

Winter in Hieron 15: Settle Your Matters

Transcriber: adam @adamebell [0:00:00-0:25:27], cole [0:25:27-finish]

ALI: Last time, on Friends at the Table

AUSTIN (as Arrel): Alright, let me lay this out for you. Hieron floats...in a void. There's nothing around it. Except, there is something around it. That something is the Nothing around it. And that is closing in. And it is bigger than any sword, older than any spell, and I see a way to, if not defeat it, at least let people live... joyously... until it finally consumes us.

*[Music begins "[Outside](#)" by Jack de Quidt. Guitars]*

ART (as Hadrian): No that's not... you have to fight.

AUSTIN (as Arrel): Okay. I've heard that from you. [sigh]. I've heard that from a lot of people.

*[Banjos begin playing]*

KEITH (as Fero): Hey, where's the person in charge of the execution stuff? Maybe I can have them, like, hold off. I've got a badge.

AUSTIN (as Mother Glory): They've already announced it, Fero.

KEITH (as Fero): I could give it a try. There's also Throndir. We've got two people that have badges.

DRE (as Throndir): It's true.

AUSTIN (as Mother Glory, overlapping some): And thousands who want to see me burn.

KEITH (as Fero): That's gross; people are so gross. [nervously chuckling]

AUSTIN (as Mother Glory): When I'm gone will you stay and fight?

KEITH (as Fero): I'll give you a tentative yes—

AUSTIN (as Mother Glory, overlapping): Ohh.

KEITH (as Fero): —based on the understanding that, I'm gonna fuckin' get you outta here anyway.

AUSTIN (as Mother Glory): Mmm, I see. No, it's fine.

*[pause as a flute plays]*

AUSTIN (as Emmanuel): Lem, you came to a baker to ask about a cursed sword hilt.

JACK (as Lem): Well, you're a ghost. And I like you very much.

AUSTIN (as Emmanuel): If you want to spend time with me, you just come see me. Yeah?

JACK (as Lem): Can you also please check out this cursed sword?

*[AUSTIN, ALI, and KEITH laugh hysterically]*

ALI (as Hella): Saul, I don't... care if you want to go. *[sighs]*. That's... That's fine. That's...

AUSTIN (as Saul, interrupting): Then we don't have a problem!

ALI (as Hella): We don't really need you around.

ALI (as Hella): Sol, I don't care if you wanna go. That's fine. It's—

AUSTIN (as Saul): Well, then we don't have a problem! *[overlapping with Hella]*  
I—*[something else indistinguishable]*

ALI (as Hella): We don't really need you around, but before you do— *[sort of laughs]*

AUSTIN (as Sol, overlapping): Oh. *[pause]* Here's the ask.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah. There's some people who wanna stay and help, who... *[nervous sigh]* are gonna get killed. That's really what we're here for I guess. I don't know.

*[music ends]*

AUSTIN: Alright. So, can we recap because it's been a couple of weeks?

JACK: Mhm.

KEITH (overlapping): Yeah.

JANINE (laughing): Yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Who wants to recap?

*[pause] [laughter from all]*

DRE: Oh god. Uhh...

ALI (still laughing): I assumed you were going to do that, Austin.

JANINE: Yeah. *[laughs]* I thought that was an offer.

JACK: Okay. So. Chancellor Lutz has been killed. Uh, at least that's what we believed to be the case. From the crime scene there was ash, there were scorch marks, and no sign of Lutz at all. There were also signs of a struggle inside the room. We found out through researching that *[pause]* Lutz probably wasn't killed. He was kind of spirited away... by Arrel who is a rogue wizard from the last University who is attempting to kind of put people inside... bubbles... in which they can work... indefinitely to try and prevent the arrival of the Heat and the Dark, or just hang out in this bubble for as long as possible. No way to leave the bubbles, so that's a bit weird.

AUSTIN: Uhh, not true. He said— he specifically said that—

JACK (overlapping): Oh, but there is a way to leave the bubble—

AUSTIN (interrupting): —like he can obviously bring people in and out of the bubble whenever he wants, and he also said that in a long enough timeline—

JACK (overlapping): They'll just work it out?

AUSTIN: —people who are smart enough will— will work out how to get out of the bubbles.

JACK (overlapping): Which is like yeah— yeah, you know. (inhales) I'm not—

AUSTIN (overlapping): But there is— I want to be clear, it is not a one-way ticket.

JACK: Right. Yes. Yeah.

KEITH: I also want to be clear, it's not a physical bubble. It's like a pocket universe and not like a bubble.

AUSTIN (overlapping): It's— Right.

JACK: Yeah. We found out that Arrell is none other than our friend Fantasma, or I guess the reverse. Fantasma was always Arrell, or rather like a projection of Arrel. A weird sort of puppet that he was using. Arrel is now existing in the world, and... we've talked to him? And he's the worst? *[sighs]* At the same time, the various districts have each taken suspects and at a certain time are going to execute them, which might cause a rush to execute the other suspects to try

and be the one to prove that you've caught Lutz's murderer. Also, the stars have arrived, and they're kind of aliens? Maybe? One arrived and then, Hella...

ALI (overlapping): Mhm. Yep.

JACK: ...killed it? Um, so that's good I guess? *[laughs]*

*[Austin laughs]*

AUSTIN: Other stuff, what else happened, or what else is on the plate?

ALI: Umm, well things— Okay, things that need to be solved, are... Blake is still in...

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK (overlapping): Oh yeah.

DRE (overlapping): Yeah.

ALI: ...a cage. And Mother Glory's...

JACK (overlapping): And Mother Glory?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Let's go.

ALI: ...situation is not great.

AUSTIN: Let's go over all the suspects really quick. Victoria Solomon, last seen in *[mumbles]* an interrogation room, no one saw her, I guess. Um—

ALI: We talked to her.

DRE (overlapping): We got that really weird... no, we didn't talk to her because she was in an interrogation room.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you talked to Gloria Lake.

ALI: Ohhhhhhh.

DRE: And there was, like, that weird... feeling we got when we walked by...

AUSTIN: Yes. You felt cold and drained of life. Iduna Fel...

JANINE (overlapping): There's a dementor in there.

AUSTIN: Right. Iduna Fel was sold out by Hadrian.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Arinia Slayton, no one's checked in on Arinia, who is Chancellor Lutz's ex-wife. Is that correct? I don't think anyone's—

DRE: Yeah, nobody's talked to her.

JANINE (overlapping): Yeah.

SYLVIA (overlapping): Yeah, no, nobody talked to her.

ALI (overlapping): No.

JANINE: She's... Isn't she— she's currently in a relationship with the theatre man?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yes, with the theatre man.

JANINE (overlapping): The cultist theatre man?

KEITH (overlapping): Yes, yeah. Nobody thought that was weird.

JACK: Oh.

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

JACK: Oh, so I went to see a cult?

AUSTIN: You did!

JANINE (overlapping): Oh yeah.

JACK: The cult of the Dark Sun.

AUSTIN: The Sect of the Dark Sun, yes.

JANINE: *[mumbling]* Wait, what?

JACK: It just— it just was a complete, just a disasterpiece... for all. Lem killed one of the people, or maybe two? And managed to foot--

AUSTIN (overlapping): I think it... one cause one fled, and the other one was taking care of the dead body. Or the dead one. Or was like—

JACK: I think Lem actually had one of them kill the other one, right?

AUSTIN: That is true. That is what happened. You're right.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mhm. That was good.

JACK: Which is like, pattern magic is a thing, huh?

AUSTIN: Yeah. It ain't good.

JACK: No. It's neutral. I'm neutral.

*[Austin groans]*

JACK: *[laughs nervously]* And I took from there a sort of sword hilt, that um... feels very weird... and was kind of drawn to this... dark shape in this cult temple, I think. Is that fair to say?

AUSTIN: Yeah—

JACK: I've just got this thing now?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you have that thing. Totally.

*[pause]*

JACK: My boyfriend's in town.

AUSTIN: Your boyfriend's in town. That was nice. Y'all hooked up.

*[Janine chuckles]*

AUSTIN: Um, other suspects—

JANINE (interrupting): That's not how the song goes.

KEITH (overlapping): Well, they— Hold on. They met up.

AUSTIN: No, they hooked up. What?

KEITH: Oh really? Did I miss that?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Did you not—

JACK: Yes!

KEITH: I totally missed that.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: *[laughing]* We're very subtle on this show.

AUSTIN: Apparently. Uhm. Other suspects—

KEITH (interrupting): Listen, these are long shows with nine people on them.

AUSTIN (overlapping): I know. I know.

KEITH (overlapping): And they're five hours long. [Dre laughs]

AUSTIN: I'm just sayin', when we get fucky it ain't— it ain't subtle.

JANINE: What do you think giving someone the dog badge means?

*[laughter from most]*

DRE: Yeah. Mhm.

AUSTIN (enthusiastic): Wo-ow!

*[laughter continues]*

KEITH: Is that what that was?

*[Sylvia laughing]*

ALI: Uh huh.

KEITH: Is that what happened?

*[unintelligible talking and laughing]*

KEITH: I did hear that. I do remember that.

AUSTIN: Woof. *[pause] [hesitantly]* Uh... hmm...

*[laughter erupts again]*

ART: You did that on purpose, and you'll never convince me otherwise.

AUSTIN (overlapping, laughing): I did not. I did not!

SYLVIA (through laughter): Oh god.

ALI (laughing): Oh, now I have to keep this in the show.

AUSTIN: Oh my god. You can just release it as a bonus episode.

KEITH (overlapping): Oh wow.

AUSTIN: Just its own episode in the feed.

*[Ali laughs]*

JACK: Yeah, it's twenty-three seconds long, and it's— *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Blake Bromley is also under arrest, also going to be killed. Um. Lenny Lenova— Also, Blake just stole some shit. Blake stole the— the, the hilt actually.

ALI: Yeah, mhm.

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: From— from Roseheart, uh, from— from the Chancellor's bedroom. Lenny Lenova, what did you end up doing with Lenny Lenova?

JACK: Uh, we...

ALI: He.... Oh—

JACK: He's in that place for his own protection, right?

ALI and AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Like, he's put himself in prison.

ALI: We—

JACK (interrupting): And we've—

ALI (continuing): —we've convinced them to keep him for longer—

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: —and then also to start, like, an internal— an investigation—

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Yeah.

ALI: —on misuse of, like, police whatever.

AUSTIN: Yeah, like police corruption.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mother Glory, under arrest in Veridian Village, scheduled to be executed first at the end of this turn. Isaac Addleton... Hella and Adaire—or no— no, that was not Addleton, that was Ciderbrew.



JACK: Oh that was— yeah.

AUSTIN: Where— what—

JACK: We don't really know where Addleton is, right? He's just sort of gone?

AUSTIN: Oh right. R-right. He turned into a scorch mark on the ground inside of the—

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —the prison. Inside of the Ordennan prison.

ALI: Yeah, that was when me and Hadrian went to go and find him.

JACK: And his—

DRE (overlapping): So he's presumably in a pocket dimension somewhere?

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: His whole, like, background in illusion magic is kind of central for what seems to be framing Mother Glory?

AUSTIN: Yes, correct. Um, he— he seems to have turned himself into— or turned someone into, a fake Mother Glory.

JACK: A kind of bad Mother Glory.

AUSTIN: Yes. A very bad Mother Glory.

JACK: Like a knock off.

AUSTIN: Yes. Then, there is the fire monster. The bright one, which is what— is what the Ordennan Justiciar were calling it. Which is different than, or is the sa— who knows what it is. No one's actually encountered it yet. But you have encountered another very bright thing, which was the star. But remember that that first one is still out there. And then there is the... that's it. Then there's the Cult of the Dark Sun. Which is the thing that it is, yeah.

JACK: Um, how many stars did we encounter in that scene?

AUSTIN: One.

JACK: Just the one, and then Hella...?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

JACK: But presumably there are others— others fell around the city, right?

AUSTIN: Countless fell from the sky.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: You only saw the one so far.

ALI and JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: And you haven't seen any other— you haven't seen any others or heard anybody else talk about any others yet.

JACK: I'm so... frightened of these stars.

ALI: I'll keep stabbing them for you.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Cheers.

*[laughter]*

JACK: Still don't know if that's also...

SYLVIA: Well, you know.

JACK: Well...

AUSTIN: Hmm..

ALI: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: Alright, so, where were we? Are there any other questions about stuff? Does anybody like, have a fuzzy memory on anything?

ALI: Not anything pressing, but I guess that's not how that works *[laughs]*

JACK: No, I think I'm pretty much ready. Good to go. Any sort of queries I have I think I can... Oh uhhh, there was also Saul Ciderbrew.

AUSTIN: Right. What— so that's actually a question for me is, where did that end up?

JANINE: We poisoned him, volunteer—

AUSTIN: To knock him out. Right.

JANINE: He volunteered to be poisoned... kind of.

*[Keith laughs heartily]*

JANINE: *[chuckles]* And then we took him— we're taking him.

AUSTIN: Where are you taking him, though? I can't recall... Were you going to use—

JANINE (overlapping): The police station, or the whatever station. The—

AUSTIN: Was it the police, or was it the press?

KEITH: Yeah.

JANINE: The cop town.

KEITH: It was the police.

JANINE: Cause the police can act faster.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay.

ALI: I'm going to the press. Adaire is going to the police.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. Awesome.

JANINE: And Hella's presumably going to drop Saul off for me cause *[laughing]* I don't know that I could carry him.

AUSTIN: Right, like, on the way.

ALI (overlapping): I put him into a cart for you. And then—

AUSTIN: You're all in the same— You two are in the same neighborhood; that's doable.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Alright, so let me just go over where people are going this turn. Hella is going to the— the Current, the Rosemarrow Current, which is the newspaper.

ALI (overlapping): Mhm.

AUSTIN: Adaire is going to the Major Crimes Division. Lem is going to the Archives. The New Archives have a thing here in the Kickshaw. I don't know where anybody else is going, so where are the rest are you going?

KEITH: I was thinking last— or I guess two weeks ago when we were recording— that uh, I was maybe gonna go to the Roseheart Jail, but— to— because we've only seen half of the people that are there. But I'm worried that going there will mean that I will be meeting up with a pile of ash, and so instead, I think I want to go to the Police with Janine.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: I... was actually thinking of going to the Jail.

JANINE (overlapping): Are you— where are you that you can do that?

AUSTIN: He's in Roseheart. Roseheart can get anywhere.

JANINE: Okay, okay good.

DRE: Wait, was he? I thought he was in Veridian Village with me.

KEITH: But you can get anywhere.

AUSTIN: Oh.

KEITH: You can get to Roseheart from wherever.

AUSTIN: You're right. No, no, no, no, you're right. No, no, no, you're in Veridian Village. You can't get to anywhere else. You have to— you have to go to Roseheart. Right, you can go to anywhere in Roseheart this turn.

KEITH (overlapping): Oh, is that not in Roseheart? Oh okay.

AUSTIN (overlapping): No, they're in the Mills. The special— The— the Major Crimes Division is in the Mills.

KEITH: Oh okay. Uhm, then...

DRE: I mean I think for us, Keith, our options are either to go back to the jail to talk to Victoria—

KEITH (overlapping): Yeah.

DRE (continuing): —and see if she's not a scorch mark. Or has— Nobody's gone to the Hawk and Mouse Inn, right?

AUSTIN: Correct. Right, that was another— another player here was, uhh... Ordenna in general— All three leaders of Ordenna are in Rosemerrow right now. The head of their military... Impetor Fela Malle is on the Sapphire Song in the sea, to the southwest of Rosemerrow. The Chief Justiciar, uh... I think her name is— what is her name? Qinta Quatróna is in the— at the brig in the Northwest, in Knoll Hollow. And then... the kind of spiritual and civil leader of Ordenna, Jerod Shiraz, is here. The Ordennan Vicereine who's in the Hawk and Mouse Inn in Veridian Village. So yeah, you could go there.

DRE: And that's someone that we could potentially talk to to try and get, like, an escape plan for Mother Glory? I mean she mentioned that as like a Hail Mary.

JACK: I mean this is, like, the government right?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Well...

KEITH (overlapping): That also— it seemed like that would involve a lot of death?

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That was like a “We’re going to capture Mother Glory by force, and she’ll be our prisoner instead of your prisoner.”

KEITH: Right. Right. Which seems like both a lateral trade and also all the death.

JACK (overlapping): A prisoner of the Ordennans?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: God, I really don’t know if—

AUSTIN (overlapping): That was a thing you could— you could try to do. Not a thing—

JACK: Yeah, I don’t know if Mother Glory’s gonna have a good time with the Ordennans, like, at all.

ALI: Yeah, I was gonna facilitate that but that doesn’t help her, which is why I’m gonna tell the press about the constitution instead.

KEITH: Yeah. So I— I think that maybe, Dre, we should stick together and go to the jail just in case...

DRE: Okay.

KEITH: ...and, you know, there’s bound to be something else there. Probably? There’s probably bound to be something else there.

*[Janine chuckles]*

DRE: Sure. Works for me.

[0:15:00]

AUSTIN: Okay, so you’re going back to Roseheart.

JACK: Austin, didn’t you mention that the, umm... you mentioned that there was, like, a distinction between the police and the press, right? In that—

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah.

JACK (continuing): —one can work quickly, and one can work slowly?

AUSTIN: Mhm. One is gonna be about like— I mean—

JANINE (overlapping): One is like a short term thing one is like a long term thing, probably, right?

JACK: Mm, and we're covering both of them in this turn?

AUSTIN (quietly): Uh...

KEITH: The press can't stop someone from being executed.

AUSTIN: Yes, correct.

KEITH: They can only report on how horrible it was that someone already was executed.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Correct.

JACK: Okay.

JANINE: I mean, the thing is that— the thing that I'm planning to do this turn is the— is the like, "If it works out quick fix" kind of thing, whereas Hella's would be the long-term, like...

JACK: Right

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Yep.

KEITH: "Just in case" parachute.

ALI: Right, attacking it from both sides. Cause if she, like, survives... [overlapped] Like, yeah.

JANINE: The Major Crimes Division isn't going to just be like, "Ohh, the dog-lady we hate didn't do it? Okay, thanks thief. We'll let 'em know." That's not gonna happen.

KEITH: I feel it's a good plan.

AUSTIN: [overlapped] Well, let's see. Uhm, Hadrian and Ephrim.

ART: Well, who is at the village center... prison? The Veridian Village Prison?

AUSTIN: Mother Glory.

ART: Mmm... I can't help there. *[sighs]* I mean, I don't see that I have any business in Roseheart, and then the other place to go out here is the Hawk and Mouse, which is where the Vicereine is?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: But I don't necessarily have anything...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah.

KEITH (overlapping): Well...

ART (continuing): —there, but I can just go and see what happens and worse comes worse, we can talk about what's next.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

KEITH: They might have something.

AUSTIN: Totally.

SYLVIA: That's kind of the same situation I'm in. My initial idea was... there is a dead body that we have to sort of deal with. But, Austin, you mentioned to me that it might not take a whole turn to do that.

AUSTIN: It depends on what you're trying to do with that dead body.

SYLVIA: Literally burn it and make it into a pile of ash like the other ones.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's a thing you can do. My question is whether or not Hadrian... like— what that looks like... one, physically, really materially, and then two, what Hadrian does when he sees you burning a body.

*[Sylvia and Ali laugh]*

SYLVIA: Well, um, so, well the way we've sort of established that my Burning Brand works is that it can light fires as well as just be used as a weapon.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: So, I imagined I would just be using that to light the body and then trying to contain the fire while it... burns up ol' Obelday. Uh, and then that's basically the long and short of it. Maybe like smashing a couple things to make it look like people came in. Ephrim has not thought this through completely; he's just like, well...

*[Ali and Art laugh]*

SYLVIA: There's that other thing that's ash... This could work.

ART: Friends at the Table.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

ART: Bad criminals.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: I'm a prince; I can get away with it.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: Well, that's what he thinks.

JACK: Let's try telling that to Mother Glory.

SYLVIA: Well...

*[Austin sighs]*

ART: I mean the way to get away with it, is to not tell Hadrian you're doing it.

*[Ali and Sylvia laugh]*

SYLVIA: Yeah, true.

AUSTIN: And just being, "I'll catch up with you later, bud."

SYLVIA: Yeah, basically. I can do that.

ART: "Yeah, I got something to do, you're gonna catch up with me." Um, and I mean then we're not going to see each other for a while, right? I mean, just hope if Hadrian finds out what you did by the time you guys hang out again, he's not still mad.

SYLVIA: Fingers crossed!

*[Ali and Janine Laugh]*

AUSTIN: Okay. So— but then both of you will be going to the Hawk and Mouse after that.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cool. So, let's start with— let's start with Hella.

ALI: Okay.



AUSTIN: And then we'll wrap back around to Adaire.

AUSTIN: So, do you want to give me a roll?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's 2d6 plus one because you are alone.

ALI: I don't get any...

AUSTIN: Bonus here? No.

ALI (laughing): That's a seven.

AUSTIN: That's a seven, that's a seven, so you get the, uh... so yeah, you still get to ask me a question, but you don't get the bonus thing here.

ALI: Okay

AUSTIN: Uh, so. The Rosemarrow Current is the first newspaper ever in Hieron outside of Nacre since the Erasure— since everything fell to shit. They have converted a giant windmill into a printing press. And I should be clear about that, too. Like, there isn't printing in this world by and large. Like, the Archivists probably have a very limited form of it, but most books that you see are things that were printed on machinery that has since fallen to rust. And so, that's also true for newspapers; that's why there weren't broad sheets anywhere except for in Nacre. And in fact, whatever newspapers were in Nacre were probably better than the ones that were there back in Marielda times because there'd been time to develop that stuff and improve it.

So, this is like a new thing. Uh, you know, the refugees came and had these newspapers and some of them had knowledge on how to build a machine like this. Um, and Marisol Sweetwater, the editor-in-chief of Rosemarrow's first ever newspaper, is very excited about that. She has run one edition so far; it's a monthly. *[laughs]* It's like— it takes a lot of time to print these. Um, and when you go in she, who— she's, like, about a four foot ten halfling, um, and all of her people who are, you know, there's probably like a dozen people in this— in this huge base of this windmill, um— are, like, hectic and running around changing things with their newspaper because they were ready to go to print on an edition before Lutz died. And now they need to throw a bunch of the early prints out and redo stuff.

So there's kind of two things you can do here. First of all, she's just like, she's bubbly and is excited, but also a little agitated to be dealing with somebody. You come in, and she's just like

AUSTIN (as Marisol): Howdy, uh, we're not really open for, uh... *[breathy]* Do you have a question? What's— what's going on here?

ALI (as Hella): Nah, I have some leads.

AUSTIN (as Marisol): You got leads?

ALI (as Hella): Yeah. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN (as Marisol): Okay, you— we have a reception room, uh, up two floors. Just take the stairwell up around the side, and I'll be right with you. I just got— *[yelling aside]* Jim! Stop it. Jim, stop, no. Okay. Okay.

ALI (as Hella) (overlapping): Do you want to stop Jim?

AUSTIN (as Marisol): No, he's fine, he's fine. He's just... He thought we were ready to go; we're not ready to go.

Ali (as HELLA): Okay, I'll—

AUSTIN (as Marisol): I'll see you upstairs in a little bit.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: And you go up these stairs that run along the interior wall of this windmill and eventually it goes into a room that has been, like, bolted onto the side of this building. *[laughing]* Um, and it's just like— from the outside, you would see that this is, like, braced on there, and it's just made of wood. And inside, there ha— it's been hastily done. It's clear that they got their first bunch of income, and are like "Oh boy. We can get a fuckin' room added that isn't just the printing floor." Um, and it's all, like... halfling carpentry. It's kind of nice. Like, it's not especially fancy, but it— it is better than... The Mills have not traditionally been a place where businesses operate, like, independently. Right? They're places where grain goes to be milled or, you know, you do some additional farming work there that has spread out of Flank Fields.

But this seems to have been, uh, one of the things of just, like, "Oh, rent is cheap there, and also, we can reuse that technology to do this other thing." Um, so after about fifteen minutes of waiting and the silence— again, you can hear the wind blowing, probably feel it too. *[Ali sighs]* This building— this little attached room definitely moves around when the wind gets strong. Uh, Marisol Sweetwater comes in, um, and does a little bow and then hops up onto a raised chair at the far end, um, where her desk is. It's the desk of someone who doesn't sit at a desk very often.

AUSTIN (as Marisol): Alright, how uh... A pleasure to meet you. What can I do you for?

ALI (as Hella): Uh, well hi. So um—

ALI: I kind of adjust my, like, deputy badge, I guess?

AUSTIN (as Marisol): Oh, you're a big one, huh?

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, I, um, am on a job here.

ALI: Hella doesn't know how to talk like a deputy, so... *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Nope.

*[Keith laughs in the background]*

AUSTIN: Marisol... uh, Marisol's hands are greasy and oily, and she takes a— a scarf— or not a scarf, a, uh, handkerchief out and cleans her hands and says,

AUSTIN (as Marisol): Listen, honey, don't worry about the pretense. We're all workin' folk here.

ALI (as Hella): [relieved] Okay. Okay.

AUSTIN (as Marisol): What's goin' on?

ALI (as Hella): So, there's some stuff that's come up in the investigation that, like, the people should probably know? Um, and I..

ALI: I'm not sure how to present each of these... Okay, so, out of character for a second.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: I've been wondering the— like, okay. So, we... told the police to have, like, an internal investigation on...

AUSTIN: No, you told specifically the police in Creek Crescent to do that.

ALI: Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: Or in Westshore, sorry. In Westshore-upon-Sea.

ALI: Right, um, I just don't know... Like, if we tell the press that, and it's, like, an internal thing, does that... or am I overthinking it?

AUSTIN: You get one thing here.

ALI: Okay. Fair enough. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like the press— what she basically will tell you over the course of this conversation is they're new. They don't have a lot of investigatory resources, and anything...

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: If there's any sort of corruption, or if there's anything you want people to investigate here, you have to tell me what it is, and we'll put our one resource on that. But anything else is gonna get covered up or erased or is gonna be impossible to chase down.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Because— after a time, right? Like, any time— what the powerful do is— is they cover their fuckin' tracks. So you tell me what you want me to put a reporter on, and I can put a reporter on it. I can investigate it myself; I have a little free time. But... et cetera.

{25:27 end of previous transcriber}

ALI: Okay, well if I only get the one thing, then I want to tell them about the location of the contract, which Mother Glory had hidden somewhere.

AUSTIN: Right. Did we figure out where that was? Did we ever say exactly where that was?

ALI: She said exactly. I don't remember where.

DRE: She told Fero, right?

AUSTIN, ALI, and KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm just tryin' to remember from— for my own sake where she's put it.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think it was just like... God, yeah. I think it was just somewhere in one of the— like, uh, a building somewhere on the way between the Mills and outside the city or something.

ALI: Yeah. My thing is I just know that nobody else right now is planning on getting it. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Sure, totally.

ALI: So, um...

Austin (as MARISOL): So, what's the deal with this contract?

Ali (as HELLA): [sighs] Ugh, I don't really know the whole deal. A friend of mine seems really worried about her, and like, I— [sighs]

Austin (as MARISOL): I mean... she's a gnoll, right? What's a gnoll doing with a contract?

Ali (as HELLA): Yeah, so apparently the whole— like... there's a part of the town called, like, Knoll Hill or whatever? I'm not from here; I don't know any of this.

Austin (as MARISOL): Knoll Hollow, Sweetie.

Ali (as HELLA): Yeah.

Austin (as MARISOL): It's okay.

Ali (as HELLA): Uh huh. Yeah. But okay— but like, so— [sighs] [quietly] God, I should have brought Lem. This place used to be... Or there was like an agreement or something between the gnolls and the halflings. And like, all of the stuff that she's been fighting for—

Austin (as MARISOL): [groans] Oh boy...

Ali (as HELLA): —is true... oh. [laughs]

Austin (as MARISOL): No, uh— Listen. It's just— [Keith laughs] You sound like those protestors. I— I'll look into it, okay? I— I give you my word. We believe in the truth here, but you're askin' me—

Ali (as HELLA): Oh my god.

Austin (as MARISOL): You tell me I got one thing to look for— We'll look into it. We will. [overlapped] I promise. I give you my word.

Ali (as HELLA): It's the history of this whole place!

Austin (as MARISOL): Okay! Okay! You don't have to back me into a corner here. Please. Take a seat. It's fine. We'll look for the thing, and if it says the thing you say, like, you know? We're here to represent the best interests of the people. So I'll— I'll do my best and... you just keep on buying the, uh, The Current and... and we'll see what happens.

Ali (as HELLA): [hesitant, whining] Okay... [Ali laughs]

KEITH: [overlapped] I can help with—

Austin (as MARISOL): Now, can I help you with anything else?

AUSTIN: Uh, you get one question still.

ALI: Okay, yeah. Um... God...

AUSTIN: Most people are racist, just to be clear.

ALI: Yeah, no. I know. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Like. She's— she is like about as good as you're going to get from the random halfling in Roseheart— er, in Rosemerrow.

ALI: Uh huh. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right? Like, yeah, she's gonna investigate it. She isn't lying about that. She isn't deceiving you here.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: But she's very skeptical that there's anything to do with the— the fucking hyena people and her high-civili— uh, and the greatest civilization on Hieron—

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —as far as anyone knows. Still a corrupt civilization she wants to improve, but like, this is a big— this is big for someone to hear.

ALI: Right, no.

KEITH: [sarcastically] I just can't believe that a newspaper would be dismissive of protests.  
[Austin and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: Who could ever imagine?

DRE: Wocka-wocka.

ALI: [groans] Um... I—

JACK: This is so frustrating. [Ali and Keith laugh]

AUSTIN: So, what's your question?

ALI: Um, god, what do we even want to— need to know at this point?

AUSTIN: I guess the thing to think about with her is like, she has investigators everywhere.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: She's probably looking to break a story. Like, she— she knows stuff. She isn't just a civilian, right?

ALI: Right. Mhm.

AUSTIN: In that sense. Like, she isn't just a random person on the street; she definitely is a nexus for information. Think of her as like an information broker.

ALI: Okay.

JANINE: Is there like a big gap in our knowledge right now that we could fill? Or— or sort of fill? Like, is there like a big, glaring hole in what we have so far?

DRE: I mean we don't really know anything about um... Ba— Lutz's ex-wife.

JACK: Or the fire beasts. The— the fire beast.

DRE: Oh yeah. The “bright one.”

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: [laughs] This is an interesting story.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: We don’t know anything about his ex-wife or the fire beasts. [everyone laughs]

KEITH: I— I have a suspicion that the fire beast— Oh wait, no. I’m thinking of... The fire beast is a different thing than the stars.

ALI: [crosstalking] No, well....

JACK: [crosstalking] Maybe?

KEITH: [crosstalking] Are they? No, the same.

AUSTIN: [crosstalking] You don’t know. You don’t know. No one’s—

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You haven’t met the— you haven’t met the fire beast.

KEITH: Right.

JACK: Good.

AUSTIN: You only heard descriptions. [Janine laughs]

JACK and KEITH: Um...

JACK: But I mean like... the fire beast is probably something that she’s fairly interested in. Um... I’m tryin’ think about, like, her as this weird intersection between.

ALI: Yeah, that was kind of the thing that Hella was most interested in, too. But.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Cause I think personally and then also, like, on a story level, the fact that there was one here before... all the stars started falling is curious.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Mhm.

[0:30:00]

ALI: Especially if it was, like, initially by the museum or whatever.

AUSTIN: I think that's where they— that's where the justiciar first—

ALI: Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: —recorded them, yeah.

ALI: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah, you can ask— you can ask about that. You can ask whatever you want. But it has to be a question.

ALI: Okay. Yeah, unless anybody has a compelling argument otherwise, I'm gonna go with that.

Austin (as MARISOL): Sightings of that thing have been all over the city since it first showed up about a week ago, I guess. Just around the same time as that, uh— as, uh... the museum burned down. And we've had reports from Westshore-upon-Sea, from the Peaks, from Roseheart. I don't think there's anywhere it hasn't been. Maybe the Longsand, but... I don't really have a reporter who— who has that as his beat, so. [pauses] Yeah, I— Be careful. People... Don't go looking for that thing, okay?

Ali (as HELLA): [laughs] Okay.

Austin (as MARISOL): If you hear anything, you let me know. We pay for, uh, good tips, by the way.

Ali (as HELLA): Uh— oh?

Austin (as MARISOL): Yeah.

Ali (as HELLA): The— the tip I gave you before wasn't a good one?

Austin (as MARISOL): Well. We'll see. [Ali/Hella sighs] Stay in touch.

Ali (as HELLA): Yeah...

Austin (as MARISOL): Do you have an address? I can forward you a check.

Ali (as HELLA): [laughs] I've been traveling a lot lately. It's— it's fine. We'll... we'll settle it later.

Austin (as MARISOL): Sounds good.

AUSTIN: Alright. Um, I— Again, I'm not saying that she— she absolutely going to get that first contract and— and—

ALI: [finishing the sentence] Break the story.



AUSTIN: There will— Right.

ALI: Right?

AUSTIN: Right. Exactly.

ALI: It was worth a shot.

AUSTIN: Um, I— That was the outcome it was gonna be. Whether you had a ten or a seven.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: There is more there that you could have gotten if you'd gotten a ten instead of a seven or an eight, but... [Ali laughs] Or a nine. Next. Let's go to the Archives with Lem King. Give me a roll, Lem. Take plus one extra here, so— so 2d6 plus two.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Because you are an Archivist.

JACK: Didn't I get a plus one from, you know... spending time with Emmanuel?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. You get plus three. Damn.

JACK: [exhales] 2d6 plus three.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Okay, that's a nine.

AUSTIN: That's still only a nine. [amused] Okay.

JACK: Well.

AUSTIN: Oh boy. Okay.

JACK: You know.

AUSTIN: So— Mhm.

JACK: I'm a fugitive Archivist, I guess.

AUSTIN: That's true. So, you, um... As you approach— So, the Kickshaws are a bunch of— of— the kind of neighborhood here is a bunch of longhouses. Like, long kind of manufacturing buildings. Long and squat. And then, in between a bunch of them— Also, they're not like— they're not laid out in a grid. They're just kind of like, [sighs] tossed together. People built the

Kickshaws before, like, Rosemerrow kind of industrialized and became— or like, in that same period, and so it was before, like, city planning was a thing that built Roseheart up.

And so just kind of a mess of these long manufacturies that kind of move together in weird ways that have created all these intermingling alleyways and little— little empty... What am I— What's the word I'm looking for? Like, um... [thinking noises] I keep wanting to say court, which I guess kind of works, but just like little empty areas in between a bunch of them, and like, that's where people will hang out sometimes. And they'll— the New Archives have a trading house kind of shmu— smushed right in the middle of a lot of these things. Like, there's just a little, a much smaller building that looks like it's just a converted schoolhouse or something, from the outside. There's a bell on the top, and it has, like, wood paneling that's painted red. And the front door is open a little bit as you step inside.

Um, the reason there's a trading house, by the way, Lem, is— is that, you know, the Archivists— the Archivists sometimes need things that have been traded for or that have been traded away as part of a ritual, right? As part of a piece of pattern magic. That like, you need to have traded, you know, seven barrels of wheat as part of the pattern. And so, you have to be very careful about that because sometimes you need to have actually held onto something. And at the same time, you need to actually be a— someone who buys and sells things because otherwise people won't come to buy and sell things.

So, Elgash Or who runs this place, has had to be very careful about— about that and is a very like— I guess... he's, like, very anal retentive in terms of keeping the books straight and— and making sure that everything's in its right place. He's also the guy who kind of stole the Book of Life from Velas [Jack laughs] and brought it back to— to here. And he's also the guy that you see dead on the ground with a dagger in his back—

JACK: Oh, jeez.

AUSTIN: —when you move into— past the kind of reception area and into the back room. This place is filled with knick knacks, and, you know, there is a statue of a hen. And there's, like, some snow shoes. And there is, like, an old wooden sword and three desks that, like, are stacked on top of each other and two carpets, one on top of the other— the other. And the lower one is definitely really nice, and the top one is really grimy, but it's on top for some reason. And they're in the middle is Elgash Or, a kind of large bulbous orc who has a dagger in his back. And above him, frozen in place is a— like a blast of fire. Like, a long— almost as if someone moved a torch very quickly, like a huge torch, and then froze it in place in the middle of its swing. Do you know what I mean?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And it just hovering there. Just fire in the air above his dead body. Or like, near his— but in the air— but like, near his dead body, not directly above it.

JACK: I'm gonna close the door behind me. [laughs lightly]

AUSTIN: When you do, you hear a cough. And then back from behind the three desks, a face pops out from the side. And it is— it is— [sighs] How old are you?

JACK: Do we know— Have we talked about how orc age works?

AUSTIN: Not really. How long has it been since you've been in school? How long since the whatever the orcish equivalent of—

JACK: Oh, like primary school?

AUSTIN: Well no. Just, like, the last time you were in... How does orc education work?

JACK: Oh, that would have been— Well, like it's the Archives, right? Like.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I mean it never stops probably, right? But like.

JACK: Yeah. Working in the Archives is like academia. So, I think when I was— when I was last at the Archives, when I stole the violin, which would have been...

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: —what like— ?

AUSTIN: [crosstalking] Like, a year or two ago? Like, less than that?

JACK: [crosstalking] Yeah. Like a year and a half.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Not long.

AUSTIN: Okay. So you recognize this person., actually. This is— this is Alonzo Victor Devaraux van der Dawes. He goes by Devar. He's like— he got picked on a lot cause he isn't, like, a pure blooded orc, as his name might suggest. He's, like, just— he's a mix. He's, like, got some human in him. He's got a little halfling in him. He's like five foot eight, something like that, which is short for an— for an orc. He has tusks, but they're not as pronounced as most people. He has like— he has very human looking hair. His is, like, tight and curly, and he has it styled as like a— like a high top fade, like very boxed out, very care— very like— very carefully handled. And he's wearing a pair of round sunglasses, which are also regular glasses underneath that. And he's like,

Austin (as DEVAR): Lem, is that you? [sighing relief] Ho... hooo... hoo.

Jack (as LEM): It's Devar, right?

Austin (as DEVAR): Yeah, man, How— how you been?

Jack (as Lem): [unsure] Well, um... Hey, did you kill him?

Austin (as DEVAR): Nah, It was like this— [sighs] [Keith laughs in the background] This dude with— he got hair. He—

Jack (as LEM): Uh...

Austin (as DEVAR): It was that guy, Arrell. It was that guy. [Keith laughs] It was that guy, Arrell.

Jack (as LEM): Okay. Can you come up from behind the desk, please? Cause it's really hard to hear you.

AUSTIN: He, like, pokes his head out a little bit and then flips his sunglasses up to reveal his regular glasses underneath.

Austin (as DEVAR): Yeah. All right, man.

AUSTIN: And he steps out. He, like, tip-toes his way around the dead body and is like,

Austin (as DEVAR): Whoo! It's been a long day, man.

Jack (as LEM): Were you here all day? Did you see this happen?

Austin (as DEVAR): Yeah. So, this cat, Arrell, came in, right? And he's been here before getting books or whatever. And, you know, Elgash and him go back, I guess. And they got into a fight about this book or whatever. And Elgash, I guess, knew he was coming cause he had a pattern in place to stop whatever Arrell was tryin' to do.

Jack (as LEM): That's this fire, right?

Austin (as DEVAR): I mean it was a bunch of shit. He had fire. He had some ice. He tried to— he tried to open up like a— like a portal. But then, Elgash, like, tipped some salt over or whatever, and then it closed. So. He was very prepared.

Jack (as LEM): What did the portal look like?

Austin (as DEVAR): It was just like this, but like a little bit... like creamy.

Jack (as LEM): Creamy.

Austin (as DEVAR): I didn't get close, man; it was dangerous. Anyway... you know, I hid.

Jack (as LEM): Well, yeah.

Austin (as DEVAR): That shit looked like it was out of my pay grade. And uh—

Jack (as LEM): That's probably true.

Austin (as DEVAR): You know. Anyway, it's good to see you. How— how are you? Are you still wanted?

Jack (as LEM): [distressed ] Jesus. [laughs] I'm— Look, I'm working for um... I'm working for Morbash right now.

Austin (as DEVAR): Word. Alright. That's good. I think Morbash could take this Arrell dude.

Jack (as LEM): Yeah?

Austin (as DEVAR): Morbash is big, so.

Jack (as LEM): [unsure] Well, have you heard from him recently?

Austin (as DEVAR): Yeah, we actually— Let's— Can we leave this room, actually? Cause this is— [Keith and Dre laugh] kind of fucked up, honestly, Lem. [Janine laughs]

Jack (as LEM): I still got some stuff to be— be doing here, I think, Devar.

Austin (as DEVAR): Alright, well, I'll be out front. I'm gonna get some water and—

Jack (as LEM): You're not gonna run away, are you? Like, cause—

Austin (as DEVAR): No. Where am I gonna go?

Jack (as LEM): I mean I guess the other— Well... that's true.

Austin (as DEVAR): Go. You look around, and then we'll talk some more. Alright?

Jack (as LEM): Okay. It was nice seeing you!

Austin (as DEVAR): I'm not going. We're gonna see each other again in two minutes, B. Like. [laughs lightly]

Jack (as LEM): Wha— I mean—

Austin (as DEVAR): You look around. I'm gonna make some tea. Would you like some tea?

Jack (as LEM): Yeah. [stammers] Yeah, I'll take some tea.

Austin (as DEVAR): Alright. It'll calm us both down. You look around. I'm going to go put some tea on.

AUSTIN: And he, like, walks away. He has like a very— he has like— So, the shirt he's wearing is... Have you seen like a painted tie before?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's like that, but the whole shirt.

JACK: Oh, wow!

AUSTIN: It's— You recognize it immediately as being something from the Pre-Erasure times. [Jack gasps] And like, he probably shouldn't be wearing that shirt! That shirt is probably from— it's very bright and gaudy and— and definitely made— Mm. Mmmm.

JACK: It's almost certainly from a collection. Right?

AUSTIN: Yes, absolutely.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Viewers at home will recognize that is the sort of shirt that the Black Slacks used to wear.

JACK: Yeah. Also, viewers at home will recognize that, like, stealing from the Archives— and I know this— is really bad.

AUSTIN: Yes. Alright. So—

JACK: Does this fire that is caught in the air still give off heat?

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: I can just move my hand through it?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Okay. Is there anything on Elgash's— So, Elgash has just been killed, presumably just by being stabbed, right?

AUSTIN: Yes, correct.

JACK: So, my read on this is that Arrell kind of came in, attempted a lot of magic, which Elgash just shut down, and then Arrell kind of decided to do things more traditionally?

AUSTIN: Is that your question? Do you want me to confirm that?

JACK: No, no, that's not my question.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: That's— that's kind of the line I'm thinking down initially. But then... It's interesting to know that pattern magic can shut down Arrell's magic in that way.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: At least partially. Also, the porthole failed. Or didn't get all the way open, which is also really interesting. Would searching Elgash's body count as my question?

AUSTIN: Yes. I'm still gonna give you a little bit more from—

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: —from Devar that isn't about a question; it's just information cause you're an Archivist here.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But— but searching that— so, searching that body would count as your question.

JACK: Is there anything else in the room I should be aware of before I decide on what my question is?

AUSTIN: I mean, there is so much stuff in this room. So, like, in other words, you could use the fact that there's infinite stuff in this room, in a sense, to ask any question that I could then help answer through something else in the room.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, yes, there's stuff worth looking at in this room. If you had— if you were at this place for the next week, you could spend the week here learning a bunch of stuff about the world.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And also nothing about the world. Cause like, what are you gonna learn from snowshoes, right?

JACK: Right. Yeah. Okay. I'm cautious to search him because Arrell would have taken something valuable to **him**, you know. Once the body was—

AUSTIN: Right, right. Sure.

JACK: —was dead, Arrell would presumably have taken something. Unless anybody has any better suggestions, though, there might be something useful on his body that would contextualize this in a— in a way that's valuable. What do other people think? Oh, I know what I can ask!

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Please, please do me a solid here, Austin. [laughs lightly]

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Has anything in the pattern of this room changed as if to send a message to somebody who would know to look for it?

AUSTIN: Yes. There is like a— So, you're searching Elgash Or's body, actually, when you find a little— there's like a little cube— like a tiny little box, that's like— it fits squarely in his palm that has a bunch of switches and levers and buttons on it. And the— it's the sort of device that can... that some pattern magicians— like, if you're looking from the outside, it looks like they're going through a prayer or something, right?

JACK: It's almost like a weird rosary? Like an orc rosary?

[0:45:00]

AUSTIN: Yes, totally. Totally. And the way it works is— you understand how works in such a way that you can kind of read the pattern backwards based on the information contained within it. Like, you have to break it apart to see what the last, like, twenty inputs were, basically. And you do that to see, like, the sit— the current configuration of the gears. This probably takes you twenty to thirty minutes. In that time, Devar comes in with fresh tea that he drinks and also offers to you. He's not trying to poison you. He really is just trying to make some tea.

JACK: I'll take the tea. I'll take the tea.

AUSTIN: Okay. He gives you good tea. It's really good. He makes good tea. And you work out that he sent a message to the Archives, and it says "The Wizard is coming. Move the book."  
[someone whistles]

JACK: Wait, so this— the way this message worked was— How do the— how does high levels of the Archives communicate with each other at speed?

AUSTIN: This is one such way. There aren't many of these devices. There are some— they're the sort of thing that you're, like, trained in partially so that you can be in awe of the power of pattern magic.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: But also, most of the time they communicate the way everybody in Hieron communicates, which is, like, slowly.

JACK: Like, carrier pigeons and—

AUSTIN: Yes, exactly. And those not lately because of the snow, right?

JACK: Yeah.



AUSTIN: During all of this, like, as you discover that I think, is when Devar is kind of giving you more about— about what's happening back in the Archives and things that have happened lately. So, Devar explains that, like,

Austin (as DEVAR): Over the last week, we got a letter from Morbash who said that things back at the Archives are getting weird, man. Like, the— you heard about the fire at the— at the museum?

Jack (as LEM): [weakly] Kind of peripherally. Yeah.

AUSTIN: He gives you a look.

Austin (as DEVAR): Aw, man. Don't— Mm. Don't tell me that was you. [pause] Come on. Ugh. [groans] That's how you're gonna get us in trouble, man.

Jack (as LEM): I didn't—

Austin (as DEVAR): Like, our whole class is full of fuckups. Like.

Jack (as LEM): Well, come on. Hey, look. [Janine laughs lightly] You steal— [quietly] you steal one violin and, like, a shirt and that's— you're done.

Austin (as DEVAR): [loudly] I didn't— This shirt has been in my family for a long time, frankly!

Jack (as LEM): Like two and a half months?

Austin (as DEVAR): Dude, at least. [Keith, Ali, and Jack laugh]

Jack (as LEM): Okay. Look, I didn't mean to— Look, I didn't mean to set the fire. That wasn't me. I was— Well, actually, I was trying to rob the... I was tryin' to rob the vault at that point.

Austin (as DEVAR): And you're giving me shit about the shirt. Goddamn, Lem. So, word of whatever happened there— the fire and all the illusion magic and shit got back, and they— [sighs] there's a whole debate that blew up over night, man. About like— I mean, you get it. Look at this place. We spend... I've been here since— since I graduated. I didn't get to go tour the world with a stolen violin. [Jack/Lem laughs lightly] And every day we're in here counting beads. "How many beads did I sell today? Oh, I sold 222 beads. I was only supposed to sell 221 beads."

Jack (as LEM): [concerned] Oh, no.

Austin (as DEVAR): Oh my God. You're just— [defeated] Okay. [Keith, Ali and Jack laugh] Goddamn, man.

Jack (as LEM): Devar, this work is important.

Austin (as DEVAR): No, but that's the thing! That cat, uh, Addleton? He showed that there could be a way to just... What if I sold 400 beads, but I could trick the pattern into thinking I only sold 222?

Jack (as LEM): You can't trick the pattern, can you?

Austin (as DEVAR): Apparently you can, man. And that's— that's a lot to take in. Like, these dudes have spent their whole lives... not just their whole lives, right? Like... I'm kind of an outsider, right? Like, most of my family tree has spent their whole... generation on generation on generation learning how to make bread. But those cats at the Archives have spent all that time learning how to move beads around until— until the sun stays out longer so you— so you get a bigger crop in general. And now they're here and like, what if you could just move things around a little bit, and then maybe you don't have to trade any beads? Or maybe you don't have to reroute the river such that the wind blows differently? Or you don't have to do any of the shit that we do. We can just—

Jack (as LEM): But that's—

Austin (as DEVAR): —do it.

Jack (as LEM): [worried] Devar, like... this isn't real, right? It's not— it doesn't work, right?

Austin (as DEVAR): I don't know, man. So... It's a— it's a hard question, and it's only get harder for them. I'm reading this book.

AUSTIN: And he looks around the room and, like, brings it up and finds it underneath a pile of other— of other old things. It's, like, under— it's under a robe and underneath a fishing rod and—

Austin (as DEVAR): Here it is. It's like... This is a book that was printed. I don't even know how long ago. No one does. Long time. Like, Erasure long. And if you look at it, it says on the cover, "Not for sale." And that's because it was like a... I guess, like, an early print of it for people to read before the real ver— I don't know if it was like an editor copy or what, but it's, like, a really good book, right? Like, it's— it's about this dude who his husband got killed, and then he had to build a house. It's a whole thing. And then, no one read it after that. Everything fell apart between this getting made and... everything falling apart. Before anybody could read it. But I'm reading it now. [sighs]

Like, what if you could just make it so that... There are patterns that need a hundred of these books to have been read, and there are people back home who are saying, "We could just make that be the case." That we could trick the pattern so that it feels like, to the pattern, that these books got printed and that they got read and that now that adds into the pattern in a way that we could do all sorts of new shit that we couldn't have done before. Cause there are limits on this pattern shit, right? But now there aren't— or there might not be. And I'm with you; I don't know. This sounds scary to me, too. [overlapped] And worse—

Jack (as LEM): What does Morbash—

AUSTIN: [simultaneously] Go ahead.

JACK: [simultaneously] Go on.

Austin (as DEVAR): Morbash is a traditionalist, right? In more ways than one, so, uh— he doesn't like it.

Jack (as LEM): He's not happy?

Austin (as DEVAR): No, he wanted us to make it— make sure we weren't fuckin' around with it here. Frankly, we don't even really know how it works. That Addleton dude is the guy who knows that illusion magic shit. So, like, we don't have one of him. We wanted him, but I think he's gone now.

Jack (as LEM): Yeah, I don't know where he's gone.

Austin (as DEVAR): Arrell mentioned— Arrell mentioned him. He's— I don't know. He said he's gone. And now I think Arrell's gonna head for the Archives, so.

Jack (as LEM): Yeah, that's what Elgash was saying.

Austin (as DEVAR): Yeah, that's what he was saying when... Yeah, anyway, B.

Jack (as LEM): What are you gonna do?

Austin (as DEVAR): Close up shop. Head back.

Jack (as LEM): Back to the Archives?

Austin (as DEVAR): If you're goin', I'll go with you. Yeah.

Jack (as LEM): Yeah. You can come with. We could use another orc.

Austin (as DEVAR): Three eighths of an orc anyway.

Jack (as LEM): Well, you know, we can trick the pattern.

Austin (as DEVAR): Doin' my best every day.

Jack (as LEM): It was good seeing you. Thanks for the tea.

Austin (as DEVAR): Take some.

Jack (as LEM): Can I take this box? Do you mind if I take this box?

AUSTIN: The communication thing?

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Yeah. He's like,

Austin (as DEVAR): You take whatever you want, man. And check in before you leave cause we can get kitted out. You know, stuff gets lost. Stuff gets lost out. I don't know; there was a wizard here. So.

Jack (as LEM): [laughs] Yeah, you know, I just— I'll just uh— Hey, it's a nice shirt you got there. Yeah. You know? We know what we're doing.

Austin (as DEVAR): Snowshoes could help. It's snowy out.

Jack (as LEM): Snowshoes— snowshoes could help. It's— it's— yeah, it's snowy out. Can I borrow that book when you're done with it? You know, if you finish it before we set off?

Austin (as DEVAR): No, I'm, like, trying to do a whole thing with it. I'm, like— that's, like, my whole thing is writing. I'm working on a novel.

Jack (as LEM): We don't see many of those nowadays.

Austin (as DEVAR): No, I'm trying to bring it back, though.

Jack (as LEM): Good luck.

Austin (as DEVAR): Here's what I'm— what my plan was— I'm gonna— so, I'm gonna do it like this. Like, we don't have, like, the— the stuff that makes books anymore. But you ever meet Marisol over in the Mills? Little, little thing?

Jack (as LEM): Like, ugh, it's been a long day.

Austin (as DEVAR): She— Well, anyway, she's—

Jack (as LEM): Maybe. Maybe my friends—

Austin (as DEVAR): She's doing this thing with, like, a monthly newspaper, like current events and such, and I'm gonna see, like, what if I could just get, like, a little bit of my book in there every month?

Jack (as LEM): Oh my god.

Austin (as DEVAR): And then, like, you're gonna want more. And they don't even care about the news. They just want to see what happened to, like, that dude Charlie, who was fighting a dragon or whatever? I haven't started writing it yet. I don't know if there's gonna be dragons.

Jack (as LEM): No, that sounds— That sounds good. That sounds good. You should write right up until the point where Charlie gets killed by the dragon, or it looks like the dragons can get killed or he's gonna get killed and then you stop. Right? And that's when you—

Austin (as DEVAR): Nah, that's bullshit. Fuck that. [Ali laughs]

Jack (as LEM): Okay.

Austin (as DEVAR): I ain't trying to be cheap, dude. Like.

Jack (as LEM): Well...

Austin (as DEVAR): It's her job to sell the paper. I'm trying to tell a story. That's just the medium for me.

Jack (as LEM): You just— you're going to write, like... oh, well, okay. Well, good luck with it. It sounds good. I'll read it.

Austin (as DEVAR): It— Mm... I'll see you in a couple of days.

Jack (as LEM): See you, Devar.

Austin (as DEVAR): [upset] You wouldn't play a song without a hook in it— Mm. Alright.  
[Jack and Janine laugh lightly]

AUSTIN: And he lets you go and sips his tea and then, like, shakes his head and puts it down and starts to clean up the dead body. [Jack laughs] Alright. Hadrian's and Ephrim.

ART: Hey.

SYLVIA: Hello.

AUSTIN: Who wants to— who wants to— Hadrian should make this roll because he shows up first. 2d6 plus two.

ART: Hey!

AUSTIN: Look at ten. Alright. Oh, so the Hawk and Mouse Inn is like a... Jack, can you describe an inn so that I don't offend you with my description of an inn or a tavern or a pub for once?  
[Jack and Sylvia laugh]

ART: [amused] Yikes.

JACK: In like— in Rosemary?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I guess it's like, uh— it's kind of like a fairly large open room. There's, like, a combination of seats and— and, like, chairs next to fires. That's probably, like, one or two dogs; one of which is underfed and one of which is overfed, like, walking between people. There are things hanging from the walls, and I think they are, like, crops from a better time.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: From— from when Rosemary was doing better agriculturally. There are, like, hops or barley or wheat. And there's probably, like, one or two fewer beers on tap than you'd want. But they're probably— they're probably alright beers. I guess it's Rosemerrow, as well, so you sort of have to stoop a little. It's probably fairly dark.

AUSTIN: Okay, I can work with that. That's— All that's true. [Ali laughs] And also, there are about three dozen pala-din... the anchor there. [overlapped] All different—

JACK: There a standard as well.

AUSTIN: Oh, they're just in all of the— right, okay. And— and a whole mess of Ordennan, like, humans also who are all wearing much less militaristic clothing than you've ever seen an Ordennan wear. Like, no one here except for Hella has ever been to the Ordennan, like, island, right? Maybe Adaire?

JACK: I haven't.

JANINE: Adaire has. Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Ok.

JANINE: That's canon now already.

AUSTIN: Okay. And so it's just like— I guess, Hella, what's— what does civilian wear look like for— or not even civilian, like business wear— like, what's a professional of Ordenna wear?

ALI: Um, huh.

AUSTIN: Like, not all the way to formal, but— but you know.

ALI: Right. Like business casual.

AUSTIN: White collar work.

ALI: Yeah. I think it's like— like pants and like cotton shirts cause you want stuff to be kind of breathy—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: —cause you're, like, always by the sea or by a really hot, like, mine or whatever. But, like, with embroidery or like a bunch of bracelets or stuff like that, kind of.

AUSTIN: Oh, that'd good. Yeah.

ALI: Yeah. To kind of show you're, like,— you're, like, stature.

AUSTIN: Status or whatever?

ALI: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I gotcha.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I like that. Alright. So, they're just kind of like camped out all around this inn, like, literally with tents and stuff. And you flash your badge and are let inside, and inside has been— The bottom is still an inn and tavern. Like, there are still people here who are not part of the Ordennan group getting drinks, but not as many as there would be if not for the Ordennans who are here. And one of those people who is seated at a long table by herself at the far end is Jerod Shiraz, who is the Vicereine of Ordenna. This kind of role that is like a combination of kind of priestess and president. She kind of is what's left of the spiritual life of the Ordennans. But all of that has been made— and this is something Hella knows primarily... and, you know, if anybody else in the party does know, it would probably be Hadrian and Ephrim, as people who are of the cloth— their spiritual life had been kind of shut down as a part of the culture years ago.

[1:00:00]

And today, it's kind of been folded in. Those elements were made— were, like, secularized. So, like, there are still festival days, but they don't necessarily have the religious— there's no belief behind it, or there's not as much belief behind it. In my mind, Ordennan— Ordennan culture has that sort of like, um— what's the Japanese saying? It's like, "You're born Shinto, you marry Christian, and you die Buddhist." I might be fucking that up. If I am, apologies. But, like, there is— religion is— has a secular element. And there are still people who do have faith in Ordenna, of some sort, about kind of— built around the notion of bloodlines, built around the notion of your family's history. It's not quite ancestor worship necessarily, but Ordennans definitely have a sort of like, "We built this" quality to— to them. And so, there's lots of honoring the dead and what— what your bloodline did in the past. And there was this moment of, like, great catastrophe during which the resulting thing was, it combined the spiritual and civil heads of state together.

And now she's in front of you. She has short cropped hair. Actually, it's not short crop at all; it's very long, but it's up. It's a bluish tint. It's up in a bun. And, like everyone else, she is wearing the kind of cotton shirt with— with nice pants, and instead of just having the bracelets, she also has, like, a whole ream of necklaces all around her. Like from the— almost like from her chin down. Like very tight chokers at the top of her neck, and they slowly open up in length until finally they're very long hanging, coming down like her entire— her entire torso. And she

also has, like, gems inlaid in— in her hair itself. And she looks up at you and kind of like motions for you two to sit

Austin (as JEROD SHIRAZ): [exhales] Deputies of the Golden Lance. A pleasure. How may I help you?

ART: If you have an actually pertinent question, you should go first. [Ali laughs]

SYLVIA: Well, um... I don't.

AUSTIN: Okay, I'll give you the things— the free thing she's gonna give you here— the main free thing that she's gonna give you— that she would have given you on a seven to ten, or seven to nine. Which is... I mean, I guess I need to know, like, how you're framing the conversation first. This isn't your question, but like, what's the— what does the opening look like for this?

ART: It's— it's an awful lot of pretense.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: It's like—

AUSTIN: Are you, like, representing the church? Actually, she probably notices that. She probably says, like,

Austin (as JEROD SHIRAZ): I'm not sure whether I should be addressing members of the Golden Lance or of the Creed of Samoths. Whose name do you bear now?

Art (as HADRIAN): How about Alexander, Citizen of Hieron?

Austin (as JEROD SHIRAZ): Huh. Good answer. And you?

AUSTIN: She looks at Ephrim.

Sylvia (as EPHRIM): [sighs] I come bearing no name but my own. My name is Prince Ephrim. That's— that's all you can— that's who I'm representing.

SYLVIA: And he orders a, like, really strong drink.

AUSTIN: Good. Great. She nods.

Austin (as JEROD SHIRAZ): Well, Prince Ephrim, take a seat. You, too, Alexander of Hieron.

AUSTIN: And I think she, like, uses this as an excuse to chat, basically. Like, to take a break from her work, and partially between what she's saying and partially between clues that you pick up from other conversations you're overhearing and things, the paperwork that you're spotting



when she's not looking, you kind of piece together that she is here trying to solidify an allegiance with Rosemerrow quickly enough that they are taken off the table as a military target.

She speaks in metaphor a lot and with reference to parables you don't know because they're not from your culture, but— but that are still clear enough for you to understand the meaning, right? There's actually something really novel about it because they are stories that— they're stories that you can't quite predict the ending to, which is a rare thing. But it becomes clear that she is in a position where war feels inevitable, and it's about choosing which war is going to happen. And she's picking the one... She's trying to push people into the one that is the least harmful. That is her— that is why she is here in person and didn't just send a representative. She wasn't pleased with the representatives who came before.

And as part of all of that, it becomes clear to you that the next time— so, I've mentioned before, the blizzard is cyclical— every few weeks it hits really hard again, and the next time it hits Velas really hard, Ordenna is invading Velas. Because their ships are immune to the snow. [someone exhales] And they'll roll through Velas, and that will be that. And there is no— like, that is better than if they invaded this huge city and killed all of the people here, a lot of the people here. So she nods and says, like,

Austin (as JEROD SHIRAZ): To be the voice of reason... in a conversation that is unreasonable is a very difficult thing. Something I'm sure you're both very familiar with.

Art (as HADRIAN): Absolutely.

Austin (as JEROD SHIRAZ): There's something else that... [exhales] Come with me.

AUSTIN: And she, like, lead you upstairs and walks you down a long hallway and like nods to a few guards and does like a hand gesture, and they leave. And then she opens the attic and nods for you to go upstairs. What do you do?

SYLVIA: Fuck it.

ART: What here is evil?

AUSTIN: There's probably a dude outside who's evil. [overlapped] She is not.

ART: Alright, but not like eight dudes in the attic?

AUSTIN: No. Um, there is something in the attic that doesn't register. Like... so I've talked about Fero feeling an absence before, instead of life, but, like, it's still physical. There's something like that upstairs. Like, there's something that, like, is reg— It's like— there's— there's a blip, and you're not getting a read on whether it's evil or not. Or if it's— what it— there's something that could be evil upstairs, but also isn't not... It's weird. It's throwing you off.

ART: Okay.

SYLVIA: At this point, Ephrim is just like tired and is like, 'There isn't— what else could today throw at him?'

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: And so he— he's just like,

Sylvia (as EPHRIM): Fine. Yeah, sure.

SYLVIA: He, like, finishes— he finishes his drink, which he brought upstairs with him and then goes, [overlapped] over to the attic.

AUSTIN: Great. Good. Where do you put the glass? Also—

SYLVIA: [amused] He hands to— he hands it to Jerod.

AUSTIN: Good. Great. She, like, shrugs and slips it into some weird pocket in her sleeves. She has, like, big huge sleeves. And you go upstairs, and— who goes first?

SYLVIA: I think I do.

AUSTIN: Okay. There is a very strange light up here emanating from a figure who is seated on a chair reading a glowing book. And the figure, too, is glowing. And it's another one of the stars. So this being is just— is a lot like the previous one. You didn't get really close enough to analyze the first star. You didn't spend enough time at peace with it to make like, "Oh, is this the same face as the previous one?" [lightly laughs] But here nothing is on fire. It's— it's golden wings are kind of held in close to its back. And you can see that it has... a sort of— it has that same sort of glow as the previous one that, like, is emitting light for itself, or from itself, but isn't necessarily lighting the room. There are torches and stuff in the room to— or candles probably to keep the room lit, but you have no problem looking at it directly. It's not so bright as to be blinding as like the previous one. And then they speak, and they ask Jerod,

Austin (as UNKNOWN STAR): [vocal audio metallic] Who are these?

AUSTIN: And Jerod says,

Austin (as JEROD SHIRAZ): They are members of a church. You wanted to speak to someone of the faith.

AUSTIN: And the being nods.

Austin (as UNKNOWN STAR): Good.

AUSTIN: And they move their hand across their body, and the chairs bend upwards from the wooden floor, from nothing. It is if like— like a pop up book.

ART: Okay.

Austin (as UNKNOWN STAR): I am Obelus. Sit.

ART: Uh, Hadrian sits.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Yeah, alright.

AUSTIN: As you get closer, you can see that the thing like— you can see their face, and it is like... it's statuesque, but not in the sense that, like, it's— it's.... like high cheekbones. Like in the sense that you can feel that it was carved, but not like the anchor or the pala-din either. Um... [sighs] like the faces of Mount Rushmore in that, like, the task of making this thing's face was so big that you could only ever get pretty close. Do you know what I mean? Like, "Yeah, that's Lincoln. Mmm... Yeah, he has a beard. Close enough." [Sylvia laughs] Or whatever, right? Like, someone could tell you this is a figure and you'd be, "Oh yeah. I can see it." It almost feels like it's unfinished. It's— Their face feels like... like it— the finishing touches were never made. And it's wearing robes, but it's hard to separate the robes from its flesh even. And I don't mean that like— in like a body horror way. It's just that the color is muted. Like, it's the same bright yellow light. And the— the kind of scroll it's holding, it doesn't seem to— you can't quite see where it begins or ends. It looks like there's an infinite amount of paper on the scroll, and it places its pen away and bows to you slightly. And you get questions. Two questions.

Sylvia (as EPHRIM): I mean, stop me if this one's too obvious, but what did you want to talk to people of faith about?

ART: Great question. Love it.

AUSTIN: That's a good question. Obelus says,

Austin (as OBELUS): It seems that the people are unaware and unprepared. Why has the church failed?

Art (as HADRIAN): Why? What— what do you think the church should have done here?

Austin (as OBELUS): The Nothing is coming. And we were not supposed to arrive to a world like this. They do not know the cost of saving. They are frightened of us and of our task.

Sylvia (as EPHRIM): You're talking like we know what your task is. We have— [sighs] we don't even know what you are... other than the stars? It's—

Austin (as OBELUS): But we can see him on you. How do you not know?

Art (as HADRIAN): Samoths is a reclusive lord.

Austin (as OBELUS): And Samot?

Sylvia (as EPHRIM): I didn't know Samot existed until earlier today. He's not exactly common knowledge around here.

Art (as HADRIAN): Samot is... strong in the south and to the east. I had to learn that myself.

Austin (as OBELUS): Then our task is harder. Not enough for us... But for them.

AUSTIN: And then they turn to look left, and the— the, like, wall opens up to reveal the town. The town is, in this vision, on fire with that fire that the first star produced. And as the fire spreads— this happens pretty rapidly in such a way that you go from like, “Oh, shit, burning— it’s burning the town!” to being like, “Oh, this is like a weird vision.” As the fire burns, it is replaced with a different— with, like, a different set of buildings. And it gets to the the Longsand at one point, and the Longsand is replaced by the woods. And you can hear the ocean disappear. And suddenly, instead of being the ocean, there are— there are mountains there. It’s like it’s being painted over with a new world. You have another question.

ART: There’s the supremely selfish question...

AUSTIN: Which is?

ART: Can you— can you put me in touch— can you make Samothēs talk to me?

AUSTIN: [amused] Can I get those digits? [Ali and Sylvia laugh]

ART: But that’s— that shouldn’t be— this— this is— we’re— But if I could—

AUSTIN: I mean, like, I guess the interesting thing about that question would be that it would be selfish of Hadrian in a way that would be like.... That’s interesting, you know?

ART: Yeah, I don’t think I’m there yet.

AUSTIN: But I don’t know if that’s where he is. Yeah, yeah.

ART: I think we’re— I think we’re a few months from that.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And remember, like, Jerod is also here, and... again, you’re asking a question about the world than I can get you to in different ways.

Art (as HADRIAN): Are you going to help the Ordennans wage war against Velas?

ART: Or is it— is it better phrased,

Art (as HADRIAN): How can we avert the war between Ordenna and Velas?

AUSTIN: Oh, you’re asking Jerod? Are you asking— just asking in general? Who are you— who is the “you”?

ART: I’m asking— I’m asking the star.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Because if the star is gonna help—

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: —we're fucked. If the star isn't going to help, maybe I can— maybe I can try something.

AUSTIN: They shake their head and say,

[1:15:00]

Austin (as OBELUS): All remaining conflict on Hieron is beneath us. The outcome of the war is prologue to what comes next. Settle your matters. Find peace. We will defeat the Nothing. But none of us will see what comes next.

Art (as HADRIAN): How can I help?

AUSTIN: Obelus nods to you.

Austin (as OBELUS): You can prevent many others from stopping us. There are... artifacts of power that date from our Lord's Time.

[Jack de Quidt's "[A Chaotic Cataloging of the Entire World](#)" begins playing]

AUSTIN: And below you is a familiar sight. The map of Hieron that you first found in the Tower of Severeia on the Isle of Eventide, and it marks the towers that were marked there originally with the little plumbob crystals.

Austin (as OBELUS): Your Lord works against us. And gathers strength there below.

AUSTIN: And a path opens up on the map that runs from Rosemerrow down through the woods and to the mark that you're headed towards. And then from there, it runs south further to this island.

Austin (as OBELUS): We live on the light, and we work under it. And there is none. Stop the Dark Sun, and bring the light back to the sky. This is how you can aid us in our holy endeavor. We are Samot's... Forgotten.

[Previous song stops. Jack de Quidt's "[Outside](#)" begins playing]