

## Autumn in Hieron 24: A Paladin is a Tool

Amaya/@thepearlofdeath

AUSTIN: This place is a vision into an alternate world, a world that could be or could *have* been. It probably shakes you up a little bit when you see, among the workers here, among the clanking machinery and automation, Hella in the far distance.

[MUSIC: AUTUMN NOT WINTER]

ART: (pauses) The worst that happens is she murders us all. But, I mean, that's kinda always on the table, right? Like, we're, we're living on the edge of a knife, in general.

AUSTIN: And as it gets closer, it begins to chant.

AUSTIN (as Hella's sword): Our son! Our son! Our son Fantasma returns!

AUSTIN: And, at that her eyes go wide, and begins charging at you.

ART: I mean I think the interesting philosophical question is, did, did Fantasma just kill everyone in that dimension? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yes, he did.

NICK (shocked): W- whoa. Really?

AUSTIN: Yeah dawg. (Dre laughs) Because you're invisible, you get out, but they don't see you. And you know that they get left behind. If you would have led them out, instead of - protecting your own safety, you know that they would have made it, and instead are lost in here now.

NICK: He... doesn't really know what to do, about this thing that is *entirely* his fault. (laughs) And has trapped the only people that he can maybe, sort of, call friends, in the whole world. (pauses) Once everyone - once everyone is back, uh, Fantasma stands up, and sort of like, clears his throat, and addresses everyone, and says:

NICK (as Fantasma): I want you all to know. That I am s... [fades into sigh]

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

ART (as Hadrian): It was, it was, it was the right... choice at the time. You did what you had to do.

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah.

ART (as Hadrian): We've all -

NICK (as Fantasma, shortly): Of course it was. I'm glad you all agree. (Dre laughs)

ART (as Hadrian, quietly): We've all been there. Promise.

NICK (as Fantasma): Well now that that's settled, what next.

ART (as Hadrian): Well if I just gained four levels, right now, I could cure... (laughter) my rock hand thing.

AUSTIN: Great! Great.

DRE: Can you not cast Cure Disease on yourself?

ART: (pauses) I don't - there's no spell called C- I could - no. No. No.

DRE: Or whatever spell you have -

ART (overlapping Dre, laughing but resigned): I can't cure diseases, I can only - I can only do that to other people. There's a, a Cleric spell that I *think* would do it, but it's, it's a level 5 spell.

DRE: Mm.

ART: I have level 1 spells. (Austin laughs)

DRE: You better start failing some rolls pretty quickly here.

AUSTIN: Are people - by the way, people should be keeping track of that. Have people been keeping track of...

DRE: Yep.

AUSTIN: XP from -

ART (overlapping Austin): Oh! My Defy Danger roll.

AUSTIN: From fail? From fails? Okay.

NICK: Yep. I think uh, I think Dre is the only one that's failed something this session, right?

DRE (overlapping everyone): Uh, Art failed, uh...

AUSTIN (overlapping everyone): Art did. Art -

ART (overlapping everyone): I failed a, I failed Defy Danger.

NICK (overlapping everyone): Oh yeah, Art did too.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Alright so, I only need, I only need, uh. (Austin laughs loudly) (pauses) Like, like 30, 35, 40 XP right now. (laughter)

AUSTIN: No big deal!

ART: I just - I'm gonna start composing a symphony. That feels like I'd fail a lot (laughter).

AUSTIN: (laughing) Oh, boy. Alright, do we wanna like, take another turn? How we feeling.

ART: I mean I wanna, I wanna, I wanna find, uh.

AUSTIN: Uklan Tel.

ART: Uklan Tel.

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mokay.

ART: But not in the middle of the night, that seems dangerous.

AUSTIN: Well yeah, you just, go the other - the next day. Take another ration.

DRE: Can we -

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): Use another ration.

DRE: Can we take a -

AUSTIN: Yeah we can break.

DRE: Quick five minute break?

AUSTIN: Yeah definitely, I need some water real bad.

ART: Yeah, I've, I could also use a quick five minute break.

AUSTIN: Alright, be right back.

DRE: Okay.

NICK: Yep.

[pause]

AUSTIN: Okay. Let's bring it back. Let's dial it back down, let's find our Sting centers. (breathes deeply) In. (pauses) (Art breathes out) Out.

ART: Oh. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) You jumped the gun, you went out too early.

ART: (laughing) I went out too early, I'm probably not gonna be centered, I'm gonna be way...

AUSTIN: You were way off center!

ART: Way to the left, now. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: I'm already there. I'm in the circle, with my little crysknife.

AUSTIN: Oh, man. (quietly) Nice. (Dre laughs) I'm really waiting for My Little Crysknife, too.

NICK (overlapping Austin): Bring it on, Muad'dib.

AUSTIN: (laughs, pauses) Okay. (pauses) (loudly) Welcome back!

ART (overlapping Austin): Should we label these - oh, the r- and then - okay, yeah,

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Wh- what are you - mm.

ART: Never mind. (laughter) Everything I wanted happened. (laughs)

AUSTIN (laughing, exasperated): Welcome back, everyone. From break. I don't know if we're gonna have a musical interlude, there.

ART: Just a, a quick little, elevator music version of Girl from Ipanema. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: Right. Okay. So, it's the next day. You all wanna go find, Uklan Tel, is that wh-

NICK (overlapping Austin): Oh man. I really wanna do some, like, uh. I really wanna do some Shatner-esque, like, spoken song, as Fantasma now.

AUSTIN (horrified, with feeling): Oh god. (Dre laughs) (pauses) If you uh,

DRE (overlapping Austin): Let's uh - let's have a look for it. #00:05:00#

AUSTIN: pledge on Patreon at the \$1000 level, you'll get (laughter)

ART: Ye- (laughing) for \$1000 a month, we will do as many spoken word song covers as you want! (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: Okay. So Uklan Tel sounds like the - like, where people want to go.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: That's really where I wanna go.

AUSTIN: Okay! Let's slide you guys back up there... I think it's just another Search and Scavenge roll. I mean, the place is... this is a lot of rock, to have fallen. And it hasn't totally settled yet. (pauses) Give me, someone, whoever - whoever you'd like, whoever's taking the lead here can give me a Search and Scavenge roll? Of course you can totally Aid each other on this roll, too.

ART: I would love to aid, but I don't got that WIS.

DRE: I'll roll. I have a +WIS modifier.

ART: (pauses) Hold on, I have to - I have to refresh myself on how Aid works.

DRE: Uh, let's see.

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): It's 2d6 plus however many connections you have with the person.

ART: (pauses) And... I have a bond with Thrandir, if I remember correctly?

AUSTIN: Yeah - bonds, sorry, I said connections, that's a different game.

NICK: Can we - can we *both* Aid?

AUSTIN: Yep! It just opens you up.

NICK: I forgot how that works.

AUSTIN: It just opens you up for possible, uh.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Problems if you fail. You know?

NICK: Well I guess -

AUSTIN: Aid says, um. When you Help or Hinder someone, you have a bond with, roll +bond with them. On a 10+ they take +1 or -2, your choice, on a 7-9 you also expose yourself to danger, retribution, or cost.

DRE: Hmm.

AUSTIN: You could not, I mean, he did alright - ooh. Look at that.

ART: BOOM!

AUSTIN: That's solid.

ART: Wait - I rolled 2d10.

AUSTIN: Oh. Well that's not. (laughter) You can't do that.

DRE (in a childish voice): That's - that's cheating.

AUSTIN: Yeah you cheated. (laughter) Art rolled a - a 13 on 2d10 +1. Which all said isn't even that great of a roll. (laughs)

NICK: Yeah.

ART: And then I got an error message because I rolled, I, I'm trying to roll 2s6 and they don't know what that even means.

DRE: Oh, dang -

AUSTIN: DANG!

ART (overlapping Austin): Oh, and then Nick just did it!

NICK: I rolled a 13 on a 2d6 - whoa.

AUSTIN: Y'all are wasting these good rolls (laughs).

NICK: Yeah. (laughter)

AUSTIN: So you basically already succeeded! Alright, so, the,

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: but it's important that you all helped out, I can, I can get with that.

NICK: Yeah!

AUSTIN: You spend the day digging through the rubble of the space, um, and.

NICK: It's Search and Scavenge, and I helped!

AUSTIN: Give me - s- yeah, you, you. Throndir, you can choose *three* things.

DRE: Um... let's do...

DRE: Is everybody good on food? For now?

ART: I don't need to eat.

NICK: Uh... I could... I'm on my I- I'm down to my last ration.

DRE: Um... I definitely want to find...

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

DRE: Medical supplies... useful information? And then do we want something to eat, or do we want useful tool or weapons, guys? (pauses) (Austin laughs) Aren't you carrying rations?

ART (overlapping Dre): I got -

DRE (overlapping Art): Art?

ART: Yeah, I got some.

DRE: (pauses) Hm.

ART: I don't know how many, I could - I'm, I'm, I'm looking, now. I'm checking real quick.

DRE (overlapping Art): I have seven.

AUSTIN: Alright, so what was your choice, again? What were your three things?

DRE: Uh, let's do, medical supplies, useful information or long-lost knowledge, and a useful tool or weapon.

AUSTIN: Let's, let's call (laughs) well one of those should be Uklan Tel.

ART (overlapping Austin): One of those should be -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): The person.

ART: Yeah we need a person.

DRE: Oh okay.

AUSTIN: Sorry (laughs).

DRE: Okay, so Uklan is one.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

DRE: Medical supplies is another.

ART: Oh we, we might - I was like, we don't need medical supplies, but, but he might, he might need medical supplies.

DRE: You do. Well, you do or he does.

ART (overlapping Dre): No I'm great.

DRE: Your rock hand, *sir*. And a useful tool or weapon.

ART (exasperated): We're - we're not gonna find a rock hand cure.

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): You're not gon- *well*.

ART (overlapping Austin): I understand it's a - it's a sweet impulse.

AUSTIN: There are places here.

ART: But there's no way they're just sitting on a rock hand cure.

AUSTIN: There are places here that have rock hand cure.

DRE (low, gritty voice): Listen man you can't cure me of this rock fist. You know, it's just.

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): Alright, so - you find -

ART (overlapping Austin): (laughs painfully) K- I - let's not call it rock fist.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Uklan, medical supplies, and, what was the third thing?

DRE: Uh, item. Or weapon.

AUSTIN: Oh, like a random item or, or, right right right. Okay, you find - so you find Uklan, and he is not in great shape. He has been (pauses) he has been caught underneath falling rubble, and his legs are, uh, not functioning.

DRE: Jesus.

AUSTIN: You also - he also lost the map of this place. Which you might recall, he was constantly redrawing? So that you could keep a memory of like, where stuff was that you hadn't been to yet, that he'd already mapped out. #00:10:00#

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: However, you do use that, you did find one useful thing, and it's that. It is, it is, under a nearby rock, you find the map of this place that you've been drawing.

DRE: Phew!

AUSTIN: That allows you to, to continue to, maneuver from place to place here, without being... lost or, or confused. Without that, this would get real tenuous real quick. (Dre laughs) And... medical supplies. (sighs) What did we - we did this one before, and I think it was just - it was just, like, a potion, right? Is that what we found?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or no, it was like a, it was like a, it wasn't a potion, in fact, a kind of like ancient med kit, with, like,

NICK: Yeah.



AUSTIN: some kind of tinctures, and salves, and some gauze, and a needle and thread. And, if you'd like to, yeah, you can use that on Uklan, to, to reduce his damage. But he's gonna be out of commission, at this point.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And back at base. Back at base camp, kind of no matter what. (pauses) So who's go-

DRE (overlapping Austin): Yeah I'd still rather him not be dead, so I would.

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: I say we go ahead and use it on him.

ART: Yeah. When you say, when you say his, his legs aren't working, you mean like his legs are broken, or you mean he's like paralyzed?

AUSTIN: You don't know. Or I, I mean, I guess you could check, I don't know that - do you know *how* to check? If anyone here knows how to check, it might be you.

ART (overlapping Austin): I don't really know how to check, I might be - but like, there's there's, because I uh, maybe cause I could heal people.

AUSTIN: Right. His legs are definitely broken. (pauses)

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: At the very least. You don't know if there's been nerve damage. You don't know - I don't know that you'd know what nerve damage is.

DRE: Yeah. (laughs)

AUSTIN: But his legs are *definitely* broken.

ART: Oh I guess it's heal damage, or remove disease. Paralysis isn't disease. I'm worried that I would like, try to heal him, and I would end up paralyzed. (laughter)

DRE: Yeah, you probably would.

AUSTIN: Yeah, at this point. (Dre laughs)

ART: Uhh. (laughs)

DRE: You already wasted that {crosstalk #00:11:53#}

ART (overlapping Dre): But it doesn't work like that!

AUSTIN: No, no.

ART: (pauses) And I mean that, there's discussions about what, what is broken...

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Give me a - give me a d6 to heal, hit me with that med kit, and I'll mark down what he's at.

DRE: Any modifier or just -

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): Nah...

DRE: straight d6?

AUSTIN: Uh, give me an INT modifier. Someone,

DRE (overlapping Austin): Someone.

AUSTIN: whoever wants to do that.

DRE: That's not me!

ART (overlapping Dre): Don't -

NICK (overlapping Art): Uh, I have it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, go ahead.

NICK: I have it.

AUSTIN: If you feel -

NICK: I'm -

AUSTIN: Is Fantasma gonna use this *med kit* on this, on this guy, on this *Archivist*? (pauses) Is that -

NICK: Uh.

AUSTIN: Does he f-

NICK: Yes.

AUSTIN: That's a real big moment for him, I think.

NICK (pleased): Yeah. But, okay. So here's my roll. I rolled a 9.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's, that's still. (pauses)

NICK: As he's doing it, he shoots, like a *deadly* glare to the Archivist, and says,

NICK (as Fantasma, threatening): Speak of this to *no one*. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: Great. (Dre laughs)

ART: No, speak of it to everyone! We can just make it so the whole holiday special never happened. (laughter)

AUSTIN: ...god. Oh. (laughter) Tch. I'm so - Nick - mm. Okay. (Dre laughs) Yeah I'm just gonna, I, okay, I know where he's at here. Uh. Who's -

NICK: Look, I mean. Fantasma doesn't think the Archivists are right, and he thinks they're all a bunch of dummy-heads, but he doesn't. He's not evil! He's not gonna - let someone die that he could help.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: No I'm just saying like we're in like a real West Side Story moment here, and like, maybe want them to know that they just met a girl named Maria. (Austin and Nick laugh)

NICK: (laughing) Ugh, okay.

AUSTIN: He is in a lot of pain, but gives you a look of admiration and respect. (pauses)  
Consume another ration, we're going another night.

NICK: As he uh -

ART (overlapping Nick): Oh wait, I could also heal him!

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, go ahead and do that.

DRE: Yes.

ART: Well, cause it's, it's, it's, heal damage *or* remove disease? And so, as long as I decide I'm not messing with whatever's wrong with his, his - I'm just healing damage.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

DRE: Alright.

ART: The damage can be passed on to me, but I can't end up with broken legs, cause that's apparently just not how it works.

AUSTIN: Okay. (pauses) And what happens on a 9?

ART: I heal 1d8.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: And I take the, I take that damage.

AUSTIN: Okay. Go ahead and...

ART: (pauses) (sheepishly) Is it really obnoxious that I've made it so it's my whole title when I roll?

AUSTIN: Meh.

ART: I can undo that.

AUSTIN: It's hilarious. Every time -

ART (overlapping Austin): 4.

AUSTIN: Every time Hadrian rolls it says Hadrian, Sword of Samothres, Defender of the Undying Fire, Officer of the Order of the Eternal Princes rolls 9. (laughter)

ART: Cause I only rolls 9's, baby!

AUSTIN: Um.

ART: I took my - I took my 4.

AUSTIN: His bones, in his legs, I think up in his, up in his thighs, set back into place. (pauses) He's still out of action. #00:15:00#

ART: Sure, but it probably hurts a lot less!

AUSTIN: It hurts a lot less, between the two of you. (pauses) Do you have any actions here, or do you want to go to the next day?

ART (intently): Does resting here count as Rest?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: Capital R Rest?

AUSTIN: Yes, this is capital - if you consume a ration, this is capital R Rest. This is not - this is not remove a debility Rest, this is not like, I don't know what it's actually called, it's like Take a Few Days Off, or whatever? It's not that, but it is Rest.

ART: Or. Or is Rest not it? What am I looking for here.

DRE: Rest.is. (laughter)

ART: What's the one where you like -

DRE (overlapping Art): Uh, Make Camp.

ART (overlapping Dre): you like heal a little bit.

DRE (overlapping Art): Make Camp is what you're looking for.

ART (overlapping Dre): Make Camp, yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): This is Make Camp, but it's *not* the other one.

ART: Okay but I can, I can recover damage equal to half my max XP?

AUSTIN: Ye- uh.

ART: HP, not XP.

AUSTIN: Yes! Correct.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: Everyone should do that, if you haven't been. When you take a rest here.

ART: (pauses) Alright. I would like to talk to him about theology, but I think I can do that after our next day of exploring.

AUSTIN: Sure. Where - where're you going?

ART: Does - would anyone be amenable to figuring out what's going on with some of those strange movement places? Right, like,

DRE (overlapping Art): Yeah I think so.

ART: like we, we're all doing pretty well right now, we, we lost a man (Austin laughs) but that, that sucks, but, but, we're not getting it back! But like maybe, maybe we want to like, kind of like get to the bottom of this? (pauses) Or, we could say, hey Hadrian, the last time you had an idea about, about... something like this, an entire universe was destroyed (laughs)! (pauses, laughter)

DRE: What if uh, what if we went and checked out some of the bottom levels?

ART (overlapping Dre, sheepishly): And, and maybe your devil may care attitude... (pauses) Sure! Like, we could go to uh, this one? Or, why isn't that working. That one - th- this one - is anyone seeing that?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ART: Is this one section, or is *this* one se- is like, this a section and this a section, or is all of that a section?

AUSTIN: Each of those is - that's four sections.

ART: But we can like - and, that's not the one - and, *this* is the one that, that Throndir was in.

AUSTIN: Yes.

NICK: There's -

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): Throndir was in that one in the middle northeast - um.

NICK: What was this -

ART (overlapping Nick): So, is *this* a section too?

NICK: What was this note?

AUSTIN: Which note? (pauses)

ART: Bad things?

NICK: Yeah. What did that refer to?

AUSTIN: That was the - those were the enemies that shot.

DRE (overlapping Austin): The statue guys.

AUSTIN: The statue guys that shot Uklan Tel to begin with.

NICK: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: He's not having a good trip, y'all.

NICK: Yeah! (Dre laughs)

DRE: Sorry, buddy!

AUSTIN: Someone here has to, now, because he's not coming with you, someone here has to take his map, then when you travel, you have to, uh. You're going to need to make a roll to keep that map updated. To remind you,

ART (overlapping Austin): What is that?

AUSTIN: that map, like, erases itself. Every few hours.

ART: What - what s- what skill is that?

AUSTIN: I think that's probably WIS. I think that that's probably a map-making is probably wisdom? It's about perception.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: But I could, but I could hear a case for it being intelligence instead. Cause it's about like geometry.

ART (overlapping Austin): None of those are - none of those are Hadrian skills, guys.

DRE: Well, could it be... what's the, what's the Ranger move where you're like, plotting a course or whatever, like when you go on a journey?

AUSTIN: (pauses) That's Perilous Journey? I think, I don't think it's that.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like we're not, we're not going on a perilous journey here. Because that's, like.

ART (sardonically): Aren't we?

AUSTIN: I mean, you -

NICK: I think it makes sense for Fantasma, to do it? He's a...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: I think it's either you or me.

NICK: He's a, a -

AUSTIN: Yeah, I could see Fantasma, or, or Thrandir doing it, it doesn't matter to me. But the way that that works is, every time you make a move, you have to make a, a 2d6 plus, whatever, whichever stat you're using.

NICK: INT.

AUSTIN: Sure. You would be using INT. On a 10+ you get to draw the map perfectly, you get to travel without being noticed, and you can travel to the space you intended to. If you... if you got a 7-9, you only get one of those.

DRE: Mm.

NICK: I guess this is... maybe too much, uh, table talk, but, were you, were you rolling those? In the background, before?

DRE: Perfect.

NICK: Because -

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): No he was just succeeding.

NICK: Oh.

AUSTIN: He was just succeeding.

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: Oh I see. Okay.

DRE: Uklan's good that way.

NICK: Because he's a - he's a pro!

AUSTIN: He's a pro! This is his deal, right.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, he does this and so he's been training for it. You're, and he's, but now you're like, uhuh, I guess I get how this weird magic map works! Shrug. (Dre laughs)

ART: Alright. Then I guess I like, strongly believe we should go, here.

AUSTIN: And to be clear, if you don't get the space you want, I will decide one of the adjacent spaces that you'll wind up in?

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: But I won't tell you which it is, until you're out of it, and you can kind of get another chance to figure out where the hell you went.

ART (doubtfully): O-kay, but I guess like, so like, this space is adjacent to this space we've been in, we'd recognize it, right?

AUSTIN: Yes. You would recognize it.

ART (overlapping): Be like, oh, this is part of 'throne room' again.

AUSTIN: I also will not make you go into a space that you've already been into, at all. That's just not that interesting. #00:20:00#

ART: Right. Well, it's, we - (laughs) we're just like, yeah, that happened eight times. You. (laughter) You're all just old now. (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughing ) Right.

ART: But so yeah, I think, I think this is a good space.

DRE: Yeah, I think so too.



AUSTIN: Mmhm.

NICK: Okay.

ART: But I - I'd hear any alternate theories.

NICK: I mean, they're basically Schroedinger's spaces at this point, like this is nothing in there until we look at it, so, I.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: Who cares.

AUSTIN: Let's, uh, so who's m-

NICK (overlapping Austin): That's fine with me.

DRE (overlapping Nick): Wanna s-

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): Who's making...

DRE (overlapping Austin): I wanna see if I can find this bigger orb...

AUSTIN: Alright so somebody make the map roll. Again, 2d6 plus INT, I guess, Fantasma?

NICK: (pauses) Yep. Brrp, brrp, where's the button, there it is.

AUSTIN: Okay!

NICK: 9.

AUSTIN: Choose one.

NICK: Again! What the heck. (laughs)

AUSTIN: You get to either -

DRE (overlapping Austin): Can I Aid?

AUSTIN: Uh... yeah. I'll let you Aid - Aid. I'll let you Aid on this. (Dre laughs) [typing]

DRE: Oop! Forgot my Slash roll.

AUSTIN: Gotta get that Slash roll. Sometimes I just go for a good Slash roll - uh oh!

DRE: Woof! Woof.

AUSTIN: Alright, so let's, let's resolve Fantasma. Rolled a 9, so you get to either redraw the map perfectly, travel without being noticed, or travel to the space you intended to travel to. What would you like to do?

NICK: (pauses) Uh. Well, like I said before, the space itself doesn't really matter at this point.

AUSTIN: Right. So, keep the map?

NICK: So. (pauses) Well, I don't want anything bad - anything worse to happen, so I'm gonna travel silently.

AUSTIN: Remi- remember that Dre did just fail that roll. Something bad is going to happen. Like, again -

ART (overlapping Austin): Oh, yes.

AUSTIN: To metagame here a little bit?

NICK (overlapping Austin): Oh, yeah, you can -

ART (overlapping Austin): Let's go back to the map, and...

NICK (overlapping Art): Ah, alright.

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Yeah, he, he failed a roll, I get to make a move as hard as I want.

NICK: Okay. Yeah, I'm gonna, I'm gonna have. I'm gon- I'm, take the accurate map then I guess.

AUSTIN: Okay. Otherwise the -

DRE (overlapping Austin): Backseat map driving over here.

NICK: Wait - can I, can I do something before -

AUSTIN: Sure.

NICK: We make that roll - um, that I was gonna do anyways. So, Fantasma, before they set out for the day, Fantasma goes over and talks to Sunder, and uh, taps her on the forehead, with, with two fingers, I'm casting Telepathy.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Okay.

NICK: With her. Um. And that's a 12.

AUSTIN: Nice.

NICK: Good.

AUSTIN: So now you will remain, in -

NICK (overlapping Austin): So yeah, so he - he does that, and he says, just - and Fantasma says -

NICK (as Fantasma): In case something bad happens again.

AUSTIN: Okay. I- is she coming with you?

NICK: So, we can communicate -

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): Or is she staying behind?

NICK: (pauses) Oh.

AUSTIN: I, it's up to you guys.

NICK (overlapping Austin): I assumed she was coming with us?

AUSTIN: Okay, yeah, that's fine.

NICK: Unless Uklan needs someone to - does he need someone to look after him?

AUSTIN: Ah... he is in a bad way? He, he will be...

NICK: But he could probably just sleep by himself, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, as long as no one comes to fuck with him.

NICK: (pauses) (concerned) Oh.

DRE: Hmmm.

NICK: Well, I mean, it's up to Sunder, I guess.

AUSTIN: It is. (sighs) Um. (pauses) She sighs, and says that she wants to stay, at least for this first day.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: For him to recover a little bit, because. (pauses) If something comes,

NICK: Well.

AUSTIN: she'll feel t- she'll feel terrible.

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: But, she'll stay in contact with you, via this telepathy.

NICK: Yeah. It's, it's still a good idea, to stay in contact.

AUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely. (pauses) Alright, so. As you're heading towards what you think is, is *this* - mm. Roll20. Come on Roll20. Towards - I guess - *that* space. This space here.

DRE: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: You wind up elsewhere. (pauses) The. (pauses) Let me, let me set it up for you, and then I'll get to, to Dre's roll, don't worry, I haven't forgotten that Thrandir failed. (laughs)

DRE: Hey - good news, I leveled up! Heyyy. (laughter)

AUSTIN: The - place you walk into, Thrandir, you immediately under- like, recognize the general shape of it? In that it is, like, an interior city?

DRE: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: It is, a... a, circular, um, kind of, zone - sector, with five different... sorry, I think it's six. Let me double check my notes. Yes, it is *six*, kind of, sectors, sections, inside of this one zone. With a big park in the middle. Each of the quarters - or not really quarter, right, quarter suggests four, right? I guess quarter can be used to mean, in a city? Or yeah, like, right, in kind of a city layout sense, quarter doesn't always mean - right?

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Yeah, yeah, I think it means like, quarter, like, *quarters*.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Like where you live.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So there are kind of six divisions. And... you can see immediately that there are lots of statues here, lots of... religious iconography. You would need to do a Search and Scavenge and ask for information to get more there? Um. #00:25:00#

ART: (pauses) Sure would like to.

AUSTIN: (pauses) But after you've been in there, for. It - it's dead in here. Unlike the place where you were. Thrandir, this place is *long* since gone quiet. There is no activity, there are no - there are no robed people walking to and from, t- taking things from storehouses. This place is quiet. Though the garden in the middle, the big park that unites all of these... different quarters, does still have life. There are trees going inside here. There's a lake. And you can hear birds. (pauses) It's not long after you hear birds that you also hear the marching of boots behind you. A little ways off still, but they're coming. You don't know if you were spotted, or if they were

planning to be here anyway. But, you hear the... the troops that you saw, days ago, come into this sector. What do you do?

[pause]

ART: Personally, I - I -

NICK: Uh -

ART: I'm itching for a fight. (laughter)

AUSTIN (incredulously): Yeah?

DRE: Yeah. But remember, when we first saw them, I had my vision, and normal weapons didn't work on them.

ART: (pauses) I'm not a normal weapon. I'm a divine instrument. (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: Oh boy. (laughs)

ART: I have a golden sword! Who makes golden swords that doesn't like, do something? Gold's a very soft metal, it's a terrible sword medal (Dre scoffs) if it's not, somehow, special. (pauses) (Art laughs) That would be a funny way to learn that - yeah, that sword's just garbage, that's, that was a decramental - that was a decorative sword. (laughter) You're dead now.

NICK: So uh - can we - I wanna. I wanna do, like a little cutaway, back to... earlier, when Thrandir was assisting Fantasma in reading the map?

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

NICK: And, so, Fantasma's looking at the map, he's like scribbling some stuff down. And you know, doing some, doing some arcane, mathemagics, (Dre laughs) and uh. He, he scratches his head at one point, and leans over, and says to Thrandir,

NICK (as Fantasma): Can you read this? What does this word say. (laughter)

NICK: And Thrandir says,

NICK (as Thrandir, exaggerated young voice): Uh, looks like it says soups? (Dre laughs)

NICK (laughing): And Fantasma says,

NICK (as Fantasma, doubtfully): Strange. Why would it say warning, soups? Hm.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Great!

ART (laughing): I've had some warning soups. (laughter) Wee-ow.

AUSTIN: Great.

ART: (pauses) So - you guys are against - you guys are against fighting these guys?

DRE: Yeah. I - I wanna duck into one of the buildings that's here, that's been abandoned.

AUSTIN: You can do that easily, you can avoid these people as long as you want, as long as you don't also want to Search and Scavenge. If you want to Search and Scavenge, you're opening yourself up if you fail that roll, to be, to being caught.

DRE: Mm.

ART (unconfidently): I don't fail rolls!

AUSTIN (incredulously): Yeah?

ART: (laughter) J- just don't look while I roll some d10's!

NICK: What if I go invisible? And I Search and Scavenge?

AUSTIN: You can totally do that, at some point, you know, that's still not gonna protect you from... knocking something over, if you fail that - if you fail the Search and Scavenge roll, you're going to be noticed, you know? Like that's just the way that that roll is gonna...

NICK: Mm, okay.

AUSTIN: It - you're right, it won't be because someone saw, you, but.

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: Something bad happens, if you fail that roll.

ART: (pauses) Guys, I'm not gonna fail this roll, but I need to know about this religious iconography.

NICK (overlapping Art): How many - can we see how many -

AUSTIN: Yeah, cause you're able to hide out in a, a... in a little house. Maybe it's like a, it, I think it's probably like a... quarters? For, a bunch of people? Like a convent, or something? And on the second floor, you can look down, and see, that there are a *bunch* of them. Over, probably around 15? But that they're splitting up, and going into the different districts - or the quarters of this district.

ART: I'm sure I had this answer before, but I don't remember so forgive me, but these guys are evil or not evil?

AUSTIN: These guys are *evil*.

ART: Hm. That's cause they're weird monsters?

AUSTIN: (noncommittal noise) (Dre laughs) #00:30:00#

ART: (pauses) How many are there?

AUSTIN: 15, 20? But they're spread out across the district. In little kind of, in little like, fire teams, you know?

NICK: Whoa.

DRE: Oh.

ART: Whoa, Austin, you got a little weird there -

NICK: I lost you there. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh, sorry. Am I back?

DRE: Yyyes.

ART: Yeah, how many?

NICK: Coming back.

AUSTIN: 15 to 20?

ART: Ah I can't kill 15 or 20.

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: But they're spread out across the district. They're spread out - like, they're moving around in little fire teams of 4 or 5 each.

ART (exasperated): Yeah but it's not like I can kill 4 very well! We should go.

AUSTIN: No no no, but what I'm saying is like - this space is big. This space is like - it's not Central Park big, it's like. You know. But it's a big park. It's a big park with - with - it's kind of a circular park with six different districts around it.

ART: Oh okay.

AUSTIN: So each of them has, you know, 3 to 5 people per team.

ART: I would very much like to Search and Scavenge, and if we end up fighting, 4 of these - 4 or 5 of these guys, I, I believe in us. Wow I really - that's a, that's a bad little - sound wave I'm getting there, what if I, what if I do that a little bit.

AUSTIN: Oh boy.

ART: Sorry about that. Yeah no it's, it's, it's normalizing, I think the, the little like arm on my mic kind of got too close to my face.

AUSTIN: Oh. Okay.

DRE: Let's uh, yeah, let's Search and Scavenge, let's see what we find.

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): Alright give me that roll, Art.

ART: Alright, it's a - it's a wisdom roll.

AUSTIN: It is a wisdom roll.

DRE: Oh, boy.

AUSTIN: Geez!

NICK: (groans)

AUSTIN: Okay!

NICK: For everyone at home, he failed.

AUSTIN: He rolled a 4! Take an XP. (pauses) You are...

ART: (laughs) This is all part of my secret plot to get 35 XP and cure myself. (laughter)

AUSTIN: You like - you kind of take the lead here. And, and, say like okay like, I'm gonna lead us into one of the districts when there's no one in them. Right, you're gonna follow the guards with your eyes, and - like, like a stealth game? Like a Metal Gear Solid, or a Dishonored or something? You're like okay.

ART: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: This district is clear. And you walk in. And... you quickly identify the district that you've walked into. This is the District of Samothēs. You see the iconography that, is, has long been familiar to you, as a devotee. The sun, in its, in its place, at the top of a center temple, at the kind of far wall of this district. There's, the temple is, is, cut out of white stone, going up to, in like a... kind of like a triangle, with a t- with a flat top? What's, is there a name for that kind of shape, in geometry? I don't think there is. It's like, but it's tr-

ART: Yeah, I, it's a, it's a,

NICK (overlapping Art): Yeah, it's a trapezoid.

ART: yeah, it's a trapezoid.



AUSTIN: Is it a trapezoid? Okay. I'm checking to see if this is what I have in mind. Yeah! It is like a trapezoid, but like an... the angle is really, is really...

DRE: Triangle-y.

AUSTIN: Not - there's a better word than triangle-y. (laughter) Sharp, I guess?

ART: Acute?

DRE: Is it -

AUSTIN: Acute.

DRE: They're both very acute, yeah.

AUSTIN: They're both very acute.

NICK: (pauses) Aw. (Austin laughs)

ART: You just need two parallel sides for it to be a trapezoid.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: A trapezoid can be whatever you want.

AUSTIN: That's - yeah, that was the thing I wasn't sure about.

NICK (cutesy voice): You're such a cute angle!

AUSTIN: And - the... at the top of it is the giant sun. And you start walking up the stairs, there's kind of a big staircase towards that temple. And you feel yourself guided there, you know, there's, there's, warmth in your heart, as you get closer and closer. And then the doors open. And four men in armor, with strange, marbled skin, burst out.

DRE: (alarm sound)

ART: Oh, so they were like, waiting for us?

AUSTIN: Eh, you know. Maybe they saw you, while you were fucking, bumbling around this district (laughs). (Dre laughs)

NICK: (sings Metal Gear Solid theme)

ART: This *never* works. But I'm gonna do it anyway. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Mhm?

ART: I'm -

DRE (overlapping Art): Ah! It's time for the I Am the Law.

ART (sheepishly): Yeah, I'm gonna I Am the Law them. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

NICK: Everybody take a drink! (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: Mhm!

ART: Yeah. And when they, when one thing chooses to attack me (laughs), you know. (sarcastically) We're all gonna be fine. Uh. I, I look at them. You know, steely, steely eyes.

ART (as Hadrian, harshly): My name is Hadrian. I am the vessel on earth of the King Samothēs, whose - whose territory you are in! He is the progenitor of *all* dynasties, mundane and divine. I will *not* be defied in this land. Flee - flee from my, from my gaze, or, or face - or face damnation you can't imagine!

ART: ...and now I'm rolling.

AUSTIN: Do you have to like show them your holy symbol or whatever?

ART: I do not.

AUSTIN: That's good.

ART: I just have to, uh.

AUSTIN: Okay!

ART: Just have to, to. Yell at them. (laughter) That was a 10!

AUSTIN: That's a - that's -

DRE: Yay!

ART: So they choose - I get a +1 going forward,

AUSTIN: Uh huh. #00:35:00#

ART: and they, they, they choose to either attack me, flee, or do what I said. I guess I told them to flee, I should have, I should have shot higher. (laughter) I should have told them to just, just kill yourself! But. (Nick laughs) So I guess I gave them flee, flee, or attack.

NICK: Oh!

ART: And I'm, I'm braced for impact. (laughs)

AUSTIN: You're braced for impact, okay.

ART: (pauses) I'm not really. Hadrian believes it's gonna work.

NICK (overlapping Art): You should shoot even higher than that.

ART: But Hadrian doesn't - doesn't realize it never works.

NICK: Tell them to serve you.

ART: I'm not sure it works like that!

AUSTIN: He - so, so there are four of them. Three of them, are.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know, three of them have, kind of a. Kind of a... dull metal armor. With that statuesque skin. You know, a couple of them have spears, one of them has a sword. And then, and then there's one, who has - whose armor is a little shinier? Who has some javelins on his back, and has a waistskirt. And the, the first three tremble, clearly. And, the, the... one with the waistskirt reaches his hand out, to show you... to show you that he also has a ring on his finger, and he says:

AUSTIN (as Man in Armor, sternly): You are Pala-din [note: here pronounced pah-lu-*deen*] too. We *all* serve the same lord.

DRE: (pauses) So... we're good, then? (laughter)

AUSTIN (as Man in Armor): Come with us. Tabard would like to meet you.

ART (as Hadrian): O- okay.

ART: This is a threat, or this is a, this is an offer?

AUSTIN: Tough to read. They don't have mouths? Exactly?

DRE: Yeah he is a rock person. (Art laughs)

NICK: They have - they have literal stone faces.

AUSTIN (laughing): Yeah. It - they're tough to read, you might say.

NICK: These guys would be real good at poker.

AUSTIN: The - the voice also doesn't come from his head, it like comes from in front of him, a little bit. It's very odd.

ART: (pauses) That is odd. I mean he's got, he's got the, he's got the holy symbol, I'm, I might...

AUSTIN: He... you can't see his ring from here, necessarily. He has a ring. He did say he was also - he said he was a pala-din.

ART: (pauses) Yeah. I mean. Yeah, I, I don't, I don't believe this man's gonna, (Austin laughs) this rock person's gonna stab me in the back. And I mean I was prepared to stab him in the front, so.

AUSTIN: You were.

ART: Yeah, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm in. You guys don't have to come with me. This might get weird.

DRE: (sighs and laughs) Ah, geez...

ART: I'm here for an *educational journey*. I wanted knowledge, I think I'm getting knowledge either way! I'm taking this as Austin giving me a success when I failed.

DRE: Uh, what was that -

ART (overlapping Dre, laughing): That's how this works, right.

DRE: What was that name, that he said? Austin?

AUSTIN: He said he was a Pala-din.

ART: Pala-din.

DRE: That wants - and he wants - who was he saying his leader was?

AUSTIN: Tabard. He wants Tabard. Tabard would like to meet him.

ART: Which, if I remember correctly, is what you call the cl- piece of cloth you wear on top of your armor, and I'm not afraid of any piece of cloth. (laughter)

DRE: Um... are either one of those words ringing Kindrali senses Austin?

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): No. Not a clue.

DRE: Kay. Gotcha.

AUSTIN: Uh. Pala-

ART: If Pala-din is what I think it is he might know it.

AUSTIN: Pala-din is. He knows Pala-din. The Pala-din -

ART: Do you want me to like close my ears or something? (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: No, that's fine. That's fine. When he hear - when, when, yeah, when you hear it, your Kindrali sense starts tingling, for sure. Pala-din is a... what was - I wanna see how much I want to lay on the table here. Let me think about what Kindrali would know.

DRE: Do you want me to roll for it?

AUSTIN: Yeah give me a roll.

DRE: Kay.

AUSTIN: I forgot that this is -

NICK (overlapping Austin): Who's this Dean that everyone's pals of? (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: You know! Paula Deen. (Art laughs)

DRE: Aw, I was just about to make a Paula Deen joke! Dammit, Austin. Heyyy!

AUSTIN: Something useful -

DRE (overlapping Austin): It's a *good* number! It's - it's good numbers. (laughs)

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): Yeah, it's a good number. Something useful, if no- or something interesting, if not useful. The Pala-din were, as far as Kindrali knows, what you called - what the five human gods, I don't think he even knows the five hu- what - (sighs) what the humans called their holy warriors.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: But then he, he - you get this feeling that he always thought that they were something more, or something less, than regular men. That it wasn't just a - it wasn't - to be a Pala-din was not like to be a baker, or to be a captain of the guard, or to be a ship captain, right? To be a Pala-din was like the difference between being a man, and (sighs) something all - something in a different category. Like a man and a wolf. Or a man and a *wall*. #00:40:00#

ART: (pauses) Wolf is flattering, and wall really isn't.

AUSTIN: Eh, that depends. (laughter) It's easier to kill a wolf than a wall.

ART: (pauses, quietly) It depends what your tools are.

AUSTIN: Eh. And how big the wall is. (Dre laughs) So, it sounds like Hadrian's going with them.

ART: Yep.

AUSTIN: They make no effort to bring the other two with them at all.

ART: Alright, great, you guys can go and...

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Or other th- yeah, other two, Sunder isn't here. Are you -

ART: If something goes wrong, come save me.

AUSTIN (concerned): They're leading him away.

DRE: I'll - I mean I'll follow.

NICK: Um.

DRE: Are they stopping us from following?

AUSTIN (hesitantly): No... no.

DRE (overlapping Austin): Or are they just like saying hey, you should come too?

AUSTIN: They're not even -

DRE (overlapping Austin): They just don't care about us.

AUSTIN: They don't even care about you.

DRE: Okay. I'll follow.

NICK (overlapping Dre): Fantasma is gonna... try to go invisible, before following.

AUSTIN: Go ahead and give me the ring. The ring... the...

NICK: 12.

AUSTIN: Roll. (quietly) I'm exhausted. Alright! 12 is solid. You manage to, to go invisible. Does that break the tel- the - no, the tele- the telepathy just stays on, until you do something...

NICK: Oh.

AUSTIN: else? Is that how that works? Or until you, you get it with somebody else? (pause)

NICK: Um. Yeah, it's, it's on until I break it, the only restriction it says is you can only have one telepathic bond at a time.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. Do you... tell Sunder what's happening? (laughs)

DRE: Probably should!

NICK: Uh... yeah! I'll relay this back to her.

AUSTIN: She tells you that she's only encountered these things a few times, that she doesn't... you know, she doesn't trust them? But, that if, if that... Hadrian wants to go, wants to go, she's not gonna stop - you know, she's not gonna say to *not* go.

NICK: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: But she'll talk to Uklan when he... rises from his rest.

ART (sarcastically): Great! I'm sure he'll say that's fine, what a good choice Hadrian made.

AUSTIN: Are you all -

ART (overlapping Austin): Wait.

AUSTIN: So you're all moving basically as a unit, then?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: Yep.

AUSTIN: (pauses) You - okay. So here's the strange march that you take. You leave the, kind of -

ART (overlapping Austin): Oh so we were in that one?

AUSTIN: You're in the little, the little - yeah that one, exactly. In the little... there's that little bit broken out of the tower, it's kind of like a triangle shape, that you were in. Make that one clear. You were in the five temples... and as you head south, past the rest of this tower. It's a long march, honestly. It's, it's... I keep clicking things that are not the thing that I want to be clicking. You get moved down to *here*. (pauses) This back corner, as you approach, ha- there are two things, to kind of notice. First, there are... this is not in order of, of immediacy. (laughs) First, you notice a... I, I shouldn't have to say in order of immediacy. Once you come, like, past this little bump, in the building? In the fallen tower, you notice a *huge* glow, coming from behind that little bit of rock, or that little bit of the tower, that has fallen off to the south, or to like the east, do you see the one I'm talking about?

ART: Like here?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: You're not sure what it is.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: But it is *bright*. And shining.

DRE: Is it... orange?

AUSTIN: It's like an orange-yellow, yeah.

DRE: Huh.

AUSTIN: Huh.

DRE: Is it similar to the color of the orb that I picked up?

AUSTIN: Yes, it is.

DRE: Kay.

AUSTIN: It is. But it does not have glass, holding it in. It is just kind of free, spiraling out, self-contained, but growing. And then as you round the corner here, you notice a camp of these soldiers. There are *lots*. (pauses) The- they are led by a tall, dark human, who you, kind of quickly understand is, is Tabard, the man that they... said would like to meet you. He is in a sh- in a sharp silver armor. He wears a long blue cape, and, on the back of it, you see an open book, and a, a goblet, forming the symbol of Samot. Which you, at this point, have come to recognize.

ART: Sure. (laughs) I'm probably not still holding on to my... my idea that he's just some weird orc heresy. #00:45:00#

AUSTIN: No, probably, probably a little more complicated than that, at the very least.

ART: Probably given that, that, that guess up.

AUSTIN: Tabard has dark skin, dark hair, close-cropped, with a bushy beard. His right arm is just like, constantly hanging on, on a long blade that's at his belt, and he's missing his left arm. He is directing these troops, these Pala-din, occasionally looking over maps, drawing things in the sand, and dirt, with his feet, and kind of giving impromptu orders. There are, strangely, a number of cages in here, about a dozen or so. Most of them are empty. But there are, weirdly enough, a handful of other knights locked in those cages.

ART: (quietly) Oh shit.

AUSTIN: You're not sure why.

DRE: So is Tabard not... marble? He's like -

AUSTIN (overlapping Dre): He is a human being. He has human -

DRE (overlapping Austin): He has flesh and blood?

AUSTIN: He has flesh and also blood. As far as you can tell, anyway, right?

DRE: Yeah. (Art scoffs) But everyone here is a marble soldier.



AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: You are led to a table, made of marble. (jokingly) Which must have been a pain to drag through the snow, but here it is (Dre laughs). And... there is a map, similar to the one that Uklan had drawn, except at much higher fidelity? And it does not seem to be erasing itself. You don't know what magic separates this from his, but you have to assume some. Tabard... you know, someone goes and gets his attention. And, he looks over at you and raises his eyebrows, and gives a little, huh, okay. And heads over to the table where, where you've been sat. It's kind of like, I'm picturing it as like a, a marble picnic bench? Or like a picnic table, you know what I mean?

ART: Okay, that's smaller than I was thinking, alright.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, this isn't like a big thing, this is like a little (sneezes).

ART: How - like how s- like, like I've always described Hadrian as *massive*, like, what's this guy - how big is this guy?

AUSTIN: He's - he's a *big* man. He's, he's comparable to you in strength and height.

ART (begrudgingly): Alright.

AUSTIN: You know, he's a career soldier. It's very clear to see that, in his, in his gestures, and in his, in his body language, almost immediately.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: He... you know, kind of like, nods his head to you... uh, (sips in air). Kind of looks around.

AUSTIN (as Tabard, confident, bordering on condescending voice): I was expecting a third! Where's the...

ART (as Hadrian): ...yeah.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): Where's the elf?

ART: (quietly) Well that's rude, we already have enough. (laughter) Uh. (pauses)

ART (as Hadrian): He's -

NICK (overlapping Art): Fantasma says,

NICK (as Fantasma): Teehee! (laughter)

NICK: No, he doesn't, he doesn't say that.

ART (as Hadrian): He's - he's - shy.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): Yeah, they always are. Well, I'm glad uh, glad I didn't have to shed any blood to get you here. (sucks in breath and sighs) My name is uh, Tabard Alon. I'm here on behalf of Samot, the good King, purveyor of knowledge, true friend to all men. I hear we are brothers!

ART (as Hadrian): (pauses) I'm - I'm not sure what - I'm not sure what that means, but yeah, I understand we're, we're, we're similar.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): (laughs)

AUSTIN: He laughs.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): Would you like something to drink? (loudly) Men!

AUSTIN: He waves over a hand, and they bring over a... a bucket of water, with some, some wooden cups. (pauses)

AUSTIN (as Tabard): (breathes out sharply) What are your names? (pauses) I hate to be rude, but. You know, when I was young, I was taught - always use a man's name. He deserves that much, at least.

ART (as Hadrian): (pauses, laughs sharply) That's - uh, I am - I am Hadrian!

AUSTIN (as Tabard): Hadrian! Good name.

ART (as Hadrian, trailing off): I'll spare you the... the honorifics... (laughter)

AUSTIN (as Tabard): And you?

AUSTIN: He looks at the snow elf.

DRE (as Throndir): Uh, my name is Throndir.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): So, are you uh... are you from Auniq? Do you represent them?

DRE (as Throndir): (Art laughs) I'm from there. It would be a stretch to say I represent them.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): (pauses) It's a tough thing. Sometimes it's... not your choice who you represent. (pauses) Now listen. The thing is. This is a... ah, a destination. This is a... a land, with a history? And, with a holy power. Uh, I'm not sure what you hope to find here. But whatever it is, it is not worth your time. (pauses) I'm offering you this, out of generosity, and as a brother, to another who serves... our lords. Leave now, and there will be no conflict. We

outnumber you, we know more about this place than you, and we have the right to be here. A right won in ancient conflict. Take this opportunity, and leave. #00:50:00#

ART (as Hadrian): (sighs deeply)

ART: That's a - that's an in character deep sigh, I don't know if it... if it came across.

ART (as Hadrian): (sighs deeply) I - I wanna -

NICK (overlapping Art): You're not supposed to read the stage direction. (laughter)

ART (as Hadrian): I want to thank you, for your hospitality. It means the world to me, I've experienced... unbelievable rudeness, on my journey, to get here. I... I appreciate the way you feel. I don't know of these ancient conflicts you talk about. I'm not really sure I understand our bond, of, of brotherhood. But I *feel* it. Unfortunately, I... I can't, I can't do what you ask. I've, I've been, I've been ordered to do this. By... by people that, that, that I can't disappoint, in this manner? Uh, I'd, I'd rather not... fight? I've, I've had quite enough of all of this. (Austin laughs) But, but I was sent here for answers, and, and I, I, I can't leave without them.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): It is a tough thing, to be... obliged... to the divine. But in my time, I have learned. That it is one thing to be devout, and another to be Pala-din. The Pala-din are tools, to be used, and discarded. They know what they are. I will *always* remain devout, and I advise you do the same. But sooner than later, you will understand, that to be Pala-din, is to be nothing.

ART: (pauses) Is this guy reading my mail? (laughter) Uh...

AUSTIN: (laughing) He's just been some places! (pauses) He shakes his head.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): Take uh - bring them some, bring them some chicken. What - what would the elf like? I know his kind are, ah, often... a little... *touchy*, when it comes to food.

AUSTIN: He's like looking around, for, for the invisible one.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Again, he's like (Nick laughs), he doesn't even s- yeah. I wanna be clear, this is intentional, to, to Throndir.

ART: (pauses) I'm curious if he knows about the other two people. But like, I'm certainly not gonna be like, hey, do you know there's five of us? (laughter) Do you know that you don't know how many of us there are? Do you know that you unwittingly gave us a big tactical advantage? (laughs) Or like, did he just misspeak. (pauses) I don't know, I don't...

NICK (overlapping Art): He... so just to be clear, he indicated that he knows, that I'm hanging out-

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): Yes.

NICK: -invisible somewhere.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. He's well aware.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: He understands.

ART: He might have senses that pierce lies.

AUSTIN: He might. It could be. Maybe not! He might just have like -

ART (overlapping Austin): Maybe he's bluffing.

AUSTIN: He might just like *know* what's, what y'all have been doing for the last bit. It's hard to tell.

NICK: Sure. Well. At that point, Fantasma drops invisibility.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): There he is.

NICK: And says,

NICK (as Fantasma): As long as you - as long as you know I'm here anyways! (Austin laughs) I might as well not turn down a meal.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): Have a meal, return to your camp, and think it over.

ART (as Hadrian): Um - hey. Do you know anything about *this*? #00:55:00#

ART: And I hold my hand up.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): (laughs darkly) Well they have you now. It'll be a long couple weeks. And then, you'll need to be put away, for an even *longer* couple of weeks.

AUSTIN: And he looks over at the - the few knights caged.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): After that you'll be fine.

ART (as Hadrian): (pauses, then scoffs) (quietly) Sure.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): After that... you'll *really* be Pala-din.

ART: Hadrian like, flexes his hand. Like he looks at his hand, then like, closes it and opens it.

AUSTIN (as Tabard): Maybe you don't understand how dire this is.

AUSTIN: And he looks at it, for a second. Raises his hand, and closes it? And your hand closes with his. (pauses)

ART (as Hadrian): (concerned sigh)

AUSTIN (as Tabard): To be Pala-din, is to be used.

AUSTIN: (pauses) And he opens it, and you have - you get control over it again. They bring out food, you don't have to take a ration for the day. You don't have to use a ration, you can eat one here. And, by - and he goes about his work, right, like, he's busy. He's busy planning weird stuff, that you don't really understand.

ART: Um. I think I'd like to Discern Reality?

AUSTIN: Sure! That seems fair.

ART: (pauses) I mean I'm gonna fail the roll, so. (Austin laughs) What I'd like to do is *fail* at Discerning Realities?

AUSTIN: Sure. (Dre laughs)

ART: (quietly) This doesn't go over here... there we go, how'd I do.

AUSTIN: That's a 7! That's a 7, 7's alright.

ART: Alright, so I get one?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Again, your options here for Discern Realities are, what here should I be on the lookout for, what here is useful or valuable for me, what is about to happen, what has happened here recently, and, who here is really in control here, and what here is not what it appears to be.

ART: See - this is interesting. Because, I'd love to ask who's really in control here, and have the answer not be him.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ART: But if it's him, it's just a, a worthless...

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: ...question, and it *probably* is. (pauses) And what here is not what it appears to be could be fascinating, or it could be oh, nothing.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: Uh (laughs). So I think I'm gonna choose, what here is useful or valuable to me.

AUSTIN: (sighs, pauses) Hoo, okay. Um, is... (sighs and laughs) How much of a thief are you willing to be? Cause like I guess, and - I guess you just want to *know* what's useful, right, you're not *taking* it.

ART: Yeah, I'm not - this isn't - this isn't Pilfer.

AUSTIN: You... at a certain point, you're able to... find a moment when no one is looking, and you can look at all of his maps. And... (quietly) let me just slide this back over, really quick. One second. Tchoo, come on, Roll20. (louder) Among his maps, there's - sorry, that's Velas, that's the wrong map. Among his maps, there is of course, the map of this area, which I've mentioned before. And there is *also*, a map of Hieron. Which is slowly loading in.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: Come on, map. (Art laughs) Map? Does this look weird for you guys too, or is it just me?

DRE: It's loaded up for me.

ART (overlapping Dre): I see the map but I think this is the map I've seen?

AUSTIN: No that's fine. This should be - this should be the map that you've seen.

ART (overlapping Austin): The New Archives, the Lost University...

AUSTIN: It's just not - it's like really low res for me, for some reason. Anyway.

NICK: It looks okay for me.

AUSTIN: Okay. This just might be my connection. So there is, it is missing - oh there it goes, it went, it finally came in for me. It doesn't have Ordenna on the map at all.

DRE: Hm.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: The New Archives are not there.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: Velas is there. Rosemerrow is there. The University is there. And, there is, a, kind of a path marked, kind of a line - let me just draw it, actually. (pauses) The Mark of the Erasure is there, as a mark of erasure, the way it is on yours. And then there is... a line, that you follow back, from here, past the University, over the bridge... and to, a large, city.

ART: There it is.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Um. I'm trying to decide what it would say, there. If it would use... hm.  
#01:00:00# (pauses) I think it says... (pauses, sighs in frustration) I think - hm. I'm debating - this is a tough thing, cause I haven't had to commit to what this city is called, yet.

ART: I mean we can always tastefully edit reality, later.

AUSTIN: We can, it's true. But I - I do need to know. I do need to know what Samot calls the city. (pauses) I think it is... I think he's respectful, in a, in a really weird way. And it's called, the City of First Light.

ART: (pauses, excitedly) Oh *man!* Forget all this, let's just go there! How long is that? (laughter) That's - that's probably a long way.

AUSTIN (laughing): That's a long way. (laughter)

ART: Bye, losers I've always secretly hated! (laughter)

AUSTIN: And then that's, that's, that's it!

ART: That was pretty useful!

AUSTIN: It's pretty useful.

ART: That was a good one.

AUSTIN: Mm.

DRE: Hadrian there's one other thing you should probably do before we leave.

ART (overlapping Dre): That was a good reality discern. Yeah, what's that?

DRE: You should - you should figure out if Tabard's evil or not.

ART (dismissively): Oh, I doubt he is. Is Tabard evil?

AUSTIN: No. (pauses) I *really* wish you -

ART (overlapping Austin, quietly): Yeah, he isn't -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art, regretfully): Ah, I really wish you had rolled higher on that, on that - Discern Realities, ugh. You'll have chances. We'll get more. (Nick laughs)

ART: Uh. Yeah, there were - th- Discern Realities is super interesting.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ART: And, I hate to, I hate to say this, but in our first game - I don't even remember the circumstances anymore, but I was always, always upset that people were asking the wrong questions. (laughs)

AUSTIN: That's - yeah. Well that's role playing games. Alright! Let's, let's - are you heading back that night? Cause I think that's a good spot to end it. I think, hey, this is the name of - the City of Samot - I think is a pretty good... you know.

ART: But I also think that's probably where the volcano is. (pauses)

NICK: Volca- wait, volcano?

ART (overlapping Nick): Or you know, it's probably at least somewhere around there.

AUSTIN: Yeah, do you, do you wanna remind people, of why there would be a volcano there?

ART: Oh, I *believe*... that the City of First Light is so named because it is the place where Samoths crafted the sun.

NICK: Mm.

ART: And Samoths crafted the sun from iron out of a volcano, that, that has only the purest iron in it. And - and I know that that's not how volcanos or iron work. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: I'm gonna, I'm gonna - for the sake of, for the sake of. Of. Kind of. Clarity, for people who've maybe forgotten, since it's been months, and months, and months (Dre laughs) since we heard any of this, I am going to read the bit that... that Hadrian is referencing, here. I have to find it first, sorry. Give me a second. (pauses) So it is this one, and then... [typing] (confused) What, how is this - what? That's wrong. Keith, you can edit this down, I hope. That, but I -

ART: He's just gonna, he's just gonna make it longer.

AUSTIN: He's just gonna *add*...

ART: Ohh, I just figured out how to figure this out faster.

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): I found it - I found it.

ART: Okay (laughs) that's good. That's better than what I had.

AUSTIN: (pauses) You told her of the canon. That in the beginning, there was the earth, the people, and our enemies. The dark, and the danger. You told her that the King-God was mortal, but a mortal like her, of craft, and purpose. You taught her that the King-God built weapons, and armor, for his friends, and taught them how to build homes, roads, and bridges. She now knows the story of the sun - that one night, in exchange for his freedom, an enemy of the King-God revealed the location of a distant source of power, a mountain of fire and metal, which the King-God used to build our sun, and his crown. She says - oh yeah, that's the rest of it. That's



the end. And his crown. Yes. So. Yeah, I mean take from that what you - what you want. Um. Do you all head back to camp?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, no need to spend a ration that night. I *think* we should call it there, though? You think that that's the spot?

DRE: Yeah I think that's good.

NICK: Yeah. #01:05:00#

ART: Do you think it's better to have the - the - to be debriefed, this session, or next session? Do you think having - having the debriefing about this day, which I'm sure our, our compatriots will be interested to hear about, is better as like, now, when it's all fresh,

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Um - I think you can -

ART (overlapping Austin): Or you think it's better next time as like, this way is our way of reminding, of remembering?

AUSTIN: I think let's do that - the second, because otherwise we'll be here for another thirty minutes.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: Let's do XP and stuff now, though. (pauses) So, up here moves...

ART: Oh could everyone just do me a favor and tell me that their file is approximately two hours and forty-five minutes right now?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it is. I don't - I still don't understand what happened to yours.

DRE (overlapping Austin): Yep.

NICK: Mine's two twenty, but that makes sense.

AUSTIN: Right, cause you had to restart, yeah.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um... whoa, that's not bl- that's not right. End of session. Alright. 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 and write a new bond with whoever you wish. I'm guessing that's not the case. Though it could be! Though it could be.

NICK: As we're looking through the bonds here, I just want to remind everybody that... every bond you break! (laughter and groans) Every step you take (laughs). Samoths, will be watching you.

AUSTIN (laughing): Oh well now I know what Samoths looks like! (Dre laughs loudly) It's just buff Sting - it's just buff Sting!

NICK: Perfect.

DRE: Great.

ART: I guess I should wait for that - I guess I should wait for that. I should wait for that to pay off.

AUSTIN: Sure?

ART: I, I, my - my bond with Hella.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah.

ART: But I should wait for that to c-

AUSTIN: Mmhm. You should.

ART: I just - I just started a path. I haven't walked it yet.

AUSTIN: That's correct. Alright, so bonds, it doesn't sound like anything's moving on.

DRE: Yeah, I don't think so.

AUSTIN: Look at your alignment. If you've fulfilled that alignment at least once this session, mark XP.

NICK: Mm...

AUSTIN: Um! I think Thrandir can make a case. (pauses) In that -

DRE (overlapping Austin): Yeah? How so?

AUSTIN: In that you - you - s- rescued Uklan.

DRE: Oh. Yeah yeah yeah!

AUSTIN: I think that's, that's freeing someone from literal or, or figurative bonds.

DRE: That is - he was literally bound underneath a giant piece of rock.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Did you... (laughing) learn something new and important about the world?

ART: I think we did.

AUSTIN: That's one.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Did you overcome a notable monster or enemy? No.

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: Did you -

ART (overlapping Austin): Overcome is such a, a, *word*.

AUSTIN: Did you loot a memorable treasure?

DRE: Uh...? I got my cool orb thing.

AUSTIN (skeptically): Yeah, that's, that's close. I - mm. (pauses) That was a cool orb. Take one. Take - everybody, take one. Cause that's for everybody, remember, this isn't - this is -

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: (pauses) Did you destroy an entire reality, take one. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Yeah, you did! You definitely did. You won't - yeah. You take one for that, right? Is that not right? You don't take one for... destroying... no? (Nick laughs)

ART: Hold on, let me che-

NICK (overlapping Art): I mean, I'll take one, if you're gonna give me one. (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: I was actually thinking about, about, gaining respect through power. But... I think whatever respect you -

NICK (overlapping Austin, doubtfully): I don't know if anyone *respects* me for that.

AUSTIN: I think Uklan respects you for, for helping him.

DRE: Yep.

NICK: Oh.

AUSTIN (amused): But I don't think that that, maybe, outdoes the disrespect for destroying an entire... dimension.

NICK: (laughs) Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know. Some of these things.

NICK: (pauses) Also, I wasn't really showing my power there.

AUSTIN: No, no.

NICK: I was showing my, uh, rare (Austin laughs) bit of compassion.

AUSTIN: Mhm. (pauses) Okay. I think that's it.

DRE: Yeah. Level three!

AUSTIN: Let's - congrats, we'll do leveling up off, off sh- you know, off the recording as always. Ask me questions.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: As you need to.

ART: Is the - is the XP thing on this broken?

AUSTIN: Maybe? Let's see. Why, what's up?

ART (quietly): Hold on here... XP equal to or greater than your current level plus seven... oh I guess it just happens to work out. Never mind.

AUSTIN: You're good.

NICK: You - you do have to use the up and down arrows.

AUSTIN: Mmm.

NICK: If you just -

ART (overlapping Nick, unsure): Yeah.

NICK: type it in, then I don't think it -

AUSTIN (overlapping Nick): It sets, or whatever?

NICK: triggers the calculations?

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: (sighs) Well, thank you for listening to Friends at the Table. As always, you know, you can, you can find us on iTunes, where you could, you know, maybe rate us? That would be nice. You can also find us on streamfriends.tv, where archives will just go up sometimes with like, a map? A video of a map? (laughs) I'm way back on those, I have to get on those this week, I have to update... a bunch of those. But wait not - #01:10:00#

ART (overlapping Austin): Or I mean when this comes out, it'll have happened months ago.

AUSTIN: Yeah. (laughing) Ideally, I hope. If it hasn't, then uh oh! Whoops! Sorry.

ART: Happy first day of spring, everybody. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: That's probably about right. (Art laughs) And we jumped into this really quick today, so we didn't get to say where people w- were. Andrew, where can people find you, on the internet?

DRE: Hey! I'm also a stream friend, and you can find me on Twitter, @andrewleeswan.

AUSTIN: What about you Nick, where can people find you?

NICK: (pauses, hesitantly) Uh, you can find me... around?

AUSTIN: Around? Cool.

NICK: At some places, that are a little... up in the air, right now.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's fair

NICK: Sorry.

AUSTIN: Art, what about you?

ART: You can find me on Twitter @atebbel, you can read some stuff I write at comicmix.com.

[MUSIC: AUTUMN NOT WINTER]

ART: And, probably by the time this is on, we'll have figured out what's going on with the Kick In Show, and you can... you can hear me talk on that, too.

AUSTIN: That's your Kickstarter show? Your Kickstarter podcast?

ART: Yeah, but my cohost got a new job.

AUSTIN: Uh oh.

ART: We haven't been able to figure out when the hell we can record. So maybe, by the time you hear this, we'll just decide...

AUSTIN: Screw it?

ART: That it's only a - that's only a show for when you're unemployed.

AUSTIN: Right. (laughter) And have no money to back things on Kickstarter.

ART: Right. It's a - it's a, it's a devil's... gambit? That's not a thing, right.

AUSTIN: Devil's gambit, it's a devil's gambit. (laughter) As always, you can find me @austin\_walker on Twitter, TheCalcutech over on Twitch. You can read what I write at clockworkworlds.com, and at pastemagazine.com/games, where I have a kind of bi... monthly? Biweekly? I don't know how this works, twice a month. I have a thing going up on Paste, now. So, so check that out.

ART: Sub-monthly.

AUSTIN: Some monthly, right? Oh, sub, is what you said?

ART: Sub-monthly. Less than monthly.

AUSTIN (laughing): Great. And as always, you can find all of us at twitch.tv/streamfriends, where we stream a whole variety of video games. I'd like to do a, a Friends at the Table stream this year. It's on my docket. (laughter) I don't know what. I don't know if it would be Dungeon World, or like a one-off fun thing or what, but. We'll figure it out.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright everyone, have a good night.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AUSTIN (vaguely): Bye...

DRE (overlapping Austin): You already -

AUSTIN: Oh wait, that's me saying goodbye on Skype (Dre laughs), that's not what I want. How do I say goodbye on the podcast? (pauses)

ART: Hm?

NICK: I don't understand...

DRE (overlapping Nick): You need a - you need a catchphrase.

AUSTIN: Oh, right, I do the catchphrase, the Friends at the Ta- if, if you can't have your friends at the table, then *who you gonna eat with?* (pauses, laughter)

ART: Yeah, that's it. You do that all the time.

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): All the time. That's it. Every show.

ART (overlapping Austin): You do it every show.

AUSTIN: Mmhm!

[END OF EPISODE]