

## Autumn in Hieron 20: Do I Feel Followed?

Transcribed by Linda @imperialhare!

KEITH: Hey everybody, it's Keith, just checking in to let you guys know that this is the 2nd part to the episode that was put out two weeks ago where Art's audio was messed up, he came on and apologized, it was very nice, he's a sweet guy, uh, this is the second part so his audio's still messed up - I recommend listening with headphones, it makes what he says a little bit clearer, and I wanted to reassure people that yes, it definitely sounded worse before I messed with it. I promise. And that's all, so here we go, last time on Friends at the Table.

AUSTIN: The very end of the last session, the very end, you passed through the worst of the storm, and you'd run into two people, [MUSIC - "Autumn Not Winter" begins] a human lady – she was a prodigy in practical magic, she was really good at intuitively putting things together, not like you at all. And with her was, uh, a large orc, who had a pair of glasses on, was very clearly from the New Archives. And as the cold leaves you, you feel something missing, somehow. At first it feels like maybe the cold drilled down so deep into you that you lost something, that after a bit of time, each of you, on your own, can't help but wonder if that feeling of emptiness was in you all along. Uh, what you're looking at is kind of a hand-sketches map of the fallen tower.

AUSTIN (as Sunder Havelton): There's been strange movement, uh... small groups of, ah, we're not sure, we'll have to get closer.

DRE (as Throndir): These are the lower levels. This is where the people lived. If we're looking for information, for the important things, they'll be further up.

DRE: And he traces his finger up to the northwest.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Well, goddamn, prince, you were right!

AUSTIN: Uklan gasps.

AUSTIN (as Uklan Tel): The Tower of Samot. I knew it. It's said... it's said that here is where the boy...

AUSTIN: And he trails off, into a story.

[music fades]

AUSTIN: And here, we are going to start playing a different game. It's another game by D. Vincent Baker who made Apocalypse World, who also made a lot of really interesting games, he made Dogs in the Vineyard years and years ago, and recently he released a series of kind of

tiny games meant to be played primarily on social media networks, on things like Google Plus, which is where a lot of the kind of indie role-playing game community is. Someone is super breathe-y right now. I think that Art might be stress-breathing? I'm not sure. I think it stopped. It stopped.

ART: Because I stress passed out.

[AUSTIN laughs]

AUSTIN: This is a game that's called The Sundered Land. And really it's kind of a game with kind of five or six little modules in it, each sort of connecting in some way either directly or symbolically, and it's kind of his take on kind of Sword and Sorcery stories, y'know, like Conan the Barbarian style, y'know, that era and genre of fantasy. And he has one called "A Doomed Pilgrim In The Ruins of the Future", but for us, we're going to rename it. We're gonna call it "A Doomed God in the Past of the Ruins". And we're gonna play it right now, I don't need to send you anything, we can just do this.

AUSTIN: My name is Samot. I will be known one day as the boy king in leisure, the young god of books and wine. But right now, I'm on a journey through the lush wood, toward the eastlands. You my friends, play the world. Your goal is to see me to my doom, instead of safely on my way. You're allowed to only directly answer my direct questions, though – oh, sorry, you're allowed to only answer my direct questions, though, so you might not be able to do it, you might not be able to see me to my doom. The rules: one, only answer my questions. Two, if you don't already know the answer, make something up. Three, keep your answers short – here I'll give you a little bit more wiggle room, again this was intended for social media, so you didn't want like someone writing a huge passage, but still –

DRE: Copy-pasting a Word doc.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly, but here we still want to try to keep it brief, and punchy. Four, if your answer is disruptive, I'm allowed to override it – again a rule clearly in place for social media, for trolls. And five, otherwise, I have to go with the first answer that somebody gives.

AUSTIN: I, Samot, have the summoning name of a ghost burned into my memory, and a vast and deadly patience. I have been walking through the lush wood for 2 weeks now. I am in the shadow of the Hewed Peak, the massive mountain split in two at the top, which is at the center of this continent, and is supposedly the home of the great dragon, Hieron. Someone warns me of approaching danger. What warns me? Anybody can answer.

[TIMESTAMP 5:08]

ART: An owl.

AUSTIN: How does it warn me?

ART: It can speak the human tongue.

AUSTIN: Andrew, what's it say?

DRE: You are about to enter a land of great danger.

AUSTIN: Okay. So I continue on forward through the woods... I'm at guard, here. Nick, do I feel watched?

NICK: Yes.

AUSTIN: I sit still and I listen. Is anything weird, do I hear anything? Anyone can answer.

NICK: No.

AUSTIN: Okay... I continue on and I find myself sticking to the trees. I know I'm being watched, I'm nervous. What's my best escape route, if any?

ART: To the west, it slopes downward.

AUSTIN: Okay, I begin heading in that direction. Is there anything I hear or see to warn me of the danger?

DRE: You hear the soft murmuring of words but you're not sure what's being said.

AUSTIN: Can I... Can I go down the slope without being noticed? Anyone can answer.

ART: Only if you're very careful.

AUSTIN: Okay, I'm very careful. And I quietly climb down the stairs. There are means of conflict resolution, but only when real conflict is here. Um, I carefully climb down the side of the slope and make my way into a lower level of the forest, of the lush wood. Um... Is it, does it still – do I still feel watched?

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: Am I free to leave?

NICK: No.

AUSTIN: Is something new on my tail?

DRE: Mmm...

ART: Yes.

AUSTIN: Have to take the first answer. Does it make itself known?

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: What do I, what do I see or hear, how do I sense it?

ART: There's a shadow on the moon.

AUSTIN: Oh, hhhh, [DRE laughs] well that's terrifying. Should I... Should I bother to cover my tracks, or is this thing on me? Like is it, is it, does it know where I am already?

NICK: It knows.

ART: I don't think it does.

AUSTIN: Mmm... you guys both kind of answered at the same time, both roll 1d6 for me and I'll take the higher roll.

DRE: That's a good roll, Art.

NICK and AUSTIN simultaneously: Yeah, that's not as good of a roll. [DRE and AUSTIN laughing]

AUSTIN: Art, what did you... did you say that it does not know where I am?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Nick, you can go next, I'll- [unintelligible]

AUSTIN: Eh, you know, we'll see. It's not –

NICK: Whatev – whatever.

AUSTIN: Now, what, so – I do try to cover my tracks, then, I try to walk quietly without making too much noise in the wood and I try not to leave behind any large footprints. But I am curious –

and I trace the shadow on the moon down to see if I can find what it is – what is it?

NICK: A large wolf.

AUSTIN: [nervously] Cool. Does it seem nervous, or watchful, or suspicious of me?

ART: It's above that. (?)

AUSTIN: Hmm... I move for quite some time, this time to the north, and I'm trying to keep distance from it, but I can't help but look back at it now and then to see if I've escaped it. Do I make distance? Do I separate myself from it?

NICK: No.

AUSTIN: Is it closing in on me?

NICK: No.

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: I have to take Nick's answer there. But Andrew – is it, do I... Is there a position I could take here that would give me an advantageous relation to it?

DRE: You could try climbing into the trees.

AUSTIN: Okay, I do, I start to climb up into the trees and see how it reacts. How does it react?  
Art.

ART: Um... It almost feels omnipresent.

AUSTIN: Mmm. How does it make that feeling known? Also Art.

ART: You think you're – you think you know where it is, but when you check, it's in a radically different place.

AUSTIN: Mmm, okay.

ART: And it couldn't possibly have moved that fast.

AUSTIN: Right, right. I stay in the trees and keep heading north, moving from branch to branch, I'm light on my feet here. And... I eventually come to a plateau that's like another higher level up, and I sit on the edge of the plateau and make eye contact with the wolf using my vast and deadly patience to stare it down. What's it do? Anyone can answer.

ART: It looks into your essence.

AUSTIN: Nick, what's it see? In my essence?

NICK: Nothing.

AUSTIN: I stand up and I keep my eyes on it and I slowly start to back away. I don't look behind me. I trust that I will be fine. Does it move? Anyone can answer.

DRE: It matches you step for step.

AUSTIN: Eventually I come to a small cave. I go inside, again backing up into it, feeling my way behind me with my hands. Does the wolf, does the creature enter the cave with me?

NICK: Yes.

AUSTIN: It has me cornered. Does it make any moves? Anyone can answer.

ART: It bares its teeth.

AUSTIN: Does it make any noises? Like, any noises, generally?

NICK: It hasn't until now.

ART: No.

AUSTIN: I can do both of those. No, and then now, it does. What sort of noise is it making? [silence] ...Okay, so wolf noises. I... I feel fear and I don't know what to do, so I step forward towards it. How does it react?

ART: It's start – it's surprised (unintelligible)

AUSTIN: I get closer and closer to it. And I... I get closer and closer to it and I keep walking. Does it... does it seem scared of me?

NICK: No.

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: I whisper the name of the ghost, its mother, the god of wolves, which I killed, a week ago, and I let her leave my presence. What does it do?

NICK: It bites your hand.

AUSTIN: Is this a – is this a hard bite? Is this a –

NICK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay, so this is like an attack, it's attacking me.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I try to... I try to lift it with my other hand – at this point we're fighting. So we do go to dice rolls at this point. So I'm gonna – Samot is going to try to lift this wolf by the scruff of its neck and throw it against one of the walls of the cave.

ART: I don't know what that roll looks like. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: You just roll 2d6. There we go, that's an 11. On a 9 to 11, I might be able to overpower it, I throw it against the wall of the cave, I lift and throw it. I kick it once in the stomach once it hits the ground. Does it die or submit or flee?

NICK: No.

AUSTIN: Okay. I climb onto its back and wrap my hands around its throat. Stop, I tell it.

NICK: No... Poor wolf...

AUSTIN: I might be able to stop it long enough to go free. Does it give me the opportunity to go?

NICK: No.

AUSTIN: I continue to choke it, and life begins to drain from its eyes. It fights free from me, somehow, maybe driven on by the spirit of its once-dead mother, which I've let go. It powers past me. It... might kill me, here. I rip the robe from my chest and throw it in its face, hoping to distract it long enough for me to get away. Do I have a chance to get away?

NICK: Yes.

AUSTIN: I flee. The wolf and its mother, the god of wolves, is behind me, and I escape. Uklan tells you, that that is Samot, that that is one of his favorite stories of Samot, and that that is a thing worth drinking to. We are back in Dungeon World now.

[TIMESTAMP 16:39]

AUSTIN: It's a cool game. It's a cool game. So this, you realize, is part of the throne room of Samot. Along with the image of his symbol – Hadrian, you recognize broken statues of his visage, you recognize them from the dreams of him. You also recognize, and Uklan points these out, small statues of wolves, which he explains, Samot built for the whole of his life, some say in penance, some say as a sort of tithe to the fact that he was allowed to live that day. Are you – You can each ask me a question about this place, or ask me if you see a thing, or, y'know. What are your questions?

NICK: Can I do a detect magic?

AUSTIN: Sure. I'll just tell you it works – there is... there is a lingering magic everywhere here, for miles. This is a place of great magical power, but it's also... it's spent a little bit. It's like asking if there's fire a day or two after a big forest fire died out.

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: Like yeah, there is, still, but like, it's also done. Like it's also spent, in a lot of ways. And it's strange, that feeling. But here, in this specific safe, there's not like a font of it in this one, y'know, you're not overwhelmed by it here, it's that same sort of background level, um, that's here. You do see, okay, you do see a space, there's, you're kind of wandering through this place, the rubble of this sort of palatial throne room, when you see that – there is a point at which it was split, it looks like it was cut in two almost, and that, that kind of... the, what's the word I'm looking for, the edges of that wall have like an extra heavy residue of magic. So... I'm gonna mark this as part of the throne room. Uh, Hadrian and Throndir both have a question still, or a thing that they can do.

ART: I'm struggling...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: Metaphysically.

AUSTIN: Sure. [DRE laughs] That's a thing to do for sure.

ART: Like, I... I can't decide how true I think this is.

AUSTIN: Don't you have a thing for that? Or do you not have that anymore.

ART: Um... I think I never had that.

AUSTIN: You didn't have a thing that was like... what's the thing I'm thinking of, then?

ART: There was that spell about... about guidance, right?



AUSTIN: Yeah... I thought that that... Yeah, I guess so. Maybe it was somebody else's thing, that was like – what here isn't real?

ART: That's not me.

AUSTIN: No, that wasn't you.

[loud noise]

ART: One of my roles is that I can –

AUSTIN: Whoa, is everybody okay?

NICK: Yeah, sorry.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. No, it's fine.

ART: (unintelligible) Guidance, a symbol of my deity appears before you and gestures towards a direction or course of action your deity would have you take and disappears.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ART: That's isn't, that's not.

AUSTIN: Nah, that's not this.

ART: 'Cause like... Ugh. If you have yours, Thrandir, you can go, um, [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

ART: I'm gonna have trouble.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's fair.

DRE: I guess, Thrandir's still trying to figure out what connection this tower and the fall of the tower has to do, like, with his people and the breaking of their relationship with the goblins, so is there anything in this throne room, like any symbols or items or materials that look even remotely familiar or connected to him?

AUSTIN: No. Nothing here.

DRE: Yeah, I didn't think so.

AUSTIN: No. Also, Hadrian, I was thinking of "senses that pierce lies", which is one of the things you could have taken as your quest power.

ART: Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: That's what you used to have. Now you have... the cold thing, right?

ART: The cold thing and the –

AUSTIN: No eating.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Don't need to eat. Yeah. And reminder to people listening, to keep those powers Hadrian has taken vows of valor and hospitality, the vow of valor says that he is forbidden to suffer an evil creature to live, and hospitality says comfort those in need no matter who they are.

ART: I guess, I guess, I wanna – what here is evil?

DRE: Yeah.

ART: In this room.

AUSTIN: Nothing.

ART: I mean then... My gut instinct was... so there's this throne here, yeah? There's chairs here?

AUSTIN: The throne... is not here.

ART: Oh. That's a shame.

AUSTIN: It is.

ART: I had a thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. We'll get there. We'll get there. [DRE laughs]

ART: Yeah, I'm sure. Um... Are there meaningful relics in this space?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. Definitely. Um, you'd have to...

ART: Something... (unintelligible)

AUSTIN: You would have to scavenge, you would have to use the move I mentioned before, search and scavenge, to actually get something. But this is definitely the sort of place where you could do that. Um... And that is, I have that as  $2d6 + \text{Wisdom}$ , I think... I think wisdom is right, because you're searching for stuff. Yeah. I think that's right.

ART: (unintelligible)

DRE: Can I, uh, aid on this roll at all?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally, how are you helping him?

DRE: Uh, well, myself and Kodiak, who is trained with keen senses, would ask Art, y'know, what are you looking for, what can I help you find, are you looking for a certain symbol, a certain type of object?

ART: I'm looking for something that would reveal the truth of this place. There's too much here that I don't...

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: That I don't understand.

AUSTIN: Um, you... So go ahead and roll that aid, which is  $2d6+1$ , I think, Andrew?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Throndir.

DRE: Here we go. I'm just going to make a wisdom roll because my wisdom modifier is 1.  
[pause] 9.

AUSTIN: How does that, how does aid work again. Uh-huh... On a 7 to 9 you also expose yourself to danger at retribution or cost but that's fine because you have succeeded handily here. Alright, so you get three of the following: something to eat or drink, a useful tool or weapon, useful information or long-lost knowledge, or medical supplies. So what three of those would you like. Hadrian.

DRE: What were the options again?

ART: Information, or relics...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ART: That's one thing?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's one thing, yeah.

ART: Uh, medicine, I'm still very close to dying.

AUSTIN: Yep.

ART: Um... What were the first two?

AUSTIN: Something to eat or drink, rations, and a useful tool or weapon.

ART: I'm thinking useful tool or weapon, I'm not doing great on that front either.

AUSTIN: Sure... No, you're not. Okay. So the medical supplies are fairly easy to find, actually, um...

NICK: Wait a minute.

AUSTIN: You – yes?

NICK: If, uh... If Hadrian is still close to dying, like I didn't realize that – I have healing potions.

AUSTIN: Well –

ART: I'm not that close to dying, I'm at 9 hit points, so I'm doing great. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: [snorts] It's close for him, it's not... so, you're able to find a small stash of medical supplies in a kind of a side room of a, like a servant's quarters? That is, it's not untouched, let's say, but the things that have been taken or ruined from here are largely things that are of lots of value – like you can see that there are missing, there are things missing from the mosaic in the floor, the kind of um, the more interesting furniture is just in a bad way, it just something happened to it over the last... long period of time that left it in a bad way. But in a drawer, you happen to come across an ancient, but still functional medical kit, that has y'know, sutures and some bandages, and things like that. Uh... And I forget if that's a specific thing in the book or not, so uh, what's a health potion give you back, does anybody remember?

NICK: Uh... no.

AUSTIN: You can check really quick. Or, can you check really quick, is the other way to say that?

DRE: [laughing] Please check.

AUSTIN: Would you please check.

NICK: So we haven't...

DRE: Would you kindly.

NICK: We haven't had any rest either, then, huh?

AUSTIN: No, you've had no rest yet.

NICK: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: No. You'll be able to, at the end of this day you'll rest. Or you had that like brief moment, right, like you had that, you warmed up, everything's okay, you'll be able to rest again before –

NICK: But that's not enough for me to re-prepare spells.

AUSTIN: No. No, that was not enough time. Okay, um.

ART: (unintelligible)

AUSTIN: It'd be in items, which is like way in the back, I think, which – it's not that big a deal, y'know, let's just say that this gives you back 1d6 – let's say 1d8 health. So go ahead and roll that and take it.

DRE: Is that just for Art?

AUSTIN: Yeah, just for right this second. I'm just like, let's just use it so that it's not another thing to keep track of.

DRE: Sure, sure.

NICK: Uh, healing potion heals 10 damage or removes one debility.

AUSTIN: Okay, well, this is not as good as a healing potion, right, healing potions are just like alchemical magical things. So—

ART: I rolled pretty well.

AUSTIN: You did! Good job.

ART: Wait, I rolled pretty badly.

AUSTIN: Yup. He rolled a 2. Uh... [laughs]

ART: That's okay, I'm above a – I'm double digits now!

AUSTIN: Double didge, [DRE laughs] so you also find... you do, you find a, towards what would be the, one of the sides of this receiving room, this throne room, you – down a ways, this is a big place, again, this is not a, we're not talking about a small little, receiving, like this is, y'know, this was maybe the throne room of the Boy-King, God of Knowledge and Wine. Right? So... It's big. And you find a little icon of him, about like a foot or maybe a foot and a half high, like a kind of an Orthodox Russian icon – do you know what I mean, do you know what I have in mind here? Kind of a little stone relief, almost like a statue but a little flatter than that...

ART: Yeah, I see what you mean.

AUSTIN: You know exactly what I mean?

ART: Now that I can Google Image Search again, yeah, I see what you mean.

DRE: Yup, ditto.

AUSTIN: Okay. And it is – you – it's weird, whoever made this captured Samot's eyes perfectly, and his kind of like, his "I'm not looking at you dudes, I'm looking past you" gaze, the deep long distance view of a god is really captured in this thing. And he is holding close over his chest a book, and then a bottle, in his left hand. And you can totally take that.

NICK: He's looking at that ghost wolf that's haunting him.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Uh... And then, huh.... and then you do find a weapon, since you don't have one. Weapons are useful.

ART: They are.

AUSTIN: Um... You find... a... it's strange, it's just sitting there, on the carpet, in the middle of one of the sections of this big room. A golden sword. With its hilt wrapped in a dark brown

leather, but the whole thing shines... it's not just reflecting the light of the sun, y'know, obviously this place is ruined, there are holes coming down, holes above you in the ceiling – but like, it has a... It's still the afternoon, let's say, but it has a sort of a glow to it.

ART: Sure, this must be just heinously sacrilegious.

AUSTIN: Mhm!

ART: Uh... Is it sharp gold or soft metal, like is it literally gold or is it –

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): Uhh, y'know you're not a, you're not a –

ART: Metallurgist?

AUSTIN: Metallurgist, yeah?

ART (overlapping AUSTIN): But is it sharp, is this a weapon?

AUSTIN: This is sharp, yeah, this is a weapon, and for convenience's sake let's say you're able to find a sheath that fits it fairly nearby, that way it's not just like dangling... next to your junk.

ART: Or make one out of rusty furniture.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Right, exactly, just stab into a couch. Alright, we got it! [DRE laughing]

DRE: You gotta (unintelligible), it's good.

ART: I've got this much upholstery, and it works.

AUSTIN: Awesome. Um, okay, you make your way back to camp.

ART: And like mechanically, what is, what is this?

AUSTIN: Oh, um, for now it's just a sword. For now it's whatever the book says a sword is. Um... There might be some other stuff happening there, do you know what I mean?

ART: Sure, but, yeah, I'm just looking for like damage, I'll find what it –

AUSTIN: It is, it is close, +1 damage, 1 weight.

ART: Okay. Got it.

DRE: Is it a one handed sword, two handed sword?

AUSTIN: It is like a one-handed longsword.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um. Okay, alright so you're back, you guys can... Oh, you know what, actually – hm. As you're leaving, so as you're coming out, you... I forgot that there was that strange movement there still. You can see a dozen or so figures to the north about 500 yards... um, they are knights clad in silver – or like, clad in iron armor, you can recognize it, those of you who've fought – this isn't like, shining silver, do you know what I mean, this is, they're in metal armor.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: They... their movement is precise, um, and they're walking towards you. What do you do?

ART: Are... Are our companions disturbed?

AUSTIN: They shoot each other looks, and Sunder asks, "What do you guys think we should do?"

DRE: I wanna see if Kindrali remembers anything about these knights.

AUSTIN: Make the roll?

DRE: Yep. Uh, 9.

AUSTIN: Which is something interesting?

DRE: You get something interesting, but without explanation or its use.

AUSTIN: Um... You can see him stab one - it's a brief flash - he stabs a spear through the chest of one, and it breaks through, without any blood, without any - it's as if he punched through a wall, but the knight doesn't stop, and keeps walking towards him, pulls himself through the spear to attack him. And y'know, Kindrali's not in any threat, but that was still a shocking moment that he never forgot.

DRE: Yeah.

DRE: (as THRONDIR) We need to run.



AUSTIN: You begin to run, and you're able to lose them in the hills. But arrows do start to come in from the distance. One of them catches Uklan in the shoulder. He'll be alright, but he is definitely wounded. He hands –

ART: I still want to see how powerful this guy is. Not enough to be like, (unintelligible)

AUSTIN: Right, not enough to fight a dozen of them, necessarily.

DRE: At 11 HP.

AUSTIN: Right, at 11 HP, exactly. You get back to camp, you've lost them. But there was something haunting about that experience. And Uklan is, he's not out of commission, but he is in pain. That night shows you the wound where the arrow hit him – and it's, it's hard to find the right word for it – it's crystallizing? A little bit? It's hardening, his skin is becoming firm and a strange growth is covering it. And he's in a lot of pain. But you're able to take a rest. You're able to take a day's rest and re-memorize your spells and heal and all of that, and consume a ration. So.

DRE: Um. Austin, I have...

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: Hm.

AUSTIN: Throndir?

DRE: I still have that "sick" that's taking -1 from my constitution modifier, do I cure that from resting overnight, or?

AUSTIN: It's not – no, you need more than a rest overnight, but if you do have a healing potion you can totally take one of those to remove a debility.

NICK: Oh, yeah, I...

DRE: I do not have one.

NICK: I'm sick too. What was that from?

AUSTIN: You should – uh, walking through the blizzard.

NICK: Oh, right right right.

AUSTIN: The blizzard, like, you failed those rolls, because last session everyone failed every roll because the dice were just, the worst!

DRE: Yup. Uh-huh!

AUSTIN: So yeah, if you have healing potions you should take those to heal that.

NICK: I, uh.

AUSTIN: Why are you... wait, that's it. All you are is sick, right?

NICK: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah, yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: I, chug one down, and seeing that Thrandir is like sniffing off on the other side of the fire, uh, I get up and like make a big show of like – [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Great.

NICK: Like, sighing and y'know, like, [SIGHS], and I just shove it in his face and I say

NICK (as FANTASMO): (gruffly) Here.

DRE: Maybe I shouldn't have been muting me being all sniffly and coughing, that would've been good roleplaying.

NICK (as FANTASMO): I'm tired of hearing you sniffle!

DRE: You're the guy on the plane who's like, "are you gonna blow your nose or are you just gonna sniffle the whole flight?"

NICK: Yup.

AUSTIN: Great. Great! Um, so what—

ART: If I die in this game, everyone remember what happened with the healing potions.  
[AUSTIN and DRE laugh]

NICK: I got one left.

DRE: Cure your sniffles.

AUSTIN: Yeah, he has one left just in case. Let's take a 5 minute break, let's take a 5 minute break and then come back and do another section.

NICK: Okay.

DRE: Yeah, sounds good.

AUSTIN: Be right back.

[TIMESTAMP 37:24]

AUSTIN: Okay, I'm back.

ART: Alright. For the record, a longsword is two weight, but I'm gonna break –

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): Is it? That's not what it says in the book –

ART: That's what it says in the weapon list, page 324...

AUSTIN: Check your gear section. [pause] Like in your paladin – on the paladin page.

ART: (unintelligible)

DRE: Ahhhh! You don't get XP for successful rolls, right, it's only failed?

AUSTIN: Nah, failed rolls, and uh... bonds and stuff.

DRE (overlapping AUSTIN): In-game stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

ART: Can you like, heal overnight, like, cuts mending and junk?

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): Yeah, yeah, it's in there. That's um, take a rest I think is the name of the move. Or not take a rest –

DRE (overlapping AUSTIN): Uh, recover.

AUSTIN: Recover, yeah, yeah.

ART: (unintelligible)

DRE: When you do nothing but rest in comfort after a day –

AUSTIN (overlapping DRE): Oh no no, is that – no that's not, you're not recovering, you are like making camp, when you settle in to rest consume a ration, if you are somewhere dangerous decide the watch order as well, if you have enough XP you may level up, when you wake up from at least a few uninterrupted hours of sleep, heal damage equal to half your maximum HP.

DRE: Ohhh. Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: How does that work with... me...

AUSTIN: I think you still have to rest. Right? To heal? Maybe not...

ART (overlapping AUSTIN): But... But like...

AUSTIN: The question there is – so your thing is that you don't need to sleep, right? But that's –

ART: The exact wording is "freedom from hunger, thirst, and sleep". I don't think that means I can't rest.

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Just I guess we have to like, quibble over what rest means, or (unintelligible)

AUSTIN: No, you can, you can, I think you can be at like a state of rest that's still like, awake, y'know?

ART: And then do I round up, or down?

AUSTIN: Round up, always round up.

ART: Okay, so I think I'm back – I'm back baby.

AUSTIN: Nice.

DRE: Yeah. I'm at full HP!

AUSTIN (overlapping DRE): I'm not gonna – I'm not gonna make you do watch order here, you're not in danger tonight. You might be in the future, but not right now.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: That's super weird that the longsword in the gear section and the longsword at the end of the book have different weights but it's true.

AUSTIN: Do me a – do me a favor, I'm curious, check the fighter version of longsword? [pause] If it's even there? Let's see.

ART: Uh... pretty much the longsword – where are we, what are we doing here?

AUSTIN: Nuh...

ART: Oh, it's just signature weapon. Is there a list of signature weapons somewhere?

AUSTIN: Nah, they like build them.

ART: Oh yeah, they build them.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Theirs are two weight. I think it's – you're right, it's probably a mistake in the paladin section, but also I kind of like the idea that no, your sword is just lighter, like paladins just get lighter swords.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Like, iunno, like, churches have money. They can get you good light swords.

DRE: Or your faith carries the burden of your weapon.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. Yeah.

ART: Yeah, no one else gets the (unintelligible) the longsword. Which is weird, I think I could make a case that a ranger should get a longsword.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Mhm.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: I've seen that dude. [DRE laughs]

DRE: There's a ranger skill, you can dual wield.

ART (overlapping DRE): I really wish I was more aggressively diving into alternate classes.

AUSTIN: Wait, say that again?

ART: I wish I was more aggressively diving into alternate classes.

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): Well you have cleric now, right?

ART: No I just mean like, people have house made a ton of like crazy shit, but not to like use for this, I just wanna be like reading it, because I'm a crazy... person.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's the person you are. Right.

DRE: [laughs]

AUSTIN: How are we feeling on time right now?

DRE: I'm good. I got this Surge in front of me, I'm good.

AUSTIN: Everyone's drinking that Surge!

ART: Yeah, you're all – you're all gross.

AUSTIN: Um!

DRE: I don't feel happy about it, but it's here.

AUSTIN: [laughs]

DRE: I'm drinking it.

NICK: I used to – I used to love Surge.

AUSTIN (overlapping NICK): Nick, how you doing?

NICK: Uh...

AUSTIN: I haven't had it since it was out.

DRE: It's not bad!

NICK: I'm really sleepy, to be honest. I'm... I'm rough.

AUSTIN: Do you wanna do... do you wanna do one more section and then we'll call it?

NICK: Uh...

AUSTIN: I can read like the next section – these sections are literally – that last section was long because we did that big other thing, but these are like – each of these is like, ten minutes. Basically. Um. And I wanna be able to leave on something that's more interesting, maybe, than this. Although, I dunno, this is an episode certainly. Like, but I didn't get to end on like an end voice.

NICK: Well...

AUSTIN: Just over an hour. Like.

NICK: Yeah, but there's gonna be stuff cut out.

AUSTIN: That's what I'm saying, yeah. So let's, can we go a little bit longer?

NICK: Yeah, no. That's fine. I'm fine.

AUSTIN: Alright. Alright.

DRE: Nick, do you want a Surge?

ART: I have a, I have a vague concern that like...

NICK (overlapping ART): I would love a Surge.

ART: Right now, everything's fine, but there's gonna be a point where it starts being dinnertime, here on the west coast...

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): Right. Yes.

ART: And then I'm gonna get hungry.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we're not gonna go long. I don't wanna – like, I want another 20 minutes of your life, and then we can go.

ART: Oh, yeah, I was saying like, you wanted way more than that...

DRE (overlapping ART): Yeah.

AUSTIN: No no no. No. I just wanna do like one more little section, that way we can end on something interesting. I don't know what that thing is yet!

ART (overlapping AUSTIN): We go for another 90 minutes.

AUSTIN: No, no. I'm not gonna...

ART: That would be too much.

AUSTIN: That's fine.

NICK: I, uh.

AUSTIN: So it's the next morning – oh, go ahead.

NICK: I leveled up, by the way. Just FYI.

AUSTIN (overlapping NICK): Oh, nice. What'd you take?

DRE: Congratulations!

NICK: Um... Well my, my actual spell, which I'm preparing immediately, is Dispel Magic.

AUSTIN: Good call!

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: That's a good one. That's a good one to have.

NICK: Um, and uh... Kitty! How you doing? Um... And I think I'm probably gonna take... Uh, buh, I lost my place in the thing now. I forgot what moves I actually...

AUSTIN: Like, get or whatever?

NICK: Also, I, from editing one of the other podcasts, I realized that you're supposed to be taking a, um, attribute point every level, which –

AUSTIN: Yeah!

NICK: – I didn't take, well I'm only level 3, so.

AUSTIN: Oh... right right right, so.



NICK: I got another +1 to INT now.

AUSTIN (overlapping NICK): But you should take one for this. Nice!

DRE: Nice!

ART: Yeahhh.

AUSTIN: That's useful, that is a useful thing to have.

NICK: Yep.

AUSTIN: Uh...

DRE: Before the, before the dawn breaks, Thrandir's been wanting to ask Fantasma since the moment we met those people, can I trust... is Sunder her name?

AUSTIN: Sunder. Sunder... Lady Sunder Havilton.

DRE: Havilton.

ART: Great name, by the way.

NICK: Yeah, that's a good name.

AUSTIN: Yeah, she's good. I like her a lot. Yeah. Um.

NICK: That's like a... That's like a Dishonored level name.

AUSTIN: [laughs]

NICK: That's a game full of fantastic names.

DRE (overlapping NICK): Yeah. It super is!

AUSTIN: That game is – yeah, that game – that game does it right.

DRE: I need to finish that game.

AUSTIN (overlapping NICK): Me too.

NICK: Oh, it's so good. I mean... that one level is –

DRE (overlapping NICK): I was playing it on stream.

NICK: – the worst fucking thing, but...

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah?

NICK: Uh, after that level there's some really amazing bits in that game.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

NICK: Um... anyways. Uh.

AUSTIN: What move are you taking?

NICK: Oh –

DRE: I don't know if I'm taking a move, I think Throndir's just –

AUSTIN: Nonononono, sorry, I was talking to Fantasma, who had leveled.

NICK: Um... Well, I was gonna answer his question first. Um... Fantasma says...

NICK (as FANTASMO): She was much younger when last I knew her. But she was still one of the most promising wizards I ever met. That is... If you can put much stock in those... that toy... with the arcane energies of this world... on a merely intuitional basis.

NICK: That's it.

DRE (as THRONDIR): That's not really a yes or no.

DRE and AUSTIN: [laughs]

NICK: He just... [laughs] Fantasma kind of side-eyes him a little bit and grips his staff a little tighter and he just says,

NICK (as FANTASMO): Yes...

DRE: Throndir kinda like, cocks his head and goes,

DRE (as THRONDIR): "Did you guys... did you guys have a thing? Were you a thing?"

[everyone laughs]

AUSTIN: HUUUH!

NICK (as Fantasma): [emphatically] No.

DRE (as Throndir): Okay...

AUSTIN: ...So after a little bit of time, Prince Uklan and Sunder are awake, everybody's awake, uh... Uklan says that he is going to sit this one out. Um, he thinks he can keep whatever it is that they did to him at bay. But, it will take... concentration and a great deal of semiotic work.

ART: So they probably don't want me to Lay on Hands him, right?

AUSTIN: Uh, you can try, certainly?

DRE: Oh, boy.

AUSTIN: You can ask him, anyway.

ART: Yeah, uh, I will of course.

ART (as HADRIAN): Y'know, my connection to the divine allows me to heal...

AUSTIN (as UKLAN): Mhm?

ART (as HADRIAN): ...wounds, injuries. Uh, would you like me to try it?

DRE: Or diseases? Can't you do diseases?

ART (as HADRIAN): And diseases, I can remove a disease.

ART: Mechanically.

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): He says...

AUSTIN (as UKLAN): Hmmm... I've heard of such things working. Uh... hmm... wh... why not.

AUSTIN: – he says. Go ahead and roll!

ART: Okay, it's important to know that on a 7 to 9, they are healed but the damage or disease is transferred to me.

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): Yeah! Uh-huh! That is, that –

ART: That was for, that was for, that wasn't for you, that was for the audience.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I've been thinking about that! [enthusiastically] So... Aw man, oh boy, 7 to 9, huh!

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Cool! Yeah, he heals.

ART: It was an 8.

AUSTIN: No what, it was an 8! Hadrian rolled an 8.

ART: It's worth noting, I have a good charisma.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you do. [DRE laughs]

ART: I'm just bad at this.

AUSTIN: The warmth... okay. You pass the warmth of Samothres on to him, and you see the wound close – you feel the wound close under your hand. But then... do you remember, earlier, I said, that when you came through the other side of the blizzard, you felt a hole in you?

ART: Yeah, that was a really, that was a really jarring mental image.

AUSTIN: That hole is being closed in now. With something else. And you don't –

ART: Oh.

AUSTIN: You don't even feel it at first, it takes another hour before it really comes into play, but... The tip of your ring finger... It's just like, a little calloused. It's a little – weird, like it's a little – you start to lose sensation in it. It's getting a little harder. And over the course of the day, that will continue to happen.

ART: It's fine, it's fine! Everything's going to be fine.

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): Everything's fine, everything's great.

ART: No one would let their champion die in a holy, y'know, holy site, that's not how deities work.

AUSTIN: Yep!

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: So where you going today?

ART: Oh, we get to pick?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: This is on y'all.

ART: Um... if it were up to me, I'd go up to that, to that chunk –

AUSTIN: Wait one second, I didn't –

ART: This, this set of chunks – is this working?

NICK: I, uh...

AUSTIN: No.

DRE: No.

AUSTIN and DRE: You have to click and hold.

NICK: Speaking of that emptiness...

DRE (overlapping NICK): There we go.

AUSTIN: Mhm?

NICK: That's what I was thinking when you asked what the wolf sees inside Samot.

AUSTIN: Mmm, okay. Nice. Yeah, yeah.

DRE (overlapping AUSTIN): Mmm.

AUSTIN: Um... so, yeah you can go there, remember that there – that is where some of those knights were in that general area.

DRE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Which could be problematic.

ART: I just believe that that's where the throne room is gonna be, I believe that that's where I need to be.

AUSTIN: Okay, so that's one vote for there. Where do Fantasma and... Where do Fantasma and Throndir think that you should go?

NICK: Um... Do we know if any of these things were a library?

AUSTIN: You don't know.

DRE: I mean I think if we want to know more about the people who lived there, that would be the southeastern halls, cause that's where the living quarters were. I think Throndir's kind of interested in those, because if there was any chance that like, y'know he's gonna find something about his people or about people who used to be in this area in general, it'll be in those little southeastern areas.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

NICK: Um... Fan—

AUSTIN: I'm letting y'all decide this among yourselves, by the way.

NICK: Well...

DRE: Yeah.

ART: They're not gonna vote?

AUSTIN: I mean, you guys can vote. They are... They are going to... Mm. I think she even says it, like, listen, we're gonna be here for a while. We're in this for the long haul. I don't care where we go to next so long as I go everywhere. I'm not here to find a book and leave. My calling is greater than that.

DRE: Damn, that was a burn. That's a burn.

ART (overlapping DRE): That's a little harsh considering I just like, healed their dude. I just healed their dude.

DRE: She wasn't dissing you, I think...

AUSTIN (overlapping DRE): No... She was, she was...

DRE: The book was a specific callout to someone, I think. [everyone laughing]

NICK: Fantasma like, out of earshot, and under his breath, is just going,

NICK (as FANTASMO): Find a book and leave, mmmm [mocking noise].

[AUSTIN and DRE laugh]

ART: [quietly, imitating Fantasma] Fucking hippies.

NICK: Um...

AUSTIN: So, between the three of you, I think, feel free to...

NICK: Here's where, everyone continues to love Fantasma... Uh, he says he wants to go to the third option, because there's little chance of anything, uh, anything magical that he could learn from in the throne room because that would be, y'know, the kind of religion magic that he's not interested in, and there's even less chance that there'd be something interesting where the commoners live.

AUSTIN: So what are you suggesting? Where on the map here are you suggesting? Further up, even? Or further to the northwest, basically?

NICK: Yeah. Yeah. The one that's left, after the one that we saw and those other two.

AUSTIN: Well, I mean... you saw, so you – Throndir wants to go down here into this big chunk, right, um, right, Art – Hadrian is saying this big chunk here, so there are still like a bunch of little rooms, well not rooms but little sections to the north there. So you're saying basically any of those.

NICK: Oh.

AUSTIN: Like those are each distinct spots.

NICK: Oh, okay, I thought there was only four total.

AUSTIN: Yeah, each –

NICK: Oh, oh right.

AUSTIN: No, no there are fourteen, or something. One two three... yeah –

NICK: Oh, geez, alright.

AUSTIN: Each, each subdivision is a space that you can investigate, with stuff in it.

NICK: Pfft.

AUSTIN: You don't have to go through them all. Y'know. They're, it's... this game has a long and strong history of not going everywhere inside of a given zone.

DRE: Aw man, but you're talking to someone who didn't leave the Hinterlands for like 30 hours!

[AUSTIN laughs]

NICK: Um... yeah –

DRE: Okay, Thrandir's gonna break this tie. Let's finish out the throne room.

AUSTIN: Alright, so you're going to like, this big middle chunk.

NICK: Alright.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Right. And I guess we're guessing perhaps incorrectly with that is that's where the throne room is.

AUSTIN: You're certainly guessing.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: I dunno, what's the worst thing that happens.

DRE: Uh, we all turn into those giant, crazy automaton things, that's what.

ART: I mean, I guess the worst the thing that could happen is that's the barracks.

AUSTIN: That would be the worst thing that could happen, yes. Um.

DRE: So you find the barracks!



AUSTIN: [laughing] No, you don't. [DRE laughs] Someone has to make a Defy Danger roll here, I think, Defy Danger... You can tell me how you're doing it, but like, you know that there are guards up there. And so, to get around – you have to get around them safely. So to go straight to that zone, from this position, requires passing through where they are, so someone here has to make that lead roll.

NICK: Fantasma's casting Invisibility.

DRE (overlapping NICK): Um, what if...

AUSTIN: Of course, go ahead and make that roll.

NICK: Yup.

AUSTIN: You did it successfully, okay.

DRE: What if, uh, Throndir is kind of, like, y'know, using his dexterity to see if he can find a – blaze a path through.

AUSTIN: I don't think – ah, see like, that's so tough for me, cause dexterity is like dodging stuff, do you know what I mean –

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: – finding paths is wisdom. Um... Like dexterity might just be like, we're gonna run it, we're just gonna sprint, we'll just outrun them, would be dexterity. Y'know?

DRE: Yeah. Yeah. I could do a wisdom check too.

AUSTIN: Sunder shakes her head at you, Fantasma, when you turn invisible. [DRE laughs]

AUSTIN (as SUNDER): One of these days it's gonna get you in trouble, old man.

NICK: [laughs] When she says that, Fantasma lets out a surprisingly uncharacteristic like just, blast of a laugh. Just...

NICK (as FANTASMO): HA!

NICK: [AUSTIN and DRE laugh] [AUSTIN sighs] Whoa, that clipped the hell out of everything. Yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping NICK): Uh, so... I bet!

DRE: Yeah.

[long pause]

~ Here's that part where ART's audio disappears entirely ~

[AUSTIN and DRE laughing]

AUSTIN: Sure, yeah, why not. Uh-huh! You do now, Art, if you didn't before, you do now!

NICK: [gasps or is imitating a ghost OoooOooOoo noise]

DRE: Yeah, yeah, I was kind of, I was picking up on that. You're basically turning into a zombie guard.

NICK (overlapping DRE): Wait a minute!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

NICK: [bang] Aw man, I keep whacking my...

[silence]

[DRE laughing]

AUSTIN: Mhm. Let's just, let's just, let's just make a decision here. [pause] [laughs] Okay, well let's just... Yep! Ah, so, so here's what I'll say, what I will say is, you can kind of think of this space as a – you can kind of think of this map as almost a board game. And – or like a strategy game, or a tactics game, where what you will be doing is sort of recovering – or, or, as you move through each zone, you will be able to leapfrog through the zones.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you right now would have to go right to that spot – I almost said what it was, but I didn't – um, but you have to go straight north, you couldn't go east through these other, this kind of southeastern stuff and then cut north through it, um, but if you did go to one of those, you could then do that. But you'd have to make that decision, do you know what I mean? Or you could go up and around it, and then southeast through. However, as long as you have a direct line through spaces that you've already been through, it just takes you a day, like the whole thing is always only going to take you a day. Y'know?

ART: So, so perhaps it's a better idea to go here?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you could totally do that, you could go around and then through.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: Or that little chunk, or that little chunk between there and –

ART: This one? Or, this one.

ART'S MISPLACED AUDIO, WHICH OVERLAPS THIS NEXT SECTION: I have, uh, I have this other worse idea on how to get through this if we're not sold on (sprinting?). Um, y'know, what if I just Defy Danger charisma the zombie guards? I think me and these guys have something in common. I'll just talk them out of it (unintelligible). Yeah! I mean, zombie guard isn't a terrible way to end up, I think we all knew that's where Hadrian was going to end up, guarding something as a zombie. I don't have a better – I don't have a better idea than sprinting, really, like looking at my like, I don't know how to strength my way through, put my head down and charge, but that's not defying anything. Well... yeah.

AUSTIN: That one. That one is the one I was thinking. Right, that one would also have to pass through the strange movement. Which now you know is, sorry, which now you know is –

DRE: Bad things.

AUSTIN: Bad things. They're something, I don't, y'know.

DRE: I think they're like, automatons.

AUSTIN: They're something.

DRE: Like, golems or something.

AUSTIN: So you're going to go up to here, which is the vote for everybody basically.

ART: Yeah!

DRE: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Also, Fantasma wanted to go up further, right?

NICK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Let's do it.

AUSTIN: It's a long way, up and around. You make it up to here, and, um... Okay. As you get closer and closer, you smell... sulfur. And fire. You smell the kind of... I guess, hm, I don't know that any of you have been there, so no, that won't work. You hear machinery, you hear things being – like chains being pulled across pulleys, you hear the sound of big pieces of metal slamming into other big pieces of metal, um, and... it's kind of, there's no – there's no organic noise on top of that. There's no people yelling or talking to each other. It's just this kind of mechanical clank, clank, clank, whoosh, boom, clank, clank, clank, whoosh, boom. This like slow repetition of something.

DRE: Well this is probably the most bizarre, foreign, and terrifying thing that Throndir's every heard before in his life.

AUSTIN: Yup! Absolutely.

NICK: Fantasma shoots a glance at Hadrian though and says,

NICK (as FANTASMO): This sounds familiar.

ART: Super familiar...

AUSTIN: What do you think it sounds like?

ART: The stuff in the other tower, the, the automata – I don't know if automata is the right word – stuff that worked by its own, stuff.

AUSTIN: Sure, Sure. Um. The –

ART: They were mad at me for killing skeletons because they're jerks.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Uh, you find a hole into the zone and you... or not the zone, god I have to use real human language and not just like game-y stuff, uh... You find a hole into the wall of this–

NICK (overlapping AUSTIN): [dramatically] What you're saying is, we enter the machine zone!

AUSTIN: Um... [laughs] Right, you've entered the killer machine zone, my favorite level from Sonic Adventure 2.

DRE (overlapping AUSTIN): Oh, sick!

NICK (overlapping AUSTIN): Yeah, sounds (unintelligible).

DRE: Now I'm really gonna live up to my Tails moniker over here.

NICK: Got some sweet music in that stage.

AUSTIN: It does. Uh... And, it's a strange feeling. You step inside and it's only a few steps in when you feel like you've turned, physically. Like, you're stand – it feels for a brief second like you're standing on the wall. And you look behind you, outside, where you can see the blue sky – and it does feel like you're on the wrong surface in here.

ART: Oh, that's weird.

AUSTIN: The clanking is getting louder and louder, and the inside here is lit by a combination of light that's coming in through windows and from the roof – the "roof", quote unquote, which is some places is a formal wall, like a wall that does have windows in it that is now above you.

DRE: Sure, sure.

AUSTIN: But there's also, strangely, you're kind of walking through a corridor that has lights on the wall, like candles, but, there's no candle there. It's just a glowing, it's just a glowing that's there.

ART: Wait, to clarify – did we, are we now standing on the –

AUSTIN: You're in this, you're – like, here, you're just at the entrance to the side of the hole of this –

ART: No, I'm asking how gravity works.

AUSTIN: It's working.

ART: Okay, we're still right-side up.

AUSTIN: Yes yes yes. It's just that sometimes, the way this place is is broken in a weird way.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And that's the weirdest thing. The weirdest thing is that sometimes you're in a place that you can identify is, oh, this room of the tower fell funny. And we're standing on one of the walls and above us is another wall, and the floor and the ceiling are to the left and the right. Other times, so you open a door and it opens up into a large, um, a large cave and below you is dirt and ground and it's clearly – you guys aren't miners, but this is a mine. Ahead of you there is a kind of like a lever and pulley operated – like a dumbwaiter, or an elevator, but it's running itself, over and over again, and it's bringing up, and then lowering again, pile after pile of ore. No one is there to receive it. Um... this place is filled with strange machinery, as you – you know,

you spend the day doing this. It is a place where natural resources are being dug up from the ground, strange... strange metal. Fantasma, you recognize the metal as the same sort of metal that's used in Hella's sword.

NICK: Hm.

AUSTIN: And... there are places where these machines are changing that raw material into processed material. And there are places where it's just like, it is just being piled up, big rods of metal, over and over again, into nothing. But there are also other places, and this is – this is where we'll leave off, for the night – you open one door and the second you do, the space feels alive. The space feels like a place that's lived in, unlike the ruins of the rest of this section of the building. There are... there is... there are voices in the distance, and as you get closer, you see them. There are people here who are just working, but they're not... they're not people, like they're not – what's the word I'm looking for. They're not substantial. But they're not like ghosts either, you're not terrified. It's like you're seeing a vision into a different world.

DRE: Hm.

AUSTIN: What do you do?

NICK: Um...

AUSTIN: Remember, you can each do one thing here. Like for free, without it being a – without being put at risk. Y'know?

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: Do I have to detect magic?

AUSTIN: Um... You should. You should roll that. [DRE laughs]

[pause]

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping NICK): Nice!

DRE: Dang. You smart!

AUSTIN (overlapping DRE): Um, so you... Yeah. You... this is magical, this whole room is magical.

NICK: (somewhat sarcastically) Really?

AUSTIN: But it's a strange sort of magic. It's at once something that you could only have conceived of as being the end result of something, um, a perfect magical formula. Like the most – you're interested in how would you make this happen. How would you conjure a different reality like this. But at the same time, it doesn't feel like it's been like – human hands, or like sentient hands, like summoned this place here. Uh... Uklan, the orc archivist, the semiotician emeritus, gasps.

AUSTIN (as UKLAN TEL): I thought this was only – I thought this was only a theory. This is... we're seeing another possible world. The world, it unfolds according to systems, rules. History, politics... war, society, they have velocity, they have force, they have momentum. But now and then there is a chance for great change, whether initiated through a great individual or through a social organization or through a hero or luck – these moments rise and things change a great deal, except most of the time, they don't. Most of the time, nothing changes. Most of the time, the new boss is the same as the old boss. But... but... these moments, the ones we're seeing, they haven't been quashed. These are echoes. Echoes of a different world. I... I'm terrified.

AUSTIN: he says, and pushes his glasses back up on his nose. Sunder kind of instinctually whispers a little spell, and a ward appears underneath your feet. The ground beneath you changes, it reveals the ground that should be here, the side of this tower that's fallen, y'know? And outside of that little ward you see that – kind of outside of that – you see a clear differentiation between inside of this kind of bubble and outside. And as you get closer to the people here, this is like now an open manufactory, and a kind of – people are working on machines and kind of – y'know, smelting ore down and turning it into other stuff... You see there, walking through the door, talking to someone, is a figure that's maybe a little older than when you saw her last – certainly better armored – but there's Hella.

DRE: Hm.

NICK: What.

ART: Huh.

AUSTIN: Let's do XP!

NICK: Auuuguhhg.

ART: Alright, but remember next time that two of us have free moves here.

AUSTIN: Oh, y'know what, yeah, let's, let's wait. Hold on those and respond to that afterwards. Let's uh...

DRE: Aw, man! I have so many theories!

AUSTIN: You guys are in a weird place.

DRE: Yeah. Fucking mega-weird place.

ART: Like emotionally?

AUSTIN: Like al—always.

DRE: All of the above!

AUSTIN: Also Hadrian, at this point, it is clear to you that your ring finger, the ring finger that you wear the religious symbol of your god on, is just made of marble.

ART: Literally or figuratively?

AUSTIN: Literally.

ART: That's okay, I'm gonna be saved, he's gonna save me. We're in his house.

AUSTIN: You're in a house.

DRE (overlapping AUSTIN): Are we? Yeah... I don't think we are, man. I don't think we're in his house.

ART: I'm gonna be fine. You guys are being weird. Right now.

AUSTIN: Uh, where is the end of this... End of session. Excuse me. End of session. When you reach the end of session, choose one of your bonds that you feel is 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. Uh... And write a new bond.

ART: I don't... I don't believe I've done that.

NICK: Uh... I mean... I think I have. But the player is not here.

AUSTIN: Who – that's okay, what's the, what's the bond –

NICK (overlapping AUSTIN): The bond is, uh, I don't know what the heck, this is worded really weird, but I think what I meant was, I need to find out more about Hella's sword.

AUSTIN: Sure... Um.



NICK: And learning that this is where apparently where its metal...

AUSTIN: You don't know that this is where the metal, you recognize—

NICK (overlapping AUSTIN): But I know, I know like this is where metal like that sword comes from. So...

AUSTIN: You recognize that this is the same sort of metal, it would be like saying, um, in the Marvel Universe, you walked into a place and found a vibramium, a vibranium – a vibranium, is that right?

NICK (overlapping AUSTIN): Yeah, yeah, that's one of the like 10 Marvel made-up...

ART (overlapping AUSTIN): Yeah.

DRE (overlapping AUSTIN): Yeah, that's right.

AUSTIN: – like cursed, cursed sword – right, exactly – so you recognize it as vibranium, but you don't – this might not be the only place in the world where it comes from, right, like, this isn't discovering Wakanda and being like, oh this is where vibranium is from, this is like wandering into a weird place in Kansas and finding a vibranium mine. Like oh, weird. Um... But I do think you're not wrong to say that you could work on something there. Like I don't know – you could replace that at this point, probably. With something either that builds off of it or something that is... It could just be irrelevant at this point. It's up to you. But I don't think this is the solution. Like I don't think that – I think that Fantasma knows that this doesn't mean this is where the sword came from necessarily, y'know –

NICK (overlapping AUSTIN): No, yeah, no that's not what I was suggesting, I was just suggesting that he learned something...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah... Yeah, he did, I think that that's... that that's fair.

DRE: I don't think that my bond with Hadrian applies anymore, because it's – the main part is that I admire Hadrian for his convictions... And I don't think that's true anymore. I think between Throndir having his own like weird brushes with a demigod and also Hadrian's convictions keep landing us in less than desirable situations [everyone laughs] like I think... yeah. Yeah. I mean—

ART: Also we're not gonna die here, you guys are being weird.

DRE: That's admirable, but I think for Throndir it's... Like, your, Hadrian's beliefs are going to put us in danger.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: Yeah no, morality is hard, guys.

AUSTIN: Go ahead and take one and replace it. Once bonds have been updated, everyone look at your alignment... And if you have, uh, if you have—

NICK: I... I did not gain respect through power, today.

AUSTIN: No... No, not so much. Not so much.

ART: I think you were almost disrespected through lack of power.

AUSTIN: Eh... Hm.

NICK: Lack of power?

DRE: Ehhh...

ART: I dunno, that lady didn't seem to... didn't seem to show you a lot of respect.

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): She's just a, she's just a... Ehhh, there's sorts of disrespect that have a, um... type of—

NICK (overlapping AUSTIN): It's a respectful disrespect.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly.

ART: I'm saying I could do a Rodney Dangerfield kind of vibe, but that doesn't (count?), that's what I'm saying.

AUSTIN: Oh boy. Uh-huh. Did you... learn something new and important about the world?

NICK: Yeah— yeah.

ART: Yeah!

DRE: Hm... Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Go ahead. Take it—

ART: Although I'm not entirely sure what it is yet.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's where I'm questioning. You learned – you've definitely learned some stuff, you definitely have some ideas.

NICK: We learned that story of Samot, like that's...

AUSTIN: That's an important story, that's a story about Samot. Um... Yeah, I think that that's fair. It's... You learned a legend about Samot, I want to make sure it's clear that that's a legend about Samot, but that is an important thing to learn, you're right, do you know what I mean?

NICK (overlapping AUSTIN): Sure, yeah, right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Um... right right right. It's like learning – it's like yeah. Yeah.

ART: It's like – I mean, it's super important for me cause like, this isn't even a name recognized by the church, right?

AUSTIN: Right, correct. Correct.

ART: We're getting a weird heresy tour of the...

AUSTIN: You're getting...

ART: the middle part of the continent.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. Y'all ain't seen nothing yet. Um... Did you overcome a notable monster or enemy?

ART (overlapping AUSTIN): That's how you know they're convictions!

AUSTIN: Did you as a group...

DRE: We ran away from one...

NICK: Yeah.

ART: Yeah I might die here but I died saving an innocent man!

AUSTIN: Did you as a group – did you as a group loot a memorable treasure?

NICK: No.

DRE: Art got that sword.

AUSTIN: Yeah I don't think that that counts yet.

NICK: Yet...?

DRE: Fair enough.

ART: Remember to remember it if it's the last sword I ever touch. [AUSTIN laughs]

DRE: We found a cool old-timey medical kit?

AUSTIN: Yeah... No, that's not... that's not a memorable treasure. There is memorable treasure here, I promise.

DRE: Yeah, I believe you.

AUSTIN: Um... so. Alright!

ART: I still have to write that letter to Hella, now I have to write it while pretending I don't know these things.

AUSTIN: Well like... yeah. You don't even – what do you even know?

ART: Nothing, but I can't use it – the letter is already written, I just haven't written it as a person.

AUSTIN: As a human person, right.

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: Alright, let's time.is and then call it.

DRE: Man, if I'd failed twice I would've leveled up.

AUSTIN: The story of my life.

DRE: If Kindrali had just shown me some bullshit visions.

ART: I literally got no experience in that game. It's awful.

AUSTIN: No you got one! You got one. Didn't you get – you guys learned something new and important. That's one.

ART: Oh, you gave us that.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah.

ART: I thought you were saying no to that.

AUSTIN: Nonono, I said yeah but I wanna make sure that it's not, you didn't learn a historical fact about Samot, you learned an important legend about Samot. That's all, that's all I wanted to make sure that was clear.

ART: Yeah, I learned some important orc lies about my god.

[AUSTIN and DRE laughing]

NICK: That still tells you a thing.

AUSTIN: To our listeners. To our listeners, something very interesting is happening with Art and his understanding of what's happening here. That's all I wanna say. I'm guessing that there are some listeners who picked up on this already. But there is something happening here that is, is... this is what faith looks like. Um... okay. Let's clap. At, uh... 50... Or at, let's say 10 seconds.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Actually we should do outros, is what we should do, before we do that.

DRE: Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: Boy.

ART: Oh sure.

AUSTIN: I'm Austin –

ART: So we didn't do intros.

AUSTIN: We did – oh did we not do intros? Oh man.

NICK (overlapping AUSTIN): Nope. Yeah, we went right in.

DRE (overlapping NICK): Yeah we skipped 'em.

AUSTIN: Ugh... Well, it's good because we didn't want to go too long today anyway. So, I'm Austin Walker, you can find me at @austin\_walker on Twitter, theCalcutec on Twitch, you can find the stuff that I write at clockworkworlds.com, and I also often write for

pastemagazine.com/games. By the time you read this – by the time you read this, my Crew review should definitely be up. [laughs]

DRE: Hopefully, question mark? [laughs]

AUSTIN: Right? But no, it should be, and I'm sure I'll have written something else for them by then. What about you, Art, where can people find you on the Internet?

ART: Uh, you can find me on Twitter at @atebbel, you can find me at StreamFriends like everyone else here, you can also listen to the other podcast I do at kickinshow.com, and I just wanna say happy Valentine's Day everyone, I know – I know it's Valentine's time, I hope you're all having a really good happy time.

NICK (overlapping ART): Oh man. It's my birthday too!

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): Lovely time, listening to – oh, happy birthday!

NICK: Thanks!

AUSTIN: Oh buddy.

DRE: It'll be – it'll be a week from my birthday.

AUSTIN: Happy birthday to both of you! [MUSIC - "Autumn Not Winter" starts] I hope you're snuggled up for a nice Valentine's Day, y'know, Friends at the Table. We should've made a special Friends at the Table Valentine's Day!

DRE: For Valentine's Day, I got you... Friends at the Table.

AUSTIN and NICK: Aww.

DRE: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Where can people find you, Nick?

NICK: You can find me at Twitch, Twitter, and Youtube slash drevilbones.

AUSTIN: And Andrew, where can people find you?

DRE: Hey, you can find me on Twitter, I'm at @andrewleeswan, and of course I'm on StreamFriends as well.

AUSTIN: And also, thanks to Keith who will theoretically be editing this episode, who even knows if his computer will be fixed by February [laughing], we'll see!

NICK: Hey, the next one, the next one will be broken this time.

ART (overlapping NICK): You mean this week? You mean right now?

AUSTIN: No –

NICK: The one he's building now.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly. Right. Uh... so...

DRE: These are live.

AUSTIN: These are live. We're live, coming to your eardrums right now. [DRE laughs] Thanks for listening everyone, stay tuned, the next session of this one is one I'm very excited about. So.

[TIMESTAMP 1:19:50]

[music stops]

ART: (Remember?) this one, and then there's wrestling theme music, and that's how it started.

AUSTIN (overlapping ART): There's a car, and (unintelligible)

ART: Skree!!

DRE: Yeah. [laughs]

AUSTIN and NICK?: Da doot, da doot, da doot, da doot – yeah [laughing]

AUSTIN: Is that what it says? Okay, let's –

DRE: Austin's here! Wrestle time!

AUSTIN: That's it, Austin's here, and then a couple shots of me walking and it says "WRESTLE TIME". [DRE laughing]. Da-dun, da-dun, da-dun, yeah, that's it.

DRE: Waaaaow!

AUSTIN: Thanks everybody, bye. Bye. Bye.