

SPRING IN HIERON 09: A CERTAIN WAY

Transcriber: Cole

Austin: Ephrim, tell me what your makeshift throne room is like. The place where you have decided to set up shop and you and Corsica Neue have in turn, listened to the requests of the people of the Last University.

Sylvia: I think uh... The idea behind it was, we need to make this look nice with the limited resources we have.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: So, it's... I don't think minimalist is the right word, but it's very much like, trying to look classy on a budget.

Austin: So, is that like... like... [laughs] There's 2 ways that can go...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Is that using table cloths for curtains? Or is that just like, you only have a few decorations, but they're nice decorations.

Sylvia: Yeah, it's more the latter. It's like, we have a few like, nice sconces that we have.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: For the torches in this room.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Everywhere else just has the you know, typical ones. Because this... the... my thinking is just like, if we have like, the one mural or painting that we have left in this room, and it looks all nice, this is where um... like foreign diplomats would come to.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: And we need to make sure that they see us as...

Austin: What is the mural of?

Sylvia: I think it's of the university. I think it's something that's been kind of like painted over the years.

Austin: Gotcha.

Sylvia: As like, things have been added. I think actually that someone right now is trying to figure out how to get like, the outhouse into this painting now.

Austin: Great. I love it.

Sylvia: But it's like, we don't have the space.

Austin: Just like literally a person behind you all day slowly trying to like, figure out how to sneak it in. Love it.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: So, through the course of the day, you hear a number of requests and concerns. In fact, I think maybe.. Let's save the roll for the last of these. But you do have a move that is about this, right?

Sylvia: Yes, I do. I have Hold Court which might be what you're referring to.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: But I also have Master of Your Domain which is like the pres-session... the pre-session one.

Austin: So, yeah. We'll end this little bit with that roll.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Hold Court says when you hold court and hear the problems of the people, the GM will tell you of at least one opportunity within your stronghold or the areas surrounding it. I'm gonna tell you a few. And this is what you hear through the course of the day from members of the university. Um, a delegation from Chatterchin's uh, not a delegation like, 2... 2 gnolls show up and tell you that there was a small robbery of some books and some candies from the dorms. Um, a... one of Throndir's scouts shows up and lets you know that there is... that they ran into an Ordennan scout over in the western wood. One of your... we have to figure out who your retainers are, but one of them reminds you in the middle of the day, kind of whispers into your ear, and says, like, 'I hope this ends soon.' Maybe it's just.. Maybe it's Highwater. It's like,

Austin (as Highwater): I hope this ends soon. We have to start getting prepared for Samot's arrival later this week.

Austin: There's also news of a caravan that was carrying supplies northward coming up from the southwest, from the dwarven city of Kanton. Um, and the guards checked the goods, and they all seem fine. They're like food and supplies and stuff. But they told the guards, your guards, that the supplies were headed up to Velas where Arrell lives, and so the guards are

detaining those... that caravan for now. Um, and then uh... Last, but not least, the last person who shows up for that day is Emmanuel. Lem's on again, off again. And um...

Art: Are they on or off right now?

Austin: It's complicated. [Art laughs] They have... they like... they've been texting. So, um, that's not a joke. [laughs] It's not a joke. [Sylvia laughs] They've been texting. Uh, well, don't... Just listen to the other side of the game.

Art: They weren't texting when we were in Aubade, right?

Austin: No, they were not texting then. They were not. Lem just got them a phone. Just got him a phone, so it's a whole thing. Anyway.

Art: If Lem had that technology, and didn't say...

Austin: I know. I did not... Lem did have that technology, in retrospect. [laughs] But I don't think it would have worked. I think we established it did not work in Aubade. Regardless, Emmanuel is here now, and he has a problem. Which is, in the middle of the farm that he works at, a tree has begun to grow. And it's... it's not huge, but it wasn't there a week ago. And now it's like bigger than he is, so it's not... it's not like a giant tree, but it wasn't there a week ago, and now there is a tree there. And he saw it when it was a little tiny sapling and didn't know what to do with it. Told his boss, and then his boss said, 'Ah, just deal with it if it gets bigger.' And it did get bigger. And now, it's as big as he is, and he's worried about it. And will you please deal with this tree.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: So, that's what's all on your plate, and with all of those things, Ordennans in the west, a strange tree growing in the farmland, Samot coming in a week, a robbery from the dorms, and a stopped caravan that seems to suggest some sort of relationship between Arrell and the dwarves to the south. You should make your roll for how things are going in the university. Wait.

Sylvia: Alright.

Austin: While your stronghold is secure and you are present to rule it unchallenged at the start of the session, roll + charisma. Your charisma is 14, is +1.

Sylvia: Oh.

Art: Oh, this feels important.

Austin: Hey...

Sylvia: I got a 6.

Austin: What'd you roll?

Sylvia: I clicked the move though. I don't know if that...

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Oh no.

Austin: You got a 6.

Dre: That's bad.

Sylvia: Yeah, I got a 6.

Austin: That's not good at all. So, uh, what was supposed to happen if you did a good? [Dre laughs] What's supposed to happen there?

Sylvia: Uh, so when I roll a success, I can choose 2 of either gain 1 surplus, gain a unit of any resource your stronghold produces...

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: ...and my stronghold is free from want or danger for the time being. On a 7-9, I can pick 1 of those. On a miss, I don't get any.

Austin: So yeah.

Sylvia: Um, I'm checking to see if there's a downside to missing, but I think I just don't get any.

Austin: Oh, the downside is I get to make a move as hard as I want.

Sylvia: Of course. As always.

Austin: As always. So, I think that as Emmanuel begins to leave, you hear him cough. And you know that that is like, there is something immediate in the way he coughs. It's this like, deep, dry cough that's coming from deep inside of his chest. And maybe it's because you spent so long, you know, wielding fire in your life, um but you know when there's supposed to be fuel. That he is sick in this other way. And you don't know if it's the plant or something else, but um... it strikes you. And then you hear it again from someone else later that day. Another similar cough. And it's at this moment that I want to remind you that your camp has a need.

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

If you look at your, your list of things associated with the university. And that need is medicine supply. The Last University has food. It has shelter. It has guards. But it doesn't have enough medicine for everyone here. And it's about to be very important that you fix that.

[Music plays to end]

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast, focused on critical world-building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker. And joining me today, Lord Ephrim. Uh, Sylvia¹ Clare.

Sylvia: [laughs] Hi, I'm Sylvia. You can find me on Twitter [@captaintrash](#), and you can listen to my other show, [emojidrome](#) on iTunes or GooglePlay.

Austin: Andrew Lee Swan.

Dre: Hey, you can find me on Twitter [@swandre3000](#).

Austin: Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hey, you can find me on Twitter [@atebbel](#), listen to [One Song Only](#), a pod about Kanye West and poor foresight.

Austin: [laughs] And Janine Hawkins.

Janine: You can find me [@bleatingheart](#) on Twitter.

Austin: Alright. Um, as always you find the show [@friend_table](#). You can find me [@austin_walker](#), and you can support the show by... Hmm, excuse me. By going to [friendsatthetable.cash](#). My own lungs there lost... there should have been... there was too much water. It was weird. Bodies are weird. Um, so as Ephrim is ruling in the throne room, what are the rest of you doing on this day? It's... I'd say it's like a... it's like a crisp, uh... I guess it's almost evening actually. Let's say it's like... it's like, 7pm, 6-7pm. Maybe that's dinner for you. Maybe you've eaten early, I don't know, but I'm just curious. Give me a high level. Throndir, what are you up to right now?

Dre: Hmm...

Austin: It's a Thursday afternoon, you know? Um, you have a week until Samot gets here, in a week. You know, next Thursday, next Friday. Or whatever. Those aren't the real names of the days. We have those real names, I don't remember them in order. So... um, but.... You get what I'm saying.

Dre: Is the information that Ephrim has, is that available to the rest of us or....?

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

Austin: Um, I think as someone.... As the Gunslinger, you kind of keep your ear to the ground with a lot of that stuff anyway.

Dre: Ok.

Austin: And so what I would say is you've probably, definitely heard about the Ordennan scout in the western wood. You definitely know about Samot showing up in a week. You definitely know about the caravan supply being stopped. Um, and you probably... you probably don't know about the small robbery of some books and candies. That seems a little under your...

Dre: Yeah. Ok. I mean, I was gonna go...

Austin: ...your pay grade.

Dre: ...you know, interrogate people about some missing Snickers bars, but... Um... I think with the news of the Ordennan scouts...

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: ...Thrandir is probably making some adjustments to like, the dummies on the range.

Austin: Cool.

Dre: And specifically setting up armor that like, mimics Ordennan. So, it's like, 'Ok, you need to be able to shoot here. This is where the weak points are.'

Austin: Uh huh. Cool. Um, I think Blue J is hanging out with you during all of this. And is like,

Austin (as Blue J): So, why don't we just go get 'em? Like we know that there's Ordennans near here. Like last time, there was a big fight, and so... like, we lost a lot of people. And like, why don't we just hit them first?

Dre (as Thrandir): Well, I mean, there's a lot of reasons. Do you... like, there's a lot of tactical reasons. Like, we don't know how many of them there are.

Austin (as Blue J): We could find out. You could send me. I've... I would go find out.

Dre (as Thrandir): Have you... Have you killed somebody before?

Austin (as Blue J): I've... killed some like, animals. Um...

Austin: Oh, wait. Actually... one second. This is... yes, of course.

Austin (as Blue J): Yeah, and it was Ordennans. It was when they attacked Twinbrook. Yeah.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): Yeah. Ok.

Austin (as **Blue J**): And we won. We won that time, and we didn't even have that many people.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): No, and like, listen, that was a... That was an important and good fight. And this isn't me giving you a speech about never hurting people. Because sometimes when... when awful people are trying to kill and hurt other people, the only thing they'll listen to is that. [sighs] We don't know if they know we're here. So, if you go out and then you get followed back here, and they find us here... It could get bad.

Austin (as **Blue J**): But what if I go and I see how many there are and its not that many, and we can scare them off? Run them out of here before they hurt anybody.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): Ok. Who are you taking with you?

Austin: And like, you caught him. He has not thought that part through. [**Dre** laughs] Um, he is like,

Austin (as **Blue J**): Benjamin, obviously. Um... and um...

Austin: You know immediately that that is a bad idea.

Dre: Yep, uh huh.

Austin: Benjamin is brilliant, but Benjamin is not like... Blue J could be the Ranger one day, you know? Blue J really could be. Benjamin is not walking that path. Benjamin will step on all of the loud twigs. [laughs] Benjamin will not be stealthy. Um, and he like lowers his head, and he goes,

Austin (as **Blue J**): I don't know.

Art: This feels like you're calling me out right now. [**Dre** laughs]

Austin: No. [laughing] Eh, it's like a common... yeah, you know. There is... there is...

Dre: Well, like, Blue J is a fucking rough and tumble oni kid...

Austin: Yes.

Dre: ...who has like, grown up in the woods around like, moth people. And with *his dad.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Blue J is like...

Dre: [overlapped] Benjamin is the nice kid.

Austin: How tall... How tall are you Thrandir?

Dre: Oh, that's a good question. Um, did we ever figure out like, how tall elves are. Are they like, shorter than people?

Austin: No, there's a... Fantasma was really tall, if I recall.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Um, but you are a snow elf, not a high elf or whatever we were calling them.

Dre: I'll gonna say like, 5'8.

Austin: Ok, so I think like... one of the things that's interesting about this sequence is like, Blue J is just taller than you. Blue J is actually maybe even more than just taller than you. Blue J is definitely like 5'10, 5'11, at this point.

Dre: Yeah.

[0:15:00]

Austin: Right, so like, Red Jack... Red Jack's a big boy, right? And so, Blue J is getting up there. Um, and like is wearing... there's a lot... there's... Blue J is like very much coming into adulthood. Um, and like is trying to figure out what that means. Because you know, Red Jack is a very specific type of adult. **[Dre and Austin laugh]** Which is like huge and burly and loud and boisterous and powerful and caring, but like intimidating. Um, and Blue J is not those things. Blue J is... is... um, much more... Blue J likes to feel small. Blue J likes to move quietly.

Dre: Hm.

Austin: Um, Blue J likes to ask questions more than tell stories. Uh, and so, and is... you know, we figured this out, right? Benjamin's like 18, somewhere in there. 18, 19, somewhere in that direction. And so, that is also where Blue J is. Um, and so is taller than you, but is very much remaining small. **[noise of something hitting a table]**

Janine: Sorry, that was...

Austin: Adaire is out here Discerning Realities. **[Dre laughs]**

Janine: I was trying to open the thing.

Dre: **[laughing]** And rolling real good.

Janine: We switched things and I was trying to open the thing, and I rolled...

Austin: Uh huh. It's fine, it's fine.

Janine: Sorry.

Austin: Hm... hm... hm.

Dre (as Thrandir): Alright, Blue J.

Austin: As a note, really quick for people, that all of the basic moves are also in that sidebar, so if you don't ever want to click... if you don't want to click into your sheet and look at basic moves, you can just do that.

Dre: Oh yeah.

Austin: Over to the side. Um, anyway, go ahead.

Dre (as Thrandir): Listen. I... Benjamin one day would be a great person to take on this kind of thing. But I don't think it's a great idea now. And Hadrian would probably like, be very upset.

Austin (as Blue J): Yeah.

Dre (as Thrandir): You... If there's one thing I've always learned is that you have to, you need a partner. You need someone with you.

Dre: And I think at that moment, like, Kodiak like, nuzzles Blue J in the back. [**Austin** laughs]

Dre (as Thrandir): Go into the woods, but don't... don't go after the Ordennans. Listen. And figure out who you can speak to out there that will then listen to you so that you start to build that partnership.

Austin: Blue J like, nods and is like,

Austin (as Blue J): That makes sense. That makes sense.

Austin: And like, starts to grin and kind of like bounce a little bit, and like, hops up off of like, a rock and is like, basically like, not dancing, but is like, doin' a little wiggle, doin' a little dance, a little shake, you know? Like, in those shoulders and in the head. And is like,

Austin (as Blue J): Alright. Alright. You're gonna be impressed. I'm gonna come back with like, a dinosaur. Uh, probably not that.

Dre (as Thrandir): That would be impressive cause I...

Austin: [laughing] I don't know that either of us know what that... No, you're in this fucking library. You're in this...

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: You're in the university totally. Like, I bet they've read about a thing like a dinosaur before.

Dre: Yeah.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): Alright, listen. It doesn't count if you just go talk to Fero and have Fero make something weird for you.

Austin (as **Blue J**): Fero's gone. Don't worry about it. I'm gonna come back with something sick. Oh. Get ready. I'm... You're gonna be grinning. Uh!

Austin: And then just like, like bounces and turns and hops and does like, a little jump because... because there's some degree of direction. And kind of runs off. Like strapping the bow around their shoulder basically as they go. Um...

Art: Can I get like, a jumpcut

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I'm not even sure like, who this is to.

Austin: Ok.

Art: But I just want Hadrian asking someone,

Art (as **Hadrian**): Why don't we just go take this fight to the Ordennans? Why are we... sitting around here?

Austin: Is that... yeah, who is there for that? Is it you and Corsica and Ephrim or something?

Art: [laughs] I mean, I think for maximum, uh...

Austin: Oh ok.

Art: ...synergy with the scene we just had.

Austin: [overlapping] It's Benjamin.

Art: [overlapping] It's like, Red Jack.

Austin: It's what?

Art: It's Red Jack.

Austin: Oh, it's Red Jack. [**Dre** and **Sylvia** laugh] Yeah, yeah. Totally. I think... Ok, here. I actually think it's like, Red Jack and it's... and it's Benjamin is what... is my... I want Benjamin here for this. Because...

Art: That's a great idea.

Austin: Because Ben... Red Jack is like,

Austin (as **Red Jack**): You make a good point. There was fear in our hearts the first time we faced down the Ordennan scum. But after two successes, certainly they should fear us by now.

Art (as **Hadrian**): That's what I'm saying.

Austin: And Benjamin's like,

Austin (as **Benjamin**): But if they fear us, they'll be way more dangerous. Right? Because like, they're gonna use the stuff that they haven't use before. They're gonna like... it's like a trapped animal. If we scare them that much, they'll hurt us a lot. We might win, but like, right now I don't know that it's a great idea, dad. [**Art** sighs] I... You haven't been here, so um, a lot of people got hurt the last time that they attacked. And we beat them off. We did. They left. They scare... they were scared and they ran away. I don't think they expected to fight as many of us as they did. But um, we had to bury a lot of people. We had to bury a lot of people. And it took... it took everyone a long time to kind of, get back to normal. Um, so, I don't know. I'm not saying... I don't want you to think I'm scared of them. I know that we're strong. Um, but yeah.

Art (as **Hadrian**): When did you get so wise?

Austin: He like, smiles a little bit.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Uh, you're right. I just... I'm antsy. It's...

Austin (as **Red Jack**): I still think we could take them.

Art (as **Hadrian**): I feel like I've been afraid of the Ordennan invasion for... forever now, and like, I guess it's... longer for you all.

Austin: He... he says like... He runs over to like... or he doesn't run over like, he points down at the map. Let's imagine there's a map between all of you, right? Is like,

Austin (as **Benjamin**): We don't know where they are anyway. But... but... We know they have boats, right?

Art (as **Hadrian**): Yes.

Austin (as **Benjamin**): What if they're gonna like, use boats against us somehow? We could maybe like, put guards on the river. I don't know. I'm... I don't know.

Art (as **Hadrian**): That's a great idea. I think um... Guards on the river are a fantastic idea. I wish Hella were here.

Austin (as **Benjamin**): I... What's up with Hella? What's her whole deal?

Art (as **Hadrian**): I don't know.

Austin (as **Benjamin**): I know you're like, old friends, but like, I've never really spent time with her.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Well, she's Ordennan.

Austin (as **Benjamin**): Right, but she's like a... she's like a cool Ordennan, right?

Art (as **Hadrian**): Yeah, she's a cool Ordennan. Um, she didn't really fit in.

Austin (as **Benjamin**): I know what that's like.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Uh, oh. Hm. But yeah, she... she doesn't see eye to eye on a lot of their invasion ideas.

Austin (as **Red Jack**): She is a wise one, too, If new to it. She seemed different after leaving the blade.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Yeah, that's a great observation, and I don't know a lot about that.

Austin (as **Red Jack**): I've always said I'm a good observer.

Art: [laughs] That voice is so infectious. I almost like, did it back to you. [**Austin** laughs] Like.

Austin: It's a fun voice.

Art: [overlapped] When Benjamin was like...

Janine: [overlapping] It's a really good Iron Bull impersonation.

Austin: Uh huh. Yep.

Art: When Benjamin said like, 'we could put guard at the river.' I was like, [mimicking the Red Jack voice] 'That sounds like a great idea.' [**Austin**, **Dre**, **Janine**, and **Sylvia** bust out laughing]

Austin: Benjamin says,

Austin (as **Benjamin**): There's one more thing I could do. Um, but... I know how... you feel about magic. Um, so I want to ask you first, but... So, you know how...

Austin: Ands he's like, trying to think of a metaphor. His like, eyes are kind of bouncing around.

Austin (as **Benjamin**): You know how you say that when you pray to Samoths, Samoths can tell you... what's in the heart of someone? You could.. They could...

Art (as **Hadrian**): Yes.

Austin (as **Benjamin**): You can tell if someone is good or bad.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Uh huh.

Austin (as **Benjamin**): Well, I... you can do that with magic... I worked with Sunder and some other people, and I learned that I could like... Let's say you had a whole lot of bad in one place. You could... It's like a compass. It's like... I can, I can... I can align and find where it is. Except in this case, it's not what's in the hearts of people, it's not if someone's good or bad, it's like stuff. It's like... like let's say they had a bunch of Ordennan steel. I could do a spell that would let me figure out where all the Ordennan steel is. And that might... that might lead us there. That way we'd know where they are.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Yeah, that sounds like a great idea.

Austin (as **Benjamin**): You're ok with me doing it?

Austin: Again, his eyes completely brighten up.

Art (as **Hadrian**): I... I have to be, right? You've... you've grown so much. I have to trust that you've... you've gotten to a good place.

Austin: He like, [claps hands once] claps and makes fists with his hands, and like, does like a, 'yeah'. Um, and he's like,

Austin (as **Benjamin**): Alright. I'm gonna... I'm gonna take this map and um, alright. I'm gonna... I'll be right... I'll be back tonight. Er, tomorrow. Tomorrow.

Art (as **Hadrian**): You're gonna be safe, right? You're gonna be careful?

Austin (as **Benjamin**): Yeah, of course. Of course, of course. I'm not gonna leave the campus. I'm gonna do it right here. I'm gonna do it in the central tower. If you need me, I'll be on Floor 32.

Austin: And like...

Art (as Hadrian): That's a room number?

Austin (as Benjamin): Floor! Floor 32!

Austin: And he's like, running away. [laughs]

Art (as Hadrian): Oh, I thought you said 432.

Austin (as Benjamin): Floor! Like the-

Art (as Hadrian): Floor!

Austin (as Benjamin): Yeah!

Austin (as Red Jack): Your son has grown greatly in this time.

Art (as Hadrian): Yeah, it's great isn't it?

Austin (as Red Jack): It is. Do you... do you not fear him?

Art (as Hadrian): No, why would i fear my own son?

Austin (as Red Jack): Hadrian. The world has worked a certain way for quite some time. You know the stories as well as I do. Samoths and Maelgwyn. Myself and my own father. Even in your own retinue, Hella turns her back on her fatherland. Throndir, on his.

Art (as Hadrian): No, it's not gonna be like that for us. We're gonna make it work.

Austin (as Red Jack): I hope, for us both, that is true. And you are a good man. I wish mine had been like you.

Austin: And he like, does a pat on your shoulder. Um, and then pours another drink for himself. And not for you. He's just like, pour... gotta pour one for me. [laughs] Alright, Adaire, what is up?

Janine: Um, I probably know about the books and candy disappearing, right?

Austin: Yes, totally.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: Well, or at least, yeah you definitely know that that's happened. Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Janine: Yeah, that's what I mean.

Austin: I was gonna say, 'Do you know what happened?', but yeah. No.

Janine: No, that's... that's what I was gonna move for.

Austin: Yes, totally.

Janine: Um, but it seems like the kind of thing that Adaire would pick up on even if not like, right like... yeah.

Austin: Right. I think there's like a... there's like a thief sense here, which is like, 'Candy and books? Are you... What? Why books?'

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Yeah. I have theories already, but I...

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: You know. Gotta investigate.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: Um, so I think the thing Adaire is doing, and it's not particularly out of a sense of duty or anything, don't get me wrong. [laughs]

Austin: Of course not. We should go over alignments after this, by the way.

Janine: It's profession curiosity, in a sense.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: You could call it. Uh... I think there is also a degree of like, Adaire has probably heard about the thieves that left.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: And has some feelings.

Austin: Yep.

Janine: Um, but this seems like the most practical thing for her to be pursuing in a situation where she could generally do more harm than good in other areas. So, uh, I think she's like, kind of... snooping around a little bit, I guess.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: Like, this is probably.. I imagine her investigating this more in the sense of like, you know, if she was in a community that she had lived in for a year or whatever, she would probably know exactly who did it. Or something.

Austin: Right.

Janine: If it was a person within the community because she would know who's into what shit basically.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: But she doesn't have that knowledge here, so this is a case of more than... This isn't a case of her like, you know, Sherlock Holmes detective sensing her way through it. It's a question where like, 'well, I need to see all the pieces in play.'

Austin: Right.

Janine: Or I need to like, understand how this place moves a little more before I can understand who exactly would do this.

Austin: Uh huh. So, how are you going about that?

Janine: Um... I think she's probably like, starting... or probably starting with the sort of basic theory of like, 'well candy and books sounds like a thing for kids or teens'.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Um, so that's probably her first sort of stop is to like, see where they're hanging out, and sort of get a... uh... This is actually may be a good opportunity for Adaire... uh. I don't know if we... Can I just say Adaire has a candy?

Austin: Yeah, Adaire can have a candy.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Um, this just seems like funny moment to do the opposite of the whole thing with Signet...

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: ...when I was like, 'fuck candies and treats, that's... that's not Signet's... That's Adaire's style.'

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Janine: And it is. And let's just do that.

Austin: Let's just do that. Yeah.

Janine: Like, she's just going to have candy and try to... try to um, see where the interest is generated with that candy.

Austin: Yeah, so you... are you basically... is this basically like, the equivalent of some sort of gather information attempt? You're just kind of talking... you're like asking around and like, um, you know, basically bribing a bunch of kids?

[0:30:00]

Janine: I think it's actually more that Adaire is like... the person loudly unwrapping the peppermint on the train.

Austin: Oh, and seeing who tries to...

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: ...who's attention it grabs?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Where are you doing this? Where do the kids hang out at this... on campus?

Janine: Probably the gaming and rec hall, right?

Austin: Yeah. I think so.

Janine: I feel like... I feel like it's probably like that alley I created for Adaire to hang out in is probably where also people like...

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: ...go to secretly smoke clove cigarettes and shit like that.

Austin: 100%. So...

Janine: So, this is probably a crowd she's already accidentally falling in with.

Austin: Yeah. So, I think...

Janine: To a degree.

Austin: I think this is like, the thing that I want here is Defy Danger, either char... I think it's charisma, in a sense. But the danger... I guess this is... it's not a Defy Danger cause you're not... you're not... It's not an imminent threat. The thing you want here is like, to get attention, right? Um...

Janine: I... So, the reason I accidentally rolled Discern Realities was because I was thinking of this move, and was like does this count as closely studying a situation?

Austin: Yeah, I think so.

Janine: But I've created a situation.

Austin: Yeah, I think so. Totally. Definitely.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: Do you want to just let that roll stand?

Janine: I mean, shit, sure. I get a plus 1 on that though, but yeah.

Austin: Ok, well, then you got a 12. It's fine. Um, so yeah. So, so, you're walking through this gaming rec hall in the alleyways nearby and I keep... I just imagine you just like continually popping peppermints, and like there's maybe like, a few hanging out of your pocket in a very obvious way. You know?

Janine: Yeah. Yes.

Austin: Maybe you drop one once?

Janine: Totally.

Austin: So, Discern Realities says when you closely study a situation or person roll + wis, on a 10+ ask the GM three questions from the list below. On a 7-9, ask 1. So, you're asking three of these, and remember to take +1 forward on the answer. What happened here recently? What's about to happen? What should I be on the lookout for? What here is useful or valuable to me? Who's really in control here? And what here is not what it appears to be?

Janine: I want 'what is about to happen?'.

Austin: [overlapping] Um, ok. Uh, do want to ask...?

Janine: [overlapping] 'What should I be'...

Austin: Yeah, go ahead.

Janine: Oh.

Austin: Go ahead and ask them all, and then I'll answer.

Janine: Ok. What is about to happen? Actually no, I should ask them... I should ask them one at a time.

Austin: Ok.

Janine: We've had this problem before.

Austin: Alright, so then... yeah, you're right. So, first one was 'What is about to happen?' Um, there is a... Uh, there are a pair of kids. I'd say one of them is probably around 12. And one of them's 15. Um, and the 15 year old is um, in front of you. And she is uh... very obviously eyeing your candy. Right? Um, and the thing that's about to happen is, the second kid is the one behind who is like, 12 years old. And he is about to cut your purse and take it. And take all your money. Um, they're playing. They're trying to play you. They're trying to be like...

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: 'Oh this lady has all this candy. We want that candy.'

Janine: That's cute.

Austin: So, that's what's about to happen.

Janine: Um, alright.

Austin: The girl in front of you is like, again 15. She has like, very fluffy hair. She's.. She's like, she's white. She has fluffy, bright orange hair. It's like, um, kind of framing her face in like a, almost like an upside down 'u' shape. Do you know what I mean? But like, has like long side bangs on both sides. Um, and it's very like, dense hair. It's like very like, not voluminous in like a TV commercial way, voluminous as in, there's a lot of hair there. And then, the boy behind you who's cutting your purse, is very clearly her younger brother, and is like, you know... He's not eating enough and is clearly like, a little, a little dirty and you don't know who's taking care of these kids, you know?

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: His hair is buzzed.

Janine: Um, what here is useful or valuable to me?

Austin: Um, you... So, one of the things I want to do this season, especially when you've asked this question is to answer it in a way that's just literal. So, I do a lot of like, 'ah, metaphorically, what is useful or valuable to you?'

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: You see where their stash is. You see that her eyes actually go behind him, and based on just knowing this alleyway really well, there is like a barrel that's supposed to be filled with like, oil or something. And if you slide that barrel away, you suspect you will find a little hole dug out, either in the ground or underneath the foundation a building. That is where they just keep all their shit. All their stolen goods. So, that is literally what is valuable. What is useful is that they don't know this, but the back entrance, the one behind um... They would probably know this.

No, I'm gonna say they wouldn't for this one day. For whatever reason, today, maybe it's like, every third Thursday of the month, they have to close this alleyway on the north side so that they can do like, a cleaning. A street cleaning or a you know, whatever it is. There's some reason that the northern gate closes in this alleyway, and they clearly don't remember that because you know... you have like, you're thief sense like, they're gonna cut you purse and then run that direction. But they're gonna hit a dead end.

Janine: Ok. Um... Uh, I don't know what other question I need.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Um...

Austin: I can see stuff that would be interesting still.

Janine: Who's really in control here?

Austin: So, uh, there's a couple of ways to answer this question, but one of them is I think you probably can tell like, you've given these 2 kids... Not just these 2 kids. You suddenly recognize there is something shared between a number of these kids. Cause like, these are the 2 who are scamming you, but there are other ones around. Others ones you've walked past and dealt with, blah, blah, blah. You know, other... you've given up your fair share of peppermints at this point, but they're clearly not the ones in charge, you know?

These 2 are, and you notice suddenly that there are... every now and then there is someone who is like, got a good pair of shoes on or like, a nice cloak. And I think you keep seeing like, there's like, the glimpse of a symbol on most of them. Um, and you finally see on... she has like, a necklace on. Her name is Rix. And Rix has a necklace on and it is... has a symbol on it. Um, and it is the symbol of Samoths. So, it is like, that circle. That's right, right Art? It's a ring?

Art: Yep. Uh huh. Modern... modern Samoths is the circle.

Austin: Including the Creed of the Dark... yeah, the Creed of the Dark Son, right? They both had the same symbol. That was like, part of the big revelation, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, so it's that...

Art: Well, because the... yeah.

Austin: Cause it's the signature of...

Art: I mean, if anything the Dark Son...

Austin: Right.

Art: ...would have started using the circle and supplanted the rest of it.

Austin: Right, so it's that symbol. It is like, an open ring circle on a pendant, basically around her neck. So, who is really in control here? For whatever reason, the church of Samoths, like the Creed of the Dark Son, whatever you want to call it is supplying them with like, better stuff. Presumably they're buying that stuff from them or they're being... or they're being gifted it. By which I mean, you've definitely just still Sherlock Holmes'ed this whole thing.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Like, 'Ah ha!'

Janine: But in a way that I think is like, wildly plausible for Adaire.

Austin: Yes, yes. Totally.

Janine: In this very specific situation.

Austin: I mean, you've been to a cult of the Dark Sun place, right? So, like we get Adaire...

Janine: Yes.

Austin: ...specifically remembering seeing that symbol in a more...

Janine: But also, Adaire knows what non-religious child gangs look like.

Austin: Yes. Yeah, totally. Totally. And like, yeah you're gonna take the fucking religious place's... stuff. Of course you will.

Janine: Like that's... Yeah. That's fully, I think, why would see through this scam is like, she ran this scam.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: Like, a long time ago. She knows this.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: So, what do you do?

Janine: Uh, I'm trying to think of the coolest possible way to foil the purse cutting kid.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: And like, there's a way to do it that's cool and a way to do it that's honest. Uh, either one is certainly a roll, but you know what I mean. Um...[sighs] I honestly just think that Adaire wouldn't have a purse without some kind of cut-proof lining.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I feel like, I mean, cut-proof has its limits, of course. That's what I mean.

Austin: I was gonna say, listen, technology is always advancing, right?

Janine: Yeah, yeah. No, that's... that's what I mean. But I just mean like, for her to have run a purse cutting...

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: ...scam, and then have a purse that is as easily cut as any purse she ever cut seems silly.

Austin: Yeah, but if she was....

Janine: So, it seems like the resistance here should be related to that. Is what I mean.

Austin: If Adaire was a teenager now, how would she cut this purse? Cause she'd figure it out, right?

Janine: No, I... what I mean is that like... [sighs]

Austin: Like I don't think there's a roll here that's like, roll your equipment. Do you know what I mean?

Janine: I think... I think... well, I mean, I think it'd be like if it fails or not. Like, I don't... cause like, cut-proof in this sense is like, she's not gonna have a chainmail purse.

Austin: No.

Janine: But she's gonna have like, a couple extra layers of leather or something at the bottom. Um, that's what I mean is like, is the roll there... does the knife go through that? Or...

Austin: The roll there is what you do to prevent danger. That is the like, that is the way the system works, right? It is... you're...

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: This is going to be a Defy Danger. And so, for me, it's a question of like, if this was a thing we'd established already in the system where you had spent money on a thing that prevents you from being...

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: ...that prevents you from being pickpocketed. Or, or, or actually, wait. You do have a move for this, right? Because...

Janine: Uh, I have a lot of moves.

Austin: I know.

Janine: I do have a move that prevents someone from striking first.

Austin: Yeah. So like, I think that's a thing here. That you could...

Janine: That makes sense.

Austin: That.. So, Shoot First. You're never caught by surprise. When the enemy would get the drop on you, you get to act first instead. I think that's what it is then. I think that like, in this case, I'm happy to say that that fires because you have this... this lining. Right? So, the first cut comes to remove the purse, but instead it just drops into another pocket deeper in your coat or whatever, you know? Um...

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And at that point, this little boy whose name is Rowe just has like, a little dagger like, looking for where to cut next, and is kind of caught up in your coat. What do you do?

Janine: Um... I think what Adaire does is uh... I think Adaire like... I think Adaire like takes his wrist to sort of get him untangled.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: With kind of this like... I imagine her trying to do this with like, the sort of frustrated patience of someone who like, has a squirrel get caught in like, a thing in their yard.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: And it's just like, 'Ok, you just need to fucking... just hold still.'

Austin: 'Just chill.'

Janine: 'I'm not gonna hurt you.'

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: 'Just relax. We'll sort this out. Just, I need you to just fucking, yeah. Calm down.'

Austin: Um, I think like, as you're doing that, Rix who is the girl is like,

Austin (as Rix): Let him go right now!

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah, I'm trying.

Austin: And like, pulls out a... and she... so she goes like... She's like, going to pull out a knife. And she's like,

Austin (as Rix): Rowe, get over here.

Austin: And Rowe like, is still struggling with you, and then like,

Austin (as Rowe): Ahh.

Austin: And like, drops the dagger and then runs over to his sister. His big sister. And like, is trying so hard not to look like he's cowering behind her, um, and she's like,

Austin (as Rix): Run!

Austin: And he does. He turns and runs, and then you hear him like, shaking the gate at the other end of the alleyway. And she is like... holds up the knife to you and says,

Austin (as Rix): Give me everything you have.

Janine (as Adaire): Ok. You two are very trapped.

Austin (as Rix): You're the one who's trapped. You're surrounded by our people.

Janine (as Adaire): Ok. I mean...

Austin: And she goes like,

Austin (as Rix): Ka-kaw!

Austin: And then like, you hear someone else go,

Austin (as unnamed NPC): Ka-kaw.

Austin: Somewhere. But you know this scam, too. And this is definitely, yeah, they have like, they have like an agreement to make that noise, as if to intimidate someone.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: But no one's gonna come try to kill you.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Maybe. Probably. I don't know. With this cult involved, who the fuck knows honestly.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: But you did not sense anything... you've done your detect hidden shit, and there's not like, an ambush waiting to be sprung on you.

Janine (as Adaire): Um... Alright, I... you know, I'm just gonna... I'm just gonna be honest here, kid. I'm very familiar with this thing you're doing. 'Cause this thing is old as shit. It was old when I was doing it. To be honest with you. I'm not... I'm not here to like, bust you or whatever. I... That's not my thing. I also don't particularly care to harm you or your brother. So, you can tell him to stop rattling that fucking gate because it's not gonna do anything. Uh... What are you... what are you guys doing? Why are you... People will give stuff, if you need it. Like, why are you...?

Austin (as Rix): No, they won't. No one gives you anything in this world. You have to take it.

Janine (as Adaire): That's fucking... that's fair as hell, but like, you know, they'll keep you alive here as best they can.

Austin: I think this is a Parley. Yeah. Um, so, cause you want her to talk to you about stuff, right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Um, so give me a Parley which says, why is it... Where'd my sheet go? There it is. Behind me. There we go. Um, when you have leverage on a GM character and manipulate them, roll + charisma. Leverage is something that they need or want. In this case, it's: you just said that people will take care of them. And so like, they're interested in that. On a 10+, they do what you ask, if you first promise what they ask of you. On a 7-9, they will do what you ask, but need concrete assurance of your promise right now. So, go...

[0:45:00]

Janine: Also, I have Bamboozle which if I successfully parley, it gives me a +1 forward.

Austin: Totally. And you already have a +1 forward on this roll now.

Janine: Yes.

Austin: So, make sure you get that in too. Which you can do at the top...

Janine: Yeah, in the... yeah.

Austin: ... at the top of the page.

Janine: At the top of the page?

Austin: Yeah, if you scroll up, there's a thing that just says +1 forward. If you click that, it automatically adds that to your roll.

Janine: Oh dang. Ok.

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh.

Janine: I was just gonna put it in the whatever.

Austin: Uh huh. That is a 9. Ooo, $2 + 3 + 3 + 1$. Wow, that's a bad roll for someone with 18 charisma. [**Janine** laughs] But I think it's appropriate in this situation, right? Where...

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: ...Rix is like, you say people...

Janine: I also probably don't entirely 100% believe what I am saying.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Totally.

Janine: I like, believe it cause I was told it...

Austin: Right. Right.

Janine: ...but is like, 'Nah, this is not how the world works.' But whatever.

Austin: So, she goes like,

Austin (as Rix): Prove it. When we work with other people, they show us up front that they want to take care of us. So, take care of us. You know? Toss me some coins. What do you got? I bet you have... I bet you have 12 coins on you right now. Give me half. Give me 6.

Austin: [laughs] I just looked at your coins. [**Janine** laughs]

Janine (as Adaire): Sure.

Austin: You have 98 coin.

Janine: Yeah. I'll toss her 6 coins and some candy for her trouble.

Austin: You know, 6 coins is not nothing, you know? I'll put it that way.

Janine: No, especially when you're a kid.

Austin: Totally. With 6 coins, you could get... Let's see. A run of the mill killing. Oh, well, that was the first one I saw here. [**Janine** laughs] That's good. A run of the mill killing and that's only 5. With 1 more, you could get a month's prayers for the departed. So, honestly...

Janine: Cause both of those things sound great here right now.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, uh huh. Um, but you know, 6 coins is not nothing, so. She... do you like, toss it to her? What do you... how do you... how do you give it to her?

Janine: Um, I think I toss it to her... er no. I think what happens is I, uh, I think I pick up her brother's dagger...

Austin: Yes.

Janine: ...and then like, hold it out hilt first in one hand. And then in the other hand, I have the 6 coins and the candy.

Austin: Right. Um, I think she like, very cautiously approaches you, and she takes the... she takes the dagger first. She like... she's... not sure about which to take first. But she takes the dagger first and then sheathes it, and then take the coins. And she says,

Austin (as Rix): Alright, come with me.

Austin: And she calls back. She goes,

Austin (as Rix): Rowe, she's alright. I got some candy for you.

Austin: And Rowe like, rushes back. [**Janine** and Austin laugh softly] And she like, slips Rowe some candy. And Rix and Rowe lead you to, uh, where do they actually hang out? Like, what is the teen... the teen like... what's the thing in Saved By the Bell called? What's the name of that little diner in Saved By the Bell?

Art: Oh, I've been to a replica of that this year. And I don't remember.

Janine: [overlapping] Is it like, The Spot or something?

Austin: [overlapping] Is it like, Max's or something?

Janine: I think it's Max's, that sounds right.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: It's the... The Max is what it was called.

Janine: Ok.

Art: Yeah, cause this thing was called, 'Take it to The Max.'

Janine: Hmm.

Austin: Ok so... what is the fantasy Hieron version of The Max? We only get to answer this question one time.

Janine: Is there still snow everywhere?

Austin: No. No.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: We're firmly in spring. Spring has 2 seasons.

Janine: Ok. I wasn't sure.

Austin: Spring is a season in the sense of Hieron...

Janine: [overlapped] Cause it's all white.

Austin: ...but spring also has 2 seasons. It is... It has a wet season and a dry season. We are in the dry season currently.

Janine: Um...

Austin: Like, is it just, is it another name? Is it like, you know, George's?

Art: Lem's.

Austin: Lem's. Yeah, wait a second.

Janine: Uh...

Dre: What if that's just the new incarnation of Red Jack's old Marielda bar?

Austin: It could be. Right?

Dre: Just a weird, teen diner hangout.

Austin: God.

Janine: It's just like a shed with a horse? [**Dre** laughs]

Austin: Kids love it. You know? Teens, they fucking eat it up.

Janine: Kids love a horse bar.

Austin: Um, you know what it probably is? Is it's probably some sort of bar that was here like... like restaurant that was here before already. Um, because this was a school, right?

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: This was a school already, and it's probably like, the on-campus, shitty...

Janine: They're hanging out in the caf, you're telling me?

Austin: They're hanging out in the... Well, no, cause we know the caf is the meeting hall, so this has to be something else. Like, I don't know how your schools have been, but when I...

Janine: The satellite caf?

Austin: Yeah, like there's always like, a second...

Janine: The second Tim Horton's that doesn't accept debit?

Austin: Exactly. The second Tim Horton's that doesn't accept debit. The like, secret place that's like, halfway across campus, but actually their burgers are way better. Um...

Art: Like the Rathskeller in Hofstra?

Austin: Like the Rathskeller, yeah. Is it called... It could be the Rathskeller. That's a fantasy-ass name, isn't it?

Art: Yeah, we should find out who that real person was.

Dre: Yeah, one at my college was The Eternal Mountain Cafe.

Austin: Wow, that's great, too. Um, I kind of like The Rathskeller or Rathskeller means council's cellar. It's the German-speaking countries for a bar or restaurant located in the basement of a city hall.

Art: Oh.

Austin: Yeah, that's interesting. That makes sense, right? Based on where it was.

Art: Yeah, it was in the basement. I just assumed it was some, you know, Jim Rathskeller gave them a bunch of money, I didn't figure it was.

Austin: Yeah, no. The word had been used in English since the mid-19th century, with at least one New York restaurant calling itself a rathskeller in the 19th century. Yeah, it's the Rathskeller. And I think it's underneath... underneath what has become the Archive Trading House which was built inside of some sort of like, similar student center or... or maybe it was like, inside of the like, um... uh, the equivalent of the president's office, you know. Or the dean's... maybe the Archive Trading House is originally like, the dean's house? And so, the Rathskeller is underneath that. So, it's underneath the gaming and rec hall and the Lending Library and everything else.

I'm gonna add it to the map. In fact, there's already this little square here that I just kind of thought was neat and now I'm just gonna add the word Rathskeller to it. [typing] Uh, so yeah. They take you into like, a little like... around a corner and like, down into a little basement thing. And it is like most... it's like between 15 and 21 people who hang out here, right? Um, but like, everyone makes an exception for Rowe. Rowe is definitely the youngest kid here at 12, but Rowe hangs with Rix, and Rix is kind of a big deal. So, they're allowed. You enter, and it feels like you're a chaperone.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And Rix is like,

Austin (as Rix): It's cool.

Austin: And leads you to like a back booth. And there's definitely music here. Like, there's only people playing like the fiddle and there's lots of talking and there's lots of... er there are lots of the equivalent of Hieron red cups down here. Um, which I think are just really cheap wooden

cups that are like, tall wooden cups instead of glass cups. And yeah, they... she leads you to this booth and sits down and lights a candle and says like,

Austin (as Rix): Alright. Where do we begin?

Austin: And we'll cut there and go to Ephrim. Ephrim, what are you up to?

Sylvia: Uh, I think the first thing I want to do is check out that tree.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Just because like, sickness is already a big issue here.

Austin: It is.

Sylvia: And if there's something that's causing it within like, even more...

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: ... then I want to take care of that.

Austin: So, Emmanuel leads you to the middle of this... this farm. You can see that it kind of, it's outside the walls of the school, but inside of the starstuff. Um, and I want to say it's at the southern side of this... of this farm. Kind of dead in the middle in terms of the width of it. Um, and there is a tree there. Uh, I... you know, I didn't really decide what type of tree it was. [typing] Let me look at some trees real quick. I think it's just like, a nice, small elm tree. Um, yeah. Yeah. So, kind of... kind of weird because you know, you don't visit this farm that often, but you've been here before. And there was not a sapling here that long ago... you know, that recently. Um, and he points to it, and he says,

Austin (as Emmanuel): Here it is.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): When did it... when did it sprout up again?

Austin (as Emmanuel): I first saw the leaves a week and a half ago, and told the owners of the farm. And they said keep an eye on it. But they did not know if it was dangerous. Or what. Plants being what they are these days, you know?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Uh huh. Alright. I do have another question. And um, feel free not to answer if you don't want to talk about it. That cough of yours... did that start around the same time that this showed up?

Austin (as Emmanuel): [pauses] You know, the... the way we are, coughs come and go. This one... This one's recent. I couldn't tell you for sure.

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

Sylvia: Um, I think what I want to do here, uh, is I want to... I mean we... I'm not sure if Discern Realities or Spout Lore would be more int... like, useful to studying the tree here.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Um, so I'm trying to pick between the two, but I definitely want to do some sort of like, studying on this here.

Austin: Yeah, so like, how would Ephrim go about studying this, is the question.

Sylvia: [sighs] I think part of it is like, we are in a place with a lot of knowledge, and we have a lot of things that we can compare with using that... those resources.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: And presumably within the 8+ years Ephrim's been here, he's read a bit about this. Especially as plant life becomes, you know...

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: ...kind of a threat.

Austin: Totally. That feels like Spout... hmmm... This is new, so it actually wouldn't be like...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: ...these types of plant things aren't in the libraries. It's one of the weird things about it.

Sylvia: Exactly, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think what I... by using... that's one of the things that is like, 'oh, this is completely different from that stuff.'

Austin: Yes. Yeah, I got you. Cool, cool, cool.

Sylvia: ...and that's... yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, give me a um... that sounds like a Spout Lore then.

Sylvia: Alright. So, 14!

Austin: God damn. Nice roll.

Sylvia: I got +2 on intelligence, so you know.

Austin: There you go. So Spout Lore says, when you consult your accumulated knowledge about something, roll +INT. On a 10+, I will tell you something interesting and useful about the subject relevant to your situation. Um, I might ask you, how do you know this? Tell me the truth. You already kind of did. So, this is... this is... There are plenty of examples of um, fast-growing plants in the history of Hieron, right? Um, this is a thing that like, there are entire schools of magic about it. Entire schools of agriculture about it, right?

I've said this kind of privately to you and I think on the Discord, but like, the Last University is a university. It is not just a magic school, right? Like, there are entire, you know, library wings just devoted to agriculture. Just devoted to mathematics. Just devoted to architecture, right? Like, this is... this is a... it's a School in the capital 'S'... Like, it is just a school. It happens to also teach magic because magic is one of the things that exists in this world. It doesn't teach computer science cause there aren't computers. But instead it teaches magic cause there's magic.

And so yeah, I think you have... when the plants first started showing up, you started reading about past magical plant-type things. And there are a bunch of different ways to do it, right? Um, but what you know unifies all of them is some sort of special fertilizer. The way that you get a plant to grow fast is that you, you know... some um, farmers used special fertilizer. They made it so the plant would... would like, respond really well to one type of fertilizer that would make it grow remarkably quick so long as it was also getting enough sunlight and water or whatever. Other mages did a thing... or other people would do something with magic where they made it so that a plant could use anything as fertilizer. Use more things as fertilizer. That way if a crop, you know, sucked all the iron out of the soil or whatever, it would switch to using something else that was in the soil, right?

Um, there was all sorts of different plays on that, but it all comes down to fertilizer, which tells you that the reason this thing is growing so fast is... it's... whatever it's eating, it's... there's a lot of it. Um, or it has a lot of things to basically eat and turn into new matter. Um, and so that is... that is your educated answer to what's happening here with why it's growing. But you also do recognize, this is not from any of those books. You've never read about this particular thing.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Austin: Um, and so, who could say? Your guess is it's part of the spring. It's part of Alyosha's spring. You don't know who Alyosha is, but you know.

Sylvia: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Austin: You know there's been all these new flora, so.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Do we cut it or...?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): I'm not sure. My worry with cutting it is that we don't know how this thing spreads its seeds. And that might end up with more of them here. Um... what we could do for now is um, maybe fence it off a bit. And we can monitor the growing, and if it becomes a problem, then we'll get rid of it, but... for now, I just don't know what the issue with this is. Um...

Austin (as Emmanuel): Great.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Honest, honest. I don't know what's causing it, but I know... I think we can figure it out given some more time.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Ok. Ok.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): I'm not.. I'm not gonna just leave you here with this tree and ignore it. Trust me. [Austin laughs softly] This is something that is very... you know.

Austin (as Emmanuel): It's funny you say that. You won't leave me here with this tree. Anyway, um... Thank you.. so much, Lord.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Your welcome. Uh, please keep me posted on if anything else strange happens with this. We need to keep an eye on it.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Of course. Of course.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Thank you, Emmanuel.

Austin: And he like, shakes his head and heads back inside for the night. Um, before we continue, let's go over quickly alignment and bonds. So that we're all on the same page. Hadrian.

Art: Hey.

Austin: What is your alignment, and what are your bonds?

Art: Um, my alignment is 'Good. Suffer or endure hardship so that someone else does not have to.'

Austin: Uh huh.

[1:00:00]

Art: Um, I only have one changed bond. 3 of these are my last... last season bonds, but I thought they were all fine.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: Now that I'm looking at it, maybe Adaire just needs a rewording.

Austin: Yeah. Probably.

Art: And I'll start with that one. 'Adaire has a silver tongue, but metals are only sacred if they're blessed.' Um, Hella and Fero are both the same. Hella is 'I trust Hella to carry me through troubled times. I don't trust her sense of direction.' I honestly feel like that might just still be true. [Austin laughs] Uh, Fero. 'Fun is fun, but Fero would let my family die, never trust him.' I just really haven't hung out with Fero since then, so it's gotta just be my last...

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: ...impression. Uh, 'Thrandir has been through hard times and come out on the other side. He is a valued friend.'

Austin: Ok. Uh, Adaire. Let's go to you.

Janine: Uh...my alignment is chaotic. 'Break an unjust law to benefit another.' Um, my bonds. Hadrian. 'Hadrian is not an immovable rock, do not use him as a foothold.' 'Lem is a river in need of a dam, give him shape and guidance.' [Austin laughs] I love to be condescending.

Austin: That's extremely funny for another reason which is, we learned last episode that you haven't heard this yet, but you know that river that you arrived on?

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: Lem made that. 10 years ago.

Janine: Damn.

Austin: When Lem flooded the stoneworks, that just kept happening, and so that's now a river. It's been 10 years of the faucet being open. Um, so, yeah. River in need of a dam.

Janine: Great.

Austin: 100% Yeah.

Janine: Cool. Huh. Alright.

Art: I thought you were gonna be like, Lem's dead. He's in the river. [Austin, Sylvia, and Janine laugh]

Austin: Yeah, you guys haven't heard the last episode yet. Lem died, uh he's in the river.

Janine: Uh, my last one is Hella. 'Hella's loyalty is a tremendous and unreliable asset. Cultivate it actively.'

Austin: Great. Uh, let's go to Throndir.

Dre: Um, I have Ephrim. 'Ephrim never wavered during the worst years of the Last University, so I will always heed his counsel.'

Austin: Hm.

Dre:Um, Fero. 'I'm not sure if Fero knows what it means to help someone besides himself.'

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre:And Hadrian. 'I'm not sure I can look at Hadrian the same way after learning he willingly gave Benjamin over to Arrell.'

Austin: We should have that scene.

Dre:Uh huh.

Austin: And let's go with Ephrim.

Art: 'Gave over to' is such a simplistic...

Austin: Uh huh. Right, but remember. Throndir doesn't... wasn't there. Throndir doesn't know what that scene looked like, right? All Throndir knows is that Arrell said Hadrian gave his son to me.

Art: Weren't we still hanging out then?

Austin: No. Or like, not... that happened right before you left for the... for the Buoy. Um, so Throndir was not at that scene. We asked if anybody else was at that scene. No one else was at that scene.

Art: Sure. Yeah.

Austin: Um, and then finally, Ephrim.

Sylvia: Oh, good transition. I'll do my bonds first.

Austin: Sure.

Sylvia: Cause my first one's for Hadrian. And it's, 'I owe Hadrian and his family for bringing his son back to this dying world.'

Dre: Wow.

Austin: [laughing] Fuck. Good shit.

Sylvia: Yeah. So, you know.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Guilt is a fun trend.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Um, Throndir is 'Throndir helped me get where I am today, and I owe them for it.' Um, and Fero, I might reword this a little, but uh, the sentiment will always remain the same. 'Fero is always welcome, but never expected.'

Austin: Ok. A thing to think about...

Sylvia: And my alignment is neutral. 'Increase prestige of yourself or your stronghold.'

Austin: Cool. [overlapped] A thing to...

Art: Um, I mean, I, of course, haven't heard all of the other bonds, but like, who's cool with Fero right now?

Austin: Fero? Fer... Uh, Ephrim, right? Fero... uh, Ephrim isn't anti-Fero. Fero is always welcome, but never expected is at least, like...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin:on the line.

Janine: If I had a bond with Fero, it'd probably be fine.

Sylvia: Yeah. It's...

Austin: Yeah, Adaire seems Fero adjacent.

Sylvia: He's my pal, but he's not a very reliable one.

Austin: Right.

Sylvia: Is kind of, what I was trying to get across there.

Austin: Totally. Um, what I will say it, it's a good idea to start thinking about being willing to resolve some of these bonds or erase them at the end of this session and write new ones so that you can cash in on them. They're a good source of XP. And they're really good once you

have a good feeling for what an arc is gonna be to make them about a specific thing. Um, one of the tips that I gave to um, to the Isle... the Isle of Flight part was that like, you can do very specific ones, so like, Hella's was um, for Lem is, 'I've seen Lem lost, but I know his instincts to learn are good. I hope to learn something important about the Isles with him.'

So that like, ;Ok, I've learned something important about the isles with him. I can mark that off and make a new one.' Because you can resolve up to one per session which gives you XP, so something to think about as you... as you continue to work through these. I'd love for those to be a more living thing this season than they have been in the past. Partially because it's just good for XP for everybody, but also partially because this is a season about newness and about kind of, you know, being reborn over and over again. So... worth thinking about.

Ok. So, Ephrim, you've checked out that tree. What else is popping? What else is going on here? Let's say it's the next day, right? That was... or no. Let's come back to Adaire. Cause Adaire still is doing stuff this night, right? Um, cause everybody else kind of wrapped their day. So, Adaire you're back in the Rathskeller. Talk to me about what you're trying to get out of Nix and Rowe here... or Rix and Rowe here.

Janine: Um, I think I'm trying to uh, figure out who their doing stuff for.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Janine: Um, like I want to know like, you know, what's the split on those coins, I gave you, basically.

Austin: Oh. Yeah. Oh.

Janine: I think that's probably a thing that Adaire's just like... Do you keep those 6 coins? Or like, what's...?

Austin: Rix is like,

Austin (as Rix): Oh yeah.

Janine: She probably does say literally like,

Janine (as Adaire): What's the split?

Janine: Just presuming there is one.

Austin: Um, she says like,

Austin (as Rix): No split. Anything we take is ours. Um, we do special jobs. That's the split. And we always make sure that we get... If there's wording, you know, in the contract to assure that we get ours. But for day to day stuff...

Austin: And also, imagine maybe we come in when you're already telling them about a heist or like, a job you did or like, a scam that you ran. Like, you've earned their trust at this point, right? This is not like, the next thing you said. Um, but yeah. She's like,

Austin (as Rix): You know, we do our best to make sure we're fed before we uh... whenever we do anything here, but when we... when we take a job here or there, you know, normally it's a specific goal. Someone wants a specific thing or they want to make sure no one finds out about something else or they want something erased. And so, you know, we'll play eraser and on the way out, we'll grab that fancy candelabra, you know?

Janine (as Adaire): Or some candy.

Austin: She shoots Rowe a look.

Austin (as Rix): [sighs] Or some candy.

Austin: And Rowe is like... Rowe like shrugs and smiles, and there's just like, chocolate in his teeth. And she's like... she like, grabs a rag and like, wipes his teeth clean.

Austin (as Rix): He's young, but he's... he's a natural.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah.

Austin (as Rix): So, wait. You still do all this stuff, huh?

Janine (as Adaire): Eh.

Austin (as Rix): I always thought that like, when you get old have have to become a guard or like, an accountant.

Janine (as Adaire): I mean... I don't pick pockets generally, unless I have a very, very, very good reason to. Um, you know, as you get older, you know... accountant is an interesting example. Um, cause accountants are often still thieves. So, yes, you're not wrong.

Austin: This just falls like, completely She is not savvy enough to get what you mean.

Janine: No, that's fine.

Janine (as Adaire): Um, you know, I... uh, yeah. It's... the routine evolves. And if your smart, you get out of the small stuff, the dangerous stuff, as soon as possible. And stick to the safer... higher level...

Austin (as Rix): Hmm.

Janine (as **Adaire**): ...routines.

Austin (as **Rix**): I got you.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Uh huh.

Austin (as **Rix**): So, I mean...

Janine (as **Adaire**): The stuff you're doing now... there's a... there's a real hard ceiling, you know? It's not like... When I was growing up... when I was growing up and doing this shit in Velas, there was no ceiling. There were as many people as I cared to take from, at all levels. If I felt better stealing from certain kinds of people than others, I had that choice. You don't have as much of a choice in that, and the people you're taking from, you know [sighs] There's a limit on how well anyone's doing here, right?

Austin (as **Rix**): Yeah. You notice people coughing lately? I think something's going around.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Yeah. I used to make a lot of money off stuff like that.

Austin (as **Rix**): You got out of that one, too?

Janine (as **Adaire**): Yeah.

Austin (as **Rix**): So, wait. What scams are you running right now? Can I get cut in? I... I'm really advanced. I know I'm young, but...

Austin: And like, she rattles off the names of like, 4 high level scams that you know the names of. It's like... like, naming a magic trick. Do you know what I mean?

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: Like... like, three card monty, you know?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Or like, some set of you know, fun cons that I don't know the names of.

Janine: The Keepsy Punk Roll or something.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. The Kansas City Shuffle...

Janine: I mean those are all... That's the thing.

Austin: The Locksmith Scam.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: I'm looking at real ones. These are great. The Pigeon Drop.

Janine: Yeah. Um...

Austin: The Pig in a Poke, you know, classic. The Badger Game.

Art: What's the Pigeon Drop?

Austin: The Pigeon Drop is a confidence trick in which a mark, or pigeon is persuaded to give up a sum of money in order to secure the rights to a larger sum of money or more valuable object. [Dre laughs] Yeah, man, this thing is a great...

Art: I don't want to be on the side of con artists here, but like...

Janine: Too late.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah, wait. [Ande laughs] Oh, you mean in real life.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: Too late.

Art: But like, if you're like, I'm gonna give you money for more money, that's always a scam.

Austin: That's always a scam, yeah. Uh huh.

Janine: Works for those emails.

Austin: It does. Um...

Janine: Um, I think Adaire like, laughs a little, and is like, you know...

Janine (as Adaire): When you're doing a scam with a... when you're...

Janine: She doesn't say scam. Um, she might say grift. [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: You know, when you're... no she calls it a routine.

Janine (as Adaire): When you're running a routine with a name, someone's always already gonna be wise to it. Like, if you're running on someone else's material, someone already knows the ending. It's not...

Austin (as Rix): Yeah.

Janine (as Adaire): You want to get away from that. It's good... it's good to cut your teeth on, but you get to a certain point where either you don't need it or if you do need it, you shouldn't be in the business anymore.

Austin (as Rix): I gotcha. I gotcha. I'm hip. Um, so what... what...

Austin: She's like, trying so hard to be an adult.

Austin (as Rix): So, I mean, what are you... what do you... Do you got like a taste of something?

Janine: I'm trying to think of like, the best way for Adaire to explain this weird thing where she's like, accidentally kind of legit.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine (as Adaire): You know, at this stage of things, I like to think of myself a little more as a facilitator or broker.

Austin (as Rix): You're like a fixer. You're like a middle man. You're like a... like a...

Janine (as Adaire): A little bit. I can do a little bit of everything at this point, if uh...

Austin (as Rix): Ok. Alright, well then, do you have anything for us? Because these guys who are working us right now, I think... I don't know.

Janine (as Adaire): They're not cool? You're not comfortable with...?

Austin (as Rix): They pay real well.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah.

Austin (as Rix): Um, but I'll put it this way. I always make sure I'm the one talking to them. I don't ever send anybody else because I don't... I just don't trust them.

Janine (as Adaire): Hmm.

Austin (as Rix): They're like, churchy types.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah.

Austin (as Rix): But they got flash.

Austin: And she shows like.... She like, looks at the pendant and says like,

Austin (as Rix): Look.

Austin: And she's like,

Austin (as Rix): And this thing's gotten me out of trouble more than once. People around here see it, they think, 'Oh, poor kid. She says all her prayers at night, and she still has a hungry belly, so like, here's a couple coins.' You know? But... but yeah. When I meet them, they all have this really weird look in their eyes about just everything. They always act... a good... a good contract I always know is safe because the person telling me about it knows it's dangerous.

When they tell me something, when they say go get this book or you know, draw this symbol on the side of the tower or you know, make sure the left gate is open, the west gate is open or whatever, it's always like, you know... Uum, they think it's definitely gonna happen. Like it's predetermined or some shit. I wouldn't even work with them at all except you know, the Moonlighters made that connection for me. I want to get in with the Moonlighters, so... [sighs]

Janine: Do I know who the Moonlighters are?

Austin: You get the impr... You get the impression that the Moonlighters' Guild is who Blake Bromley is part of slash helps run. And they are the thieves who left this place. That was the name of the like...

Janine: Right.

Austin: ... the oddjob guild, basically. Or the... yeah, we'll take... we'll take care of stuff for you, whatever it is. Whether it's plumbing or disposing of bodies. We can take care of it. Um, and that is the name of it. They are... They've kind of become Hieron wide in the last few years. The sort of like, big picture thief guild franchise, you know?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And they've spread everywhere, but they don't really have any few here, and so Rix really wants to become the kind of like... I think she straight up says like,

Austin (as Rix): I really want to... you know, the Moonlighters haven't been here in a few years, and when I was a kid, I always wanted to like, get in, so that would be really cool if I could be the person who like, makes it happen. You know? Brings them back.

Janine (as **Adaire**): You think you're gonna do that by doing jobs for weird church people?

Austin (as **Rix**): We got to get a stash together, and then we got to learn the lay of the land and build contacts. Anyway, it's getting weird because they seem to think something big is coming. And they won't tell me what. And so, I'm kind of getting a little skittish.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Yeah.

Austin (as **Rix**): Anyway. It was cool to meet you. Um, if you need anything, or if you have any offers, you know where to find us.

[1:15:00]

Janine (as **Adaire**): Yeah. Do me a favor, Rix.

Austin (as **Rix**): Yeah.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Always trust your gut more than you know you trust your purse.

Austin (as **Rix**): Yeah.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Ok?

Austin (as **Rix**): Definitely. See you around.

Austin: Did you... did you tell them your name?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, alright.

Austin (as **Rix**): See you around, Adaire.

Austin: And she grabs Rowe and like, pulls at his arm, and he like, comes out with her and you know, they leave the Rathskeller. Alright. Day 2. Bright and early. What are people doing?

Art: Um, I don't know the specific plan. We could do this... we could do this Throndir scene, if you wanted the Throndir scene.

Dre: Um, so I... I think like, ever since... How long has it been since Hadrian and the sword town people have gotten back?

Austin: Probably a month. Long enough for Hadrian to have built a house.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Right?

Art: It's very strong.

Austin: Yeah, I... yeah. Ok. [**Art** laughs quietly]

Dre: I think that whole month, Thrandir has been specifically avoiding Hadrian. And we'll have small talk, but like, if they're in a room by themselves together...

Austin: Yeah, so...

Dre: Like, if there's like, a meeting where they're all there, and everybody filters out, and it's just the two, Thrandir's like, 'Oh, I gotta go do a thing. So, see ya.'

Austin: So, I think this is the opposite. This is Blue J and Benjamin have called you both to the same room. Because they have to tell you stuff, and they haven't gotten there yet. But you two are there. Alone. It's like, mid-day. It's like, lunchtime.

Art: [laughs] You shouldn't have said that. Uh, cause like, you immediately blanked my mind. I just got to like, 'So... [**Austin** laughs] What'd you have for lunch?'

Austin: No, you're... you could be eating lunch now. It's like, I guess you could have eaten a late lunch...er, an early lunch or a late breakfast, I guess. Anyway.

Art: It's like,

Art (as Hadrian): Hmm, good sandwich. [**Sylvia** and **Austin** laugh]

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah, it's... the quality of food has definitely gotten better.

Art (as Hadrian): Yeah. It was.. It was weird cause in... in Aubade, all the food was perfect, of course, but it's... it's so... It's a little... it's a little boring to have... to have that kind of experience, you know? It's... I don't want to like, compare it to... to famine... But there's no... I don't know. The passion was missing in there.

Dre (as Thrandir): Uh huh.

Art (as Hadrian): Anyway. [long silence]

Austin: No one's here yet.

Dre (as Thrandir): How is um, how's Benjamin?

Art (as Hadrian): It's... It's so strange to see him like this. This is really a lot, you know? It's... it's trying to catch up on so long.

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah. Uh, I... I guess I'm glad that you guys get that chance.

Art (as Hadrian): I... I don't understand what you mean by that.

Art: This can be as in character as you want, but like, this sounds like,

Art (as Hadrian): Do you have a... do you have a son that died? [**Austin** and **Sylvia** laugh] Cause I think you would have mentioned it, but like, that sounds like you're comparing... you're contrasting it to your own.

Dre (as Thrandir): No... you know, everybody is very well aware of my own family issues. There's no hidden... hidden children. Hadrian, I'm... I messed up... and I've been... really mad at you... for a long time. And then I realized that I think it's my fault that I'm mad at you. And I don't know.....

Art (as Hadrian): Ok, tell me about that.

Dre (as Thrandir): Arrell killed me....

Art (as Hadrian): Um, what?

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah.

Art (as Hadrian): When? Where?

Dre (as Thrandir): When we were in um...

Dre: Oh shit. What's the name of the town. I forget it.

Austin: Rosemerrow.

Dre: Yeah.

Dre (as Thrandir): When we were in Rosemerrow.

Art (as Hadrian): The fir... not the first time.

Dre (as Thrandir): When uh, you know, when we were working with the Golden Lance and solving the disappearances and stuff. And... found out all the Fantasma stuff. He... Arrell was trying to take the Golden Lance into his you know, his bubble places. And Fero and I were fighting... Well, I was fighting. Fero was digging or stuff as a vole or a mole. I can't... I don't remember what he was.

Art (as **Hadrian**): It's very complicated.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): Anyway, um, I went to break his staff, and I did. Turns out breaking a wizard's staff is bad because then I just remember... fire and then... I woke up in a different place. And I talked to this very intimidating woman.

Art (as **Hadrian**): You're gonna have to be more specific.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): I don't know who she was.

Austin: Wait, yeah, you do.

Dre: Do I?

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Did you give me her name?

Austin: Yeah, it was Victoria.

Dre: No, no, no, no. The um... cause I was.. I mean, Victoria brought me back, but then I also met...

Austin: Oh, you're talking about Adelaide.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: [overlapping] Before that. Yes, yeah. Yeah. Sorry. Adelaide.

Dre: [overlapping] I met Adelaide, too. But I don't remember if she ever told me who she was.

Austin: Yeah, I guess you don't know who Adelaide is. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, ok. Um.

Austin: [laughing] Sorry, a very intimidating woman? Welcome to Hieron. [**Sylvia** laughs]

Dre: Yeah, no, true. Yeah, fair.

Austin: Mother Glory? Was it Mother Glory? Was it... you know.

Sylvia: Corsica?

Austin: Corsica Neue? Was it?

Sylvia: She's here everyday.

Art: Sunder?

Austin: Which of the Ordennan leaders? Cause there were two of them. [**Dre** laughs] Yeah, Sunder, yeah. Exactly. Exactly.

Dre (as Thrandir): Anyway, she said she could make me a deal and bring me back to normal, but then... the Golden Lance also made me an offer to bring me back. And they did, but... I'm not alive. I'm not dead. I mean, I'm a vampire. Like, if you want the technical thing of what I am.... But I didn't tell anybody.

Art (as Hadrian): Yeah. Why?

Dre (as Thrandir): Um, well, you may remember there was like a... a uh, country invading. That was like, maniacally hellbent on murdering anybody who was undead. So, keeping it... to myself while we traveled with Hella, like I know she's not with them, but you can, you know. [long pause] Anyway, I should have told you because, you know I didn't tell anybody else. I should have told you because [long pause]

I don't know cause I died... I never really had... a family or anything, and you were pretty much the closest thing I had to somebody who showed me the person that I could be and should be.... And I think by not trusting you when I should have more than ever, it's... It's my fault that Arrell got Benjamin from you and.....

Art (as Hadrian): [long pause] That's not... quite how that happened.... I... I was [laughs] You're gonna... you're gonna think this is funny, I think. But I was also terrified of the Ordennan invasion force. I went to Arrell as... I thought the only option in a desperate time.

Dre (as Thrandir): How? I mean, even... even not knowing what he did to me. Like, knowing what he did to all those people and... Fantasma. And [sighs]

Art (as Hadrian): Well, Fantasma's kind of a grey area.

Dre (as Thrandir): That's... not true.

Art (as Hadrian): No? Is that how that ended up? I... I would have done anything in that moment to feel like my family was gonna be safe. I almost just threw all of it away. I almost just left all of you and went back to Velas to what was certainly gonna be my death. I wasn't making the best decisions because I thought this thing was the most important thing.

Dre (as Thrandir): I get it.

Art (as Hadrian): They weren't safe with us. They weren't safe there.

Dre (as Thrandir): Hadrian, I know you weren't here to see how bad it was. It was bad. I mean, people died. People argued. People fought. People left.... But it made me really think about if the world is going to end and everything and everybody is going to die... would I rather [sighs] Let's say one of the gods, I don't know, you're better at that stuff than me, but one of them comes and says, 'We have 7 days.' Would you spend those 7 days gathering everybody that meant anything to you and celebrating the time that you had or would you kill them all just to buy yourself an 8th day? Because Arrell is... the latter.

Art (as Hadrian): That isn't the choice that I thought Arrell was giving me. I thought Arrell was giving me peace of mind while I needed to go do something important. And of course, I didn't think I was gonna be gone quite so long. I thought this was a temporary solution. And it didn't end up going great.... I didn't know, honestly.... I don't feel like I knew then that Arrell was such bad news.

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah, he just, you know, tried to kidnap people against their will or you know, uh, use the... his ability to maybe save someone's life as leverage in blackmail to get whatever he wanted.

Art: I don't know 100% that I knew the last part of that. Um,

Art (as Hadrian): Yeah, but he was also... Arrell is a person who traveled with us. I don't think that you can look at all of the experience we had with Fantasma and say that none of that is present in Arrell.

Dre (as Thrandir): I can very easily say that.

Art (as Hadrian): Well, you might have more experience [Austin laughs] with Arrell than I do. At the time, I thought I was making a deal with a rational actor. And I would probably go further to defend my people. I thought that that was an important imperative at the time.

Art: And there's only so much further you can push me on this because the end of it was Austin said they couldn't come with us. [Austin and Dre laugh]

Austin: The new religion in Hieron.

Art: Yeah.

Dre (as Thrandir): I mean, if you want to figure that out, he's still open for business.

Art (as Hadrian): I bet, I bet I talk to Arrell again.

Dre (as Thrandir): Well... you make that choice, we'll definitely never speak again.

Art (as Hadrian): I think.. I mean, I'm not saying I'm gonna go make a deal with Arrell. I'm saying... I'm saying, I think I have, we have... we might... that might be a thing that happens. I... I want to go back to my home.

Dre (as Thrandir): Sure, and I'll go with you and put a bullet in his head.

Art (as Hadrian): Yeah, that could... that's a perfectly reasonable ending to that.

Austin (as Blue J): Hey, uh... we're here. How's it going, guys?

[Jack de Quidt's "[Something](#)" begins playing in background]

Austin: Says Blue J.

Dre (as Thrandir): Uh, well, Blue J, I heard you walk in like, 5 minutes ago, so...

Austin (as Blue J): Fuck.

Dre (as Thrandir): I mean, it's better. You're doing better.

Austin (as Blue J): Anyway, uh, we found some stuff. Do you want to talk about it?

[Music plays out to end]

[1:30:00]