

## **Live at the Table 43: March 2021 - augur**

Transcriber: addison#8458

JACK: Should we play a game about birds?

ALI: [laughing] We should!

DRE: Let's play a game about birds.

ALI: What a warm-up. Hi everybody! Welcome to Friends at the Table, um this is an actual play live show focused on [pause] smart characterization [laughs].

DRE: Uh-huh.

ALI: Fun interactions between friends and critical world-building. That goes second but I— it's fine we're just doing to do the thing.

JACK: We have heard Austin do it [Ali laughs] as many times as he's done it, and yet, and I'm not judging you here Ali 'cause I'm the same. As soon as [laughs] he can't do it, it's like I've never heard it in my life.

ALI: And it's weird 'cause he has such a good cadence for it like it's a slogan that makes sense, but when you're in front of a microphone...

JACK: This is why he's the GM!

DRE: Yeah, this is why Austin's in charge [laughs].

ALI: Yeah, yeah. He has ya know a certain skill with these things. Anyway, this is Live at the Table. I am Ali Acampora. You can find me over @ali\_west. You can find Friends at the Table over @friends\_table. I am joined by my friends, Jack de Quidt.

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

ALI: And Andrew Lee Swan.

DRE: Hey, you can find me on Twitter @Swandre3000 and I've been streaming every Monday night at like 8:00 to 8:30 Eastern on twitch.tv/ObiSwanKenobi.

ALI: Cool.

JACK: Should we clap or are we good?

ALI: No we're good [laughs].

DRE: Oh, okay. Fair.

ALI: Before we start in earnest has there been any chat like, "somebody should be louder" or "I can't see this" you should be able to see it.

DRE: Nobody has said any of us sound like horrific or quiet or loud or...

ALI: [laughs] Okay, no horrific, no quiet, no loud. That's what we're looking for. Today, we're going to be playing *augur* by Caro Asercion. I might be pronouncing that wrong. Um, which is an oracle game, like a deck based oracle game about um, looking to the birds for like advice [laughs] I guess. I was digging through itch to just find different games for stuff and I— this one one really caught my eye, and we've gotten a handful of questions like, on Tips at the Table, like "what's a good game to play solo" or "what's a good game to play with people who haven't played games before", and I think that that fits this, and I think that would be fun to kinda sit down and imagine a situation that these birds can help us with [laugh].

JACK: Yeah.

ALI: So, that's what we'll be doing today. Um, y'all have the book open? You're ready to go?

JACK: Uh-huh.

DRE: Uh-huh.

ALI: Okay, I'm just gonna start reading from the top here then. [dog barking] [laughs] There's a really loud dog outside, I don't know if you guys can hear that.

DRE: Yes, barely.

ALI: That is a stressed out dog, anyway [laughs]. *One for sorrow, two for mirth, three for a funeral, four for a birth. You're well familiar with the idiom, a nursery rhyme, a schoolyard chant. Count the birds, the children tell each other. They will be able to tell your future. it's more complicated than that, of course. It's not just the number of birds, but their demeanor, their flight, their nests, their song. Any number of elements must be considered. At its core, however, the nursery rhyme holds true – the birds do know many things. Consult the deck, traveler. Let the birds help you divine what is to come.*

*Augur is an interactive oracle for one or more readers. In Augur, participants observe a flock of strange and wondrous birds represented by the deck of oracle cards. To tell a story, foretell an outcome, or play to find out what happens.*

Jack, do you mind reading the rest of this column?

JACK: Yes, of course.

*You will need two things for an augur reading, access to the augur deck, this can either be a hard copy of the cards, printed and cut out or a digital version where the cards are listed. Use whichever is easiest. Some sort of random number generator. For a standard reading a single twelve sided die will be sufficient. An online random number generator will also serve the same purpose. If you are participating in this augury as one of multiple readers take time before you begin to establish norms with each other. Decide how you will resolve disputes or move forward in the event the participants have conflicting ideas. Play and discussion should be loose, freeform, and balanced evenly between all readers.*

ALI: Cool. I would say that after six years I think that we have just like uh, premeditated norms with each other for disagreements, but if there's anything—

JACK: Yeah, it's taking a little ghost.

ALI: [laughs] If there's anything we want to say up front in terms of like this sort of thing, this would be the place to do it. I think we're pretty good at the "yes and" sort of situation. I think we'll be able to work this out. Dre, do you mind reading the second column on this page?

DRE: Yes, this is where it says "to begin your reading"?

ALI: Uh-huh.

DRE: *To begin your reading, pick the location where this augury takes place. Where are you reading the birds? Are you in a forest, listening to the chatter of song birds as they construct their nest? On the edge of the coastline watching seabirds dive into the waters below? On a rooftop in a bustling city, looking at the corvids as they dot the surrounding telephone wires? Or on another planet, observing species of birds that are strange and alien to us or yourself? Choose a place that holds personal significance or interest to you. Don't worry about justifying whether it makes sense for birds to be there or what kind of birds you might expect to see. They will show up in their own time.*

ALI: Perfect, so anything stick out for bird watching areas? This is like very freeform in terms of like, just imagine a place, and then I don't know if you looked through the deck at all, we'll be able to fill in more detail of the world based on the cards. Like, one of the question for instance was like "what are the birds afraid of" or "the birds weren't here originally, where do they come from". So, we'll start to like flesh that out more as the game continues but in terms of just like bird watching location we can sort of plant some seeds for the direction of whatever we're going to build today.

JACK: Okay, I'll just throw it out here. Rugged castle on a cliff.

ALI: [laughs] Great place!

DRE: Okay! Yeah, I like that.

ALI: Yeah, birds hang out there for sure.

JACK: I'm thinking waves hammering the rocks below, big plumes of spray. You know maybe a lone horseman crosses a bridge with a flag— a big flag behind her or something. You know, maybe there's some sort of magic in this castle, I don't know. Birds, birds all around the castle. That's my pitch.

ALI: Okay, sure.

DRE: I like that you called the castle rugged. Not like the— 'cause I guess in my mind I imagine it being like there's a castle on some rugged cliffs, not a rugged castle on some cliffs. But I like that the castle itself is rugged.

JACK: Is it a situation where, like, 150 years ago cannon fire tore one of the towers off and they haven't fully replaced it, so it's just like rocks up there? Or, how is a castle rugged?

ALI: When I hear “rugged castle” I hear like, broken, or like decaying.

JACK: Uh-huh, yeah I think I’m on the same page there. Or else it’s just like austere, right? And an austere castle can be intact, but a rugged castle...

DRE: Yeah, there’s like chunks in the wall. Pieces of it are crumbling down around the base. Every once in a while a big piece of the parapet falls into the ocean and it makes a big splash.

JACK: All the birds take off and then land again really quickly. Do people live here?

ALI: Uhh, I mean, I feel like it’s maybe maintained in some way if people are gathering here to like, ya know, view the birds in this way. Um, live here—

JACK: This is a bird viewing place? It’s like specifically for bird watching?

ALI: [laughing] I guess it’s not specifically...

DRE: [cross talk] Ah, I like that.

ALI: But like...

DRE: What if a nature preserve in an abandoned castle?

ALI: Ohh, see.

JACK: Yeah, yeah where it’s like, oh there certain kinds— there’s very rare moss that grows on the walls here or whatever.

ALI: Okay, [typing] An abandoned castle, rare moss. Okay, I’m digging this. I think that’s enough to start with.

JACK: Yeah! Seems fine.

ALI:[laughing] Okay.

*To read the birds, shuffle your deck of cards, lay out three cards face down. From left to right turn over each card in sequence.*

Um, and then the rest of the rules I sort of have on our roll20 thing here. The first card is “a circumstance”, the second card is “an obstacle”, and the third card is “a recommended course of action”. And then on the right here, this is just sort of the— Oh, wait no. I wanted to shuffle it first. Recall all. Right here is just sort of the structure of the cards. It will probably make more sense once you see one, and then in the bottom right... I’m just gonna be the card controller for right now. In the bottom right are the different suits that the cards have, and the way that this is written in the game is that this isn’t hard and fast rules, but the tone of each card changes based off— into the suits. So we have, Wilds, which are individuality, the siege, chaos, that which supersedes the boundaries of society. Civils are proximity, connection, and balance, that which fits into the order system. And Bridges that are liminality, transcendence, equinox, that which exists between and beyond. So, here we are. I’m gonna flip the first one, and we're gonna start in earnest here. Cool, so our first card is “Three: The Thief”. *One nest contains a precious artifact or trinket, what is it?* That the question of the card, and the body which is different variations upon the theme is, *ill acquired fortunes, knowledge of the underbelly, and fools gold*. And then the feathers we’re gonna deal with at the end, but yeah this is our first card.

DRE: I like that we said that we’re in a Dark Souls castle and then the first card is like, “remember that crow? Hey, remember that crow?”

JACK: “Remember that fucked up crow?” So, this is a bridges card?

ALI: Yes.

JACK: Which is “liminality, trancience, equinox, that which exists between and beyond”. Okay, this represents the problem? No, the problem is represented by the second card we’re gonna draw.

ALI: By the Obstacle. Yeah, so this is sorta the status quo of the setting. [Laughs] The prompt here by the game is “What do you believe in?” so it’s sort of um... you know I don’t know that it needs to be an establishment of like “this is what society as a whole believes in” as much as it is like “this is what these bird readers might believe in”.

JACK: What here is ill acquired? [Ali laughs] Was something taken and brought here by the birds? Or is there something here that, you know, has always been here but shouldn’t necessarily be? Was stolen and brought here a long time ago?

DRE: I mean, is it a nest that has been stolen by another bird? Like that happens right? Where a bird will kind of like jump into another bird's nest or steal it even if there's like eggs that have already been laid or things like that?

ALI: Do birds do that? [Laughs]

DRE: I think so.

JACK: Sometimes it's backwards right? Where like a cuckoo will lay its egg in another bird's nest and then when the cuckoo hatches it will invariably be much much much bigger than the real occupants.

DRE: Yeah, that is what I'm thinking of.

JACK: And then this baby cuckoo pushes the other eggs or the other— uh what are baby birds called? Chicks— out of the nest usually to their death and then just hangs out there and is basically like “Yes, mother bird. Yes, father bird. I am your only son and always have been”. [Laughs]

ALI: [Laughs] That seems so rude.

JACK: It's exceptionally cruel! I mean, I don't know if birds can be cruel but it's like—

ALI: [cross talked] Birds can be cruel.

JACK: [Laughs] You get these incredible images of— I'm gonna Google “cuckoo chick in nest”.

DRE: Yes I have seen these.

JACK: You get these remarkable images of like an absolutely gigantic bird trying to persuade a much smaller bird to feed it. Let me just open this in a new tab and put it in the Discord. Here we go.

ALI: Oh, sure. Yep.

DRE: [Laughing] God, that bird is enormous!

ALI: That is a big bird. Really trying to scam that other bird.

JACK: That is not a warbler.

ALI: It can't even fit in the nest!

JACK: No! He's got too big.

ALI: Uh, yeah I'm glad we've spoken about this but I think we've wandered away from tricket a bit [laughs].

DRE: Yeah, no that's fair.

ALI: Yeah, unless it was like... I mean what would a bird consider a trinket? Some sort of precious twig? Some sort of rare nest building material? [laughs]

JACK: What do birds— They like shiny things, they like—

ALI: [cross talk] They do.

JACK: Oh, what if it's like a thread from like a king's robe or something?

ALI: Ohh.

DRE: Ooo.

JACK: Or like a Pope or somebody? [Ali and Jack laugh] Like a beautiful, shiny purple thread.

ALI: Sure, I dig it. I'm gonna write this down.

JACK: "Ill acquired" was this ill acquired? I mean— [accuitorially] *was it ill acquired*. I think the bird flew to the holy city and came away with a little bit of a papal robe. My dog is really barking now. [all laughing]

DRE: Oh, buddy.

ALI: I can't hear it.

JACK: My hope is that either someone's gonna and come and see her or they will have decided that she should just figure it out in her little head. Figure out what the plan is.



ALI: Yeah, sometimes you gotta leave her on her own.

JACK: [cross talk] You gotta say to the dog “just rotate it in your head and you’ll feel fine”.

ALI: Do you think dogs can do that? ‘Cause I can’t do that. You know when it’s like oh you can imagine—

JACK: [cross talk] What’s your cube score?

ALI: Zero, I can’t do that. I have no visual...

DRE: Wait, did you just say cube score? [Jack and Ali laugh]

ALI: Yeah, it’s the thing where it’s like “how many cubes can you imagine in your mind and then can you spin them?” and like I’m the person who like if you close your eyes and try to imagine an apple I can’t do that shit.

JACK: It’s not even like you can’t imagine it spinning? You can’t imagine a cube at all?

ALI: No, no, no. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I don’t have a visual like— yeah.

JACK: Huh. So you and Keith are similar in that regard right?

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: It’s from a tweet by [slime\\_golem](#) on December 9, 2019. They said how many cubes can you spin in your mind at once, question mark. that’s your cube score. The follow up tweet is [IQ is obsolete now that we have cube brackets™](#) and then finally, [click here to see celebrities with your cube score](#). [Ali and Dre laugh]

DRE: That’s pretty good.

JACK: I think my cube score is between one and three depending on how I’m feeling.

ALI: Wow, is it something you would actively be like “you know what, today I’m gonna sit down and try to imagine four cubes”? [Ali and Jack laugh]

JACK: It’s tough right? ‘Cause there’s that fourth cube, the first cube again.

ALI: Sure [laughs]. But then the next week you say “okay I got a handle on four cubes I’m gonna try for five” right? Like can you...

JACK: Like build your cube score?

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah, maybe.

DRE: This is the worst Rocky montage imaginable. [all laugh]

JACK: It’s just Rocky sitting in his chair focusing. Um, do we have anything else here on Thief or?

ALI: I feel like a piece of thread in a nest is such a strong visual that I think we’re good on this. I think that it sort of, you know, gestures toward the nobleness of whoever was in this area before.

JACK: And it speaks to the outward society to a certain extent right? Like the bird has pinched this from somewhere, presumably, where they have a Pope, or a king.

ALI: Right. [laughs]

DRE: [cross talk] Or a Pope king.

JACK: Me, confidently: Rome.

ALI: [laughs] We took an endless possibility of settings and we ruined it with nobility.

JACK: [cross talk] Fuck!

ALI: It happens. [laughs]

JACK: Have we ever done this?

ALI: I said “ruined” there ‘cause I was trying to go for the tweet that was like “look at it you gave it anxiety”. [laughs]

JACK: [laughing] [cross talk] “You gave it anxiety”. You ruined a perfectly good monkey.

DRE: It is a rugged castle, so it could be a dead Pope or a dead king.

ALI: Sure, yeah exactly. [laughs] I'm gonna flip—

JACK: [cross talk] We never made a show without nobility, right? Have we?

ALI: No, I don't think that we have. It's sort of like you put those things there so you can eventually be like—

JACK: Hit them with a hammer.

ALI: Right. [laughs]

DRE: When you say nobility do you mean explicitly like a monarchy style of nobility or?

ALI: Not necessarily.

DRE: Okay, 'cause I'm trying to think if we've ever had quote unquote nobility in Bluff.

ALI: Oh, sure. Well, I mean there's—

JACK: There's casino barons.

ALI: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah, like I think that is nobility but maybe it's not... "*nobility*".

ALI: Right, but there's such the like class division, like who has power. Who makes decisions sort of thing. Yeah.

DRE: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Ali laughs] Anyway, welcome to our podcast about where we talk about one word and what it means for thirty minutes. [Jack and Ali laugh harder].

ALI: I'm gonna flip the next card if Jack, you could read it for us.

JACK: Yeah, absolutely.

ALI: Here's our Obstacle card.

[00:22:08]

JACK: Obstacle. Oh, damn the Fire Brand. *How do the birds treat their young? Passionate swirl of thought, a moment at a crossroads, deliberate and decisive action.*

ALI: Hm, oh, and this is a wild card, [cross talk] *that which supersedes the bounds of society.*

JACK: [cross talk] What does wild represent? Huh.

ALI: It's hard to get away from the visual of like, birds leaving the nest after we had that [laughing] talk about it before, right? The sort of like coming of age for a bird.

JACK: Which is rough, right, for birds? I don't know, is it rough for birds?

ALI: I mean, it's like the thing with Pup [Jack's dog] right? You try to nurture an animal as much as you can and it is your precious thing but like at some point you have to let them on their own be able to work through whatever the stressor is [laughing] that she's going through and I think for birds that's like "okay you gotta go out there and start flying around like us". You know?

JACK: [cross talk] Oh, yeah!

DRE: And like if my backyard is any indication it's it's not great odds to even get that far. [Ali laughs]

JACK: Birds are so small and the world is so big. [ALI: Yeah.] Um, unless you're a cuckoo in which case you're huge and the world is your plaything. [Ali and Dre laugh] Um, is anything where it's like all the birds of a certain species are leaving the nest on this one particular day? Where it's like, it's not even like a migration it's like a sort of—

[Long pause]

ALI: It's almost a ritual for the birds right? Where it like—

JACK: I was gonna say a bird ritual, yeah!

DRE: Yeah. Would you say that birds with similar features form a group and go together? There's probably an easier way to say that.

JACK: Are you driving at something here?

DRE: Yeah, birds of a feather flock together.

JACK: Oh my gosh.

ALI: Oh, sure. [laughs]

DRE: Sorry.

ALI: You tried to talk around it. [Laughs]

JACK: It was a nobel— It was a really valiant effort. [Ali laughs] People have come, I think, to see this, like exodus, right?

ALI: Maybe, yeah. Maybe that's why they come to this broken castle that's also a nature reserve. It's like, oh today's the day that like the birds are going to send off their young. I mean, this is already a game about watching birds to determine outcomes and work through a situation in your mind, but there's also the sort of like "is the hedgehog gonna see its shadow" sort of thing in terms of like what are the birds gonna do this year.

JACK: [excited] Yeah! Yeah! Oh! What if the Pope or King comes to see it? To be like, you know, it's like will he see his shadow, it's like you know, we rolled this guy out in his uh his like carriage comes over the bridge and there's also a bunch of regular folks there, and they're all here too... In your example Ali, why is he seeing his shadow? [Ali laughs]

DRE: Yeah, also did you mean to say "hedgehog"? I just need to like double check.

ALI: Did I say "hedgehog"?

DRE: You did. Which I would love if we had a hedgehog instead of a groundhog.

ALI: [laughing] I feel like hedgehog is just something that comes easier to me. I'm often looking at hedgehogs and thinking about them.

DRE: Sure, yeah, yeah, yeah.

JACK: It's Punxsutawney Hog.

ALI: Nothing against— what's the other one— the groundhog. Shout outs to you, the groundhog. I just have a type.

DRE: There's not a video game groundhog so.

ALI: Yeah I just have a different hog preference. Jack, what was the question you asked me before that? [laughing]

JACK: [cross talk] Everybody does! Why are we— what is the augury that is kind of happening here for the people watching this?

ALI: Oh, in terms of like if there's like a group question in terms of like what... you know, the success of the birds means for the society?

JACK: Yeah. Right, 'cause with the hedgehog our question is "is it spring yet" right?

ALI: Right, or how long spring is gonna be? Yeah, it's "is it spring yet" right?

DRE: What if this is like a... so if the bird like steal like thread from like a robe to weave into their nest. What if this is like a ritual where after, you know the birds leave and the nests are abandoned, like the near by people go back in and like reclaim some of the thread and it's woven into some important garment or... I don't know. As some sort of like marking of the season change or something.

ALI: Right, right, right. It's like a empty nest is a good omen 'cause it means the birds within that family all were able to—

JACK: [cross talk] Yeah!

DRE: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: I was thinking about this where like on some level it's also like the um [pause] like the little king in the cake or the coin in the cake? Like the lucky, you know, the auspicious thing where it's like "whoever gets the portion with the little king in it is lucky" or that carries ritual meaning.

DRE: Yeah.

JACK: Where it's like everybody is watching to see what the bird that leaps out of the nest that had the King's— or the Pope's— thing woven into it, as a sign for the wellbeing for the kingdom or the King. I don't know.

ALI: Yeah, I like Dre's version of like a recycling of it, right? Where it's like, the birds have like figured out this completely arbitrary value of whatever they've found, but it's the people who go back and say like, "oh, because of the bird picked this should be honored in some way" either through some sort of craft or...

JACK: [cross talk] Oh, yeah.

DRE: I don't remember if it was you Ali, or Jack that said this but I also liked the idea of like— we take it from the nests that are empty because that signifies that like everyone survived and the birds grew big enough to leave. And that's sewn into something as like a good omen or like a protective charm.

ALI: Yeah, I was, oh, was it before— it was definitely a Sangfielle thing where I was looking through like different quilts from women in the south where it was really interesting and contemporary designs because it was like this specific group of women all from a certain area who would like sort of remix [starts laughing] each other's designs and stuff. Talking about this without context is harder but it was— if I find the link I will link it into the chat later, but yeah, I sort of like that idea of like, you know, it ends up being woven in some way. Either if it's like a banner or just like a... you know, a cross stitch or something.

JACK: [cross talk] Oh, wow!

JACK: That's representative of some sort of... like ritual or aspirational sort of power in some way? Or relief that it's gone well.

ALI: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I'm trying to think of a reason why once a year you would be like, "this is why I'm gonna make this craft". [Laughs] Except to be like, "a year has passed and we've done it and here's 2021's cross stitch that says...

JACK: That's as good a fucking reason as any.

ALI: [Laughing] You know what?

JACK: I'm up for that.

ALI: Okay, yeah. I'm gonna start writing this down. Okay so...

JACK: Are there any questions on this card that need addressing?

ALI: Oh?

JACK: No, I just didn't know— I feel like we've hit most of the stuff here, right?

[00:31:06]

ALI: I think so, yeah. I think it's um... [typing] bird parents send their birds out of the nest on a specific day of the year. Townspeople gather to watch the birds fly and collect artifacts from the empty nests to create... [laughs] a talisman from the year that passed [unsure sound] I think?

JACK: I think you're doing great.

ALI: Is that the gist?

JACK: Yeah.

ALI: Okay.

JACK: I think so. I suppose my only question is how are we framing this. This is an obstacle right?

ALI: Oh, sure.

JACK: Oh, is the obstacle that this is the moment— like we don't know the success of this yet right? Like we're sorta on a precipice if that makes sense.

DRE: Right.

JACK: Although, is there something further about this, that further presents an obstacle? I don't know what that would be.

DRE: I mean in a way this moment is the culmination of all obstacles and all of these obstacles have been overcome or have they been too much for this season of birds?

JACK: Right.



ALI: Right, yeah. Yeah the flight itself is sorta the obstacle.

JACK: It's like a "good luck, birds" type situation? [Ali laughs] Good luck, birds type beat.

ALI: Imagine if you went to this mountain and you were like, "I'm gonna get my string. I've been practicing my cross stitchings. I'm gonna make—"

JACK: [cross talk] So this is a string a bird has previously... taken?

ALI: Yeah, uh huh. And then you're like, "I'm gonna make this cross stitch necklace for this person". But then you go and all the birds die, [Laughs] or none of them leave the nest, right?

JACK: No, that is bad, yeah.

ALI: That would be a problem I think.

JACK: That would be really upsetting, I think!

DRE: Yeah.

ALI: [Laughs] As opposed to, you know, a successful flight and then you feel like "okay, this has gone well".

JACK: Or maybe you're not able to get it back. You know, if some of the birds stay in their nest, or if you've got a lot of distressed older birds, you know. Maybe I have to leave my thread in the nest or leave my uh felt or something.

ALI: Yeah. Okay.

JACK: Good luck, birds!

ALI: [laughs] Are we satisfied with this card?

JACK: I think so.

DRE: Yeah!

ALL: I'm gonna flip the last one. If Dre you could read it for us?

DRE: Sure. [Jack laughs after the card is flipped] First one, *The Exile: One bird stands out among the others. How is it different from the rest? A self imposed hermitage, absence of walls or confines, seclusion, and* [mispronounces asceticism] hm? Excatism?

JACK: Asceticism, I think.

DRE: Asceticism, thank you, and that's another wild card.

ALL: It's a giant... cuckoo— no.

[All laugh]

JACK: Oh, no.

[Pause]

JACK: So, a bird hasn't left, right?

DRE: Yes.

JACK: At least one is still here.

[00:35:00]

DRE: Yes, and I think I like that idea because I think that fits well into the last question under the descriptor under what the card is meant to represent is "what would the birds have you do?". So this last bird that is here in the castle, what would that bird have you do?

JACK: Yeah.

ALL: Is there anything else special about the bird beside it staying behind? Is it like different sorts of markings or...

JACK: Is it a different color? Is it very big or is it very small? Does it speak with a human voice?

ALI: Sure could.

DRE: Does it have a big streak purple in it that's the same color as the thread?

ALI: Oh, maybe.

JACK: Oh! Oh, interesting and the thread is nowhere to be seen or like has it like assimilated or incorporated the stolen thing into itself in some way? I don't know.

DRE: Now we're back to Dark Souls again. [Ali and Dre laughs]

JACK: Well, let's see. Some guidance might come from the fact that this is a Wild Card which again is: individuality, vestige, chaos, that which supersedes the boundaries of society. Hmm.

ALI: Yeah, what is it about this bird that makes it particularly, like... Yeah, I'm trying to garner how like this remaining bird would be the thing that's like, "oh, this is the idea that I carry with me", right?

JACK: Yeah.

[Pause]

ALI: I do like the idea of a purple bird. I wonder if it's like, there's something about it staying in it's nest too that's like "oh, you don't have access to that thing".

JACK: Oh, to the thing that was in it's nest?

ALI: Uh huh.

DRE: Oh, yeah.

JACK: And in that way it signals some kind of an implied change in the rhythm of this thing, right? Where it's like, on some level this bird is saying, "no, I'm fine. I'm choosing to stay here and you're not going to take this thing". It's almost like we've been describing this thing in a circle, right? Like the bird steals something from the— or takes something from the townsfolk, build it into their nests, leave, and the townsfolk come and take the thing back and render it into something new, right Ali? Into like a quilt or like a wreath or something?

ALI: Right, yeah

JACK: But this hasn't happened this time. You know, instead we got this bird who is in the nest and who is sort of removing from us our ability to take part in that next— or at least take part in it in the same way, right?

[00:38:21]

ALI: Right, yeah. I guess the question I have is that is this a young bird or is this an old bird? Like is this a parent bird that is like staying there because it's like childless and doesn't have the like oh I'm gonna travel with these birds that are leaving or is it like I'm a young bird but I'm gonna stay here because I like to grow or experience more in some way? [Laughs]

JACK: I think a young bird. Especially because there's been so much about leaving and about going elsewhere and about moving outside of our point of view or our camera and so to have this bird not only be like I'm staying here and also you are going to have to do something different or you're not going to be able to... Is it the purple thread right? Does it also still have a purple stripe in it, Ali?

ALI: Um, yeah. I think that was Dre's idea and I dig it so I feel like we should.

JACK: I remember you saying "I like a purple bird". [All three laughing] Which I agree with.

ALI: It's a good idea.

JACK: "*Seclusion*" [pause] The other nests are empty, right? Oh, this might be something. The other next are empty, so the townsfolk, you know, get out their ladders and they get out their their— I was going to grappling hook but that seems like a surefire way to A) Destroy the nest and B) just go sailing off into the ocean.

DRE: Right, yeah. If the castle is already falling apart.

ALI: [laughing] Right.

JACK: Yeah, they have like careful tools and everything and they all climb up and, you know, someone takes back a pocket watch that got stolen and someone takes back a um you know a little bracelet of little white shells and they're like "yes, okay I'm gonna go home", and then we just got this Pope standing there looking up at this nest

surrounded by, you know, his four red clad guards and he looks up and looking down at him is this enormous bid with a big purple stripe and it's essentially saying "Yeah, alright, come and get it. You do not get to involve yourself in this ritual in the same way"—you know, I'm basically I'm just saying since we have nobility maybe this is the hammer.

[Ali and Dre make sounds of agreement]

JACK: Whose job is to hit the nobility.

ALI: Right [Laughs] I mean, you know the bird doesn't have to bow to anybody, right?

DRE: No, I mean, if you can fly, yeah, you don't need to bow to anybody 'casue you can literally just raise yourself above everything else.

ALI: Right, sure. Oh! Is that maybe the thing that it's still a young bird in it flies from the nest but it comes back to it instead of just like [unintelligible] migrating.

JACK: [overlapping with Ali] Oh, yeah, it like flutters off and returns.

ALI: Yeah, and that's sort of like a big symbol of like "oh, what's that bird doing"?

JACK: I think they say that. They point at it and say— [Ali laughs]

DRE: "Hey! What's that bird doing?"

JACK: You know, maybe someone goes up and like, you know, like goes to shoo it away to be like "Come on, chop chop" but the bird is like [pause] "No. I'm the king". I don't think the bird says that but.

ALI: "What would the bird have you do"? Knighted as king or whatever your chosen [laughs] I guess you don't knight a king? You knight a knight. What do you do with a king?

JACK: You crown a king!

ALI: You crown a king.

DRE: Yeah.

JACK: I mean, I suppose you could knight a king if— I think a lot of— are kings also knights on some level? I don't know. They shouldn't be.

ALI: [laughs] Yeah, I don't know. I don't know the process.

DRE: [laughing] Haven't played *Crusader Kings* in long enough to make a distinction.

JACK: God, I fucked it up and I made a bird my Chancellor.

ALI: Isn't there... oh, I'm thinking of the Space Crusader Kings with the bird race.

JACK: Oh! Stellaris, yeah.

ALI: Yeah, okay.

JACK: There was also a cheat in CK 2, I think where you could appoint horses to your council.

ALI: Why not.

DRE: *Okay*, alright.

ALI: I mean they're out there doing the damn thing too on the battlefield they should have some say in it.

DRE: That's true.

JACK: Yeah! Exactly, should be able to vote. "What would the birds have you do"?

ALI: Yeah, I think that's the missing piece for me here in terms of like if this is something that like a group of people come for to sort of see an omen of the rest of the year or to sort of see the like growth of these birds as a growth of their own... self I guess [laughs]. What does like a bird staying behind sort of signal besides fuck off king? [Dre and Ali laugh]

JACK: Shit, I mean that's a pretty clear signal. [Ali laughs]

ALI: Everybody looking at this bird squawking at this king and thinking to themselves "you know what yeah fuck the king".

JACK: Yeah, it's like the gaze goes from the bird and then slowly goes to the king and then goes back to the bird again.

DRE: Yeah, I mean yeah they make the protection charm this year for the king.

ALI: Oh sure.

DRE: [sarcastic] Huh, sure is weird that like nature has suddenly decreed that we shouldn't make this protection charm anymore.

JACK: [sarcastic] Yeah weird huh? We tried but the bird kept coming back to the nest. "What would the birds have you do"? I mean, yeah the answer might be, right, that it like... I'm just— after we said earlier how we keep putting nobility in things I'm now just self conscious about it but I'm like what if this speaks some new sort of revolutionary potential into this community, right?

ALI: Right, yeah. It sure could!

JACK: It sure could.

ALI: I think that's sort of what we set up.

JACK: What are some bird alternatives? Alt-bird-natives.

DRE: Uh-huh.

ALI: Yeah, I've been trying to think of like a metaphor for like like staying in place right? It's almost the like—

JACK: Mm, yes.

ALI: Who was Lem's— oh god, people are gonna beat me up for not knowing this— who was Lem's boyfriend?

JACK: It was Emmanuel.

ALI: It was a good thing to stay home sometimes— yes, Emmanuel thank you [laughs]. You know, there's value in staying in one place despite having the ability to leave, right?

JACK: Yeah! And that is being communicated in some way here, right?

ALI: Right, and maybe it speaks to a conflict that we didn't set up earlier which is like, you know, maybe people in the society are being asked to go to war or to move in some way or to ask in some way that they don't want to and to have a bird be like "fuck that" is inspiring to be like I want to stay in the nest that I made that's my nest too.

JACK: "I have it now. I love this rugged castle."

ALI: [laughs and then squeeks] I'm sorry.

DRE: "It doesn't bother me anymore when the chunks go sploosh in the ocean. That's just— I'm used to that."

ALI: Right!

DRE: "I like that."

ALI: Okay, [typing] a young bird that is healthy enough to leave its nest flies away and then back into its nest. It [laughs] squawks at the king? And doesn't allow anyone to take the treasures from its home. I think that's our birds.

JACK: Yeah, that might be our birds!

ALI: That's our birds! Okay, so we have all three of the cards here we're gonna jump back to the rules and see... ba ba ba okay "Lastly, recite the rhyme that is created by your three card spread filling the blank space in each feather with a number. Replace the space with one and count upward for each following blank. Roll a die or a random number generator with as many options as there are lines in the feather section of the three card spread. Add the feather that corresponds to your roll. This is the final omen. It is the bird's parting gift interrupted as you see fit. When you are finished, clear the cards. If this reading had multiple participants, thank your fellow readers for their time and take a moment to highlight a contribution of theirs that surprised and/or delighted you."

ALI: Oh, that reminds me. [typing] "with a purple streak" there we go shout outs to Dre. Okay so.

DRE: Shouldn't surprise you I did something with purple there's a whole Tik Tok thing about me saying purple is my favorite color out there.



ALI: Oh is that the one? [laughs] I remember the Tik Tok. I did not remember the colors discussed in the Tik Tok.

JACK: [crosstalk] Was it like orange?

DRE: I think it was purple and then it was orange, yep.

ALI: Oh, sure that's funny. Okay so for the feathers quote unquote are these blank spaces with the words at the bottom of the card here and so for instance it would be "One for swiftness, two for grace" blah blah blah. I'm gonna roll this die really quick so we can see what our final omen is and then we can do the reading amongst ourselves, or out loud but after we discuss this. So that's nine so that's one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. So our final omen is to roam.

ALI: Is that the like the idea of this final bird that like stays in its nest but like slowly sort of circles the castle grounds and then flies and settles back into the nest, like "yeah I fucking know how to fly but the thing that I want to do is chill here".

JACK: Yeah, you know, it goes down and perches on the church steeple and people are like "oh good it's left" and then it comes over the fields and everybody's is like "is it going back to the thing again"? And maybe over the coming days, you know, it makes itself seen in this radius around the rugged castle and always returns, right?

ALI: Yeah, I kind of like this bird becoming a symbol of its own in terms of like being present, you know, around town quote unquote.

DRE: No, I love that. Yeah, the bird just starts like showing up around town.

JACK: Bird about town.

ALI: I had to mute myself for what seems like a helicopter situation?

JACK: Oh my god.

DRE: Okay?

ALI: Maybe [unintelligible]

JACK: Pretty smooth though, audio wise.

ALI: Oh, thank you. [laughs] Yeah, I guess we can do this card by card if we want to do one two three four and then Jack you can do the second card and Dre you can do the third one? Does that make sense?

JACK: Yeah, that works for me.

DRE: Sure.

ALI: Okay, cool. So, "One for swiftness, two for grace, three for silver, four for lace".

JACK: "Five four the match, six for its embers, seven for the hatchling that no one remembers".

DRE: "Eight to settle, nine to roam, ten for nature, eleven for home".

ALI: Yay! So, that was *augur* by—

JACK: Got ourselves some birds!

ALI: Yeah! By Caro Asercion. You can find that at [seaexcursion.itch.io/augur](https://seaexcursion.itch.io/augur) the link has been visible basically this entire time so go check it out I think there are a handful of community copies so like if you're interested in playing this go get it it is fun to play. I really like this because if we wanted to we could just base an entire session or season on this weird castle and the king who was just disrespected and this bird who's around town. It's fun as a world building thing so yeah, thanks for sitting down with me and doing this y'all.

JACK: Thank you for organizing it!

DRE: Yeah, thank you.

ALI: Oh, we should call out things that we liked! I enjoyed that the final bird was purple.

JACK: I love a purple bird.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: I enjoyed that we managed to get a little bird community without ever like directly describing like this is this bird's parents or like this is the bird that does X. We basically had like Big Group of Bird and then One Bird and I found that quite pleasing.

DRE: I like the idea that this community of birds is just like fearless enough that up until this point they had just every year go steal thread.

ALI: Yes.

JACK: Yes, descend upon the town.

DRE: “Yeah, this is mine now”.

ALI: Right.

DRE: “I need this”.

ALI: I like that we set up societal crafting. I'm always a fan of that.

JACK: Oh, what people making things?

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah, as a Keen in Sangfielle. We should get more Marn physically making things. Does Marn do arts and crafts as well? Or is it mostly like practical?

ALI: I think it's mostly practical, but like yeah I don't know I like haven't really thought through Marn's hobbies that way I suppose. They don't have a Bop It like Broun did. So I have to figure something out, so I have to figure something else out.

JACK: Broun had a Bop It?! This must have been in an episode I did not hear.

ALI: I think it came up twice—

DRE: I don't remember that.

ALI: In Partizan maybe it will show up in Part-2-Zan we'll see.

JACK: Was it like a techno Bop It or was it a regular Bop It?

ALI: No, it was like a different— it was like an episode when we did the like beach episode and Thisbe and Broun went to that like flea market or whatever Broun was like specifically buying like different game cards.

DRE: Yes! Okay yes I do remember this now.

ALI: For their Bop It that had like different combinations and like “pull this, spin”-- you know a Bop It [laughs].

DRE: Yeah, you bop it, twist it, pull it and this it goes buh buh buh buh buh.

JACK: You flick it. You...

ALI: You do flick it.

JACK: Yeah... Bop It is great. That sounds like the opposite of the only time you've been to the market in Sangfielle, Ali, and made every single person angry.

ALI: And then was chill. I just hung out long enough and fixed a bunch of things. I'm excited for the next down time.

JACK: Yeah, me too.

ALI: I'm also thinking now that Pickman doesn't seem like a person who like has hobbies [laughing] in that way.

JACK: Hobbies...

ALI: Yeah, when you see a really stern knight you don't think to yourself “oh, i bet they're really into macrame or whatever.

JACK: No, although—

ALI: Whereas Chine might really be into macrame.

JACK: Oh, wow. Macrame is like pattern—

DRE: That has a good mouth feel. [Ali laughs]

JACK: No! Do not eat the macrame!

DRE: [laughing] Look if i make it I'll do what I want with it.

JACK: Chine: If I make it, I'll eat it.

ALI: Wonderful. Okay, I think this has been *augur*. The game guide says this game should take eight to ten minutes so I'm glad that we get a full hour out of it.

JACK: Oh, that's so great!

ALI: I thought that'd be about how long we did this for, but yeah this is really fun. Thanks! This has been Live at the Table, an actual play livestream focused on critical world building, smart characterization, and fun interactions between good friends.

DRE: Three for three, nailed it.

ALI: I did it. You can find more of the show over at @friend\_table. I'm trying to think if there's any more announcements. Bluff Sundays are going to continue for a little bit until this arc is done. I just sent out the final Partizan postcard finally and I'm going to be sending out an email about the first Sangfielle postcards tomorrow. The Bluff City pamphlet which was—

JACK: So good.

ALI: [The pamphlet] Took the place of like six months of things because it's six pages, is in the mail and fucking rules so if you're on the postcard tier—

DRE: Do we have anything left in the Fan Gamer store or are they doing any reprint orders or anything?

ALI: I think that they actually recently did reprints of that stuff. I assume that most of the people looking out for it got an email about that because that's how you express the desire for those things, but yeah definitely check Fan Gamer to see if you want any of that stuff it fucking rules and if it's in stock go get it. Thank you everybody.

DRE: Wearing my "Boat Party" shirt right now, actually. I didn't realize it.

ALI: Are you? Yeah! I think that I said once that I was gonna give that stuff to my parents for Christmas. I was able to give that "Boat Party" to my dad for Father's Day this year so shout out to Fan Gamer.

JACK: Oh, it worked out great! Thank you Fan Gamer. Fan Gamer: We'll hit a deadline.

ALI: Yeah, I— yeah. In covid and the fucked up situation that they had with that I—

JACK: Logistics is tricky.

ALI: I'm very sympathetic to them.

DRE: Yeah.

ALI: I'm very sympathetic to the fact that Fan Gamer was like "we want all these shirts colors to be the same and special so we're gonna have someone dye it" and then it just was a fucking mess from there so, shout out to everybody's patients it was very frustrating I bet. Any other plugs from y'all? [long pause] I guess that's a no?

JACK: I don't think so.

ALI: There's another firework going off.

DRE: Yeah, I can't think of anything.

ALI: This has been Live at the Table like I said. Have a goodnight everybody!

JACK: Bye!

DRE: Bye!

ALI: Bye! End stream.

