you're just like, flipping through the papers and like, digging for information? That's an eight.

Jack: It's an eight.

Austin: So, you get to ask me a question.

Jack: Ok. Um, you'd think we'd have memorized this list of rules by now.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Uh, what here is useful or valuable to me?

Austin: The um- There's just a- [light laugh] You- The most useful thing is just that you read that the door sticks in a- in a very specific way. [**Jack** laughs] And that the way to get out is- The- It's

a note that was written for him. This is not his note. This is not Zhan's note. This is a note from like- it's in a pile with a bunch of other notes from like, the rental company- or like, the- the assignment house that gave him this room, that says like, 'Remember you have to draw the blinds after 10PM, that's part of the rule. The- you know- the rent is due on this day and this day. If you need- or you know- replacement furniture, let us know. This place-'

Jack: No beds.

Austin: And also-

Jack: No beds are available.

Austin: No beds. Zero bed- He has a bed. Um, and then no- or and then- and then this thing about like, when the door is stuck, what you have to do is like, lift it and then- and then pull it a little bit, and then push it really quick. **[Jack laughs]** But the- So that's- that's the like, useful 'you can get out of the room' thing. The second thing is that you read two things about his experiments. Zhan's experiments. The first is that he has been using books and stories as a way to test the new illusion stuff.

And the big discovery he made was that he could use those- by recreating- Stories give you enough detail to create a place that fits the needs of certain patterns. So, the story that you were just in had the- gave him the material necessary to do the pattern of creating short distance teleportation from Lot twenty-seven to his bedroom. So, that is a magical effect that was happening separate from the illusion of being in Lot twenty-seven which had been turned into the eastern islands of Hieron. Or-

Keith: So that gigantic jungle was just the- was just the fuel needed to be a teleporter?

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Keith: Ok. **[Jack laughs]**

Austin: But um-

Keith: God, these people.

Austin: And was not the eastern-

Keith: Fuckin' archivists are such assholes.

Austin: -was not the eastern-

Keith: Just walk down the hallway.

Austin: -was not the- I mean, it's far. You know, it's like a- it's like a- It's gonna save him like, a forty minute walk or something. It's not the eastern jungle, it's the eastern jungle as depicted in this book, right? It's not an air-

Jack: Oh.

Austin: it's not a- [light laugh] It's not a-

Jack: We didn't visit the eastern jungle.

Austin: Fuck. It's an air screamer as depicted in [**Keith** laughs] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's, etcetera, etcetera- It's a really good Runbutton thing that I've already forgotten the whole thing of. What is it, Keith?

Keith: Dude, I've been repeating it for years, and I still don't- They're not called air screamers. They're called the bat vultures as depicted in [**Jack** laughs] Alessa's favorite book, 'The Lost World' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle-

Austin: It's a very good-

Keith: -is I think, pretty close.

Austin: It's a very good Runbutton comment.

Keith: It's a- Yeah. We got a comment on a Silent Hill video, where we called the enemies bat vultures.

Austin: Right. But in fact-

Keith: Like six years ago. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: [still laughing] It was like, five years ago.

Austin: Really good.

Keith: And I still love it.

Austin: Anyway, so that's what- that's what was happening. So, you put that together. The second thing though is you see- you see a note that was written hastily that just says, 'It worked. It worked. I must tell Uklan and Sunder.' And then above that note you see like, the recipe for a pattern that called for um, ten unstill heroes on the eastern- on the eastern ridge.

[0:30:00]

Austin (cont.): And so you can see this is- Zhan is the one who made the sun.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You- And- and the thing there is- He-

Jack: Oh, they used fucking unstill.

Austin: Right, but you're not sure- I guess like, you got the roll, right? So, you piece it together. Somehow he put that town in danger. He put Baron's Gate in danger. So that the unstill-

Jack: [overlapping **Austin**] Because he needed Corsica Neue to show up-

Austin: Yes.

Jack: -on the ridge.

Austin: To complete the- to complete the pattern, which has now brought the sun back.

Jack: Well...

Austin: Well, you know, there is a sun.

Sylvia: 'Sun' in quotes. [light laugh]

Keith: Wait, hold on- Wait.

Austin: But the sun is not an illusion. That's an important thing. This is not illusion- That is enough- that is a magical effect created.

Jack: Oh this is like, traditional pattern magic-

Austin: Yes.

Jack: -that he's done.

Austin: He has done pattern magic, and he hasn't used any- and he hasn't used illusions to get the- He hasn't used any illusions to get the-

Keith: Sun.

Austin: -uh, to get Corsica to do what- to fulfill her part of the- of the pattern. But it's clear that he's used illusions somewhere along the line to manipulate things and push people in certain directions, right?

Jack: Oooof.

Austin: Like, he did use illusions to tell her that people were in trouble, you know? Or to give that signal. He did use illusions to lead those bandits to Baron's Gate. Things like that.

Jack: Gosh.

Keith: I consider myself officially in the clear for that then.

Austin: Ok. Um, what are you doin'?

Jack: Oh gosh. Ok. Well, if they're gonna get guards and- Like, we could-

Austin: Mm. I have one more thing. I do have one more thing which is, you are in the guy who knows how to do this the best- You do have the ability to- There are enough notes here for you to take and then, in a safer place, try to-

Jack: To do the thing?

Austin: -change the plant to look like it's fine.

Jack: Can I make a copy? I mean, like-

Austin: No, you don't have time to make a copy. You have time to gr- I mean, yes. You could- you could make a copy. That means staying here. Yes.

Jack: How complicated is the thing?

Austin: Um, if you want to try to copy it quickly and safely, that is a Defy Danger intelligence.

Jack: Alright. I'm gonna try and make that roll.

Austin: What is everybody else doing?

Jack: Could someone work on trying to get the door open? Cause we- we gotta leave here.

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Austin: Yeah, the- At this point, you could just open the door.

Jack: Oh, ok.

Austin: Cause you know what to do. Um, but I do need to know what everybody is doing before you make this roll.

Keith: Um, so the roll is just specifically to find the right notes?

Austin: To copy the notes. He's copying the notes instead of-

Keith: Copy the notes.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: Ok. Well, I can do that. Can I aid and assist by just like-

Austin: You don't know how to-

Keith: -also copying?

Austin: You don't know orcish. We've established this.

Keith: I don't know orcish, but I can copy. I can like do the letters.

Jack: Oh, like a Chinese rune sort of?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Sure.

Jack: Oh no, actually I don't want to take this risk, Fero. I'm sorry, Fero. I really like-

Keith: Alright.

Sylvia: [quietly and overlapped] Could we aid-

Jack: We screw up one character here-

Austin: Uh hm.

Sylvia: Could we aid by keeping a lookout?

Austin: No, that's not gonna-

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Um... I- If there was another exit, I would give that to you.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Do you know what I mean? You could- I guess you could do- I'm trying see- think how that works. So, in a situation in which you f- you get- Yeah, you could totally do that. You could totally aid by being lookouts.

Keith: Um, I... would like to use Communion of Whispers.

Austin: Let's solve this first. Unless- What is that doing? What it- Do- Don't tell me what move you're gonna do. Tell me what you are going to do.

Keith: Oh, I'm going to get a vision of the future.

Austin: By doing what?

Keith: Um, I guess sitting on the bed and just kind of, thinkin' about it.

Austin: What's the move do? How's the move work? What's the move say?

Keith: 'When you spend time in a place, making note of it's resident spirits and calling on the spirits of the land-'

Austin: [interjecting] Alright, so do that.

Keith: '- roll plus wisdom.'

Austin: I- What I need you to do-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: -is to make note of the resident spirits and call on the spirits of the land.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: What's that look like?

Keith: Um, I guess I'm th- I- I think that it's more like, remembering the resident spirits because I live like, next door.

Austin: It's not. The- This move is about new, making- like, communing- communing with them now.

Keith: With them now. Ok.

Austin: You're calling on the spirits of the land.

Keith: Ok. Um, I guess then I try to- What I'm trying to do then is not just figure out what spirits are-

Austin: [interjecting] Don't tell me what you're trying- I- I just need to know- I just need to see-

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Cause what's gonna happen is you're gonna be granted a vision of significance to you, your allies, and the spirits around you-

Keith: Uh hm.

Austin: -but what I just need you to do is just get an image of Fero doing this thing.

Keith: Yeah. I sit on the bed. I shut my eyes. And I just like, really real- Like, it's not a flattering look, you know wh- you know?

Austin: Ok. Yeah.

Keith: You just sit- you just like, [grunts] 'Oh, god.' [Austin laughs] Like, sometimes it just happens, right?

Austin: Yep.

Keith: Like, I'm sure that when I was meditating for you know, a week in Rosemerrow in a barn like, it just kind of came to me.

Austin: Yep.

Keith: But this is just like, [grunting] 'I've got to fucking get this thing out.'

Austin: Alright, let's do- Let's- I want all these rolls at once, and then we'll to- we'll figure out what happens. Um, I guess, Sylvia¹, the thing is you can- Ephrim doesn't have to do it. You don't have to roll your- your aid-interfere until after. I'm pretty sure that's how ruled on that eventually.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Ok.

Jack: Uh huh.

Austin: So- so, go ahead. Fero and- and Lem, both roll your things. And we resolve-

Keith: Got it.

Austin: -basically simultaneously. Two sevens. Uh, so you probably should not aid or interfere because you're not going to be able to-

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

Sylvia: Yeah, no.

Austin: -lift it up to a higher thing.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Um, [thinking noise] chu-chu-chu- Alright. So, you are doing... Oh right. So, yours was Defy Danger, right, Lem?

Jack: Ah, yeah. That was a Defy Danger intelligence roll.

Austin: Ok. You are- You can finish the thing. You can finish your um, your notes and go. But you will have to leave Fero behind because he is in this trance. That is the- that is the difficult- It is the hard bargain that you're getting on the 7-9.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: So, you leave him behind?

Jack: Yeah. Um, like, he'll be fine. I can catch up with him.

Austin: Ok. I-

Jack: If I- If I'm caught making this copy, that's-

Austin: Right.

Jack:- just the pits um, [Jack and **Austin** laugh lightly] for everybody, for- for everybody, including Fero.

Austin: Uh hm.

Jack: But if I can get away with the copy, 'A' Fero's really good at escaping from things. And 'B' um, that's a problem I can solve further down the line when I'm not- Like, this is probably treason, right, Austin?

Austin: I don't know. I-

Jack: I'm making-

Austin: It's something. It's certainly-

Jack: I'm making like-

Austin: -breaking, entering- It's certainly theft. It certainly-

Jack: It's theft in the Archives. It's-

Austin: Yeah. It's bad. It's bad. Theft in the Archives is just bad enough. Um, alright. Yeah. That's- I- You don't- You know, that's-

Jack: I can't communicate this to Fero because he's- I don't want to break his concentration.

Austin: Ok. Uh, Fero.

Keith: Hi.

Austin: The image that you see- So, the- the bed dissolves beneath you, and suddenly you are just seated on the mountain that was here once. And the thing that Lem talked about before from that lecture, the cycle of destruction um, becomes very real for you. To the east- Actually, let's start to the west. To the west, you see- you're on this mountain. And the mountain gets bigger and bigger and bigger, and you're just sitting on top of the mountain looking at all of Hieron all around you. And the world is almost whispering to you. Like,

Austin (as resident spirits of the land): To the west.

Austin: And you turn your head to the west, and you see the- this forest and this tower fall apart and be consumed from below and begin to be torn apart. It's as if something is like- It's almost as if someone has taken the world and is wringing it out- or not wringing out- like, shaking it like it's- like it's a laundry. Like it's a towel. It's shaking the world, and there's a hole burning where the tower of Samot stood. And then you hear a whisper from the ground. It rumbles up to you, and it says,

Austin (as resident spirits of the land): To the east.

Austin: And you see that the- to the west, the rumbling stops and to the east, the entire eastern seab- seaboard falls apart. And becomes like, scattered. And then you see that those- those- the kind of force that is shaking it continues shaking inland until there are tears in the ground and a sort of dark fire emerges from it. And then you see this dust storm kicked up from something traveling. Or you know, maybe it's a dust storm- it's not a dust storm by itself. It's as if it's like, the dust from a car or something, right? Like driving through sand. And it's going- it's going north and south as if it's trying to criss-cross these ho- these long, just gashes being torn into the land. And they're getting closer and closer and closer. And then it says,

Austin (as resident spirits of the land): To the west.

Austin: And again, to the west, you see instead of- instead of to the north where the uh, the tower of Samot once stood, you see down in the southwest um, the ground begins to fall into a pit further and further and further. And then again,

Austin (as resident spirits of the land): To the east.

Austin: And you see those gashes getting closer and closer to this mountain. Closer than it's ever been before. Closer and closer and closer and someone then slams your face on the ground, and says,

Austin (as unknown person): You're under arrest.

Austin: And you wake up, back in this bedroom. Um, there is an orc with a knee on your back. What do you do?

Keith (as Fero): Hi, officer.

Austin: There are handcuffs being placed on you. And a sword-

Keith: Um-

Austin: -is drawn- like, a machete is drawn and placed on your neck.

Keith (as Fero): Ha- I got stuck in here. As you can see, I was just sitting. I was waiting to res- literally rescued. I did not know how to open the door. It's a sticky door.

Austin: The figure becomes clear to you. And he says,

Austin (as Morbash): Where is Lem King?

Austin: And it's Morbash.

Keith (as Fero): Hi.

Austin (as Morbash): I've seen you around him.

Keith (as Fero): Yeah.

Austin (as Morbash): I know what you do together.

Keith (as Fero): What does that mean? What are you implying? Holy moly.

Austin (as Morbash): I'm implying that you are thieves and criminals and traitors.

Keith (as Fero): No. Traitors? To what?

Austin (as Morbash): To the Archives and reality itself.

Keith (as Fero): I've never even been here before. This is my first visit.

Austin (as Morbash): Take him. But watch him.

Austin: And a guard like, pokes you with the- with the bunt end of a machete.

Keith (as Fero): I want you to know I'm cooperating, but I don't have to.

Austin: He just shakes his head and begins looking around the room. And they're taking you to a prison.

Keith: Sure.

Austin: Um, we'll come back to that. Ephrim and- and Lem, where are you going?

Jack: Back to my room, I think.

Austin: Ok. Um, Devar is like, shaking his head. He gets like- he walks you back to like, your- your complex basically, and is like,

Austin (as Devar): [whispered] Oh man. I can't believe we just left Fero behind like that.

Jack (as Lem): He's got some experience with that. He'll be fine. Um, he'll- [**Sylvia** sighs] He'll- he'll be fine. Ephrim?

Austin (as Devar): Yeah, but what if he flips on you?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Where- where are they taking him? Do you know?

Jack (as Lem): Like, I mean- Oh, so Lot twenty-seven- What building's that in Devar?

Austin (as Devar): Uh, it's in- it's in building... Red-yellow? I think.

Jack (as Lem): Ok, do they have a brig or is that-?

Austin (as Devar): No, that's- You gotta go two buildings north to get to the brig. But that's probably not where they- If he's... I mean, if he's caught stealing stuff, that's not brig type shit. That's like... that's like, interrogation type stuff. That's, like, Mental Acquisition. They're gonna get what he knows, man.

Jack (as Lem): Ok, here's what- Ok... Oh god. Ok, here's what we do. We make this plant correct. And then we go to Morbash, and we make it right. And that involves getting Fero- He'll be fine, right? Like, he's good at this kind of stuff, right?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): No matter how good he is at this stuff, he's in a complex he's not familiar with by- from what I can tell, one of the baddest guys here. Like, this Morbash does not sound like someone to mess with.

Jack (as Lem): Morbash doesn't-

Austin (as Devar): Morbash is bad, but like, if they take him... you know we-

Jack (as Lem): Morbash doesn't run this place.

Austin (as Devar): [exhales] There are worse people than Morbash, man. You know we-

Keith: Quick interjection.

Austin: Uh hm.

Keith: Is um- Besides the plant, is there anything that Morbash is already mad at Lem about?

Jack: Yeah, the violin.

Austin: Stealing the violin.

Jack: But I have a deal with him.

Keith: Well, sorry, but he has a- But a pa- But as far as Morbash knows, Lem has kept his part of that bargain so far, right?

Austin: As far- as far as you know, sure.

Keith: Ok. So, he's just being an asshole, right?

Austin: There's-

Keith: Like, he has-

Austin: As far as you know.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: You might want to consider the fact that Lem's room was fake uh-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin:- thrown before.

Keith: Right.

Austin: The world moves.

Jack (as Lem): Ok, you said Mental Acquisitions.

Austin (as Devar): Yeah.

Jack (as Lem): Who runs that?

Austin (as Devar): They don't give those names out.

Jack (as Lem): Do you know what-?

Austin (as Devar): You can't know if someone's in Mental Acquisitions. [exhales] Like-

Jack (as Lem): Ok, do we know where they are?

Austin (as Devar): Not really? They work real quiet. Mm. I- Mmm. I never told anybody about this, but you know, I think- I think they got my dad. I think they got my dad once. He was like- You know, he wasn't like, a scholar or whatever, but like, he had a decent gig. He worked at the- the Northside Library. He had his studies or whatever, and he brought in a decent income, and he always- he was always home when the sun came down. And then, ma says he found some shit he wasn't supposed to find.

[0:45:00]

Austin (as Devar, cont.): And then he met up with them, or they met up with him. He had- he had to meet them somewhere. He wouldn't tell us where. He wouldn't tell me where. And when he came back like, you know, he wasn't home when the sun came down anymore. And then, he just wasn't like himself. And I- I don't know, I ain't seen him in a minute, so I don't know what they did. Mom might know where they met, but I don't want to dig that shit up.

Jack (as Lem): And I don't know if that would be like- [exhales] I don't know if that's fast enough, right? Based on what you're saying. Ok. Right. Do we think-? Ok, help me out. Do we think-? I'm so sorry I messed up on this. Um, is it worth me trying to fix the plant now? Or do we put it here and come back to it once we've got Fero?

Austin (as Devar): It's on you, man. I don't know. I can't decide what you do with your friend.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Um-

Austin (as Devar): I think- Mm.

Austin: Yeah, Ephrim?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Not to interject, but could we leave the notes with Devar and get him to try it while we try and get Fero? Or-

Austin (as Devar): You want me to get more messed up with this? [exhales]

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Sorry, I- I'm trying to think of a way that keeps you from getting physically in this, but-

Austin (as Devar): I'm in it.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): -let's us still make progress.

Austin (as Devar): I'm- I'm- Y'all drug me in it deep. We were in a book earlier-

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Ok. [Keith laughs]

Austin (as Devar): -and then we broke into a guy's place.

Jack (as Lem): I mean like-

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Ok, well-

Jack (as Lem): -it's just a plant.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): -maybe we should let Devar go. Like, he can, like, go home. See his parents. Don't get him more into this than he needs to be.

Jack (as Lem): Yeah, you're right.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): We've already got one friend who is in danger. We don't need another.

Jack (as Lem): You're right. Um, yeah. Keep in touch.

Austin: He like, shoots you a peace symbol and is like,

Austin (as Devar): Yeah. Word. Let's get lunch or something next week.

Jack (as Lem): Ok. Yeah, sure. Um, I'll- I'll contact you.

Austin (as Devar): Word.

Austin: Fero.

Keith: Hi.

Austin: You are being led through a Byzantine series of hallways and stairwells and towers that go downwards instead of upwards. And it is- it is a real maze where you're being led.

Keith: Is Morbash leading or is it another guard?

Austin: It's another guard.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Um, it's- it's another pair of guards. It's two other guards. One of them is behind you. One of them is in front of you. There are a couple of times when they like, do a special knock on a door that- They do like, a [foley] Da-da. Da-da. Da. Da-da-da-da. Da. And there's like, no one answers. And then no one answers, and then someone finally goes like, [foley] Da-da-da! And then they open the door and let them in. Um, there are hidden wall- There are hidden um- doors hidden behind cabinets and hidden behind couches. I have to kneel at one point and crawl on all fours to go through a- a metallic, like, shaft that's been dug into a hole- or into a wall.

Keith (as Fero): You guys, this is elaborate.

Austin: They like, prod you and just keep on movin'. Um, at one point you look up and are just like, 'Oh, yeah. I'm just like, in the big middle of the whole thing. I'm in the big middle place.' Um, and then like, you like, look again and realize no, you're in a room that the- has been painted such to confuse you and make you think that that's where you are, but you're definitely not there. Um, security is weird here.

Keith: Yeah, if they want me to not know where I am, they could have just taken in any building.

Austin: Yeah. Uh, and then finally-

Keith: I guess Fero does have a pretty good layout- like in his head of-

Austin: Of like, the top-

Keith: -what this place looks like.

Austin: Right. You're- but you're like-

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: -now deep underground. Um, and they take you to a metallic room. [Keith/Fero exhales a sigh] The entire place is like, hard metal of different types that have been like, stapled together by these like, huge metal staples that line this room. And then the furniture in it is a weird mix of different types of tables and chairs from like, different um- It's actually- I think it's actually probably nicely furnished, which is weird. Like, it's-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: -a nice couch of a sort you've never seen. Like, it's not a Rosemerrow couch or a Velas couch. It's not something you'd see in Baron's Gate. It's not something that you'd see in Old

Man's Chin or in Nacre. Like, it's a- just a different- It's a different style, you know? It's like, seeing- for us, it's like- like, 'Oh yeah. This is what- what the Aztecs used as couches. Like, I don't know what the Aztecs used as couches. But like, here it is.' Like, 'Oh, ok. Sure. It's an Aztec couch, I guess.' Um, and there is- and it's just like, a mix of different aesthetics in here. And-

Keith: Can I like... I don't know if this is gonna do anything, and I-

Austin: Uh hm.

Keith: - I don't think Fero knows if this is gonna do anything, but can I along the way be trying to just very slightly move stuff around?

Austin: Sure. Totally. You do all that stuff.

Keith: That's like, my game right now. I don't have any other way to like, do- Like, I could escape.

Austin: Uh hm.

Keith: Like, I know how to just escape, but that would be very complicated.

Austin: Uh hm.

Keith: But what I- what I can do without getting caught, I think, is move stuff out of place.

Austin: Sure. Yeah. You totally do that. And basically just like, ruin twelve different people's days.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Um, but that's not like, how they're holding you. But yes, you could totally just do that, and that does have an effect in that like, someone's, you know, dinner is gonna taste worse now.

Keith: Good. I hope it's one of the guards.

Austin: Eh, who knows? Maybe. Um, and you're just left in this room by yourself for a couple of hours.

Keith: Oh, really?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Like, by myself, by myself?

Austin: Uh hm.

Keith: There- I'm a- I'm assuming there's no apparent way out?

Austin: Just the door, which is guarded.

Keith: Um, I just- I think every uh, every ten minutes I just want to like- sort of yell out like,

Keith (as Fero): Hey! Is there anybody I could talk to?! Like, not even about getting out. Like, can I just have someone to talk to?! Getting out would be great though!

Austin: Um, eventually-

Keith (as Fero): Are you all mad at me?!

Austin: Uh, eventually a door opens. The door- not a door. The door opens. And a man who is dressed very similar to the way Lem is dressed, in terms of like, having all these pouches and belt buckles and like, all sorts of you know, extra bags and stuff, comes in. He's older than Lem. His skin is a kind of pale green. Like, you can kind of see some light, like, veins kind of under the skin. Like, he's- he's not just pale. Like, his skin is thin. Um, it does not look like he gets a lot of light. He has bright, blue eyes, and on top of the tusks coming out of his- his mouth, he has like, bone shards pushing through his shoulder blades um, out into like, the air. And he comes in-

Keith: His bone or just someone else like-?

Austin: His- his bone.

Keith: Ok. Um, does he seem nice?

Austin: Um-

Keith: What's his expression like? What- What- Am I getting a vibe?

Austin: He smiles at you as the doors close behind.

Keith (as Fero): You seem nice.

Austin: And he sits down at the table. Um, where are you in this room? So, there's like a couch. There's a table. There's a chair. There are some empty ca- er empty book shelves.

Keith: Um, I think I'm on the couch facing the door, but my neck over arm of the couch. So, I'm sort of looking at him upside down.

Austin: Uh hm. Um, he uh, takes his bag and- and he has like- has like a briefcase basically, and puts it up on the table and opens it and begins to take things out and place them on the table.

Keith (as Fero): Hi.

Austin: Uh, he just shoots you a smile.

Keith (as Fero): Am I- Are you gonna help me get out of here?

Austin: He's- He takes a little pebble out and puts it on the table.

Keith (as Fero): Uh, is this gonna help me get out of here?

Austin: Uh, he takes a carrot out. Puts it on the table and cuts it lengthwise.

Keith (as Fero): Ooo.

Keith: And then I take a slice and eat it.

Austin: He nods at you and smiles.

Keith (as Fero): Thank you.

Austin: Um, he takes out a clay pot and smashes it on the ground.

Keith: Um, I take a slice, and I pretend to eat it, and then I go,

Keith (as Fero): Ah, just kidding.

Austin: He like, changes his smile to a different- to like- It goes very quickly from a smile to like, a deadpan.

Keith: Um, I put the piece of the clay pot where the carrot was.

Austin: He smiles again.

Keith: Nice.

Austin: Uh, and then he takes out a fork and stabs it through your hand. What do you do?

Keith: [laughs lightly] Um, I- Hmm. How much damage does it do?

Austin: 1d4.

Keith: By the way, did I- Did I ever get a chance to heal? No, I guess I already did.

Austin: Um, wha- Yeah, I think you already did, right?

Keith: I- My thing said yeah. My thing says twenty, so I guess I did.

Austin: So, take one.

Keith: Um-

Austin: One damage from this fork.

Keith: Ok. Alright. Well then, um, that gives me one balance, and I'm going to immediately use that to heal my wound.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: Um, and it does 1d4, so I don't even have to roll. So-

Austin: Totally fine. Um, he takes some of the blood and mixes it with the broken clay pot. Like, the dust from the broken clay pot that you put on the table. Um, and you feel sluggish.

Keith: Is it in a container?

Austin: Hm?

Keith: Is it in the container or anything?

Austin: No, it's just on the table.

Keith: Like-

Austin: It's just-

Keith: On the table?

Austin: -right there on the table. Take the- take the uh, debility shaky.

Keith: Shaky. Ok.

Austin: Um, and he says-

Keith (as Fero): Hey man!

Austin (as unknown interrogator): Sit down.

Keith (as Fero): No!

Austin (as unknown interrogator): Hm. You should sit down.

Keith (as Fero): You made me feel weird. No.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): We have questions.

Keith (as Fero): I have answers. I'm not sitting down.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): That's fine. I can do this standing.

Austin: And he stands up.

Keith: I sit down.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): Tell me about Nacre.

Keith: I stand back up. He didn't seem bothered by that.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): Tell me about Nacre.

Keith (as Fero): It's big.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): Where is the queen?

Keith (as Fero): I don't know.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): [sighs]

Keith (as Fero): Is there more carrot?

Austin (as unknown interrogator): Hm.

Austin: He hands you a carrot. You are now playing the most dangerous game of rock, paper, scissors you've ever played.

Keith: I dip it in the blood mixture, and I eat it.

Austin: Eh, that's just gross.

Keith: Yeah. I don't know. [Sylvia laughs] I'm just tryin' shit, dude.

Austin: Uh hm. [Sylvia laughs again]

Austin (as unknown interrogator): Where is the queen?

Keith (as Fero): I don't knooow.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): Tell me about the last time you saw Ventaro Doce.

Keith (as Fero): Who's that?

Austin (as unknown interrogator): You know who that is.

Keith (as Fero): Mmm. That doesn't sound familiar.

Austin: He goes over to the bookshelves.

Keith (as Fero): I'm bad with names.

Austin: He goes over to the bookshelves um, and takes-

Keith (as Fero): If you knew me, you'd know I'm chronically bad with names, by the way.

Austin: Takes- starts taking books out of his bag and putting them in place.

Keith: In place- uh, like, on the bookshelf?

Austin: On the bookshelf. And he's like- it looks like he's not sure what order to put them in.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Or like, he's trying to decide-

Keith: I- I-

Austin: -which- which order to put them in, but he isn't quite like, yeah.

Keith: Whichever row of shelves he's on, I take the last one out and bring it to first one-

Austin: If you get close to him, he's going to physically hurt you from now on.

Keith: No, no, no. Well, how big is the bookshelf, I guess? I was assuming-

Austin: It's- it's the size of a person. It's a bookshelf.

Keith: -that it was like twenty feet long.

Austin: It's like a single-

Keith: Oh, ok.

Austin: It's a single bookshelf. It's, like, a standing tall bookshelf.

Keith: Ok. I assumed it was like a library wall [inaudible]

Austin: Um, you can- you could fuck his stuff, but you just need to do a Defy Danger to get in first.

Keith: Um, no.

Austin: And eventually he like- It's like- it's like when you have like, a bunch of books, and you don't if you want to do it by author, if you like, 'Oh, it'd be kind of cute if it was in color. Like, what if you did it from color, in color order?' And it's like, 'well, that's not really useful, but like-'

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Austin: '-how often do you read the books anyway?'

Keith: I- Can I just say? I like to do it in order of when I bought it.

Austin: [light laugh] Yeah, I- I've done that. That's definitely good. Um, and then finally he takes like- he puts one more in place, and then he asks you again,

Austin (as unknown interrogator): When is the last time you saw Ventaro Doce? Do not lie.

Keith (as Fero): Can you like, give me a fuckin' tr- like, remind me of who that is, please.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): He was in Nacre. He gave you-

Keith (as Fero): Oh, then I last saw him in Nacre.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): [exhales] Did he flee Nacre?

Keith (as Fero): I don't know. A lot of them died.

Austin (as unknown interrogator): You're not being helpful.

Austin: And he puts one more-

Keith (as Fero): You're not being helpful either.

Austin: He takes-

Keith (as Fero): I want to get out of here.

Austin: -one more book in place and take stunned. Um, you're like- Suddenly the room feels like it has a fifth wall, and that's not true. That's just the floor. But you're just super disoriented.

Keith (as Fero): Listen. [whispers] I can't remember who that is. Can I go home, please?

Austin (as **unknown interrogator**): You're home now.

Austin: And he smiles at you.

Keith (as **Fero**): [sighs] That is so annoying, dude.

Austin: And it's gonna continue like this.

Keith: I'm sand. I turn into sand.

Austin: Oh, that's good. Give me that roll.

Keith: Sure. Rr- slash roll. Five. So-

Austin: Oh, this is interesting. [deep breath and exhale] Oh boy.

Keith: I still- I mean I still do that-

Austin: [increasingly distressed] Wait, no. This is really bad. Oh, fuckin'- Keith.

Keith: Why? What?

Austin: Oh my god. [exhales]

Keith: What?

Austin: How do I do this?

Keith: That's not a failed roll.

Austin: Yeah, it is, dude.

Keith: Well, no. This- this roll doesn't fail. I can transform no matter what.

Austin: No, that's not- You turn into sand.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: And then- [distressed] Oh, I can't believe you failed turning into sand. Fuck- me. [pause]
Hey, um, Lem?

Jack: Yeah.

[1:00:00]

Austin: I need- I need like, an ontological call. Is- Are rocks and sand the same- Oh fuck, you're from here, so you're turning into this sand, aren't you?

Jack: Oh no.

Austin: Fero, you're turning into the sand from the mountains cause you're from the mountains?

Keith: Um, no.

Austin: Who's day do you want to ruin forever?

Jack: I have my- I have my hands over my face.

Keith: I'm turning into the sand-

Austin: What sand- Which sand did you study to turn into?

Keith: When I learned how to do this, I was in Rosemerrow.

Austin: Oh fuck.

Jack: [laughs] Oh no.

Austin: Ok. You know the long sand?

Keith: Uh hm.

Austin: Yeah. Um, [pauses] yeah. Fuck. There is inside of another building in the New Archives, a collection of all the different types of soils in the world. Suddenly an entire row of boxes is light and airy, as that sort of beach sand, which runs across the entirety of the western seaboard vanishes into the Heat and the Dark.

Keith: Now who's fault is that? These New Archive assholes-

Austin: No, friend.

Keith: -putting a bunch of sand around-

Austin: That's not what it is.

Keith: -without even thinking about how a whole section of the world could disappear.

Austin: [sighs] If- Let me be incredibly clear. This has happened every time you've failed a roll like this this season.

Keith: What has?

Austin: The thing that you've tried to turn into has vanished. This is not something with the New Archives. This is a thing with you and your power.

Keith: Oh.

Austin: Um, related, Samot is the last wolf alive. So, there's that. Um, I guess Lem and Ephrim, this happens while maybe you're looking over Zhan Kurr's notes. And you're looking over them. You're realizing that again and again, it keeps coming back to Sunder Havelton and Uklan Tel. But before you dig deeper into it or- or kind of figure out what your next steps are, something else takes your attention away. The light to the southwest grows sharper, and if you turn and look, you see that there is competition for the sun, in terms of light source.

There is a bright, white light that begins to- It's almost as if it's building itself down in Rosemerrow. And then behind that bright, white light, there is a second light. Ephrim, you know it because you've- you've been there now. There is the nothing. There is the Heat and the Dark. That gross purple and black that sort of oozes a sort of terrible, intimate feeling of- of desolation. Like, this- this feeling that like, whatever it touches doesn't exist. And anything that- that- Anyone who can see it, they are at threat. It grows, too. And so now there are these- these two different sorts of light, chasing each other, upwards into the sky to the southwest, where once there was the long sand. Now there are these two towers.

[**Jack** de Quidt's "[Inside](#)" begins playing in the background]

The one made of the Heat and the Dark. The other that looks sort of like what the star made in the streets of Rosemerrow when you were there, as if it's trying to enclose the Heat and the Dark. And it is one of the tallest structures you've ever seen. I think for those here, it is the biggest structure you've ever seen. It is clear that it exists- that the base of it exists over the horizon. Um, actually, wait. Are there horizons in- in Hieron? I haven't decided if there are horizons in Hieron.

[Music plays out to end]