

Winter in Hieron 23: Make the Library Smile

Transcriber: Rhys

AUSTIN: Ephrim and Lem: as you come up the side of this mountain, you can hear the sounds of arguing coming from the study and observatory of Sunder Havelton and Uklan Tel, who you're going to for various reasons but, mostly because you believe that they or their associate Zhan Kurr can lead you to your, your compatriot Fero Feritas who has been taken by Mental Acquisition, a department of the Archives. And you can hear, some arguing--not shouting, but, but--definitely some very... agitated voices, I'd say. You hear one of them say:

AUSTIN (as Sunder): There isn't enough time; we have to do this now.

AUSTIN: And you're hearing this through a--a pair of small windows? That don't have any glass in them, they're just kind of like broken into the side of this, this red... red clay building at the top of this mountain. And--and through a kind of a heavy wooden door. What do you do?

JACK: How close are we to the building?

AUSTIN: As close as you need to be.

JACK: Can I, ah, creep to the side of the door? And try and listen through the wood?

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: I mean I know the windows--actually: how high is the--(huffs) I'll just crouch beneath a window, I think, in that case.

AUSTIN: (amused) Yeah, good. That's the image we want! Inside, you see, um, what--to a, to a, I'd say a less familiar eye, would look like a messy, uh, living room in an apartment. But to your trained eye, as an Archivist, you know that they are in the middle of some sort of incredibly complicated ritual. And inside, you hear Sunder say:

AUSTIN (as Sunder): It's now or never. *Send me.*

AUSTIN: What do you do?

SYLVIA: If they're trying to leave, we should stop them, right?

JACK: Ah... if there's nobody left in the building, we can't get what we came here for, presumably? We--we need *their* help, rather than something--something they've got. Um... Can I see anybody through the window?

AUSTIN: Yeah, if you poke your head up, you can--you can see--I mean if you raise your head up, uh, you'll see... three people: Uklan Tel, the, the kind of older, orcish Archivist, Archivist-Collector; sorry he's not a Collector, he is... I forget what his title is. Sunder Havelton, who is a kind of guest academic, who seems to have kind of made her--her stay more permanent here; and a new figure, Zhan Kurr, who's apartment you'd left Fero in before, um... Zhan is a kind of stout orc, with bright red hair and a big bushy beard? You don't see a lot of bearded orcs, but, but he's got that, like, bright orange-red, very unkempt beard, with two big cream-colored tusks poking through. And... it's clear very quickly that Uklan Tel is trying to keep the situation calm, and doesn't want Sunder to go. He says:

AUSTIN (as Uklan): It's not ready. This is incomplete.

AUSTIN: And Kurr says:

AUSTIN (as Zhan): It's close enough, and something's happening. The pattern is changing!

JACK: Um... Where is Ephrim, in relation to me?

SYLVIA: I, uh, I should've said this, I assumed I went with you under the window, if I'm being honest.

JACK: Oh, good, we're both just crouched beneath--crouched beneath the window.

SYLVIA: Yeah, like I wanna hear this too!

JACK: Um, okay. God... I think I'm gonna, like--

SYLVIA: I can move to the door if you need me to.

JACK: Y--I think I'm gonna kind of like silently glance at Ephrim and, and, like...

JACK (as Lem): (whispering) Is this a good time to intervene?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): I think it's one of those now or never situations?

JACK (as Lem): That seems to be like what they're saying. Um...

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Yeah.

JACK: Okay. I'm going to, um... Ephrim, if you move over to the door, ah, I'm just gonna stand up?

SYLVIA: Okay! I will move to, like, the side of the door, so like... if they open it I'm like right next to the wall, I guess.

AUSTIN: And you just stand up. Do you say anything to announce your presence, or are you just standing?

JACK: I think... well I assume if, if this is one of two windows in the room...

AUSTIN: So--they're one of two windows on the *front* of the building.

JACK: Oh, okay. Um... yeah, so I think what--what the experience if you're inside the room would be like, would be, y'know, you'd be able to look out and see a nice mountain range, perhaps a few of the Archives, this weird purple light, and then suddenly an orc just stands up at the window? And I don't know that I necessarily say anything, but I move quickly enough that it--you'd probably notice it. I'm not--my goal is to be noticed.

AUSTIN: Right. Well, I think... the person who notices you is Sunder Havelton, who stops talking, um, and then grabs a vial of sand, that is on the table, looks you straight in the eye, and smashes it on the ground.

[Inside starts playing]

AUSTIN: And... as the sand spreads across the ground, she slowly unravels.

JACK: Oh, no no no no! Can I climb in through the window?

AUSTIN: No, it's a small window. It's not big enough for a person to climb through.

JACK: (laughing) Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: It's just kind of like your head and shoulders are just showing there? A, a window, or sorry a mirror, a large mirror at the back of the, uh, the back of the wall... shatters, or cracks, it doesn't shatter, it cracks--there's one single long crack; and as she begins to unravel, she gives you a little nod and a little smirk as Sunder Havelton, Curator-in-Residence of the Archives is wont to do, turns and like, leans her whole body, as if she's just falling. As if she's changing like where the gravity in the room is, so that she's standing sideways and falls through the--the broken mirror, and then is gone.

[Inside stops playing]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker, we are continuing our game of Dungeon World by Adam Koebel and Sage

LaTorra, my, my--what is the thing called? What is the--principles? My agenda is to portray a fantastic world, to fill the characters' lives with adventure, and to play to find out what happens. Joining me: Keith Carberry.

KEITH: Hi, my name's Keith Carberry; you can find me on Twitter @keithjcarberry, you can find the lets plays I do at youtube.com/runbutton.

AUSTIN: Also Jack de Quidt.

JACK: Hi, I'm Jack, you can find me on Twitter @notquitereal, and buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

AUSTIN: And Sylvia¹ Clare.

SYLVIA: Hi! Uh, I'm Sylvia, you can find me on Twitter @captaintrash.

AUSTIN: Cool. So before we start let's go over, briefly, I just wanna--look at, uh, bonds, and at, um, alignment really quick. So... Fero. What is your alignment and bonds?

KEITH: Um... My alignment is chaotic.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: And my bonds are...

AUSTIN: What's the, what's the--sorry, what's the thing for your alignment?

KEITH: Oh, the thing is 'pull the weeds of the past out by the roots'.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool.

KEITH: Um... for my bonds, I am still missing one bond, um, I couldn't--I couldn't think of one good enough for today.

AUSTIN: If one pops in your head, y'know, just let me know.

KEITH: Right. I'll slap it down there. Right now I have: 'Lem King only thinks I can help myself when it suits him', and I have 'Prince Ephrim and I might agree, but we might not be right'.

AUSTIN: Huh. Interesting. All right; speaking of Eph--

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

KEITH: That's the older one, I--I almost replaced that one last week.

AUSTIN: Okay, well maybe this week will be the week, we'll see. Ephrim, how about you?

SYLVIA: All right. My alignment is chaotic; um... the text of it is 'spread a dangerous new idea: I am the only thing that can stop the coming winter and should be worshiped for it'.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: I actually think I was going to cut the 'should be worshiped for it', but.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. I think that that--you seem like you had re, or Ephrim had re, kind of, dedicated himself to Samoths at the--the beginning of the last episode. In exchange for life, you know, which is a fair trade, I think.

SYLVIA: It... makes sense. Um, and then my bonds are... 'The sun has been more reliable these past few days than Lem has'.

JACK: (laughing)

SYLVIA: And then for Fero, it's still 'Fero doesn't think before he acts, but I trust his instincts'.

AUSTIN: Okay. And Lem King, orc bard.

JACK: My alignment is neutral: 'avoid a conflict or defuse a tense situation'. Um, and my bonds are, 'Fero's happiness at the destruction of Nacre is deeply troubling, I will seek to protect what he wishes to destroy', and 'Ephrim should not have taken the blade he carries, I should seek to ensure his faith does not lead to other, rasher decisions'.

AUSTIN: Great. Good. Um, so the sound of the sands clapping in--collapsing in Rosemerrow, and these two new towers--it's almost one new tower, because of how the two sources of light intermingle. And how like weirdly inverted they are, right? Like one is the Heat and the Dark, but you can see that it--it almost shines light onto the bright white light of the stars? But also the bright white light of the stars, as always, does not give its own light off? It just glows into itself? And it's just constantly building itself higher and higher, and... slowly like, tethering itself to the ground in different directions? Like it's slowly growing arms out that reach downward to support it, into Rosemerrow and the forest to the south of it, and the forest to the north-west of it. And as this is happening, Ephrim, as you knock on the door, Zhan Kurr, the--the orc, I guess Uklan and Zhan are both orcs at this point, but, uh... Zhan opens the door and like steps out right past you? And is just like:

AUSTIN (as Zhan): What the--Oh, this is gonna throw everything *off*. Who are you t--wait a second. Come inside. Right now.

JACK (as Lem): (hesitant) Okay... sure.

AUSTIN: Um... there's a, a look in Uklan Tel's eyes as you come in, that is... working on something. Like, he sees you for a moment, and then is immediately... there is a sort of--there is a sort of labor happening in his eyes, where you can see him running calculations. And partly they seem very, uh, personal emotional calculations? Like the sort of like, 'oh no, what have I gotten people into now'? But there is also a second sort, like it starts as that, and then it turns over into the sort of calculus of, again, incredibly competent semioticians. Where they sometimes become very focused on what the pattern is at the moment, and how things have shifted, and begin kind of like reworking things according to that--that pattern. Which I guess, again, Lem, you kind of just recognise that in him because that's--that's just how people are sometimes!

JACK: Uh huh. Especially him, right? Like, he's probably fairly close to a celebrity within the Archives?

AUSTIN: He's--so he's an interesting figure. I would--I would ask you to Spout Lore on that if you're trying to recall specific information about Uklan Tel.

JACK: I don't know if like this is necessarily a great time for Spout Lore, we'd have probably done that already.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we can--we can say that you did it before, right? Like you--it's a thing you could have been doing on the way over.

JACK: Okay. Sure, I'll roll--I'll roll a Spout Lore. That's uh, Intelligence, right?

AUSTIN: It is.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: 'When you consult your accumulated knowledge about something'--

JACK: Oh--crap.

AUSTIN: Spout Lore only takes a few seconds, like it's not like a thing where you're like, digging through tomes. Uh, you rolled a six, though, which is not great. Um...

KEITH: I've never heard of this guy!

(laughing)

AUSTIN: No, uh, I think what you--

KEITH: I've never seen a human!

AUSTIN: So traditionally on a seven to nine I would tell you something interesting, it's up to you to make it useful; um, what I will do instead is... You only know him by his reputation.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which is, that he is... maybe it's actually the other way. Maybe it is... hm. So, the thing that you know about Uklan Tel is... that he doesn't exist. Um, he's a--he's a common, like um.... he's an urban legend, basically, right? He's like, you... mm nah this doesn't work, cause I've already established that you've been to one of his lectures, right? I think the thing is that he's gone in--he's gone into hiding, right? So you must have seen him when you were very, very, very young, and then like no one has seen him in years. And the, the common thought is 'oh yeah, he went off to study the Mark of the Erasure and he died there'. Which is very damn near close to being true.

JACK: (laughing)

AUSTIN: No one has seen him since that trip, and the only thing you know about his specialty is that he is... he had studied, like, pre-Erasure stuff, pretty, um... with a serious focus? And... because you're so confounded by this, you're gonna take a minus one forward on the next time that you interact with him.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: So if you are trying to Discern Realities about him, or if you're trying to Parley, or something like that, take a--a minus one forward on that, because like, 'mm, you're supposed to be dead'.

JACK: Right. Ah, have I read his book on Marielda?

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: You might have an opportunity to do that in the near future, we'll see. Uh... so, you two are brought in, um... and Zhan Kurr says:

AUSTIN (as Zhan): What're you doing? What do you need? You've picked a very inopportune time.

JACK (as Lem): I'm sorry. We came here to look for you, uh, and... and him.

AUSTIN: Tel sits down at a big, uh, stone desk, and takes out a--a pad, and begins to sketch something or write something out, you can't really see what.

JACK (as Lem): Are we disturbing something? We can come back, we can come back later.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): No we can't.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): (overlapping Sylvia) You are, of course, disturbing--

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): (overlapping Austin) We--this is urgent.

SYLVIA: Sorry.

AUSTIN: No, no, it's fine. It's--it's interesting that you cut him off, right? Um... he goes:

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Lots of things are urgent these days. What do you need.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): A... friend of ours has been... captured, I guess would be the best word for it.

JACK (as Lem): Taken?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Taken, yeah. We've been led to believe that you can help us with this. At least that's what I've been told.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): What did he--what did he do? Why should I help you help a criminal?

JACK (as Lem): He, um... My best guess is that he's been taken, um... because he was connected to--to me? They got him instead of... I don't know if this is really helping my case. He's a--he's a dear friend, who shouldn't be where he is, um, and we were told that you could help us, ah... Funny story, um... Actually, no, you know what, don't worry about that.

KEITH: (extremely keith laugh)

JACK (as Lem): We need you to help-- (laughing) We need you to help us--please. We'll, we'll, we'll, what can we do to make it worth your while.

AUSTIN: Give--give me a Defy Danger Charisma for even being able to go further down this path as is? And then--and then we'll talk about what happens next. Because what you've just given him is a lot of bullshit.

KEITH: That's the cagiest shit I've ever heard anyone say.

AUSTIN: (overlapping Keith) And you play the most ca--

KEITH: 'Why should I help you? Why should I help you? This sounds cagey', he's like 'well, okay, hold on, here's what it is: he's here to help me, a criminal, wait that sounds bad, okay. Here's what it is. Wait, no, not that. Okay. Can I bribe you'.

(laughing)

AUSTIN: So give me a Charisma. Your--your minus one is not with him, so... [UNCLEAR]
[00:17:33]

JACK: Just to double check, um, I got Confused in the last episode, I'm not still Confused, am I?

AUSTIN: What were you Confused by?

JACK: I was Confused by, I think, the--

KEITH: The sun? The bright sun.

AUSTIN: Yeah, n--you adjusted at this point.

JACK: Okay. Have we regained health by being in the Archives? Or... no.

AUSTIN: No, you will have to--you will have to have spent a night resting, or whatever. Which I don't think has actually happened, so.

JACK: (overlapping Austin) Now I'm gonna roll Charisma. No, because we had no beds!

AUSTIN: (whispered) Right.

JACK: (overlapping Keith) That's another. Don't want that one.

KEITH: My thing has me at full health, so I don't--I think that we had healed.

AUSTIN: You also just heal yourself a lot. You used, in the last episode, you used, um... your balance thing to heal during the confrontation with the interrogator.

KEITH: Yeah, that's fair.

AUSTIN: Make sure you mark this XP, Lem.

JACK: Oh, yeah, that's two XP for me, 'cause I rolled another six!

AUSTIN: Um... The... Archivist Zhan Kurr... like, narrows his eyes at you? His big bushy red, um, eyebrows that--that come to a point, they meet in the center, that's how badly he's burrowing--or he's furrowing his eyebrows at you. He's burrowing, also.

JACK: (laughing)

SYLVIA: A vole.

AUSTIN: Right. And he begins to study you, and like... walks around the two of you, and closes the door.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Tel... you won't believe who walked into our door.

AUSTIN: And before you know it, the windows to this place have disappeared. And it's lit only by oil lamps.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): I recognise that fiddle.

JACK (as Lem): (laughs) Yeah. Uh... You know I said that they were supposed to get me?

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Hm. Priest. Is there truth to his?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): First of all: priest is a bit of an understatement. Secondly--

JACK (as Lem): No, no, Ephrim...

AUSTIN: (laughing) Oh ho ho!

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): It's true.

JACK (as Lem): Right, no, but this--

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Our friend was just in the wrong place at the wrong time, um... and unfortunately didn't get out of there as quickly as others did.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): And you want *me* to help?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Yes! I want your help.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Where is he?

JACK (as Lem): We don't know, um... he was, um... we have reason to believe that he was taken by the Department of Mental Acquisitions.

AUSTIN: Tel gives like a low laugh from his desk.

AUSTIN (as Uklan): (laughs)

AUSTIN: And Zhan Kurr like leans forward on--on his tippy-toes--he's shorter than both of you, but, but like leans forward up and says:

AUSTIN (as Zhan): (smug laugh) The Untethered Annex. That's where your friend is.

AUSTIN: Fero... how you doin'?

KEITH: I'm... really upset...

AUSTIN: The last time that we saw you, you had turned into sand, um...

KEITH: Yeap.

AUSTIN: And also had destroyed all of the sand in Rosemerrow--actually, what I said was 'all of the sand on the western--the western seaboard', which is an important distinction, because that's the same sand. It's bad. It's bad, over there. But you don't know anything about that; in fact, you feel really disconnected from the rest of the world, here? Which is... a strange thing. Like I--I feel like we've talked before about your ability to sense life? And you can sense... the interrogator, who had been talking to you, demanding to know... stuff about Nacre, about Ventaro Doce... He had, um... been kind of using a sort of very strange form of pattern magic to disorient you... you also sense the life of... it's--it's a distant sort of sense, but like, there are probably another dozen people within range of you? And that's really weird, because you're in a city? Or you're in a thing *like* a city? And normally that's like, 'oh yeah, there's hundreds of people all over the place', and here it's like there's a faint feeling of twelve other people. At most. And like some of them flutter in and out of existence, and that's--and there are no other animals down here, and that's really weird. And the interrogator, when you turn to sand, leaves the--has left the room, at this point. We're gonna jump ahead like, an hour. You were just kind of left in that room. So tell me a little bit about what you were doing in that room for the last hour.

KEITH: Um... Just totally by myself?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I think... I think that I am... really committed to this protest? I think I was sand, unmoving sand, for the entirety of the hour. Because I was sand as a sort of defense of like, 'well, maybe they can't do so much shit to me when I'm sand'.

AUSTIN: Right. Totally.

KEITH: Like, I don't--I don't have--I'm still Fero, with all my thoughts and stuff, but I don't have like a brain for a little bit?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Like I got--my brain is magicked away into a different... whatever.

AUSTIN: Yeah, is that how it works, like is there--does Fero have a soul that's dispersed among the grains of sand...? What's... Is there a certain grain of sand that is Fero, and the other ones kind of gravitate around it? Like if someone swepted you up, what would happen.

KEITH: No, I think--if someone sweep--I think that I would be all of the grains of sand, in different places?

AUSTIN: When you became one--when you tried to reform yourself, which one would you be?

KEITH: The way that I always pictured it is that like when I become... and maybe it's different--maybe it's different for inanimate objects, but when I become an animal, I just feel like I get... I--sorry, no, it's definitely different, it is definitely different for inanimate objects, because when I become an animal, all my shit just transforms?

AUSTIN: Right. Totally.

KEITH: I just kind of imagined for inanimate objects I just kind of swap out. Like, I'm there, I'm literally not physically the sand. Like I'm not there. I--I am the sand in that I can be--I can move and do stuff, but like there isn't a grain of sand that is Fero.

AUSTIN: I see. You're like this--you are... less, less material than that at that point. Okay.

KEITH: Yeah. You're--right.

AUSTIN: That's fine. Um... so, an hour passes, after this--this interrogator has left, and then you hear a knock on the door.

KEITH: (whispering) I'm sand.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah, that's--that's what happens. I kinda like the shot of just, there's a knock on the door, and then you just continue being sand.

KEITH: Closeup of sand?

AUSTIN: Yeah. And then it cuts back to... Zhan Kurr explaining what the Untethered Annex is. Um...

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Untethered is--hm. It's...

AUSTIN: And then Uklan Tel says:

AUSTIN (as Uklan): It's propaganda. There's no such thing as an 'untethered' anything. Everything has a--its place in the pattern.

AUSTIN: And Zhan says:

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Yes, but: what we learned a long time ago was, you move things so far this way, you turn them that way, and... you can... *keep* something, in its place, untouched from the pattern. It doesn't matter how many dozens of doves flew over Velas in the Untethered Annex. It doesn't matter if--the trees have all lost their leaves, or if the sun hasn't risen there. It's always the same. And it takes a great deal of work, a dozen Archivists, every day, reading the pattern, adjusting just so, to keep it... *vacuumed*, sealed away. A semiotician there, well... they can do incredible things. I don't think there's a way to get your friend from there. Not exactly.

JACK (as Lem): What do you mean by not e--firstly I've never heard of this place.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Hm.

JACK (as Lem): Why are you telling me about it now?

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Because you--

JACK (as Lem): Does this mean you'll help us?

AUSTIN (as Zhan): --have something I want.

JACK (as Lem): What--is it the violin?

AUSTIN (as Zhan): For one.

JACK (as Lem): Well Morbash has already--you know. I promised I'd return it to him.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Don't worry about Morbash. (deep breath) Tel, can we devise a pattern?

AUSTIN: And Uklan Tel is like, deep in his own--his own calculations about something else at this point.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Nevermind. It--we'll figure it out. But we will need something in exchange. More than one thing, really.

AUSTIN: And he grins.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): You're Lem King, right?

JACK (as Lem): Yeah, that's--that's me.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): When this is done, we will ask you for a few things.

JACK (as Lem): Can you tell me what they are now?

AUSTIN (as Zhan): No, that would... go against the pattern.

JACK (as Lem): And you'll help me--

KEITH (as the ghost of Feros past): (very distantly) That's a bad deal!

JACK (as Lem): Sorry, I just hear a distant voice.

AUSTIN: Yeah, what was--wuh!

KEITH (as the ghost of Feros past): That's a *bad deal*!

AUSTIN: (laughing) (spookily) Don't take it, it's (trails off)

JACK (as Lem): But you'll help me--oh, you'll help me try and get my friend?

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Well...

AUSTIN: And he turns a--a little, um, compass on the--on the table, like a drawing compass, and forms a circle, and light comes back in through the--through the room, through the windows that open back up in the sides of the--of the walls.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): The thing is: we can't pull anything out of the Untethered Annex. You can't--unscramble it, I can't give you a map to the place, but I can make this room part of it.

AUSTIN: And he gives you like a really bright grin. As if, like, proud of his own, uh, his own--his own skill.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): And then it would be as simple as opening the right door, grabbing your friend, and getting out.

JACK (as Lem): Is this--has this been done before?

AUSTIN: He like shoots Uklan Tel a glance, who like... raises one hand, and then goes like 'sort of'. (laughing) He does like the little 'sort of' shake.

JACK: Is Uklan Tel like trying to like--trying to ignore him at this point? Like, is Uklan busy with other stuff?

AUSTIN: No, no it is not busy work st--again, you can... if you want to try to Discern Realities, you can try to Discern Realities. Like if you're--if you're actually curious about what he's doing.

JACK: (overlapping Austin) (sighs) I don't think it narratively makes sense. No, I--Jack is curious, Lem is just so thrown off by this whole situation.

AUSTIN: Okay. Totally.

JACK (as Lem): Can Ephrim come too? Ephrim, do you want to come too?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): I mean, I would prefer to be involved in whatever is going on, yeah.

JACK (as Lem): It doesn't sound like you're supportive of it, necessarily, is the thing.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): (big sigh) I'm still not exactly a *fan* of pattern magic.

JACK (as Lem): Well, I mean, that's a bigger problem. Yep, okay. Let's do it.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): All right. Give me... an hour. We'll work it out.

JACK (as Lem): Would you like us to wait here?

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Please, take a seat.

JACK (as Lem): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): We have some tea prepared. You--just sit there and take notes on that tower that just, just--anything, watch that thing and tell me if anything changes, hm?

JACK (as Lem): Yes sir.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Things like that, they... they seem big, but the pattern is *ancient*, resilient. It will affect what we do today, and tomorrow, and forever, but... there is some lag time. That also means we only have limited time to work, though, so.

AUSTIN: And then he like walks off into a different room. There's another big--so there's the front entrance room, there's another big door like opposite it, and then there's another little room that leads into a kitchen, and he walks into the little kitchen room. And then comes back out with tea and, and cookies, and some other stuff, and then sits at a small wooden desk that's like to the side of Uklan Tel's. There's a third desk, which is clearly where Sunder Havelton was, and it's clear because... while their desks are filled with doodads and trinkets that are arranged just so, and--books that have, are like references, and index--you know, indices, and are like, how many--what's the thing I'm thinking of. Um, um, uh... what is the, like, almanacs? Where it's like, just a list of--of information about the year, and about past years, and about predictions about the weather this next year. Hers are covered with a few things like that, but also more books that are traditionally academic. Books of--of sociology, of various schools of magic, of mathematics, and those are things that are studied in the Archives, too, but--y'know, Archivists, and speci--specifically pattern magicians need to know more about the pattern than they do about, like, general thoughts about the world.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: I mean also she w--she's from the University, originally. So. Y'know, that's... a key difference. (sighs) Um, Fero, another hour goes by. You stay as sand?

KEITH: (whispering) I'm sand.

AUSTIN: Okay. There is another knock, and that's all. Okay! Another hour goes by, and Zhan Kurr, um, snaps his fingers together. To, um... Ephrim and Lem, while you were watching the tower--or I guess, were you watching the tower and sipping tea? Or were you, like what were you up to?

JACK: Um... I think I alternated between taking notes--taking absent-minded notes on the tower, and apologising to Ephrim?

SYLVIA: Ephrim was eating a lot of the cookies.

AUSTIN: They're very good. What type of cookies were they?

SYLVIA: Oh, man... See I don't know much--because I don't drink tea, I don't know much about like what type of cookies go well with tea.

AUSTIN: That's fine. I don't know that Zhan Kurr does either. So you tell me what type of cookies they were, and we'll deal with the fact that they might be bad tea pairings.

SYLVIA: I kinda like, uh... like sorta like a ginger type thing?

AUSTIN: Yeah! I can get with that, a gingersnap with like a--

JACK: I like a nice ginger--ginger biscuits are great.

AUSTIN: Mhm! Yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um... so it seems as if... the tower--some brief things about the tower that you can see. You're also straight up given a telescope, to look at the--at the towers with? There is one near one of the windows that opened back up. And you can see that the bases of the--well you can't see the base of the tower. The base of the tower goes below Rosemerrow. Like it's, it's--not the foundation, like it goes way--it seems like it goes below sea level. The thing you know--

JACK: Sorry, just to be clear--

AUSTIN: Yep?

JACK: When you talk about a tower, are you talking about like a column of light, or an actual tower?

AUSTIN: An actual physical tower, made out of the sort of light that you saw--the white one is made out of the sort of light that took over one of the, um, one of the towers in the canyon of Rosemerrow?

JACK: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: And the other one, um... is made out of, Ephrim, the sort of like--magma-ish black and purple Heat and Dark that you saw Samoths working on. Hang on.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna add it to the map.

JACK: Wow, okay.

AUSTIN: Um... so that's the--so one thing you see is like, 'oh, the water is literally falling into it'. The--oh, that's backwards. One second. Make what white, make this purple... so.

JACK: They haven't appeared for us yet, I don't think.

AUSTIN: I--there we go.

JACK: Oh--oh my god!

SYLVIA: Oh, wow.

AUSTIN: It's big. And so then, the other thing that's happening here is--oop, I didn't mean to move that--is that it's also sprouting out... so it's like covering the--a lot of Rose--like it's bad. It's like big, and like... it's as big as half of Rosemerrow, right? Like, it's... it might take you a day to cross it from one side to the other. And it's incredibly tall. It's like taller than the mountains, it's taller than the first tower you went to, it's--huge. And it's constantly--it's constantly growing now that it's reached a really high height, it starts growing in other directions? So like, it's doing little things where like, it will sprout out like a little limb, that way? Or like, y'know, to the north, and the limb will drag itself down into the ground? Or there will be a fissure that runs upwards, like so? Like that's on the ground level? It's--a very strange thing. But the white light of the stars is keeping up with and building around the purple and black of the Heat and the Dark. Um... the Archives are remarkably--well, so, you have a--a very specific view of this that most people in the Archives do not, uh, but you definitely also see some people--you also can, can like, hear people down in the kind of valley of the New Archives, organising to send out, uh, reconnaissance parties, a couple of couriers come with notes for Uklan Tel that are requesting information about what to do given this, things like that, right? And... people are moving into motion, y'know, are, are speeding into motion to, to take some ac--active gesture? But it's very confusing right now. So that's, that's what's happening there. And then finally, Khan Zurr--sorry, Zhan Kurr, and Uklan Tel finish their work, and Zhan, like (claps) claps his hands, and says:

AUSTIN (as Zhan): All right. The window for this is small, but... I think we can do it, or--you can do it. I'm giving you the pattern. You'll have to execute on it yourself. Here.

AUSTIN: And gives you both an index card. And both--y'know, two index cards. Uh, that has a list of five things on it. The first one says: 'make the northern library smile'. The second says: 'build a table of smoulderwood and sell it to'--and then there's like a, a phrase that says like, it's like 'an armed collector of the past', which, Lem you know there are sometimes phrases in the--in patterns, or in kind of recipes for patterns, that tend to mean one thing, like you could read that to mean a Collector, an Archivist-Collector, but it could also mean something else, right? Like, it's a broader term, it doesn't just refer to a title, if you had this--if you had this and

were in Velas, then like maybe you could use the, the pattern if you met someone who was an antique dealer, who happened to formerly be a soldier. Y'know, that sort of thing? The third one is: 'gather the woes of three breathing, and send them--send them to the winds from the top of the lost lover', which is a, a mountain that used to have a second paired mountain, that was destroyed at some point in the past. 'Flood the stoneworks', which you know are an ancient pre-Erasure forge that are built into a nearby valley, and then the fifth one is 'twenty-two brown birds must perch on the granite parish'. The granite parish is a clear outcropping on a mountain to the south, which is the mountain that Fero lives on.

JACK: (laughs)

AUSTIN: I will post these, this recipe, as it were, in the chat.

JACK: And we both have the same recipe?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Oof. (laughs)

JACK (as Lem): We just have to--we do these?

JACK: I like hold the card up to Zhan.

AUSTIN: He nods.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Of course. That is the pattern.

JACK (as Lem): And this will--this will get us in to the, to the unanchored Annex?

AUSTIN (as Zhan): Well if you're both here, at the time of the final step being done, then this room will become connected to the Untethered Annex. I--I think, if my calculations are right, directly to the room in question.

JACK (as Lem): Okay! Um... Ephrim?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): I hate this.

JACK (as Lem): Hey Ephrim! Hey! You're gonna get to do some pattern magic!

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): (as insincerely as possible) Hooray.

(laughing)

JACK: I guess... back to the Archives?

AUSTIN: I mean you're in the Archives. The Archives are all around you.

JACK: Oh, I guess, okay. Do we have to do them--

AUSTIN: You're at one end of this massive campus, effectively.

JACK: Do we have to do them in order?

KEITH: I will say that it's--it's a very Archives-y thing to have one part of the Archives that's called the Archives so no one ever knows whether you're talking about the New Archives or the Archives part of the Archives?

AUSTIN: Fair. I imagine--I imagine that you are here at this kind of northern, like, north-eastern tip, where one of the largest mountains is, which gives you the ability to see really far. Especially with a telescope!

JACK (as Lem): Okay. Do we have to do them in order.

AUSTIN (as Zhan): No. But again, y--whoever wants to, whoever will be saving your friend will need to be here at the conclusion of the pattern.

JACK (as Lem): Okay. Thank you. Um... Ephrim, do you wanna split these up, do you wanna--?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): I'm not even sure what half of these mean. (laughs)

JACK (as Lem): That's how it goes, Ephrim. That's how it goes. Look. I've--I've had assignments that were like this. I mean, none like this, and you just have to--working with the pattern is like a, like a piece of cloth that has a loose thread and, y'know? You just have to like pull at the thread, and then see where it takes you, I think? Oh, it's been ages, Ephrim. Um... Do you wanna do one together so you get the feel of it?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): (sighs) Might as well. I... Oh my god, this is going to be a long day.

(laughing)

AUSTIN: Fero, the uh, the door opens. It's raining outside the door. It's muddy, and green, and... dark. It's night time out there. And you can hear people shouting. Something's weird about the color of the green. It's... you can't tell from this, from this angle. But it's not--it doesn't just look like grass. Something's weird about it.

KEITH: (long pause) I'm sand.

AUSTIN: Okay. What are you gonna do first? Which of the five?

JACK (as Lem): Look, Ephrim, when--we can start with the one that you're least sure about, and get it out of the way, or we could start with the one you're most sure about... Look, I'm so sorry, Ephrim, I, y'know--

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): How do we make a library smile, is probably the first question I have here. So maybe start with that one?

JACK (as Lem): Okay. So I think the way we start there is, um... we probably go to the library, because I don't know how we make it smile, but I'm hoping that on the way we can get some sort of--some sort of information. Maybe a clue will, maybe we'll hit on something. You like Fero, right?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): If I didn't, I wouldn't be doing this.

JACK (as Lem): Great. Thank you.

JACK: So I guess we're gonna go to the--we're gonna make our way to the northern library.

AUSTIN: Okay! Let's--let's say that that's like, here, so. A long enough walk for you to think through some of this stuff. The... again, like, the Archives are now moving with some speed to respond to the stuff that's happening in the south-west, but there's still this sense of things are in control. What to you think that's--what do you think is the cause of that, Lem?

JACK: Um, I think that... I don't--I don't think I know how Archive management works, I don't think I know if there's anybody on top, um, but my assumption is that there is definitely some sort of like, um... y'know, disaster preparedness, within the Archives, y'know. Like, we've been brought up on terrible stories of--pre-Erasure things being destroyed, and so presumably the Archives is fairly switched on as far as disaster protection is concerned. And I guess I assume that's kicked in?

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah, that sounds--that sounds feasible, certainly. Ephrim, what--how are you feeling about all of the things you're seeing?

SYLVIA: Ephrim just has that like--it's kinda like the feeling of, um, that like sort of uneasy feeling of you're going to a party where you don't know anybody other than one person? But you know that they know everybody else? Like it's not the worst anxiety, but it's enough to give you that feeling in the pit of your stomach, where it's like 'I don't like this'? And that's the sort of loss that he's feeling right now, like he's--*really* does not like being in this scenario, he--has always been wary of all the pattern magic stuff, and now having to actually partake in it has him even

more on edge.

AUSTIN: Totally.

JACK: Why are you wary of it?

SYLVIA: It seem--part of it is, sort of, I don't like using the word much, but like her--it almost seems heretical, in some ways? And also it's, it's an unknown, right? It is something that seems vastly powerful that Ephrim wasn't taught much about. And this is like, Ephrim traveled all around Hieron as a kid, so for something to not be, like, for something to be this unfamiliar for him, it just--it makes him feel like he's not in control, and that's the last thing he wants. So it's basically just the whole idea of, one, the larger pattern being this thing that you can influence but is unseen and can cause all these chain reactions, and just general unknowingness that make him feel almost helpless in a way that he tries to avoid.

AUSTIN: Speaking of, of general helplessness: there is a voice now, Fero. It's the voice of the interrogator. But it's disembodied, in a similar way to yours, I guess, in some sense. And it says:

AUSTIN (as Gantel): Detainee. This is going to happen. And--if it happens with your cooperation, it will be painless. My name is Gantel Lor. Aid me here. Do not make our day worse.

KEITH: Hmm. Okay. Um... I'm sand.

AUSTIN: Okay. The green of outside in the, the muddy, like, ground, and the rain, begin to seep slowly into this room through the open door. The figures in the distance move strangely? They move--not in stop-motion, but it's, y'know, for the viewers at home, it's as if... they move with frames of animation missing. Like, it's sketchy, it's, it's, like janky movement. And the second thing you notice is that like, it's also... it's like figures moving on top of some medium. It's not people in a field, it's--they're drawings. And slowly, that style of--of space begins to take over the interrogation room, too. And so suddenly it's not that there is a table, it's that there is a, a drawing of a table, sketched out in charcoal. And there is not a, a collection of books on a bookshelf, there is, y'know, the outline of a bookshelf with some--some streaks of color representing books. And all of it maintains its, its three-dimensional shape, but it also all feels like it's been sketched out on--on parchment, or paper. A little ruffled, a little--a little, y'know, wrinkled up. And the green of the grass you see now is like colored pencil. And you can hear the sound of sketching. You can hear the sound of, of pencil on paper, as this slowly forms around you.

KEITH: I... wonder if... Fero could figure out what the entire room turning into a drawing means for him? So I'm gonna roll Discern Realities.

AUSTIN: You're just gonna--okay, go for it. What's--what's that look like as sand? How does

sand discern reality? Like how does the viewer at home see the sand seeing the room?

KEITH: It's... here's the thing, because it's funny. It's the same closeup of like the knock on the door and then the picture of the sand? Like, like the sand isn't moving, even though Fero is looking at stuff.

AUSTIN: It's like shot, reverse shot of stuff changing and then back to sand, and then--

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Great.

KEITH: It's a pi--like, or even like, if--it's the static shot, which is I think the funniest shot, but then maybe a more--a more telling shot of what's happening, like if we had to communicate the whole thing silently would maybe like, a closeup from behind the sand but you can see over the sand, and do a pan across the room as it's changing?

AUSTIN: Oh, right. And then like, the field of--the depth of field changes, and you can see the sand in the foreground and the bookshelf--

KEITH: Yeah, it's like that one sh--yeah. (laughing)

AUSTIN: Okay. Great. Good. Give me a--give me a roll.

KEITH: Oh, I already did, and I failed it.

AUSTIN: You already did and you rolled a five. Great. Good. Um... the room is gone, and you are in a field, and there is a cage that is leading up to, um, a wooden stage. And inside the s--the cage is the, the thing rendered most clearly here, it is Mother Glory. Zhan Kurr, uh, I guess actually you're--you're past Zhan Kurr now. So you all arrive at the--Ephrim and Lem, you arrive at the northern library. Lem, what's it look like?

JACK: Oh, I was gonna ask you!

AUSTIN: No! You live here, shit!

JACK: It's, uh... the northern library is, uh, three low buildings, um... two of which are essentially, like, are kind of a large lending library? In just a town? Like low shelves, um, books with like, tattered ends, uh, people sitting at desks reading and working, um... I think there are--there are people standing by the windows looking out, right? Assuming that they've got a view, um, of some kind. Also we're--we're quite far north, so there's probably a view north, across the northern sea?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I don't know what that looks like, but--

AUSTIN: Me either.

JACK: The orcs are probably intimately familiar with them, right? They're really close.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I imagine, y'know, I imagine that there are some villages, maybe and some larger towns, on the northern islands that the orcs trade with. That would make perfect sense to me.

JACK: And the third low building is, ah, a special collection; you have to--you have to get them--you have to have like a reason to go there, it's like the Bodleian library in Oxford or something.

AUSTIN: Right, you have to get like approval and stuff. That's probably where Devar's father saw something he wasn't supposed to.

JACK: Yeah. And in there it's just like a, an old... in the way that old English universities have, it's like an old library and reading room, with like multiple floors, and spiral staircases, and books chained to shelves and things.

AUSTIN: Great!

JACK (as Lem): This is the northern library. Ephrim, do you wanna split up and, and you can uh--you can try make some of those bits smile, and I can maybe work on this bit?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): W--What?!

AUSTIN: (laughing)

JACK (as Lem): Okay. So, it says, 'make the northern library smile'.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): I--Lem, I can read.

JACK (as Lem): Good.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): I just--wh--it's a building.

JACK (as Lem): I think--yeah, that's absolutely something that's important to consider, right, because it would be pretty easy to make people inside the library smile, but that's not what's asked for here. So I think--yeah. You're right.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Yeah, I think splitting up might be a good idea.

AUSTIN: Oh, boy.

JACK (as Lem): Okay. Do you wanna take uh, do you wanna take the--the two, uh, shall I take the big one, or do you wanna take the big one?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): (sighs) I'll take the big one, because you know your way around here better, so, if you need me, you'll know where I am, and I won't get--there won't be any chance of me getting lost in the Archives somewhere.

JACK (as Lem): Okay. That would suck.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Yeah. A lot. [00:52:30]

JACK (as Lem): Good luck! Good--good luck.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): You too, buddy.

JACK: And I'm gonna walk into it and, and walk up to a librarian?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK (as Lem): Hi, ah, I really need your help, please.

AUSTIN: They look at you and say, um:

AUSTIN (as Librarian): All right, we're open for another few hours, what can I help you with?

JACK (as Lem): Oh, that's great. I need some help with a pattern.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Oh, this is not, I, um, I'm a librarian, I help you find... books. And, and other collections, and things like that. I'm not really a--I don't do the whole pattern thing.

JACK (as Lem): But is it--you must get this a lot, I'm sorry. It's a pattern that involves y-you? Or your, your library?

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Okay? Well there's a--an official... request form, that I (mumbles) (UNCLEAR) [00:53:19]

JACK (as Lem): No, we don't have time for that, I'm afraid.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): That's the policy. You don't get to just use the northern library in your pattern, in--in any way that would disturb normal operations; to do that you then have to go through the, the... the main desk, file the form, it gets put into the quota, into the queue, rather, and--and we approve it, if it's been signed off by a senior semiotician. And at that point, we can schedule a date for it to--to happen.

JACK (as Lem): (very deep breath) Look, um, I'm here with a priest of, um... more than a priest of Samothres. His name is Ephrim. He's gone to the special reading room? And he's presumably, right now, going to be talking to your... y'know, opposite number up there. And he, I--I guarantee you is gonna be asking the same question I did. But I--I'm supposed to know how to do this. And, and he's going to come back, and--he won't know, and I don't know, and I--I grew up here, so I really... I un--

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Is it--I'm a librar--I'm not... This--there are therapy services available...

JACK (as Lem): How do you make a library--how do you make a library smile?

AUSTIN (as Librarian): (incredulous sounds)

AUSTIN: They, like... are themselves now caught by this riddle.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): (muttering) How do you make a library smile...?

JACK (as Lem): Yeah, cause it can't be the people in it.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): We could--maybe it's like the library is like, conceptually the people inside of it... (trails off) How do you make a library...?

JACK: What's Ephrim doing?

SYLVIA: Ephrim walks up to like the front desk and just kinda like... leans over a little and just goes:

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): D'you have any chalk?

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Sir, this is the special collections exhibit; if you need chalk, you should go to a resource depot.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): (sighs) It'll take two minutes. D'you have... any chalk?

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Sir, we are very *busy*.

AUSTIN: It is dead. It is so dead, no one is here.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): We have a lot to do today, I don't have time to--give you chalk.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): It's for... (sighs) All right, listen, I'm... trying to help out one of your pattern mage--maguses? Is it--I don't know what the title, really, is. And... I need to make this thing--this--your library smile? So if I could just go out there, draw a little smile on it, and be on my way, I'd be...

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Sir, there is a--a form, for... all uses of the libraries in patterns that would disturb normal everyday function. You'll have to go to the main floor--

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Disturb everyday func--it's not--it's just on the wall, like it's not doing anything to anybody--to your *many guests* right now.

SYLVIA: And Ephrim gestures around the room to the empty room that they're in.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Sir, consider that maybe the people here who are doing work need the library to frown, or to have no face at all. Any sort of change in the library's temperament needs to be pursued through the use of the *form*.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): (sighs) I should've stayed in Rosemerrow. Um...

AUSTIN: Just to be clear, Austin Walker has not come up with a solution for how to make a library smile.

SYLVIA: I know.

AUSTIN: Just to be clear, I'm not like for a hot puzzle solution here.

JACK: Thanks, Austin.

KEITH: I've got an i--I've got a solution. I won't say it.

AUSTIN: I bet!

KEITH: Mine would work. Sorry, guys. Sorry, maybe you shouldn't have fucking left me in a room. Jerks.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Fine, um... I have some time to kill, then. Would it be possible if I could read some of the books you keep here?

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Which collection would you like access to.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Do... What's your biggest one?

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Our biggest individual exhibit, or our biggest collection?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Yeah. Biggest individual... collection.

AUSTIN: What is the big... okay, yeah. Um... The special collections librarian shakes their head and says:

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Follow me.

AUSTIN: And then on the walk over is like, explaining why this is allowed, which is that there is a special relationship with the Church of Samothres, as part of a cultural exchange? And like lists out the name and number of the act that allows this to happen. And then they lead you to a collection on the--on a basement level of this special collections, that is filled with the things of the, um, bird people, who live on the set of islands to the north. They're like, it's a special collection of... y'know, um, murals, and everyday items, artwork, um... some, some, ah, scrolls, handwritten scrolls. It's like all of the stuff from the collection of the peoples who live on those islands to the north.

SYLVIA: Okay. Hm. How are they arranged?

AUSTIN: By... it's a bunch of different--so it's like, it's a whole floor of this library, a basement floor.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That is set into different rooms; so like one room is artistic work. Another is like, the everyday life of the seabird, y'know? Another one is a collection of, um, all of their implements of war, and like their implements of war are not that hot. There's another one that's dedicated to their, their fishing culture. There's one about their faith.

SYLVIA: Is there any... hm.

AUSTIN: What are you looking for? And how are you looking for it?

SYLVIA: So... I think Ephrim's just kinda like going from room to room and peeking his head in to see, like, how things are organized. 'Cause what I'm *trying* to do is, um, I was going to

arrange a bookshelf so it looked like a smile? Like pull books out to make that shape? But since this is something else I can probably work with this better if there's tools in different other shapes, 'cause I can make it... more clearly. Um... I guess the one to make it seem less--least suspicious to this librarian would be the room about their faith? Would be where I'd like have him leave me? But I don't wanna--I don't know if I wanna fuck with that?

AUSTIN: Sure. You'll have--yeah, that's a good, that's a good point. The room about their faith is really interesting, because... it is a, their faith is a--is a... their faith clearly has some ancient, um, religion that doesn't reference any of the gods you know? There's a--there's definitely notions of, like, gods of the feast, gods of--of the storm, stuff like that that are names that you don't recognise? And--y'know, a lot of this is written in a language you don't know, but there is orcish translations that you can make do with? And then there's, uh, the... It's clear that they also at some point began to worship Severeia; who you might also know as, um... Samonta? Who is the... goddess of, um, a lot of weird things? Travel, flight, trade, ships, um, roads, certain doors, um... but like, she has been brought in to this. And her--the depiction of her here is actually as a bird, um, it's actually similar to the way she looked in--and this is for listeners, not for Ephrim--in Marielda, except instead of having, like, mermaid-style like fins and stuff, she had feathers that are--that are, like, slicked back? It's just like a depiction of her as a bird person, basically. And she's the one who led them to the continent. And who, who first made them connect with the orcs and with the people of the northern continent. So that's like what's in here. And then like--again, scrolls, and some pamphlets, and some like, idols, and y'know, all sort--icons, all sorts of religious stuff is in here. Some of it is on display, some of it is in cabinets and in drawers and stuff like that. By default the, the librarian is not like, leaving you here alone.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay. Um...

AUSTIN: They just sort of cross their arms.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): What is it specifically you're looking for?

AUSTIN: That's not that voice. The voice was lower than that.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): What is it, specifically, you're looking for?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Well--um, as you know, the Church has an interest in all things related to the faiths of Hieron and, um... I've been asked to look into this to see if there are any connections, any mis--any lost relations to Samoths that, um, as... since many of the Archivists aren't followers of Samoths, you might have missed when going over these things.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): I see, an insult. Good. This is...

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): That--no, it--I'm sorry, I didn't mean it like that.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): It's fine, it's just been a very long day, I'm very testy, if we could just... if you could examine the objects you need, and then let me get back to my desk so I could do the rest of my filing work, that would be great.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): This might take, uh, lemme see...

SYLVIA: Ephrim sorta like looks around, and like, is... like mumbling to himself, but not really saying much--much of actual stuff, just like:

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): This could take up to six hours, really.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): We're-- (sighs)

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): I know you're not open that long... I'm--

AUSTIN (as Librarian): I don't have six hours, even.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Yeah, um...

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Even if we were open, I have other things to do. If you file for a visit, we can get a special librarian to watch you while you do this.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): I--you--you can go back to work, while I'm here. I'm a man of faith, I'm not going to harm anything related to the--to another faith. I'm not going to cause any damage here.

AUSTIN: You'll need to... either offer something here, or use some other sort of move. So this could be Parley, or it could be something else, and if it's Parley you'll have to have--you'll have to show that you have leverage of some sort to manipulate them.

SYLVIA: I c--(laughs) I'm thinking of this, and it's a real bad idea if it doesn't work... I could try Moth to the Flame? Which is the...

AUSTIN: How's that work?

SYLVIA: 'When you tempt a weak mind with your inner fire, roll plus Wisdom'--

JACK: (laughing)

SYLVIA: 'On a ten plus their will is suppressed; they follow you and do as you desire'. The other one, I do also have Firebrand, but I think Firebrand is more for, um, ideological things, because it's like, 'when you introduce a new idea to an NPC, roll plus Charisma, on a ten plus they

believe the idea their own'.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I feel like--new idea feels like about ideology or faith or belief, not about... I think this could be Moth to a Flame.

JACK: Do the bad idea!

SYLVIA: I think I'm going to.

AUSTIN: Okay, roll WIS.

SYLVIA: Am I still Conf--we're still Confused, right?

AUSTIN: No, Confused is gone, for, for--yeah.

SYLVIA: Confused is gone? Okay. Phew. I really hope I'm not joining the five and six club here.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah--

SYLVIA: I am!

AUSTIN: You rolled a six. Okay.

KEITH: Wow, what's going on?

JACK: What's going on, Roll20?

SYLVIA: On a miss--on a miss, they become agitated and upset, your fire having sparked their hidden desires.

AUSTIN (as Librarian): Okay, listen! I'm gonna need you to leave *immediately*. There's enough bullshit going on right now, I don't need to be dealing with some--some *priest* of some religion that's not even true. *Please leave*. Right now. Or I'm gonna have to go get one of the--one of the guards.

KEITH: Y'all are on number one still, right?

SYLVIA: Yep.

(laughing)

SYLVIA: I think--I think Lem leaves, but is very clear, is like:

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): It's *prince*. Not *priest*.

SYLVIA: And then goes to find Lem?

AUSTIN: Good. Great.

SYLVIA: Didn't go great!

AUSTIN: Fero.

KEITH: Hi.

AUSTIN: You're still sand, in the, in the, in the weird sketch dirt?

KEITH: I'm sand!

AUSTIN: Um... the events of Rosemerrow play out in front of you, the events that you just left. And the unspoken voice says:

AUSTIN (as Gantel): This is what I mean. If you help me, I can find the memory I need, much more quickly. And we won't have to dig into things that aren't relevant.

KEITH: Do I know--first of all. I get--I can't communicate, 'cause I'm sand. So, I'm, I'm asking you: d--I--what mem--do I know what memory they're looking for? Is it just Lem shit?

AUSTIN: They've, they--this guy specifically asked about Ventaro Doce, lots of Nacre questions, things like that.

KEITH: Right, okay. Oh, right, now I remember the Doce stuff, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. He asks you, um... watching what unfolds, and there's, there's, it's--and this is the fuckin' nerdiest thing I'm ever gonna say; it's like what if A-ha's *Take On Me* was an AMV? Was an anime music video? Because it's like jumping through various scenes of Rosemerrow? Like, you see... you see the execution of Mother Glory again--

KEITH: (very quietly singing the tune to *Take On Me*)

AUSTIN: --you see Fero telling Chatterchin, asking Chatterchin if there's anybody else who could help, things like that, and the interrogator asks, um...

KEITH: (very quietly) Take on me (take on me!), take me on!

AUSTIN (as Gantel): Why didn't you stay and help them?

KEITH: (very quietly) Take on me! I'll be gone...

AUSTIN: All right. Lem and Ephrim.

JACK: I think that Ephrim--I don't know... I like to imagine Ephrim opening the library door, and Lem is just in like--involved, um, fairly deep into it by now, conversation with this librarian? Um... and I think that like, we're like leaning over the desk to each other? I'm prepared to make a roll for this?

AUSTIN: Okay? What's the roll--what's the thing you're trying to get? I don't know what the move is you're making.

JACK: My--my hope is that... the thing I want is for people to look at this conversation, and for it genuinely to be a conversation that started from, y'know, how do you make a library smile, and now we're like 'hey, d'you remember that time that that guy tried to do the thing', and like...

AUSTIN: Right. So you're--I mean--what's the, is the result here the thing of like, you do want the whole library to kind of turn into this rolling conversation, that's like...

JACK: Yeah! I think Lem has--completely gone back on his, like, 'no, the building has to smile' thing, like my goal is like, people are like leaning over and chiming in with like 'no, that wasn't how it happened', or, y'know, I'm prepared to make this roll, and for it to--go poorly.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm just having a hard time figuring out what that roll is.

JACK: I mean I wonder if to an extent it's Spout Lore?

AUSTIN: Sort of, but that's about specific information. Like that's about like, how do I... that's a specific recollection, y'know? Um... I'm trying to see if there's a bard thing that you're doing here, actually.

JACK: Oh, maybe, yeah.

AUSTIN: Because... it's not really--it's not Defy Danger, there's no danger here, you're not, you're not--acting in the face of, of calamity, or something, right? It's not--I mean it's sort of Carouse.

JACK: Oh my god, maybe it--

AUSTIN: But that costs a hundred coin.

JACK: Aww.

AUSTIN: I guess it doesn't, necessarily. You roll plus one for every extra hundred coin. So you could roll just 2d6, straight up. That is Carouse, sort of. When you--it's when you return triumphant and throw a big party, but that seems to be as close as you're getting here, right? Where like, on a--on a ten you choose three, on a seven to nine you choose one: you befriend a useful NPC, you hear rumors of an opportunity, you gain useful information, or you are not entangled, ensorcelled, or tricked.

JACK: I don't want to be entangled, ensorcelled, or tricked!

AUSTIN: Well then you better roll a ten plus!

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think that that's it. Again, unless you're spending--unless you're spending a hundred coins to get a plus one. Otherwise, it's 2d6.

JACK: No, especially because I don't think that like, expending coin in this situation...

AUSTIN: You don't wanna like order a pizza? I was at a bar once and someone spent like a thousand dollars to order a hundred pizzas for people?

KEITH: (extremely keith laugh)

AUSTIN: And it was like, listen, those pizzas were--people ate those pizzas? But also it felt like the sort of thing--it did not leave a good impression on me, is what I'll say.

JACK: Huh. Um... is it--

AUSTIN: I ate the pizza.

JACK: --it is more narratively interesting here for me to spend the coin, right? Because then the library might be smiling!

AUSTIN: (incoherent sentence-starting noises)

KEITH: Hold on--was it good pizza, at least?

AUSTIN: It was Domino's. It was Domino's. It was Domino's pizza.

KEITH: Like it was probably somewhere cool--oh, it was *Domino's*. So it was not good pizza?

AUSTIN: It was okay.

JACK: How much gold do I have. 'Cause I have, I think, fucking tons.

AUSTIN: I think y'all are still pretty rich.

SYLVIA: Aside from me, uh... 'cause I gave most of mine away.

JACK: Yeah, I have three hundred and sixty-three gold. I'm gonna spend... a hundred gold!

AUSTIN: All right, so--I mean you could spend *two* hundred to get another plus one. It's a plus one for every hundred coin. But--

JACK: N-nnnno.

AUSTIN: 2d6 plus one!

JACK: Okay. Right. And it's not pizza, it's, it's, um... I know what it is.

AUSTIN: It's just a little flatbread. Got it.

JACK: It's--no, it's like I've waived the, like, the reason that you're not allowed food in this building is because like the orcs are like 'oh, it'll get everywhere' or whatever. And I've like, tried to pay off somebody? It feels unpleasant.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: But I rolled an eight.

AUSTIN: Okay, so you get one of the following things! You: befriend an NPC, you hear rumors of a useful opportunity, you gain useful information, or you are not entangled, ensorcelled, or tricked! I think you get this no matter what, and the thing is--this, this is--you've successfully caroused, right? So you have thrown a big party. But you won't have befriended a useful NPC, you will not have heard useful rumors of an opportunity--

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: --or gain useful information if you choose 'you are not entangled, ensorcelled, or tricked'.

JACK: Um... yeah, I'll pick 'you are not entangled, ensorcelled, or tricked', especially because I think this just doesn't feel good. People are like, smiling. And it's like nice!

AUSTIN: People are smiling. People are having a good time.

JACK: We did it!

AUSTIN: In fact, what I--what I think ends up happening is, it becomes a sort of... haven for the anxious, in the northern reaches of the Archives. People are excited to, to be inside, where they can't even see the purple light in the sky, or the tower which now you can see from pretty much anywhere in the Archives, um... it lets them focus on what they like, which is--the catalogues, right, like things are in their place here. And also you're allowed to have some food, and like, see your friends, and it becomes this kind of impromptu block party.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you think that this means that the library is smiling.

JACK: I guess--yeah!

AUSTIN: Okay, that's one down. Um, the sketch changes, Fero. Bit by bit, the... execution of Mother Glory, seeing Rosemerrow--seeing the members of the Cult of the Dark Sun, like all of the Rosemerrow stuff, is erased and replaced with a sight you haven't seen in a long time, which is: a, a little skeleton man with a broom, swinging it at your old friend Hadrian. Who--again, all of this is in this weird sketch format--who, uh, kills the, the skeleton man; you are also stuck--you see yourself turning into a bear man. Or a bear, not a bear man, just a bear, to help Hadrian. And then you see other sketches from that--from that scene, from that scenario. Excuse me. Climbing the tower, Hella being unable to lift the, the door, the weird chef hat thing, the fight scene in the, um, in the... the various rooms where Samot's scouts were. You see Hadrian and, um, and Lem put on the crown and the mask, you see the remains of the weird stone golem towards the top of the tower, and then you, you--it kind of pauses, or it repeats, almost like a cinemagraph, like a really high quality GIF, the debate about what to do with the book. And the interrogator says:

AUSTIN (as Gantel): Why did you stay with these people to begin with? Were they your friends?

KEITH: (pause) (quietly) Just sand.

AUSTIN: Still sand. Okay. Ephrim and Lem, what's next?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): What is smoulderwood?

JACK: Oh. Austin?

AUSTIN: Do you know? In character? Do you wanna roll for it?

JACK: Yeah, I can roll for it.

AUSTIN: You wanna--you wanna look it up in the library? I'll give you a plus one 'cause you're in a library, when you decide this.

JACK: Sure! Okay!

AUSTIN: This is Spout Lore for sure.

JACK: Okay, uh, Spout Lore--

AUSTIN: So add one to your Spout Lore.

JACK: Yeeez.

AUSTIN: It's Intelligence.

JACK: Intelligence... um, I'll just hit roll and add the number at the end, right? It's easier that way.

AUSTIN: Hey!

JACK: Oh my god!

AUSTIN: Good thing you had that plus one! You had a six, which is now a seven.

JACK: That's a--that was a six, and it's now a seven. I was about to misdescribe a sort of wood to you.

AUSTIN: Um, smoulderwood comes from the east, where there are sections of the ground which are destroyed, were destroyed in some cataclysm, and the woods nearby, the forests nearby, though they are intact, produce a strange sort of wood that is at once--once petrified, in that it has s-some like, stone-like qualities, and also bears a--a strange warmth, inside of it, and, uh, lines of purple light. It's a super rare type of wood; you have no idea where to get it at this moment; otherw--if you'd gotten a, a ten or above, you would have gotten useful information, which is like 'and you know Jim, who sells smoulderwood'.

JACK: (laughing)

AUSTIN: You don't--you don't know where that is.

JACK (as Lem): Okay, Ephrim—

AUSTIN: You--you do know that, uh... apparitive magic, the sort of illusion--or sorry, apparitive patterns, the sort of illusory patterns that Zhan Kurr has kind of been at the cutting edge of, could totally turn any wood into, into smoulderwood.

JACK (as Lem): This one's easy, Ephrim. Um... this one is super easy.

AUSTIN: But it's not really smoulderwood, of course. Or is it?

JACK (as Lem): We're gonna get some genuine smoulderwood. We need to go back to my room, um... look. C-come over here.

JACK: And I like pull Ephrim into a little corner.

AUSTIN: This is in the library while people are walking around with little plastic cups of wine.

JACK (as Lem): (quietly) We're gonna turn my desk... into a smoulderwood desk. I've always wanted one, and this is just like a little--it's like a little bit of the pattern, right? The pattern's like the selling it, this isn't even part of the pattern. We just--turn the desk... into some smoulderwood... and then we, we just sell it to someone who is selling swords.

KEITH: Do you think a desk is close enough to a table?

JACK: I can—

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Do you think a desk is close enough to a table?

JACK (as Lem): Look, that bit isn't important right--because if we're making it smoulderwood, we can... make it a--a table. And I mean like, that's a little more, but it's still not part of the pattern. The selling it is part of the pattern.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): All right, s--(sighs)

AUSTIN: Oh, god. I love it. I love how quickly... he's--he's turned around on this.

JACK: No, it's not part of the pattern, Austin! *Selling* it is part of the pattern.

AUSTIN: Okay!

SYLVIA: Ephrim's just like... like out of, like--I'll go along with this nonsense, but I'm not happy about it, I'm--he's--he's very moody.

JACK (as Lem): You can go find a sword person!

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Is--armed collector of the past is, doesn't to me, isn't someone who... sells swords, it's someone who... Don't you have--was it Reclaimers, was that the title?

AUSTIN: Reclaimers, Collectors, Acquisition, we've--we've used all sorts of words. (overlapping Sylvia) Morbash is one.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Yeah. To me, that's what that is.

JACK (as Lem): I don't know if--you're thinking of Morbash, and I don't know if he's the best person to--no.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): No. No, well--I thought Morbash was the leader of the um, of...

JACK: Yeah, there's a--

AUSTIN: No, he's just one of them. He's not the leader.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Okay. He's just one of them.

JACK: There's a few of them though, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, there's a handful. Most of them are out in the world, is the thing to remember. Like their job's to go out and--

JACK: But they have a department.

AUSTIN: Yes, they do have a department, and that is where... the leader of them, Kall Fer, the Collector-Curator is.

SYLVIA: Well then again, could...?

AUSTIN: You should remember also that is the group of people who wants your fiddle back.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Just to remember. Just a reminder!

SYLVIA: (overlapping Jack) Well but also the thing is, like--

JACK: Right, but I wouldn't necessarily--be going there.

AUSTIN: Ah, I see.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Archivists in *general* could be considered collectors of the past.

JACK (as Lem): I was also thinking about this, yeah. I was thinking about that. It could be anybody.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): So... *You're* technically a armed collector of the past! If you really think about it!

JACK (as Lem): (laughs) Right. But it's *my* desk. I mean it's my table.

KEITH: (laughing)

JACK (as Lem): So you can't sell my own table back to me.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): That's a good point.

KEITH: I love that he's just like, 'well if I keep insisting out loud that it's a table, then it's a table'.

JACK (as Lem): But this one's--this one's actually, actually though Ephrim, you--um...

JACK: And I assume we're like walking back towards my room at this point.

SYLVIA: Yeah, yeah.

JACK (as Lem): Like, Ephrim, I could sell... *you*... my desk. Then we--we could turn it into smoulderwood, and then you could sell *me*... the table.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): This is absolute tomfoolery, but we'll try it.

AUSTIN: All right.

KEITH: I--I just, I wanna say real quick that Ephrim hates the pattern magic stuff, and Lem is defending it, and like--it does, it *works*, like it is real, but it is definitely an indefensible type of magic. Like this is un--this is bullshit. And this is what you do to do a spell. Like, you just go--like 'hey I need to get somewhere, I have to do an entire day's worth of errands, like absurd errands'.

AUSTIN: It's a very special place. It's way easier to get to like, the beach.

JACK: We could walk to the beach.

KEITH: That's--that's true. But like, it's st--like it's so... it's very funny.

AUSTIN: The pattern is a lot. Um... all right. Briefly, Fero, who is still sand, there is an--another place now, where you are, you are the sand on--you are sand spread out on the deck of a ship, and there is a fight going on, and you hear yourself say 'I said no boats', um... and there's cannon fire, and the sound of, of undead pirate drummers, the sound of a fiddle being played; all of it's through a certain strange, like, filter, like everything feels a little, um--it feels like it's being played on an old record player. Like that's the sound of what this would be in, in the actual scoring of this scene. And then we get the shot of, of, um... Captain Calhoun being captured, y'know we get you chasing down the--the panther, you get like all that stuff. And then it's, it's Calhoun is captured, by, ah... the fuck is his name? How have I lost his name? The, the pirate cap--the pirate--

JACK: Brandish? Captain Brandish?

AUSTIN: Brandish. Captian Brandish, I--(creepy undead pirate voice) instinctively grabbed my neck to do the Brandish voice, (regular voice) but I, but I did not remember his name! And, uh, Hella agrees to hand him over, for--for... in exchange for your lives. And the interrogator asks you:

AUSTIN (as Gantel): Huh. Knowing who you are, now, would you have given up Calhoun, too? To save your own skin?

KEITH: I'm conflicted be--

AUSTIN: And you--go ahead.

KEITH: I'm still sand.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: I'm conflicted because I... I don't want this--I don't want the interrogator to get what he wants. And it seems we are officially moving chronologically towards that?

AUSTIN: Mhm?

KEITH: And, uh... I think I've decided that... that p--that pouting, which was--I loved to do. And I think was a good idea, still. I think it's maybe not... I think that me just keeping pouting will just let what this guy wants get to him, get to his eyes?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: So I am g--I am now not sand, and I would like to try and stop these memories from hap--from being taken from me.

AUSTIN: How, what do you do?

KEITH: Uhhh.... so what is the... okay. These are sketches, right? Like there's... can I touch things?

AUSTIN: You're standing on the deck of the ship at the very least, right?

KEITH: Yeah, what hap--

AUSTIN: And you feel, like, the heat of the sun on your face, you feel the breeze of the ocean, the boat underneath you rocks, and you don't like boats, so you're on a boat, it feels like that.

KEITH: Yeah, I hate that, and I was--I felt that even when I was sand, so--already bad.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yes.

KEITH: It's probably worse when it's sand, 'cause some of you can roll away. But... what h--if I--so like, if I tried to reach out and touch something... is it--?

AUSTIN: It's there.

KEITH: I wanna talk to... the... sketches. With Thing-Talker.

AUSTIN: Okay. What's that look like?

KEITH: 'Cause I think that--um... I think I just go like--I'm just like:

KEITH (as Fero): Hey what's up Calhoun!

AUSTIN: Give me a Thing-Talker roll.

KEITH: I don't need to roll, that's just what I can--I can just do it.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay.

KEITH: Like I just have the ability to talk to thing--inanimate objects.

AUSTIN: Hm... I need to read Thing-Talker, because I need to know what the thing is--

KEITH: It's a--'you see the spirits in the sand, the sea and the stone. You may now apply your spirit tongue, shapeshifting and studied essence to inanimate natural objects (plants and rocks) or creatures made thereof, as well as animals. Thing-talker forms can be exact copies or can be

made--can be mobile vaguely humanoid-shaped entities'. And then so--that references Spirit Talker, which is 'the grunts, barks, chirps, and calls of the creatures of the wild are as language to you. You understand any animal native to your land or akin to one whose essence you have studied'.

AUSTIN: So, the only way this works is if you've studied things like this before. So you can spend time now studying these things? But that will take time. Like, these are not native to your land. These are--weird ink creatures, right?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: So, you will need to, whatever the--what is the--how *do* you study something? What is the thing that does that?

KEITH: I, um... So most of the things that I've gotten ha--like, 'cause you do need to study the things.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

KEITH: But most of the things that I've, I've--that I can transform into have just like, been an accident, sort of? Like 'oh, I did--I'm this now', like the... I'm that--that big lizard, the, um...

AUSTIN: Right right right. Those are all specific th--things from rolls, or me saying you had time to study something.

KEITH: Right, exactly. But, well--'cause I've only ever studied one thing. I can't remember what it was? Oh, I studied the panther, so that's two things.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you studied the panther. You've studied a few things. Um... and again, it's anything that you--

KEITH: (overlapping Austin) I think it--I think it was a lot of... it was observing and meditating, mostly.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So then, so then, y'know actually what I'll say is, a Discern Realities roll would let you do this more quickly? Or you can take time and study it safely, without a roll.

KEITH: I can confidently Discern Realities.

AUSTIN: Okay!

KEITH: I'm a god damn dr--I'm *the* god damn druid!

AUSTIN: You are the druid!

KEITH: I have a Wisdom of *seventeen*!

AUSTIN: You do.

KEITH: And I can do this!

AUSTIN: Give me that roll! And you're back to being a--person? You're back to being a halfling?

KEITH: Yeah, I sort of like, um...

AUSTIN: Yeah, 'cause you were like reaching out to grab people and stuff, right?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Oh, god. I'm really nervous.

AUSTIN: That's a six.

JACK: Oh no! Mark XP!

AUSTIN: Um... yeah, mark XP.

KEITH: I've leveled up! That's fun.

AUSTIN: That's good. Next time you rest, you can get--get a new move! Uh, the sketch-like quality of--to this place completely vanishes. You reach out and the second you touch this thing's arm, it goes from being, um, inky and black on parchment with like some color pencil color to it, to feeling like the, the flesh of one of Calhoun's, like, one of the boat partiers. Like it's, it's--that's an arm. That's a--that's a, kind of a flabby arm, like there used to be a muscle in there, and this person hasn't hit the gym in a little bit? That's an arm. And then the rest of the world around you takes on that same, like, density of detail. You are now on this boat. Ephrim and Lem, you're in--you're in Lem King's bedroom, and you got a desk. It's definitely just a plain old wooden desk.

JACK (as Lem): (sighs) Ephrim...

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Yeah...?

JACK (as Lem): Do you want to buy a desk?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Oh. Yes. I would--I would love to purchase a desk. Here is... a gold coin.

JACK (as Lem): Okay.

SYLVIA: And Ephrim takes the gold--gives him a gold coin.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): All right. Now what--what do we do.

JACK (as Lem): Ohhhh, well I have his notes.

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

JACK: Austin, how do I... do this?

AUSTIN: I think that it's--what it's given you is another option on, um, your main move--your main bard move. Arcane Art. 'When you weave a performance into a basic spell, choose an ally and an effect'; in this case it's, when you weave a performance into a basic spell, you can choose to, ah, enchant, or, or--y'know, use, uh, apparitive magic to, to create an illusion on an object. On a roll of ten--so it's roll Charisma, on ten plus, the effect happens; on a seven to nine, your spell still works, but you--but you draw unwanted attention, or your magic reverberates to other targets, affecting them as well, GM's choice.

JACK: Oh, god. Okay.

AUSTIN: Mhm!

JACK: Ephrim, do you think you can Aid me here? Or--

AUSTIN: How.

SYLVIA: Ah, yeah, like...

JACK: I don't--yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm not saying you can't, I'm just very curious as to what that would look like.

JACK: Um... it's just notes, right?

AUSTIN: Oh. You could.

JACK: How?

AUSTIN: Um.. Ephrim could help you know what the Heat and the Dark looks like. What that purple fire in smoulderwood looks like.

SYLVIA: Oh, true.

AUSTIN: Your lord works on the Heat and the Dark. If you reach deep in, you can find that.

SYLVIA: Um... yeah, I think I'll do that.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Y'know, it's like, it's like, it's still a replica, right? But you have a little bit of, of reference now. So give me... I guess--Lem can make the roll first, that's how we've been doing Aid this--this season.

JACK: Okay. I'm gonna roll Charisma, here we go. (gasps) A nine!

AUSTIN: That's a nine. So if you Aid successfully, that'll go up to a ten.

SYLVIA: All right! So it's just 2d6 plus bond, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: That's a nine.

AUSTIN: Hey, that's a success! That's a nine! All right, yeah! You--so what's that look like? Let's start with Ephrim--

JACK: So I--

AUSTIN: Let's start w--go ahead. Go ahead with Lem. You give me your start of it.

JACK: Um... so I think that Lem probably just like, pulls up a chair and sits facing the desk, and starts reading? And will occasionally get up, and move a thing, and get up and, y'know, pluck some strings on the violin or, or, or something. But it's a very like--there's a lot of thinking? And I think there's mostly a lot of thinking because Lem is not very good at this, or is new at this and doesn't really know how to do it. And then... um... it's a smoulderwood table! There's no pop, or noise...

AUSTIN: What's Ephrim's side of this look like? Ephrim, when you gather the, the--the Heat and the Dark into your hand. Or, or, is it your hand. Where do you show it? How do you show it?

SYLVIA: It is--I think it is similar to the summoning of the Burning Brand, um, that I do?

JACK: Oof.

SYLVIA: But what happens with this is, usually with that it's more controlled. Like, you've noticed that I on--I make like the conscious decision every time I do it to remove the dangerous tag from it, to show that Ephrim has control over it. With this, um... his hand is--it looks--it starts off like normal, his hand just gets covered with this normal red flame, and then... it becomes the black and violet flame that we saw, and... it almost looks like--like you can't see his hand under it. And it almost look--like... it almost looks like it is--there's a risk of it burning him and going up, like, and going up his arm, but it is staying in place, but if you get too close, you--like, there's a huge risk of it lashing out at you, almost.

AUSTIN: There's a moment where every piece of wood in this room almost like shifts and becomes smoulderwood? But you manage to both keep it together. And, and it--it is just the table.

JACK: (relieved) Oof. This does not feel good to do. Um... in the same way that, y'know, Sylvia kind of talked a little about heresy earlier? This feels heretical.

[Inside starts playing]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: But it's okay, because we got a--we got a table. And it's smoulderwood.

AUSTIN: Mhm!

SYLVIA: After Ephrim puts out the brand he's just sorta like flexing and unflexing his hand and looking at it, like over and over again, and is just sorta like--almost like... mesmerized by it?

AUSTIN: Yeah. His fist and his palm, y'know.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

JACK (as Lem): Hey. Hey Ephrim.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Hm?

JACK (as Lem): Um... thanks, thank you for that. You okay?

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): I'm... I'm great, yeah.

JACK (as Lem): Okay. Sell me a table.

[Inside stops playing]