

[Marielda 12: The Killing of the King-God Samoths By The Traitor Prince Maelgwyn Pt. 2](#)

Transcriber: the dread biter#0090

AUSTIN (as Samol): Like I was saying. Hatin' what it had created in me, Nothing made Death. Only thing is, Death and me became fast friends. Like a farmer and a butcher, we saw the same things, just from different sides. Tristero was too much like me. He was, after all, a material being, too, and seeing that, Nothing stopped sending material beings to kill me, and started sending something else: shadows.

[MUSIC - "MARIELDA" begins]

Temporary. Fickle. Wandering killers. And one shadow, well, he cast violence longer than any other. In a daring ploy, he led my sister, Severeia, whose domain was all things alive, but especially wolves, into a trap. He slew her, and stole her name away, and the Heat and the Dark approved. But her name was beautiful, and real, and not like anything he'd ever heard before. So instead of returning it to Nothingness, he kept it close to his chest. And he began to travel the world.

The Heat, the Dark, well, they didn't like that too much. So they sent a new shadow after him. They sent *her* shadow. A corrupted child of Severeia, wolf-god. And that new wolf, that dark dog, it caught him that day in the valley of the Hewed Peak along the Lushwood. All he had was some loose cloth, her name, and a vast and deadly patience. So he waited, locked eyes with it, and when the moment came, defended himself from its fangs and claws long enough to release my sister back into the world.

Her arrival didn't just leash that shadow. It echoed out across the world. So joyous was she to move again, so happy was I to see her, that she filled Hieron, she filled *me*, with new imaginary creatures with impossible horns and unlikely wings, steel backs and strange glows. She did not forgive her killer, though, not for many years.

Frankly, it took some time before I fully forgave the boy, too. But I rewarded him, then and there. He was just a boy, after all. And that day, he became *my* boy. My little prince. Samot, the Knower of Things. The Boy Who Apologized. The one who realized that we didn't just have the power to make things, we had the responsibility to *remake* ourselves.

[MUSIC plays out to end]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interactions between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker, and we are continuing our day—mm! Our game. Today.

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: Of Blades in the Dark, by John Harper, who has shouted us out a couple of times on Twitter, so thanks to John. And thanks for continuing to work on this really good game. As

always, my goals are to convey the fictional world honestly, to bring Marielda to life, and to play to find out what happens. I am joined by Ali Acampora!

ALI: Um, hi! You can find me @ali\_west on Twitter, and you can find the show @Friends\_Table.

AUSTIN: Jack de Quidt.

JACK: Hi. You can find me on Twitter @notquitereal, and you can buy any music on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

AUSTIN: Please pay Jack, because last week I gave—I gave him the *most* homework there was.

ALI: Mhm!

AUSTIN: And then—

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: —he *crushed* it and made *the best song* for the end of that episode, so.

ALI: Yeah, he wrote—

AUSTIN: Um.

ALI: —he wrote a seven minute song in two days.

AUSTIN: He wrote a seven minute song in two days—

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: —based around a hastily... performed like jump-cut-filled nonsense dialogue. So.

[SYLVIA snorts]

AUSTIN: Good job, Jack.

JACK: There were fourteen discrete clarinets.

[Laughter]

JACK: Thank you.

AUSTIN: Um, also joining us, Sylvia<sup>1</sup> Clare.

SYLVIA: Hello! You can find me on Twitter @captaintrash!

AUSTIN: And Andrew Lee Swan.

DRE: Hey! You can find me on Twitter @swandre3000.

AUSTIN: Okay. I'm not gonna go over all of our beliefs this week—or all of your beliefs. But I am curious if you've gotten any that are built around this new... and probably final "heist." Put "heist" in quotes.

JACK: Uh. I have two.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: One for each boy.

AUSTIN: Oh, sure, of course. One for each boy.

SYLVIA: Oh, god...

[DRE laughs]

JACK: Um. Edmund's belief is "Samothes knows we are coming, and there is nothing we can do to prepare for that, so we must instead prepare for the end?"

AUSTIN: [flatly] Oh. Good. That's a good belief.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: Um.

AUSTIN: That's a pretty—

JACK: No! I've got a—... I've got a good belief for you. Ethan's belief is [confidently] "Working as a team, we will recover the great treasure within Samothes' palace."

[SYLVIA groans]

AUSTIN: I am so sad. I am... hoo, okay. So to be clear, Ethan has not been let in on what is actually happening here.

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

[DRE laughs]

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: Edmund, though—Edmund's the one who's soft? Or is Ethan the one that's s—Edmund's the one that's soft.

JACK: Uh, Edmund is the one that's soft.

AUSTIN: Okay. Good. That's—good.

[SYLVIA snorts]

AUSTIN: Edmund's the one who's soft, and Edmund saw Samoths in the dream.

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Samoths knows that you're coming to kill him, okay. Castille, do you have a belief?

ALI: [wobbly] I do. And it—the end of it might be too soft?

AUSTIN: Let's hear it.

ALI: But my belief is “I was sent to Marielda to prove that the Heat and the Dark can be stopped, and I've never given up on a mission before.”

AUSTIN: Ooh.

JACK: Wow.

AUSTIN: That's interesting.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's very much leaning into the Charter side.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Of Castille, huh. Interesting. Okay. Um, I like that because it has that—like I don't think it's too soft because it has that Charter connotation to it.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um. So try to play that up. And, again, to reiterate for people who, like us, haven't been paying attention to this fictional world for a week.

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: You were visiting Maelgwyn. Maelgwyn—you're the one who has like the most direct line on what this all is. Maelgwyn was told that—or seems to believe, from some combination of Samot and—he referenced the mage's university—that there is a way to create something... that can hold back the Heat and the Dark. By seeing the corpse of Samoths, in its tomb.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um. Good. That's all!

ALI: Mhm!

AUSTIN: Who else. Aubrey. What is your... ?

SYLVIA: [clears throat] I just sorta...

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's fine.

SYLVIA: ... came up with this, but I thought "I need to make sure my friends get out of this okay, even if I don't?"

AUSTIN: [moved] Oh. Aubrey.

SYLVIA: Yep.

DRE: Aw.

AUSTIN: [doubtful] Uh? Hm.

SYLVIA: I d—I kinda—the problem is, I already have "Do whatever is necessary to stop the Heat and the Dark?"

AUSTIN: I see. I see.

SYLVIA: And that.

AUSTIN: Here's what I—here's—

SYLVIA: Plays so directly into this already.

AUSTIN: Yeah, and that's already you basically saying you'll do violence, right?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Good. Let me just—this—those—

SYLVIA: So...

AUSTIN: —can be conflicting beliefs.

SYLVIA: Yep.

AUSTIN: I like conflicting beliefs. That's how people are.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Speaking of conflicting beliefs, Sige. And also—

DRE: Hey!

AUSTIN: —let me—before we move forward to Sige... Aubrey, you know all about all of this because you've been visiting that weird dream world of Samoths—

SYLVIA: Yes.

AUSTIN: —and Samot talking. And then you were visited—or Samot talked to you directly? And—

SYLVIA: Talked to me—so Samot talks to me directly when I don't use the dream essence, and when I do—

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: —use the dream essence, I go to that other realm, before all of this, where they—

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: —were talking. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. And Sige, you met with [emphasis on second syllable] Samol. [emphasis on first syllable] Samol. I haven't decided—

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —where the—where the... emphasis is there. I think [emphasis on first syllable] Samol is better. So. Let's go with that. ... And what is your belief?

DRE: Uh, my belief is “The island ruins everything it touches. I must escape before it ruins me too.” and “In order to get off the island, Samol has said that I have to make sure that we *don’t* kill Samoths.”

AUSTIN: Okay. Good. D—no... [laughs]

ALI: Jeez.

AUSTIN: No conflicting... Good. Okay.

DRE: Uh-huh. It’ll be f—

AUSTIN: Good teamwork.

DRE: It’ll be fine.

AUSTIN: Lord. Okay. Uh. And the other thing that Samol kind of was hoping you would do is figure out a way to destroy the forest that has been rapidly growing. Um.

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: That—he said that followers of his? Are extending that forest, and he doesn’t really want that so much? [laughs] Um. So are kind of like believers in him, or like kind of a cult of Samol, is doing that?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Called the Gardeners. All right. So. Where were we? Everyone has gathered into what I think we were calling like the diorama room? Which is like there’s the whole map of Marielda inside of this train car. Chrysanthemum and Quince had been knocked out by Castille’s like weird electricity—ghost electricity?

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: S’ good job on that.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um. Everyone else had kind of backed the remaining four members of the Golden Lance into the dance car, which are Thackeray, Orchid, Helianthus and Iris. Yeah, maybe—I was—I was really worried that I had forgotten to describe... Lance Noble Violet, but maybe Lance Noble Vioet—Violet just wasn’t here. ‘Cause I just don’t see them on the—on the map. Which is fine. Which is fine. Yeah, I feel like maybe you’re not allowed to take all of the Golden Lance out of the city.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: You know. Even on holiday. The last thing that happened in that previous—in the kind of very front—oop! Someone just left. And they're back!

JACK: Oh! They're back.

AUSTIN: Welcome back. In that previous train car, again, Castille kind of... Castille dropped Chrysanthemum and Quince... and Maelgwyn had just saved one of the—one of the Hitchcock boys, I think, from being shot? Or maybe saved Aubrey. Saved Aubrey from being shot. Um. So yeah, I think all of you walk in, into the—into the diorama room, and then Maelgwyn follows in a few moments later, and you're kind of have this standoff as the train slows and enters... the volcano. Thackeray—draws his gun and like aims it generally in your direction. What are you doing?

JACK: Is there any way we can close this door?

[Background noise]

AUSTIN: Uh... Yeah! Sure. Um. They—you will be shot at, though, if you—if you try to make that move.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So I think you have to do like a Prowl, or something else... to get by successfully and close the door. But yeah, you could—that's totally a thing you could do.

JACK: Uh, I don't know if that's too useful on its own, but I wonder whether or closing—breaking our line of sight with them would be useful as part of another plan?

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: I don't quite know what that plan is yet. But I just wanted to float that as an option.

[DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: I mean—which door are you talking about, the one...

JACK: Uh, the one between us and them.

AUSTIN: Yeah, this one here. That's kind of in between the dance car and the diorama car.

SYLVIA: And then where Chrysanthemum and Quince are, is that... ?

AUSTIN: They are knocked out. As far as you know.



SYLVIA: Okay. Okay.

AUSTIN: That's like the front car. Um.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: And the whole train is like coming to a stop. And you can hear someone hammering in the distance.

SYLVIA: Are there doors on this car anyway?

AUSTIN: I—

SYLVIA: Like in—to outside—to outside, are there...

AUSTIN: There's a door in the front car. And then there is a door... Maybe there wasn't a door in the front care. Maybe the only door is in the... [sighs] Yeah, I think it would only be in that next—in the car that they are all in. Um. Because no one—I'm trying to remember what it was when we first—you know what? Reconfiguration means, it doesn't matter what it was—

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: —six weeks ago when we first started recording, this—

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: —train can have a door on whatever cars that make sense for this scenario.

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think this room—this car, and their car both have doors.

DRE: And we're pulled to a stop. Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you pull to a stop, just now.

SYLVIA: Should I throw a smoke bomb in the—other car?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: [whispering] Yes!

DRE: Yes. Yes. You absolutely should.

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: That is the right move.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I didn't even need to ask. But you know. Um.

AUSTIN: Totally. What's it do? How's it work?

SYLVIA: So, it is described as it is, um—"creates a cloud of acrid smoke that's difficult to breathe and stings the eyes.

ALI: Oh, wow.

SYLVIA: And the side effect of it is collatic—collateral damage and/or heart.

AUSTIN: [laughs] All right, well.

JACK: Oh no!

AUSTIN: [laughs] Um. I feel like this is a—mm. I was gonna say this is a Hunt, but do—I could hear a case that it's a Wreck. Because Wrecking is about—is about... creating distractions and chaos.

SYLVIA: I mean, the entire point of doing this is not to hurt them, but to dis—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: —to c—distract them.

AUSTIN: Yeah, gimme a—give me a Wreck. Um. Ricky Standard. For this.

SYLVIA: Do I—do I get the bonus from Fine Wrecker tools, or?

AUSTIN: No, 'cause that's like for literally breaking a thing, you know?

SYLVIA: I figured, but you know. Might as well try my luck!

DRE: Can I assist? Can I assist on this?

AUSTIN: How are you helping?

DRE: I'm gonna lay down some covering fire.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, you're just like blastin in.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Also, just a reminder, Aubrey has the sh—the sawed-off version of the gun, right? Okay.

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Cool.

DRE: So I guess I'll take—I take one Stress for that right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, take one Stress, and then—are you giving a bonus to... effect or to... Sorry, that's plus 1d. If you're just taking Stress, that's plus 1d. Yeah.

SYLVIA: Got a 5!

AUSTIN: Nice work! That's a—that's a real—that's a real success. That's... not...

DRE: Nice.

SYLVIA: I'm not sure how to ping, but I'm kinda aiming at like the feet of Helianthus or Iris, is where...

AUSTIN: Okay. I mean—I think it's—I think the area of effect for a smoke bomb here is probably gonna be enough to—

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —distract all of them. Um. All right, *“You do it but there's a consequence: you suffer harm, a complication occurs, you have reduced effect, or you end up in a Desperate position.”* So I think the... so the smoke hits, right mid—wait—show me where you hit it again? 'Cause yeah, maybe this will make a difference.

SYLVIA: I'm not s—how do I ping?

AUSTIN: You just click and hold.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Left click and hold.

SYLVIA: Right there. Yeah.

AUSTIN: All right, yeah! Um. All right, so you click and—sorry, you, uh... [laughs] throw the smoke bomb in. There is a click.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: As it—as it like emits the gas. It goes like “click!” “Pssssshhh!” and then like smoke fills that whole area. There’s coughing. But, through the smoke steps Thackeray, putting you in a Desperate position. Um. Everyone else is... not knocked out or anything, but is taken care for the time being. And Thackeray is here, with his missing nose and his glowing purple jacket. Um. And his gun. And his sabre. What are you all doing?

[15:08]

JACK: Hmm.

DRE: Trying to remember. What happened in the very first episode when something hit his coat? It was a bad thing, right?

AUSTIN: It had like—there was like a—an el—a magical electric shock. That... and the weapon like would bounce off of it. It wasn’t like—I think eventually you managed to damage the coat enough to where it wasn’t... as effective, but it *was* a problem for a moment or—for like the opening bit of the fight.

DRE: Sure.

SYLVIA: Also, we have magical weapons now, so I wonder...

AUSTIN: True.

ALI: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah. If that’s as much of a worry as it was. because you have both a magic knife—

JACK: Yeah.

SYLVIA: —and a magic gun, Sige.

JACK: I kinda—I wonder—

AUSTIN: Yeah, you know what?

JACK: —what happens to his coat if we shoot him with his own gun.

AUSTIN: Fuck it. No, none of this happens. Thackeray steps through the door, and then Maelgwyn puts the knife in his face.

[JACK hisses]

SYLVIA: Jeez.

AUSTIN: And then he falls, and like...

SYLVIA: [laughing] I was about to shoot that guy!

AUSTIN: No, the life, like... drains from Thackeray. In a—like he *wilts*.

SYLVIA: Ooh.

AUSTIN: And then Maelgwyn steps forward into the next car into the smoke. What do you do?

ALI: Oh, I—was gonna close that door.

JACK: Oh, is he gonna kill those people?

ALI: Wait. Hey, come back so we can just lock them in that smoke room.

AUSTIN: Are—is that what you say, or... ?

ALI: [laughs] That seems like a better than—oh... I mean...

AUSTIN: I mean, are you trying to make that—are you trying to make that case?

ALI: Oh... [laughs] He shouldn't kill all these people, probably. Probably?

AUSTIN: I—it'll take a roll to make him not do this.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: I mean, I could try and Sway him. I'm just trying to think of what the angle there is.

DRE: I mean, that he—we're wasting time. By fighting them, we're wasting time when we could just...

ALI: No, this is—they'll be a complication later, probably. Yeah.

JACK: No, he killed Thackeray like extremely fast.

[DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: Like comedically fast.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Like Thackeray looked like a badass for half a second, and then like there was a knife in his forehead. And then Maelgwyn with his like gauntleted hand pushed him off and down, and he like wilted as he did that. Like his flesh retracted into his bones.

SYLVIA: Oof!

DRE: That's—did he—did he pull the knife back out?

JACK: Um. Could I use a point...

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah, he's has the knife still.

DRE: Oh. Okay.

AUSTIN: And it looks meaner, somehow.

ALI: Wait, when did he get... ?

AUSTIN: Oh, remember, you made that roll. And told him that the only way to kill Samoths was to use that knife.

ALI: Oh, when he got it. Okay.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. He's very good.

ALI: Okay. [laughing] Okay.

JACK: Oh, and that knife's like a really bad idea—'cause you failed that roll!

AUSTIN: You did fail.

JACK: As well.

AUSTIN: You failed that roll really bad.

JACK: Yeah...

ALI: Oh...

JACK: Um. Now I'm suddenly suspicious of how quickly Austin killed Thackeray. Um.

[AUSTIN laughs menacingly]

JACK: Could—uh—so, we're all—we're heavy as heck right now.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

JACK: Um. Could I... take a... z—like I haven't done this yet, but could I theoretically take an Armor as... like a breathing apparatus? Against the effects of the smoke bomb.

AUSTIN: To like go in? Hm. That's interesting. Maybe. I'll say yes. That's interesting, so I'll say!

JACK: Okay. I'm gonna try and roll Sway, to st—I'm gonna follow him in. Into the smoke. And I'll try and roll Sway—

AUSTIN: What's your mask look like?

JACK: —to stop him. Um. I think that the gas masks in Marielda—or at least the gas mask that I was sold... oh, I know. I reckon that in Marielda, gas masks are usually only worn by like toughs and scoundrels and things. So I reckon this is just a metal piece that covers the lower part of my face, and is kinda frozen in a grimace?

AUSTIN: Okay. Almost like a samurai mask? Like the bottom—like one of those like—do you know the ones I'm talking about?

JACK: Yeah. Just the bottom portion.

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah. That's—yeah. Yeah.

JACK: Um. And I'm gonna roll Sway on Maelgwyn. And the way I'm gonna try and roll Sway on him. Is to put my hand on his shoulder, and tell him that this isn't it. This isn't it, yet.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Um.

AUSTIN: This is Controlled. Controlled Standard. Effect doesn't matter. It's just—we're gonna look at the success or not.

JACK: That's a 4.

AUSTIN: *"You hesitate. Withdraw and try a different approach, or else do it with a minor consequence. A minor complication occurs, you have reduced effect, you suffer Lesser harm, you end up in a Risky position."* Um. You reach out with your arm, and you catch him. Your—with your hand on his shoulder. And you feel his... his muscles clench as he extends the knife again into Helianthus. And can feel something... [sighs] You know, it's not—we've talked about whether or not there's such a thing as supernatural stuff. In... Marielda or in Hieron, or whether what we think about as being natural is just.. naive. But you feel something you haven't felt

before as the knife takes the life of Helianthus, and then you grip a little harder, and he stops. And steps back. And Orchid and Iris cough, and fall back a little bit further. Um.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: And then you feel him like—[sigh] You can hear him behind his mask, breathing out. And then the doors open to the train. And I think the door—I'm gonna draw the door. I think there's a door *here*. And there's another door like *here*. And a little cobbin with like a black—blackened apron—it's not a black apron, it's like a white apron, but it's all been blackened with soot and grease and oil—pokes his head in. Uh. Aubrey, what do cobbin—what do old cobbins look like? Like what's age look like for a cobbin.

SYLVIA: Oh, man... Um. Hm. I think like cobbins ironically shrink a little when they get older?

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Like they—they like—maybe not like heightwise, but they like retr—like—they're—they just seem smaller. Right? Like they're gaunter—like without fail, almost, they like—

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: —start to wrinkle—like the way they wrinkle, they look much more gaunter and like their doglike features become more accentuated, a little?

AUSTIN: Ooh. Okay. Cool. Um. I like that a lot.

SYLVIA: Yeah, so do I. I think it—like—

AUSTIN: Like a little less—a little less dinosaur. A little less lizard, a little more dog?

SYLVIA: Yeah, like a bit—like their snout becomes bigger, and like there's something ab—and like the eyes almost become a little cloudier, too?

AUSTIN: Okay. Well, a cobbin with just *very* cloudy eyes. It's like so cloudy that you—it takes a second for you to think like, “Okay, is this cobbin blind, or is it—are they—” like what's up with—

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And maybe a little hair, like there's actually a little like—not like peach fuzz, but like chick fuzz, like chick—like early—like a baby chick has sort of fuzz. Sticks its head in—his head in—and he says...



AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): [gruffly] [groans] You're a little—you're a little early. What the—what the hell happened in here?

AUSTIN: And he steps in and like starts looking around.

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): [groans] [laughs] No, I don't need this. I don't need this today. I don't need it! We got a lot goin' on. Just—get out here. Come on.

SYLVIA: Okay!

JACK: Uh, okay!

AUSTIN: And he like wobbles away, and like through—back through the door and out into a kind of station. A train station.

JACK: Oh, no.

ALI: Mm.

JACK: I've seen a map like this before.

[Laughter]

SYLVIA: Oh, *no*!

AUSTIN: Uh, I... I'll reveal a little bit, because there's a little bit more than you can see from here.

JACK: Austin is playing his fun redacted map game.

AUSTIN: I am.

JACK: That we all saw on September. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

SYLVIA: I still thought it was loading. And then no.

AUSTIN: No.

SYLVIA: It wasn't.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: No. All right, so the train has pulled into the station. Everything has this kind of polished like—rose-colored stone. It's like—it's rose with flecks of white in it. And there's a huge window to the west that kind of points out back to Marielda, where you can see the smoke coming up over the town. Over the city. Uh. The... To the kind of opposite side—so I'll mark where you're getting off on these trains. There's a—it's like *here*, and like *here*, are the exits that you can get out of. Um. And to the kind of east side of this huuuge train station that's just in this volcano... It's only like one—it's not like a train station. It's not like a—like a, "Oh, there's a bunch of trains here." There's just the one. But it is... it's like a—more like a subway station, almost. Right? It's like you're at the end of the—end of the line. But there is a... To the south, there are stairs leading down. Huge, crafted into the mountain itself.

And then there's also a set of five statues that are in... made of iron. Um. That are pretty identifiable, I guess, for y'all. You at the very least know—recognize Samol, Samoths, and Samot, who are the middle, right and furthest right ones. It is Samol... who is like—has very tree-like features, sitting on a stump, but it's like you can't tell where the stump ends and he begins. It's Samoths holding up a hammer, and bringing it down like on an anvil. And then that's like in one hand, and in his other hand he's holding—or like it's not even holding—it's hovering above where the hand is. Is... an iron kind of sculpture of the sun. And there is a vision of—or there's another sculpture of—again, in iron—of Samot, holding up a goblet, as if doing a toast, and clutching against his heart a collection of books. To the left, there are two other figures, one of whom is... God, I—it's—I think like the easiest way is just like "Oh, it's someone who's in a lot of armor, and who's holding a huge shield, a shield that's as big as they are." And then—and that's all the way to the left. And then just to the left of Samol, kind of in the second position of these set of statues, is a very feminine figure who is... Her feet aren't on the ground like anybody else's. She's like—the—her entire statue is hovering, with her legs bent just a little bit, and her arms out as if she's... as if she's the figurehead of a ship, or as if she's flying. Or like hovering. And has like long hair that is all over the place, as if she's underwater. You also spot gills. It's a very detailed set of—a very detailed statue. So. You all walk out of the train?

JACK: Um.

SYLVIA: I do, for sure, yeah.

DRE: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Then let me add you to the map... There they are. There's the friends.

JACK: We are the statues!

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughs] It's you! You're the...

ALI: God...

AUSTIN: Well, one of you is.

ALI: [reflectively] Yeah...

AUSTIN: One of you is a statue.

JACK: An agile statue!

SYLVIA: Castille, look! It's your family!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh my god. Fuck off. [laughs] I'm making you extra tiny now, Aubrey.

[ALI laughs]

SYLVIA: That's a—you know, that's fine. It's accurate.

AUSTIN: Uh, it's accurate. Um. And like breathing deeply, Orchid and—Orchid, who's Rebecca, you remember—and Iris, who is like the old like last-day-of-retirement cop—step out along with Maelgwyn, who has seemed to come back to his senses. A little bit. Um. The other cobbin like steps back into the—into the train, and like—he's like—

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): Give me one sec. Gimme—gimme one second. I'll be right back. I just got to, uh, take a couple—[sigh] oh, take a couple of precautions to make sure that nothing else here is... Oh, this is—this is a lot. You gave me a lot. You gave me a lot to deal with.

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): [grumbling noise] Could have told me about this, I knew... there would be extra guests, but I didn't... [grumbling]

AUSTIN: And then you hear a couple of switches being pulled up at the front of the train, and he comes back out through the front exit, and says—

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): All right, all right. Uh, which is—which is which? What do you—what do you got? You got, uh... 's, uh... Okay. You're a stone person, so you're probably Castille.

[ALI laughs]

[DRE laughs]

ALI (as Castille): [unsure] Uh, yeah—?

AUSTIN: He like takes a pair of glasses out of his pocket. Little cobbin glasses. That then snap onto his no—onto his snout.

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): Okay. Uh, and then the boys. You got, uh, Hitchcock and—what's the other one's name? Uh. Hitchcock and... Hm. Can't think of the other one, but, uh—it's the Hitchcock boys, I'll call you. That'll be fun. And then, uh... Aubrey. You—ah, yeah, Aubrey. Okay! How's your mother?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Pretty good. I haven't talked to her in a couple weeks, but she was good last time I talked to her.

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): That's good. That's good.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): Good blood. You got good blood. Uh, and...

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): Sige. Okay. And what do we got left? Orchiiiiid and Iris. Huh. ... Huh. Lance li—Huh. Okay. Come with me.

AUSTIN: And he starts to lead you to the right. Towards this giant door that is to the kind of eastern side of this station.

DRE: Um, while we're walking, Sige leans down and whispers to Aubrey—

DRE (as Sige): *Who is this?*

SYLVIA: Um.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can make rolls—

SYLVIA: What was his name again?

AUSTIN: He didn't introduce his name, I don't think. Did he?

SYLVIA: No, but like, in legends. There's... do we we know about... ?

AUSTIN: Oh. Uh, yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yes. You did know that he—that there is the...

JACK: Oh! The Artificer...

AUSTIN: Artificer Mundane.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's—

SYLVIA: Yeah, Aubrey's like visibly really excited about this, by the way.

[AUSTIN laughs]

SYLVIA: And she's like—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I—I'm pretty sure that's the Artificer Mundane. Um. He's. Basically Samoth's right-hand man. Cobbin. You know. Like. 'S very. Very cool that he's real!

[AUSTIN laughs]

DRE (as Sige): And he's on our side? But he works for Sam—I—I'm confused.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I mean. Okay, he—he's being *nice*. I don't know if he's on our side.

DRE (as Sige): Okay.

JACK (as Edmund): This is what I've been trying to tell you. If he knows, Samoth's knows. Samoth's told him to come and—get us, for some—like what's gonna happen ne—is it—are we just gonna walk up there and then say, “Hey! It's us! Let's do it!” Thi—none of this feels right.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Listen—

AUSTIN: Ethan is very confused. By the way, Edmund.

[ALI laughs]

**[30:25]**

[DRE laughs]

JACK: Yeah.

JACK (as Ethan): Uh, I'm sorry. I—I don't think we've met. Um. Uh! My name's Ethan Hitchcock.

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): Oh, *you're* the Hitchcock. Okay. What's the other one's name?

JACK (as Ethan): Well—uh. His name's Edward? Edward! Edmund.

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): Edward, got it. Got it.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): Edmund—Edward Edmund. Got it. Edward Edmund and Ethan Hitchcock. Good boys. Good names.

JACK (as Ethan): Thank you.

AUSTIN (as Old Cobbin): I'm Primo, by the way.

AUSTIN: And he shakes your hand. With his like clawed... Um. His—actually, I think—[endeared] I suspect that his claws are *very* well trimmed.

JACK (as Ethan): How did you know we were... going to be here?

AUSTIN: Aubrey what's it look like when a cobbin gets real skeptical? Or like really like... "Come on!"

[ALI laughs]

SYLVIA: I think with an old cobbin, it—they sort of snarl a little. Like, "Eh!"

AUSTIN: [amused] Yeah.

SYLVIA: Like not in like an angry way, but like they show—their teeth show a little bit, and it's sort of like, "Really? This guy?"

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Come on! Come on. Samoths. You know. Ingenuity alive. He knows, uh... everything! He knows everything.

JACK (as Ethan): W—uh...

AUSTIN (as Primo): Come on. Th—just come with me.

JACK (as Ethan): Do you—okay. Do you think he's going to mind?

[SYLVIA laughs]

DRE: [laughing] Oh! My...

AUSTIN (as Primo): Eh... He has his good days and his bad days. You know.

JACK (as Ethan): [relieved] Oh! Okay!

[DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: Oh, jesus christ.

AUSTIN (as Primo): He's what you might call... mercurial. You know?

AUSTIN: Uh, and there are—he leads you into a little hallway. All of you, and again including Maelgwyn and—in fact, I'm just going to add them to them—to the—otherwise I'm gonna forget that there are other people here.

JACK: Are they trying to kill us?

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: Or are they just kind of—dazedly...

AUSTIN: Everyone's like very confused. Actually, I think Iris and... Orchid are, at this point, after seeing what Maelgwyn did... I think Maelgwyn walks behind them. It's almost as if you've penned them in.

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: That's what's happening. Um. And at one point, Iris, the cop, looks back—like the old, retired cop—looks back and Maelgwyn... you know, he isn't glaring 'cause he has this weird fucking Samot mask on. But Iris like turns his head back really quick, and looks forward, and like just keeps walking. [grumbling noise] And he's like grumbling under his—under his breath a little bit.

AUSTIN (as Primo): All right, all right, all right! Uh, let's see here —Sige, you're up here.

AUSTIN: And Primo opens up a door for you. And then does the same for each of you, including each Hitchcock individually, into one of these guest rooms.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: [laughs] Oh no...

AUSTIN (as Primo): You go in, uh, you know, you take a seat. There's—should be some fresh coffee for you. And a little bit of some snacks. You know, gotta make sure you don't have an empty stomach, it's a big day! So. And I'll be back through in a little bit to make sure that all the tailoring is done, of course, and everyone is ready for tonight.

[ALI laughs]

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): A very important question about snacks.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Okay.

[DRE laughs]

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Are there apples?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Oh, well. You know. With Nacre, you know, they... Ain't that many apples left.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): [sighs]

AUSTIN (as Primo): [conspiratorial] But... you know. Cobbin to cobbin, I'll see what I can do.

SYLVIA: Aubrey gives him a little thumbs up.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um. These guest rooms are—they're still cut out of the stone, but they are decor—for those of you who have been here in dream or otherwise, they are decorated with the same sort of furniture that the manor in the woods has. Um. So here's a thing that—Sige, do you go into the door that he points you to? Which is this top one here?

DRE: Uh... Sure. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. He closes that door, and then, Sige, you feel like the earth shake, for a moment, and then it stops, and it's fine. And then the next—who's next? I think probably Aubrey goes in to this one, as long as you go in? uh—

SYLVIA: I think she does.

AUSTIN: And he says,

AUSTIN (as Primo): Uh, Edward Edmund, this next one is for you.



JACK (as Edmund): Thank you.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna make a copy so there's two of you. Okay.

JACK: Oh no!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Gonna mark. This is the first time that we're doing this. This is the first time that we're marking—the difference. The different—the different boys.

JACK: Make one smaller, for the softness.

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: Okay. Right. Which one's soft? Edmund is soft?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. There we go.

[DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: Jesus.

AUSTIN: There we go. Mhm. Um. And then, before you can—I—as he like turns back around, [sighs] he goes back to the first top door, and opens it again, and it's a different room inside. And—

JACK: Uh!

AUSTIN: He says—

AUSTIN (as Primo): Of course, Lance Noble... Iris, this is for you.

AUSTIN: And Maelgwyn like shoots Iris a look as Iris goes in. And then gives the rest of the rooms. Again, is anyone not going into one of their rooms?

ALI: Um, I would like to make eye contact with Maelgwyn, and kind of tilt my head to the side?

AUSTIN: He just nods.

ALI: Okay. Then I go in.

AUSTIN: Okay. All right. You're all in these weird guest rooms.

DRE: What happens if I open the door?

AUSTIN: Oh that—[laughs] You open it, and it's just stone in there.

DRE: Okay.

JACK: Oh, so we're in prison.

AUSTIN: Well! Of a sort.

JACK: Great.

AUSTIN: But good. I'm glad you all just like walked right in. That's good.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh, he wasn't lying to you, I guess I'll say, Hitchcock.

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: He was not lying to you about anything. Like—so. There's that, at least.

[Pause]

ALI: What are the snacks like?

AUSTIN: I don't—um. God, what are the snacks like? They...

ALI: Well, I don't eat. I don't know why I'm asking.

SYLVIA: What are the snacks like?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I don't know why you're... Thanks. Um. It's—you know what it is? It's a—it's a very—it's clearly a mix of stuff? It's like when you go down to... like a continental breakfast, and it's like "Oh!" like "They have like cereal, and croissants, and stuff. But like for some reason today they also have like some local delicacy, and they also have like... Canadian bacon, and then also some sort of weird... like... food from somewhere in the Middle East. They have like Italian smoked meats. They have..." like so it's this—it's this very international feeling collection of food. Um. There's no apples, though. So.

SYLVIA: Mm.

AUSTIN: So, sorry.

SYLVIA: It's okay.

AUSTIN: But there are like—I'm imagining lots of different spice like profiles. For all of the different foods that are here—but it's all breakfast-y foods. And it's like everyone has like a—has like a whole layout. A whole like layout of food.

ALI: He mentioned tailoring. Are there like clothes laid out, or... ?

AUSTIN: There are no clothes laid out. No. Um, but! After about twenty minutes, Sige, you get a knock on the door.

DRE: I answer.

AUSTIN: And Primo just like walks in, like right under your—like right past you, low, like under your waist, you know?

AUSTIN (as Primo): All right, all right, all right. Let's see here.

AUSTIN: And then he goes and like—and like, from under the—there's a bed in there. There's like a long mirror. There's a dresser. There's all sorts of stuff. He like pulls a stepladder out from under the bed and set it up next to you, and then like from one of his many pockets, pulls out a tape measurer? And begins to measure you.

AUSTIN (as Primo): You're a big one. They don't make 'em like you.

DRE (as Sige): Yeah, I get that a lot.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Goddamn brick shithouse.

DRE (as Sige): [laughs] Well.

AUSTIN (as Primo): That's what they shoulda called you. Brick-Shithouse.

DRE (as Sige): That's.

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN (as Primo): You ain't one of them Maelgwyn boys, though, huh? 'Cause they all got those weird names. You know, like Name-Whatever, whatever? Like... eh.

AUSTIN: And he starts doing the [laughs] the measuring.

DRE (as Sige): When you're... when you're done with this, can I—can I go see Aubrey really quick?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Uh... Eh... Hm. No. Not yet. Not yet, very important, very—there's a ritual to this sort of thing, you know. I wish I could. I wish I—you know, I could do a favor for a family member, maybe, but you're not—that's not—we don't know each other quite like that, yet, so. Uh. For now, just hang tight. Let me know what's your favorite color. Oh! That's wrong. That's not the right question. What color looks good on you?

AUSTIN: And like looks down at you from over his glasses.

DRE (as Sige): Purple.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Yeah, okay. I could—I could see that. I could see purple. All right. Tell me what you wanna look like

DRE (as Sige): Ah. Ah... That's a—that's a good question! I normally... I don't—I don't think about that very often.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Most people don't. And that's a mistake, because the way I see it—and I'm—take it from me, I'm a guy who builds a lotta things. You gotta decide what something—what something's gonna look like. First and foremost. Now, a lotta people think it's the function you're supposed to figure out first. “Oh, how does it work?” “Oh, are these shoes gonna have uh, slippery soles, or are they gonna have, uh you know, the rubber, so that you stick. You know, you don't slip around and all that.” But I think the style is the thing. Actually. You know, you—you make a first impression. You look good. While doing whatever it is you wanna do. And bit by bit, people come to associate how you look with the thing. You know. Used to be, blacksmiths like me, we didn't wear aprons. I started wearing an apron, next thing you know, everyone's wearing an apron!

DRE (as Sige): Real trendsetter.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Haha! That's me. So tell what you wanna look like. And we'll make it happen.

DRE (as Sige): I wanna look... approachable.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Okay. Approachable, approachable. So no hat?

DRE (as Sige): Yeah, no. Messes up my hair.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Yeah. I could see that. I—it happens to me, too. That's why I don't wear hats anymore.

AUSTIN: Uh. All right, just tell me what—tell me—tell Austin what Sige's like... outfit looks like.

DRE: [laughs] Oh, god. Um. Jeez. Are we talking like formal wear here?

AUSTIN: ... Yeah. Yeah, definitely formal wear.

DRE: Oh, Austin. You should have given me this Google homework *before* now!

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

AUSTIN: We could come back around. Does anyone else have their thing?

JACK: I think I do.

AUSTIN: [types] Okay. For who?

JACK: Uh, for both of them, I think.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, so they are gonna wear the same thing.

JACK: Oh, no no no. I mean.

AUSTIN: Ah. Okay. Well then. Who's first?

JACK: I think, uh, Ethan is first.

AUSTIN (as Primo): So tell me about it.

JACK (as Ethan): Uh. You see this?

JACK: And Ethan sort of gestures at his cavalry jacket.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Uh-huh?

JACK (as Ethan): This is just—[laughs] you know, this is just day-to-day wear. I want the dress uniform. I want the—the real stuff, you know?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Okay. Okay, I can do that. I can do that. You ever wore one of them before?

JACK (as Ethan): Uh, once or twice. You know. But... the medals were never real.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Hehehe. Oh, so you want the medals, too?

JACK (as Ethan): Well, look, I—you know—I wouldn't—you gotta look fancy, right?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Of course, of course. What do you want the medals for? Like bravery and valor, or like personal sacrifice—like what is it—‘cause remember. This is—you’re gonna step out onto that dance floor tonight. And you’re gonna like eyes with ‘em. And they’re gonna see those medals, and whatever they see first, that’s what they’re gonna think of you. That, uh... which one are you? You’re—Ethan. Ethan Hitchcock. That Ethan Hitchcock, he’s a—he’s a real... And then it’s a blank, and you tell me what the blank is.

JACK (as Ethan): Ah. Yeah, d—this is... [pleased with himself] This is gonna sound... like I’m—you know, like I’m bigging myself up so much, but... do they ever give medals for like—perspicaciousness?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Per—pers—does that mean you sweat a lot?

JACK (as Ethan): No, no, it means like I—like I can figure things out, you know.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Oh, like smarts. Yeah. Yeah, we got a—yeah. There’s one of them. Like a strat—a strategist, or like a tactician, or like a... like an inventor! Which one you want it to be?

JACK (as Ethan): Like a tactician.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Yeah, okay. I could see that. You got those tactician eyes.

JACK (as Ethan): Oh. [laugh] Thanks, Primo!

AUSTIN: I just realized I’d made the wrong—the wrong boy small.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

AUSTIN: There we go. I fixed it. All right, so what about Edmund.

JACK (as Edmund): Give me my uniform back. You know, this is—this is—this is day-to-day wear. I want the—I want what I wore when I was out there.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Well, tell me about it. You know, I’m not a military man. You can see by my stature. I’ve never been on a horse. A horse is... horses are big.

JACK (as Edmund): Well. You know. It’s just... you see, none of these cuffs. None of this braiding. It’s... it’s just like a—

AUSTIN (as Primo): I see.

JACK (as Edmund): —blue canvas shirt, and, you know, holsters for my guns.

AUSTIN (as Primo): I gotcha. You wanna be just like a—like an everyday sort. Like a blue collar man.

JACK (as Edmund): Yeah, I guess so.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Okay. I'll take care o'you, you—don't you worry. People'll look at you, they know you got your hands dirty. Eh? Eh?

JACK (as Edmund): [quietly] Yeah. Okay.

AUSTIN: He gives you a little pat on the back.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Hang in there, kid.

JACK (as Edmund): Thanks, Primo.

AUSTIN (as Primo): He sees somethin' in you. You know.

AUSTIN: And he waddles. Closes the door, and again the room shakes for a second as it detaches from this hallway, and goes somewhere else in the mountain. Castille.

ALI: Huh.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Now you got a lot to work with. You know, uh, these other folks...

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN (as Primo): They ain't exactly statuesque, but you? Eh? Eh?

[Laughter]

ALI (as Castille): That's very clever.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Yeah, I do—I do good comedy.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN (as Primo): Could have been a comedian. That's what, uh—that's what the old man always says.

ALI (as Castille): You guys get along?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Ah, super well. You know. Uh, we go back! We go back [laughs] pretty long. Pretty long time at this point, you know. I don't think anybody knows him quite as well as me. Eh, Samot says he does. Samol, meh, maybe. But I been working

with him. You know, I seen the man—I seen the man on his bad days. I seen the man, uh, trying all day to make—I was there! You know, when the—when—you! When the—you were made, basically. When the whole paladin thing—you should have seen the first version. Not so good. Not so good.

ALI (as Castille): Really? What was different?

AUSTIN (as Primo): There were no joints. It was just like mweh!

AUSTIN: And he starts moving his arms without bending at the elbows or knees.

[ALI and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN (as Primo): You think they goosestep now, let me tell you, the old versions, oy.

ALI: [laughs] Castille very carefully like moves her arm up and down.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. [laughing] Yeah, good.

ALI: God. [laughs] Um. It's tough—I think that they—I think they have a conversation about it, but Castille keeps conflicting?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: What she wants to look like? Um.

**[45:07]**

AUSTIN: Hm. Okay.

ALI: And then I think she finally says—and she has like her two necklaces and she's like twirling them in her fingers.

ALI (as Castille): I don't care how I look, I just wanna look—alive.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Oh. Well, I mean—huh. Okay. We could... I could do something about that. We got something new. We haven't... You wanna look alive. Step one, take the hat off. Hats are for dead folk, first of all. You got good hair.

ALI: [laughs] She slowly removes it.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Okay. I'll be—you know, I'll be right—back. I'll be right back.

AUSTIN: And he opens the door and steps out. And Aubrey, your like compartment—your guest room has like reattached to this hallway at this point? But you hear him walk right past you, in



like a quick—like he's quick-stepping because he's excited about something. And then a couple moments pass, and he comes back into your room, Castille. With a mirror.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Here you go. Take a look.

AUSTIN: And as you look at yourself in the mirror, as the light bounces off the mirror and onto you, you see that your stone flesh is replaced with... I don't—what color is—Charter Castille's skin?

ALI: I don't know. She was an elf, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. She was an elf from like the north.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um. So probably pale? I mean, whatever. She's a—she's also a super-magician.

ALI: Right. Um.

AUSTIN: And could have been from wherever. There are elves all over the place.

ALI: Right. Um... Yeah, I guess I—yeah, probably like pale-skinned. Um. Really tall ears.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Like, it—

AUSTIN: What's the hair situation?

ALI: Cut sort of short to accentuate that?

AUSTIN: Okay, so like *really* showin' those ears off?

ALI: Right. I think that there was like a myth or something in her home town that like the bigger your ears are, the smarter you are.

AUSTIN: Mm. Okay.

ALI: Um. Yeah.

AUSTIN: He says, uh—

AUSTIN (as Primo): That's good. It's a good look. You know, you can, uh...

AUSTIN: And he like touches his own... like, uh, the... what do you call it of his palm—like the bottom of his palm, where the flesh is. As if to say you should do this.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: And it gives, when you do. Like flesh. You push a—like hard enough, and you can feel the stone in there still.

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: But there is—there is flesh there now.

AUSTIN (as Primo): All right, so that's your whole situation, but what about the clothes? I mean. The clothes make the person. You know?

ALI (as Castille): [amused] Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Frankly, I thought you looked pretty alive before. You were moving around and laughing and joking, you got that whole cat situation.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN (as Primo): But this is good! This is good, I—you know, eh... Tailor isn't supposed to tell you how you look. They're supposed to tell you how you feel, and figure out how you look from that. And I can tell you feel better.

ALI (as Castille): Yeah. Yeah! Um. Yeah, I... I don't know, I wear a lot of mauves?

AUSTIN (as Primo): That's like a place you go shopping? Is that...

ALI (as Castille): [laughs] No, that's a color.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Nah, I'm kidding, I'm kidding, I'm kidding. I know all the colors. I know 'em all.

ALI (as Castille): Yeah. Okay. I was—you—I was a little nervous.

AUSTIN (as Primo): You know saffron? I know saffron. Saffron and I go way back. You know? We go back like crew cuts.

ALI (as Castille): Oh, that's a [snorts]—[softly] I have never worn a saffron dress.

AUSTIN (as Primo): [softly] I think it'll look perfect.

ALI (as Castille): I think so too.

AUSTIN (as Primo): All right.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: And Aubrey, he finally shows up. To you. And he opens the door, and he comes in. And he goes—

AUSTIN (as Primo): Ah, I never dressed a cobbin before. Except for me, obviously. Uh. Okay, let's take a look. What do you think?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): What do you mean?

AUSTIN (as Primo): What do you—what are you gonna wear? What are you gonna wear?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): What's wrong with this?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Oh, my g—ho ho. Listen, she says—she says, “What's wrong with this?”

ALI laughs

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I mean, it's a little dirty! But.

And then she like brushes the dust off.

AUSTIN (as Primo): It's a little dirty!

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): It's fine!

AUSTIN (as Primo): Oh my—oh! Take the apron off right now! You know what, there's never been a good blacksmith, never been a good tinkerer who wears an apron. That's what I always say. Take that off.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Well, I guess you didn't meet me before.

SYLVIA: And she takes the apron off.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Oh, yeah. She's playful. She's playful, folks.

SYLVIA: [laughs] She's still like almost shaking with excitement that Primo exists. Because this is like. Ultimate fangirl mode. But she's like, “Well, okay, what do people wear to these—what do you wear to these things? What is this thing?”

AUSTIN (as Primo): Uh. I don't—I don't go. I—you know, I got work to do tonight. So I'm not gonna—I'll be in the forge. But, uh, you know, it depends on where you're from. Like are y... I'll tell you this. The bird people. Them folks? They don't wear no clothes at all. Just got their bits hanging out.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Well, that's not happening!

[AUSTIN laughs]

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): They're not doing that, right?

SYLVIA: And she like points out the door, just in the general direction of the other rooms, as like.

AUSTIN: And he like squints at you a little bit and goes—

AUSTIN (as Primo): You're not the one who can tell if I'm lyin', right? Eh?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I'm not... I mean, I can try?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Yeah, they're all naked. They're all—no clothes, all of 'em.  
[laughs]

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): [chagrined] Oh.

AUSTIN (as Primo): No, I'm kidding withya. They are—they got good suits and such.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I mean, I guess something kinda l—what's Castille doing? Castille always looks good.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Oh, she looks—she looks great, kid. Let me tell ya. She... she looks good.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Um. Let me think.

SYLVIA: And she like sorta like sits on the bed and like crosses her arms and like her tongue's sticking out while she's thinking a little.

[AUSTIN laughs]

SYLVIA: Like you know that thing where it's like your tongue sticks out and like—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: —goes onto your like upper lip like “Mm.”

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: She's doing that for like a second. She's like—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I always liked like dark green colors.

AUSTIN (as Primo): That's good. It goes good with the scales.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Yeah... Oh, yeah! Hey! [laughs] Um.

AUSTIN (as Primo): So you—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Something that I can move in would be good, but other than that I don't really—I always just sorta dress for the job.

AUSTIN (as Primo): I can tell, you got all this leather and pouches. And straps and—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): They're very—

AUSTIN (as Primo): I see s—d—a whole bunch of vials, and—you gotta god—you gotta g—y—goddamn gun with ya right now. You're dressin' real heavy. I'm gonna say, you just be careful with all that. You know?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Oh, trust me—

AUSTIN (as Primo): Obviously you—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I always am.

SYLVIA: She says, lying.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah! [sighs]

AUSTIN (as Primo): All right, all right. So I think, uh, a nice green... What do you want, like a—you want like pants? You want a dress? A skirt? Like what's your—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Uh... I think a skirt would be good. I've never really worn one before, but. You know.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Well, give it a shot. We'll see how it works. Sometimes, you know, on the way to a discovery, you gotta make a few mistakes. So.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Uh. Wait.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Maybe the dress'll work.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Do you think I'm making a mistake?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Ah, you know, I'm not saying it would *be* a mistake. I just—I guess that I don't—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I mean, if you think it would be—if you think it would be a mistake, we can do something else.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Listen, I'm no expert.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Primo): *You're* the expert. In you.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I'm not the expert.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Uh-huh. Yes, you are. Yes, you are.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): No, I'm not.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Everyone is their own expert, and if they say they ain't, then, well, then they're not, because they don't admit that they are, which means that they can't possibly b—what I'm saying is. Have a little *confidence*. Aubrey.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): [sighs] Okay, I'll try.

AUSTIN (as Primo): All right. We'll try that skirt.

AUSTIN: And... Sige.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: He wraps back around—

DRE: Yeah. Okay. I've got a whole look planned out.

AUSTIN: And he like comes back in with like—he has like twelve options ready? Describe the one that's yours.

DRE: Okay. It starts with a plum like huge, flowing trench coat?

AUSTIN: Jesus christ. Okay.

DRE: A... like a camel like suit vest.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: Some grey trousers, a white shirt.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I have literally this whole look in my head right now.

DRE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: It's perfect, in my head. Go for it.

DRE: It's a white shirt that has kind of like a large like windowpane check pattern that's alternating like the same like plum as as the coat with the grey. Um. And he's also got—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: —a grey cravat. Which is like those little like—weird like neck handkerchief things.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Cravat, that's like a fish, right? Yeah, eat that? Eat it up. Yum yum. Got it.

DRE (as Sige): This guy. *This* guy.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Ehehehe. Uh-huh. You're a tall man, I can't really, uh—I can't really put the jacket on you, but, uh—you take—check this one out? Tell me if it fits. Tell if I gotta take it in. You know, in the waist, it's tough. It's tough for your big man.

DRE (as Sige): No, actually, it, uh—it fits perfect.

AUSTIN (as Primo): What do you want? You want like a cane to go with that? Feel like a cane would really bring this whole look together.

DRE (as Sige): Uh. Oh, god. Man, I hadn't, uh [laughing] attached that cane to my gun! 'Cause that'd be the perfect cane! Yeah. I'll take a cane.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Actually, you know what, maybe you wear the gun, you d—obviously, you leave behind any of the *firing* mechanism, but it's like a—it's like a dress gun!

[SYLVIA laughs]

DRE (as Sige): Yeah. No, that makes sense.

AUSTIN (as Primo): I think that's a good look. [snorts]

AUSTIN: And then he gives you a look. As if to say like—ah—he doesn't—there's no “as if to say.” He just says it.

AUSTIN (as Primo): I just think it would be good if you stayed armed. You know? Good men. Good men need to, uh. Have the upper hand. Of course. Eh?

DRE (as Sige): Well, that's ominous.

AUSTIN (as Primo): I—w—n. Gotta make—kid! You're here to make sure—I t—mm.

AUSTIN: He like.

AUSTIN (as Primo): You're not gonna make me *say* it?

DRE (as Sige): I don't—maybe I am.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Ooh. Oh, hoho. This is the case, there's no hope. You gotta make sure the big guy doesn't get—you know. Mm?

DRE (as Sige): So you know—you know the whole deal.

AUSTIN (as Primo): We know—jeez. I can't keep explainin' this, I sw—I swear.

[Laughter]

AUSTIN (as Primo): Shoulda heard the conversation I had with Maelgwyn.

DRE (as Sige): Listen, if—

ALI: Oh, god.

DRE (as Sige): [upset] I would like to hear that, 'cause he's got a *pretty bad knife*.

AUSTIN (as Primo): [softly] Yeah, I know. I know, kid.

DRE (as Sige): What *is* it?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Ah, it's—[sighs] It's one of them things that... you make and then you regret. You know?

DRE (as Sige): Wait. Did you make it?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Aw, I made a lot of things over the days and years and months, and... you know, you get some ideas in your head, and you say—maybe you could... you



couldn't build a thing today that could... hold back the flood. Right? Like let's say there's a flood comin'. You can't build a dam that can hold it back. But *maybe* what you can do is... you can start with a—with a real small dam, upstream. A tiny thing. Waaay before it gets too hectic. And then, from that dam, you start buildin' smaller ones down below. And then bit by bit, over the years, it gets big enough to maybe where it can—hold back—the whole thing can hold it back. You know, you build a... solution that unfolds itself over time, and then it—you can start small! You don't have to start big. You know, you don't have all the bricks for the dam at first. You only have enough bricks for the little dam. And then you get *real* smart, and you say. Well, if you're holding back the water upstream, well, that's gonna be a whole situation, when now you can start diggin' for more bricks, 'cause the water ain't comin', and you can build on top of *that*. And that knife is buildin', boy. It's buildin' big. You know, sometimes you gotta make a couple mistakes on the way to the good stuff. Let me tell you, let me tell you, Reconfiguration was not... not so good the first few times! Not so great. These days, it's all workin' beautifully, as you can see. Or, uh—you don't even know where we are right now! That's how good it is! Anyway, you look great. You look great, and, uh...

DRE (as Sige): Lis—

AUSTIN (as Primo): You be careful—

DRE (as Sige): Listen, if you're—if you're so worried about Samoths, why don't you just keep him in the rooms?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Well, I—[sighs] You don't get how this works, kid. You don't—[sighs] *Time*, for them... it isn't like for you... or even for me. If it doesn't happen today, it'll happen tomorrow, or a year from now, or the next year. Or a decade or two. You know, Samoths and Samot, they been fightin' for a couple decades? Eh, that's nothing. That's a drop in the bucket to them. That boy Maelgwyn'll wait a century before he tries that knife in his father's face.

DRE (as Sige): So it's inevitable, what are we even doing here?

AUSTIN (as Primo): Trying to stop it. 'Cause it'll happen, and once it happens, it'll have *happened*. You see. Ain't no reason to delay the inevitable.

DRE (as Sige): But you're talking like it's gonna happen eventually.

AUSTIN (as Primo): He's gonna *try* it, eventually. Now, the outcome is the outcome. It's just a matter of... when he tries it. But there ain't... ain't a better time than now.

DRE (as Sige): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Okay?

AUSTIN: He like climbs up on the stepladder, and like... kind of pats off your shoulders, as if like to dust them off a little bit.

AUSTIN (as Primo): This is old material. It's good. You picked a good color. Hm?

AUSTIN: And he like reaches back and like fixes the collar, and when it—when you do, you feel a charge run through it, and it's the same purple material. That Thackeray's shirt—or, uh, coat was made of. And it shimmers.

AUSTIN (as Primo): Eh? Eh? Primo's lookin' out for ya.

DRE (as Sige): [laughs] Oh, thanks, Primo.

AUSTIN (as Primo): All right.

AUSTIN: And he steps down, and puts the little step ladder away. Aubrey, you... when you are like going through the outfit, that he left behind for you? It's like a skirt, and a blouse, and some other stuff—and then like—“All right, I have it all.” And then you turn back and look at the bed, and there's a single apple there. Waiting for you.

SYLVIA: [very excited] Aah!

AUSTIN: Underneath all of the clothes.

SYLVIA: [very excited] Oh my gosh... [calmly] Is there like... cutlery or anything in the room, with the other food?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally.

SYLVIA: I think Aubrey cuts the apple in half?

AUSTIN: Mm.

SYLVIA: And like wraps it in s—like a little piece of cloth or something—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: —and puts half of it in her bag? And eats the other half.

AUSTIN: There *are* refrigerators in here. No—none of you understand what that is—

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: —but you open the little—there's like a little cabinet? You're like going through the cabinets, and there's one cabinet, when you open it up, it's cold in there. And there's like cold

drinks in there. And it's *amazing*. Um. You all feel a clunk as the... the bedrooms reattach—the guest rooms reattach. What do you do? I'd say it's about—like your internal clock would say it's about like ten or eleven a.m. It's been a couple of hours since you arrived.

[Pause]

DRE: Um. Sige opens his door. Is it like, still rock—

AUSTIN: The door is locked.

DRE: —or is it hallway again? Oh, well, that's bad.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Does anyone try anything?

JACK: Wait, so—

AUSTIN: Or do you all just—

JACK: Is everybody's door locked?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Could...

JACK: Oh.

ALI: ... I try to unlock it?

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: Are there like handles? What's the—what's the lock situation?

AUSTIN: Wait, are there *candles*?

ALI: Handles.

AUSTIN: Oh. I was like. "What?"

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: "What the fuck is she gonna try to do with a *candle*?"

DRE: I heard candles too. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Um. Sorry, I'm gonna reveal a little bit more of this. Down here.

ALI: It's—you get some wax, and you pour it into the lock. And then you get. The key!

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: Oh yeah.

**[1:00:16]**

JACK: It's like that weird key machine near Austin's apartment.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [laughs]

ALI: [laughs] God.

AUSTIN: God. That thing is the worst. Um. Yeah. There are handles.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Are you just trying to overpower it?

ALI: Um. I was gonna try to *Tinker* with it, to try to see.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: How it's locked, and if I can...

AUSTIN: You can give me a Tinker check.

ALI: Yeah! I would love to.

AUSTIN: Are you using any items with that, or are you just... doing your thing?

ALI: Um. A lock pick is one of the things that we just get, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's like—doesn't take up a slot.

ALI: Yeah. Okay. So I'll go for that.

AUSTIN: But it's not like a Fine lock pick or anything, right? So that just lets you do it, it doesn't give you a bonus.

ALI: I don't think I have that assigned. One, yeah. At this—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Give me—give me a Tinker... Controlled. Standard.

ALI: Okay. [laughs] Jesus...

DRE: [quiet] You're rolling...

ALI: I don't remember the last time I didn't roll a 3!

AUSTIN: Mhm! The door opens.

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: And you step outside, and come face to face with Maelgwyn, who's also opened his door. And he's in the hallway with you.

ALI: How is he dressed?

AUSTIN: Castille—um. He has... god, how is he dressed? Um. For now he's still wearing the clothes he was wearing before. He has not changed into any new outfits. He's here to work. He is wearing the mask and the crown.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um. B—for the record, he does have on like a long coat, with tails, and like—he has on his *ridiculous* superhero outfit. Right?

ALI laughs

AUSTIN: Which again is the mask, the long coat with the collars popped... a tan vest, and like a... what color shirt is he wearing? I think probably like a—like a *deep wine* colored shirt. Um. The long jacket is probably like a dark blue. Yeah.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: And then like through the mask, he says—

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): Castille. Go back in the room.

ALI (as Castille): Wh—

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): It's not safe.

ALI (as Castille): Are you leaving now? ‘Cause if—[sighs] we can’t just hang around and wait, right?

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): I—[sighs] M—the later we stay, the more risky it gets.

ALI (as Castille): Then let’s go—

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): Once people start showing up, I...

ALI (as Castille): Then let’s just do it. [slight laugh] Let’s go now.

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): All right. Let’s go.

ALI (as Castille): [slight laugh] Okay.

AUSTIN: And he like steps out and begins to lead you back through the station. You go with him?

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Uh, everyone else, you hear noise coming from the hallway. And then you hear the big door close behind... behind Maelgwyn and Castille.

DRE: Could we hear any of the conversation?

AUSTIN: Um. You could at least hear people are talking. At the *very* least. Um.

[Background noise]

AUSTIN: Yeah, you could probably hear what’s happening.

DRE: Then no—

AUSTIN: Yeah, you could probably hear what’s happening. They were being quiet, but like—it’s less interesting if no one can hear it.

DRE: I try to kick down my door.

SYLVIA: [whispering] Holy shit.

AUSTIN: All right. Give me a Wreck.

JACK: If anyone was going to, it...

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: Controlled, uh, Standard.

DRE: 4.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um. So yeah, you kick down the door, but like it doesn't give right away? And so by the time you break it open... it's already—they are gone. You don't know where they are. Um. I mean, you could go wherever you want now, but yeah, you're out of the—you're out in the hallway. Is anyone else trying to get out?

JACK: Um.

AUSTIN: Every—*everyone* hears as Sige breaks down his door.

[DRE laughs]

JACK: Uh, can I try and—can Edmund try and pick the lock on his door?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

SYLVIA: Uh, [slight laugh] can I also do the same? What about opening it right away, I wanna say, with my kind of...

AUSTIN: Yep! Yeah, Tinker away.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Again, Controlled Standard.

[Background noise]

SYLVIA: Got a 5.

JACK: I have 0 in Tinker, so let's just go. For. It!

AUSTIN: [amused] Good.

SYLVIA: Aubrey's kee—door is unlocking, but she's waiting a minute. To step out.

JACK: Okay!

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah, everyone has succeeded here.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um. But again, everyone's—it's taken a little while, and at this point Sige gets to be somewhere else, and again you don't get to see where he's gone. So Sige, where are you headed?

DRE: Um. Well, since I don't know which way they went. I'm gonna roll a d2, and if I roll a 1, I'll go left, if I roll a 2, I'll go right.

AUSTIN: Okay! Sounds good.

DRE: So I'm going tooo the right!

AUSTIN: All right. You reach the end of that hall, and open the door to reveal a *giant dining hall*. You step into this dining hall, and it's massive, first of all. There are three long tables, one to the north of the—kind of north side of the hall, one to the south, and one to the right. And there are five thrones. At the center of... or kind of—there's one at the big table to the right. That one is like carved out of an old tree, or something. There's two to the north. Um, one of them is made of iron, one of them is like that... kind of like a fleck-y metallic rock? It looks almost very... it—the one that's made of iron is made to look like a capital-T Throne, whereas the one that's made of kind of a rocky mineral... has a sort of like—a found feeling to it? It's just like a bunch of stones propped up against each other. They're very hefty looking, but they're not like intentionally laid out... they're like the sort of thing where you see it in the world and go like, “Oh, wow.” Like, “That almost looks intentional. But it isn't, ‘cause it's just rocks.”

Um. To the south, there is—there are two more. One of them—the one closer to you is... a sort of... It's actually like the least... what's the word I'm looking for? The least ostentatious one? It is just like wood with kind of canvas backing. Um, and s—and a canvas seat. Um. And then there is the one to the kind of like the bottom right. And that one is similarly [laughs] not super ostentatious, except that it is—so it's wood and leather, and in the leather you can clearly see Samot's sigil. Um, and in that way, it's the most ostentatious, ‘cause none of the other ones have any clear like iconography built into them. Um, but no one is here.

And then! So that's the kind of like edge of this room. There's a—there's also a big window pointing out to the east from which you can see... from which you—it takes you a second, actually. ‘Cause you're looking out to the east, and you can see that the sea, out there. Do we have, um... ? We don't have the Hieron map in this game, do we? [typing noises] So if we look out at the Friends at the Table—.com. Or .net, not .com.

ALI: .Net. Jeez.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: I don't know—what's my brand? What are brands? Friendsatthetable.net. And look at the Hieron map. At first you can see it's the east—it's like east from the little red mark to the south? Uh, like you can see that bay. Do you see the thing I'm talking about?

DRE: Yep. Mhm.



AUSTIN: Um. But then like after a bit of time, you—the view, you can tell, is moving. And like rotating. And then you can see a different part of Hieron, up to the northeast. And then to the northwest. And this room is slowly, imperceptibly rotating. And then you realize like it can't just be this room, 'cause that eventually you just see the inside of the volcano. And you realize this whole *place* is slowly, imperceptibly rotating. And then there's the glass dance floor. The whole center of this room, on the floor, is like a very thick crystal, or glass, or something—that you can see down into. And you can hear, through it, the sound of hammer hitting anvil, or hitting metal. Um. There's fire down there. Like you can see—actually, I—you know what, I'll reveal this weird view here. One second. Um. Do do do. Reveal area. So in the bottom right of this map? There are—so you're on that blue? You're on this like—the blue dance floor, you can look down into? And you see kind of two discs. One is a lot smaller, one is a little bit bigger. And they're both over this huge, bubbling fire and magma. That is filling up this whole chamber with light. And it's filling up—it's I—that is what's lighting this room. There is no other lighting. There is the natural lighting of the volcano coming up through this glass. In this room. So everything has this very strange orange-yellow glow.

But that is not where Maelgwyn and Castile have gone. They are here now. There's a long red and gold carpet that rolls out to another set of five thrones. Maelgwyn is like walking with purpose down that carpet. There's no one in any of those thrones.

ALI: Okay. It's the same sort of thrones, though?

AUSTIN: It's the same thrones, yeah.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Maybe a I—they're—in general, they're all a little bit bigger. Um, and again, it's Samol in the middle. Hitchcock and Aubrey. You just—you run into each other in the hallway.

SYLVIA: [laughs]

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Oh! I was just—I heard—

JACK (as Edmund): Oh, hey, nice skirt!

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Thank you! [seriously] Did you hear the big? The *loud*?

JACK (as Edmund): Yeah. Um. That was Sige, right?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I mean.

[DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: Aubrey kinda points to the door on the ground, and is like—

JACK (as Edmund): Oh gosh.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Who else can do that.

JACK (as Edmund): Yeah, that was—yeah, that was absolutely—um.

JACK: Can I open the door to Ethan's room from the inside—from the outside?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Sure. Totally.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's easy. [laughs]

JACK: So. The gang's back together.

AUSTIN: Yes. And then it's another beat, and then Iris and Orchid come out, also.

JACK: Oh. [laughs is this a kind of weird—what do they do?

AUSTIN: Uh. Iris—he's like smoking a cigar. Like a hand r—well, it's a cigarette. It's a hand-rolled cigarette. And is like dabbing away... sweat with a s—with a handkerchief.

AUSTIN (as Iris): Jesus christ.

AUSTIN: And Rebecca is like... giving you all the evil eye.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): What have you—mm. [sighs] You killed my friends. And now—[sighs] where are the rest of you? What are you up to? Why are you here? I warned you. Nothin' to say for yourselves?

[SYLVIA sighs]

AUSTIN: She says.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): As expected. [sighs] You should all go back in your rooms and just—[sighs]

AUSTIN: And she looks over and sees like the broken door.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): Oh. Okay. [sighs] Lance Noble Iris, you should go try to find the other guy, and I... I'm gonna... Ohhhh. [growls]

AUSTIN: She's very frustrated and irritated and doesn't know what to do. She's like—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I'm just gonna—recommend that maybe you should go back to your room. 'Cause you don't *really know* what's going on here.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): I know what's going on, you're criminals. First of all. That's the first thing that's going on.

JACK (as Ethan): Okay, that's the—that part's true.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): See? See?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Yeah, it's true, but that has very—I mean, that ha—that doesn't have very little to do with this, but it doesn't have a much to do with it as you think.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): Well, step two, you're here to rob the place, obviously. And that's foolish—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): [incredulously] Yeah?

AUSTIN: What was that, Ethan?

JACK (as Ethan): Yeah. I mean... well. [laughs] I mean. Well. Uh. Since we're.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): There's a reason we're here.

JACK (as Ethan): Yeah.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): That is important.

JACK (as Ethan): [slight laugh] Uh-huh.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): And... just—[defeated] you should go.

[Laughter]

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I'm—I—really, I'm not here too—I'm just telling you for your own good. I'm not gonna make you do it or anything, but...

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): Are you threatening—Iris, is this—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): [horrified] God, no! Jesus!

AUSTIN: She like steps forward towards you, a little bit.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): If you're not threatening me, then what are you talkin' about?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I'm just giving you a—bit of advice that things might get *weird*. In a way that might not be good for—people. Around it.

AUSTIN: Oh, she—by the way—is absolutely already in her formal wear. Um. Now I just need to decide what her formal wear is. I think she's gone the Ethan route. Of like—she takes—so, remember she used to be in the Fontmen. She takes like the highest-up version of that uniform? Which was like... they were all wearing suits, and so I think there's like a tuxedo variant of it with a little bowler cap? And so she's in that, except it has the kind of like soft... like peach color that her Lance Noble uniform had.

DRE: Ooh.

AUSTIN: And she still has her cool like staff-spear thing. Um. Iris has not changed. He is in just like a leather trench coat and [laughs] a pair of grey slacks, and is—y—again. Smoking a cigarette. And has this kind of like—

SYLVIA: He's wearing a very tired expression.

AUSTIN: Yeah, he's a—he's—basically Bullock from Batman, if you know him. Um. That's exactly how I'm picturing this dude.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): What are you all talking about? Tell me the truth. What's going on here?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): [groans] I can't—I can't. Do that. [laughs] Listen, I'm gonna go find my friend. Um. You look great! I'll see you later. Y—forget this conversation. Okay, bye

SYLVIA: And she tries to walk away, but probably doesn't get very far.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Orchid just kinda like tries to reach out and grab her by the scruff of her neck.

SYLVIA: Ugh.

JACK (as Edmund): No, back off. Put her down.

AUSTIN: She drops her on the ground in front of Edmund.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): You know somethin', Edmund.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I know a lot of things!

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): You—

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): It's kind of my job.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): Not to you—oh—it—[sighs] I'm gettin' the impression that not everybody here is on the same page.

JACK (as Edmund): No, we're all on the same page.

SYLVIA: Which o—was that Edmund who said that?

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): I mean, I'm not on the same page as you, so that's upsetting. I would also like to be on that same page!

AUSTIN: Then she like taps her spear on the ground.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): That *was* a threat.

AUSTIN: She says.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): [groans] Okay. The same pa—this is—here's the... jist of it, is something very... [sighs] I guess ba—yeah, something bad is—could and is probably going to happen, and I'm trying to make that be less bad, but it still needs to happen. Does that make sense?

AUSTIN: She—

JACK: Uh, I wanna—oh no, go ahead.

AUSTIN: Go ahead. No, you go ahead.

JACK: I wanna try and roll *Sway*.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: Um.

AUSTIN: What—to—or—what are you doing?

JACK: I'm trying to get them to stand down, essentially.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: On the basis that. One of them is formal wear. One of us—*two* of us are in formal wear. If we weren't supposed to be here, their employer would have made sure of it by now.

AUSTIN: Sure. Give me a roll. Let's go Risky Standard. You're pretty good at Swaying.

[1:15:16]

DRE: Yeah you are!

AUSTIN: You're *damn* good at Swaying! There's a 6!

JACK: That's a 6!

AUSTIN: Orchid like [sighs] sighs.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): I—[sighs] all right. You're right. You're right! And I—you know, I kinda kn—I was kinda right there with you, if I'm being honest. I—otherwise I would've—you know, with the whole spear thing. I would've just killed you. But. This is all very strange. This is my first one of these—Iris says—

AUSTIN: And at this point Iris is like wandering away into the dining hall?

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): He always—he says he's done this a couple of times now. Every few years, there's a whole big invitation thing on High Sun Day, I guess, and... he's a guest of honor, I guess? And—it's just a—[sighs] it's a lot! There was so much *food* in there.

JACK (as Edmund): This is our first time too.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): You hurt my friends.

JACK: I'm—I mean, I did also cut her hand off, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): If you were invited, why did you hurt my friends? Why didn't you just tell us that you had an invitation? Also, why do you have an in—that doesn't make any sense...

JACK (as Edmund): He moves in mysterious ways. A priest once told me that.

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): If you can't trust a priest, right?

JACK (as Edmund): Right...

AUSTIN (as Rebecca): I'm gonna go back to my room and... think about some things.

AUSTIN: And she like turns and steps back into her room. Castille.

ALI: Hi.

AUSTIN: You and Maelgwyn have walked past the thrones and to a little door. That is... to their left. And it's a push button? And like he pushes it in. And like it's like a—it's very mechanical? [sniffs] You can—you like can hear him depressing a kind of plunger. And then there's a ding. And then the doors slide open. And there's like a little cube room. That he steps into.

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): Are you coming?

ALI (as Castille): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): [sighs] Okay.

ALI: And I walk into this Uncharted puzzle.

AUSTIN: ... Wait a second—

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: Yeah. This is an Uncharted puzzle. Um.

DRE: Suddenly, your shirt seems half-tucked.

AUSTIN: Once you get inside, he says like...

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): [struggling] ... You look... you look good. You look good. The—skin. Stuff. Is that—what, is this magic?

ALI: [laughs] I think Castille actually starts laughing? 'Cause that's—really awkward, and adorable? Um.

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): You've—your ears are very big.

ALI (as Castille): ... Yeah. Yeah, they we—they are. Yeah.

AUSTIN: [snorts] The elevator, which is what this is, like buzzes as it moves. And then there's another ding. And then you enter another room. It's a little bit bigger. Or—it opens up to another room. That's a little bit bigger, and again is furnished in a very similar way. As the... mansion that you've been seeing. And. You step out into the room, and it is... again, decorated again—like this is actually useful, because it's the first one you've gone into—and it has the sigil of Samot on it. Uh, on various things throughout the room. And there is again a sort of like version of the throne. In that room. Along with like a bed, and again a really nice—this is like big enough for... not just a person to stay, but like an entourage. There's like a number of beds, there are some c—there's a couch.

ALI: Oh, so this is like a hotel suite. Essentially.

AUSTIN: This is like a hotel suite.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yes. Exactly. Um. And he comes in, and is like—

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): This is wrong. Ah! Damn it! [sighs]

ALI (as Castille): What's going on?

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): We were supposed to be in Samothēs' room, not Samot's.

ALI (as Castille): Oh. Well. Um. Did you hit the... right... button in the elevator?

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): It's not—it's not ba—it's—it just—it knows. It *knows* where you're supposed to be.

ALI (as Castille): Oh. *Oh*, okay. Well, that makes sense, for us, you know.

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): And—[sighs]

ALI (as Castille): Sorry.

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): No, I—I have an i—

AUSTIN: And he unclasps his mask. And puts it down on the bed. And removes the crown and does the same.

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): Let's try again.

AUSTIN: And he puts the button—he hits the button again. And steps back into the elevator.

AUSTIN (as Maegwyn): Cross your fingers, huh?

ALI (as Castille): [slight laugh] Yeah.

ALI: And she can do that now, so she does.

AUSTIN: Yes. Right. Oh.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Does that feel we—like does that feel weird?



ALI: I think so...

AUSTIN: Does she know which—she knows which fingers to cross. She knows—

ALI: Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay.

ALI: No. Yeah.

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: She's just never been able to like cross them, because statue fingers are tough?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Um. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um. All right. Let's hop back up to Sige. What are you doin' now, Sige?

DRE: Um. Just—

AUSTIN: Lance Noble Iris, he walks in the room. But like is also just kinda giving this a whole cursory like glance and look around.

AUSTIN (as Iris): Oh, it's you. Okay.

DRE (as Sige): Weird day.

AUSTIN (as Iris): Yeah, you up to any trouble or what?

DRE (as Sige): ... Not yet.

AUSTIN (as Iris): Okay. You just, uh, keep your nose clean.

DRE (as Sige): Aren't you—

AUSTIN (as Iris): This whole thing will get started soon, and we can, uh, just go about our day. We'll be back in Marielda by, uh, tomorrow morning. And... you know. For now, though, let's—it's a truce. Let's say it's a truce. You know, I've seen you around. I've heard stories about you, in Iris. People like you. You help people out, I... I have no problem with that.

DRE (as Sige): Thank you. Um.

AUSTIN: He's not gonna stop you from doing anything, so.

DRE: Yeah... I mean, it—

AUSTIN: He kind of—you know what he does is, he goes to a little corner bar.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: And starts mixing himself a drink.

AUSTIN (as Iris): You want anything, or... ?

DRE (as Sige): No, I'm good. Are they—Are they out there, in the hall?

AUSTIN (as Iris): Yeah.

DRE (as Sige): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Iris): Whole lot of 'em.

DRE: Uh, I think Sige makes his way back to the Hitchcocks and Aubrey.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Um.

AUSTIN: Um.

DRE (as Sige): Oka—We have to find Castille.

AUSTIN: Okay! Um. If you're trying to track down—track them down, you can probably give me a roll of some sort.

DRE: Um. I kin—I kinda wanna have a scene with Aubrey before we like move past this point.

AUSTIN: Sure. Okay.

DRE: So I think maybe Sige asked the Hitchcocks to like—he's like—

DRE (as Sige): I've already checked that room. They're not in there. Can you scout ahead and look for her?

JACK (as Hitchcocks): Of course.

AUSTIN: Where are you going, Hitchcocks?

JACK: Uh. We're going, uh, back into the station.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, funny thing, there's no train when you get back into the station.

JACK: Is there space for a train? Like it's still definitely a station, right?

AUSTIN Oh, yeah. There's still definitely still a station. There's still room for a train.

JACK: Okay. Hm. Uh.

AUSTIN: Uh. I think we just get that shot of them looking at like, "Huh. There's no—train. Here."

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: All right, Sige. And Aubrey?

DRE: Um. Sige says—

DRE (as Sige): Aubrey, lemme see your gun. I think the sight is—the sight is off. 'Cause you missed earlier.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Oh, well. Yeah, okay.

SYLVIA: She's sorta—a little—givin' him a little bit of a weird look but—'cause he's been kinda *off* since... like Hitchcock called him out on not knowing about the th—like every since that happened, Aub—

DRE: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Aubrey's been a little skeptical.

AUSTIN: Mm.

DRE: That's fair.

SYLVIA: So she sorta gives him a look, but she hands it to him.

DRE: Okay.

DRE (as Sige): Have you, uh... . You've never really used one of these or anything before until now, huh?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Yeah, um. You know! Desperate times, right?

DRE (as Sige): What changed?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I just learned some things. And, um...

DRE (as Sige): You're that sure. About all of this?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I have to be. 'Cause if I'm not, then things get... even worse.

DRE (as Sige): Yeah, that's fair. Look, I wanna show you somethin' about this gun.

DRE: And Sige kind of flips it over, and on the underside, there's like a scratched-in indentation of HCK—or HKC.

DRE (as Sige): Did you notice this?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Um. I think I felt it.

SYLVIA: Like she felt like the inscription of it.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I think I felt it once or twice, but I never really looked at it? What is it?

DRE (as Sige): So, you know. You knew about my little side project, right? When I'd—when I'd go away for awhile, sometimes?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Yeah!

DRE (as Sige): Well, that stupid boat. Uh. My dad was kinda weirdly religious. And so he wanted to call the boat "His Kingdom Comes," 'cause we were, you know, bringin' the light of Samothres back to the mainland and all this stuff. So I don't know, when I was workin' on it, I just kinda scribbled it on there, and when we broke it back to down for parts to refurbish this stuff, I just—I wanted to leave it there. I—I—I don't know. It's setimental. It's stupid. But.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I'll take special care of it. And, um, maybe when this is done, you can have it back.

DRE (as Sige): No, it's—[laughs] it's yours now.

DRE: And Sige gives the gun back.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Thanks, Sige. I'll try not to miss next time I use this thing. All right?

SYLVIA: And she gives him a little thumbs up again.

[DRE laughs]

SYLVIA: And then that—and like—

AUSTIN: I'm going to *fucking die*. [laughs]

SYLVIA: Yeah?

AUSTIN: Ugh... [laughs] We ain't got a dream no more.

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: Fuck. Okay. Um. So yeah, the four of you are now in this main station. Hitchcocks, you did not find Aubrey—or you did not find Castille [amused] or Maelgwyn. They are not just in the station. [snorts]

JACK (as Hitchcocks): No, they're not here. Um. The train's gone.

AUSTIN: As you say that, you hear a noise to the west. A train is coming.

JACK (as Hitchcocks): Oh, no. Uh. R—uh. We should probably hide, right?

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: [train foley]

JACK: Okay, I'm gonna hide behind one of the statues.

AUSTIN: Which one?

SYLVIA: Yeah, same.

JACK: Two of the statues.

AUSTIN: Which statues are you hiding—which statue—okay, here's a question. Of the five statues, there are four of you—which statue is no-one hiding behind?

DRE: Oh. Well, I'm definitely gonna hide behind the Samol statue.

AUSTIN: Sure.

SYLVIA: I think the one no—I mean—I wanna hide behind Samot, I think.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Uh, I will hide behind Samoths and the floating w—uh, no, can't hide behind the floating woman, 'cause then she'll have feet.

[AUSTIN laughs]

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: If only.

JACK: Behind the guy with the—the guy with the shield.

AUSTIN: Which one is behind Samoths?

JACK: Uh. Uh, Edmund is behind Samoths.

AUSTIN: Okay. Good. I'm glad—[amused] I'm glad you hid behind the right ones. Um.

ALI: [whispering] Jesus christ...

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Maelgwyn and Castille, you're back in this elevator. And it's, again, like—it's like pauses for—it's like moving for a few moments, and then it like stops. And you're just stuck in this elevator with Maelgwyn.

ALI (as Castille): You didn't, uh—

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): That's not good.

ALI (as Castille): Oh—[laughs]

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): Ah—sorry.

AUSTIN: —he says.

ALI (as Castille): You didn't take the opportunity to dress up?

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): F—[sighs] Castille, I'm here to—kill a guy, I'm not here to dance.

ALI (as Castille): Yeah, but it's nice pretending for a minute that we're not...

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): Ah—[sighs] I guess... I—mm. I have a l—I have a lot on my mind.

ALI (as Castille): Yeah. That's fair.

AUSTIN: He like furrows his brow and looks directly into the ground. There's a lightness to him now that he did not have when he had the mask on.

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): Thanks, for... doing this with me. It means a lot.

ALI (as Castille): I—it's important. [sighs] Right?

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): ... I hope so. Otherwise, it—

ALI (as Castille): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): Otherwise, it's—

ALI (as Castille): [laughs]

AUSTIN (as Maelgwyn): [uncomfortable noise] Yeah. Anyway, thanks.

ALI (as Castille): Yeah. Don't mention it.

AUSTIN: He like goes to reach out to like pat you or something. And then like retracts, 'cause he doesn't know how people work.

ALI: [laughs] This poor boy.

AUSTIN: This is—really... weird. Like there—this shouldn't—you've been hanging out with him for like a year? And he's been flirty openly, before. Like a lot. Um. And does know how—like. He was a great leader for a while there. You know?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: But like suddenly, there's something about him that is not all here. In the station, a train comes—to a halt. And all of the doors open. And there is a procession of people. Who come out and head down the stairs to your left and right, passing by you without seeing you. There are—there are lots of types of people you've never seen before. There are people who are like half the size of humans. And thin, and wiry, and like v—sinewy, almost. Um. There are people who are also half the size of humans, but like stout and muscular. There are some orcs. And there are some elves. There are more people with gills. And there are, in fact, completely nude bird people.

SYLVIA: Bits hangin' out!

AUSTIN: With bits everywhere. There's this one dude who's like just like a big like grey-skinned like muscle guy, who is like three times as big as Sige. And it's all like—grey and like bald and has big teeth. There's a set of mages among them. All of whom wear a... robes with... a sigil on them that is like—it's like circular—it's like a—it's like a ring, and then inside the ring, there are three vertical lines. Each one taller than the last. I think the middle one is actually the tallest. So it's like a little bit tall, and then a really tall one, and then like a middle one. And there are some paladin, and with them, a priest. Brother Silas. And they move down through the... through the—down the stairway and into the throne room. I'd say there are probably easily a hundred people. Maybe more.

[1:30:02]

AUSTIN: What do you do?

JACK: Can we join the procession?

AUSTIN: Easily.

SYLVIA: Then we do!

JACK: That's what I—yeah.

SYLVIA: At least I do.

JACK: I could stand for that.

AUSTIN: Um. And you are all—you're all in the throne room when the first two arrive. Coming through the little elevator area that Maelgwyn and Castille had previously disappeared down. The first is this woman—woman is probably wrong, like I don't—I actually don't think that there is—I don't think that this character is gendered, and I don't think that this—I don't even think that this character's body reads as gendered or as—you know, feminine or masculine at all. Um. They have a body that is like—this is the bod—this is—okay, so I linked—I linked the players to a picture earlier of a thing called galena. Which is a type of rock? The thing with galena that's really interesting is that it is—so it's like a lead rock. But the thing that's—makes it interesting is that it forms in these very cubic—like... structures. So it's like very... It looks super geometric? It looks like it was cut into squares. And other geometric shapes. And that's how their body looks. Except that they have these eyes. Which are immaculate glowing gems. Because I linked my players to another image, which is these... beautiful—what are they—sunset opals, I think is what they're called? Which are just like orange—big orange opals that almost look like they have clouds in them. Like it literally looks like there's a sunset happening inside. And they step into the far left throne, and take a seat. And like each step that they make is just like—heavy with... dominance? They totally own this entire space. It is



overwhelming. Like it is—it is... No one else here has that sort of power, as they do. But you also somehow feel safe. When you see them.

And then another figure. Who is feminine. Who is bald, and who has like finlike ears. Appears with this very long, flowing dress that has like six or seven different blues... in it. And it and she move as if underwater. And when you move in her presence, you feel like you didn't choose to move. Like she was like—all of your move—all of your motion, in her presence, feels like you have been pulled at. Every cough you make. A second after you make it, you realize it was involuntary. Every time you blink, the weight of recognizing that there are things your body is doing that you're not choosing for it to do—it's really something you're conscious of as it happens. And she takes her seat, in the throne to the right of that.

[MUSIC - "MARIELDA" begins]

AUSTIN: And then there's a pause. And then, Castille and Maelgwyn, the door opens. And you are in Samoth's room. And there he is. A step away from you. What do you do?

ALI: I... put my hand on Maelgwyn's back?

AUSTIN: Samoth's reaches his hand out and puts it on Maelgwyn's shoulder. And he looks his son in the eye and says—

AUSTIN (as Samoth's): Not yet.

[MUSIC plays out to end]