

## Winter in Hieron 10: Fire and Blood

[[0 MIN MARKER]]

DRE: Last time, on Friends at the Table:

AUSTIN: You have three days until they arrive. Three days until they overrun Red Jack, the Weaver King, and the humble moths of Hieron. Three days before their smoke overruns your air, and their swords reach your throats. [INTRO MUSIC BEGINS]

ART (as Hadrian): I think— I think we have a moral obligation to help these people.

ALI (as Hella): [sighs]

JANINE: That'll win her over.

ART (as Hadrian): I'm not saying we have to die in a war here, but I think we have to help.

ALI (as Hella): I will help. Up to a point. I'm not raising my sword against any Ordennan soldiers.

JANINE (as Adaire): I can work with that.

AUSTIN (as Chancellor Gilbert Lutz): Listen, Adaire, you're a smart kid. But you want me to... strike Ordenna? As they're marching an army at me. I'm— I'm... frankly, nervous.

JANINE (as Adaire): Well... Look, you know Ordenna's coming either way. You know that, whether they're here now or they'll be here in four days, or whatever, they're coming. And you have an opportunity to come for them first. When their back is turned— You either strike at them when their back is turned, or you strike at them when they're facing you, or you just lay down.

ART (as Hadrian): The scripture demands the dam come down. You don't have the authority to have built it in the first place. Samoths, once and future king of all of these lands, demands that these— that all projects be approved by him personally. I need you to take it down. Right now.

AUSTIN (as Tieran Meloy): [sighs] Alright, well. I'll talk to— Jason, change it 'til tonight and we'll get an overnight crew on the thing, and it should be— We'll get a little of the water goin, uh, first thing and it'll be a couple of days before it's really up and running. But safest we can do. We can't do it faster than that. You have to understand.

[INTRO MUSIC FADES OUT]

AUSTIN: So. It is day three. The— So, it's day two still. Like, a lot of the action of day two actually happened very early. The remainder of the action of day two on your side is that Adaire eventually shows back up. But, at this point, the Anchor have arrived in Twinbrook, and you spend the rest of the day, everybody kind of doing the things that you're doing. Adaire, you come back. By the time you come back, it is like the middle of the— of the regular night, not the dark, dark night? The... middle night. And, if there's anything anyone wants to, like, do or say, you can totally do or say those things. But there's no more actions this turn.

JANINE: I wanna go find Hella and give her the packet of crackers that came with my soup that I didn't eat.

AUSTIN: Awww! Aw huh. That's good.

JANINE: I'll just be like— And y'know, also say, like,

JANINE (as Adaire): I would've got you something better, but there's like a big fire and stuff? So if it's any consolation, if we *had* gotten there on time, it would've been a mess.

[ALI laughs]

ALI (as Hella): Thanks. Wha— What did you go there for, again?

JANINE (as Adaire): I had to talk to the chancellor? Of Rosemerrow? His name's Gil; he's nice. He's a good guy.

AUSTIN: Ahh.

JANINE (as Adaire): Like, I met him before, and we get along. We had soup?

ALI (as Hella): [stumbles] I'm so happy for you, Adaire. Um.

[JANINE chuckles]

ALI (as Hella): Okay. You can see— You know what, I'm not going to have this argument with you a *third time*. Thank you for the— This is very nice of you. I'm sorry. We should— We should get going, though. Right? We've helped them as much as we can.

JANINE (as Adaire): Listen, um.

AUSTIN: Oho.

JANINE (as Adaire): Look, if it gets to a point where things get real bad, I will take that first path out of town with you. But not yet.

ALI (as Hella): You're gonna stay here and fight the Ordennan army.

JANINE (as Adaire): Until it becomes clear that, y'know... If things are gonna not fall in our favor, then, y'know, sure.

[[5 MIN MARKER]]

ALI (as Hella): What does "falling in your favor" mean?

JANINE (as Adaire): Uh, like not dying? Usually. Or like, also when something happens that like, "oh, I can't come back to this place anymore". That's also not falling in my favor. [pauses] Like, the usual stuff.

ALI (as Hella): What more do you owe the people here, Adaire?

JANINE (as Adaire): It's not about what I owe them.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE (as Adaire): That's not the point at all.

ALI (as Hella): Since when isn't it?

JANINE (as Adaire): The point— The point isn't what I owe *them*, it's what they'll owe me.

ALI (as Hella): Right. Of course.

JANINE (as Adaire): And us.

[ALI wheezes]

JANINE (as Adaire): All of us. You don't get— Y— Sometimes it helps to have a lot of diverse people in a lot of diverse places on your side. People like Red Jack? Those are the people that you want to owe you.

ALI (as Hella): [exhales] Sure. Oh, speaking of Red Jack, I— [pauses] We stayed here to help these people. [pauses] He and *their queen* left.

JANINE (as Adaire): Well, the queen left with me. Like, I couldn't get to Rosemerrow without her. That's— That's not on her.

ALI (as Hella): Right. But you went to go talk to the chancellor. Right now.

JANINE (as Adaire): Yeah. Yes.

ALI (as Hella): In these three days.

JANINE (as Adaire): Yes!

ALI (as Hella): Sure. Okay. Yep. [exhales]

AUSTIN: Anything else?

ART: Yeah, can I— Can Hadrian lay eyes on the army?

AUSTIN: Which one?

ART: The— The Ordennan army.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So like, do you want to stay near Twinbrook before leaving, basically?

ART: I just want to kind of— Like, I'm not— I'm not sneaking around, I'm not doing anything like that. I just wanna— I wanna— I wanna see their force.

AUSTIN: You can see their force. What do you wanna know about 'em? [pauses] Are you studying them—

ART: How many pala-din are there?

AUSTIN: Are you studying them? Is this a— Is this a check?

ART: Oh yeah, I guess I am. What's—

AUSTIN: Is it Discern Realities? You're studying a situation? Yeah.

ART: So it's WIS?

AUSTIN: That is WIS. [pause] That's a success. That's a 7.

ART: Yeah, a success. Uh.

AUSTIN: Uh, you get one. [reads] “Take +1 forward when acting on the answers. What happened here recently? What is about to happen? What should I be on the lookout for? What here is useful or valuable to me? Who is really in control here?” and “What here is not what it appears to be?”

ART: Ohh, there’s two good ones there. [pauses] What is useful— Ugh. I really don’t want “valuable” and it’ll be like, “their armor is fuckin’ *expensive~*”.

[AUSTIN chuckles]

ART: What here is useful or valuable to me?

AUSTIN, deliberately: You watch their behavior and come to recognize that the living human Ordennans are able to command the Anchor to do things.

ART: Hm.

AUSTIN: Though there are like— I guess, now, I’d say there’s probably a total of eight Ordennans. Though there are eight of them and up— y’know, hundreds of the— the Anchor, the— It’s not like they’re subdivided into groups or anything. It’s not like, “oh, these hundred can only be commanded by this one person”. Any one of them seems like they’re able to command the Anchor to do things. Though there is, sometimes, a strange reporting structure. Like, there’s definitely a couple of times when you see one of the lower-ranking members of the Justiciar try to order an Anchor, and they’re told like— y’know, the, the person— the Anchor doesn’t move in response or respond. It just kind of sits still, and then you overhear the Justiciar saying like,

AUSTIN (as some Justiciar): Ugh! What did— What did Jinal tell you to do? Nevermind, I’ll go find her.

AUSTIN: So there’s definitely a weird reporting structure that can lock them into their commands, but, in general, there is a degree of flexibility in terms of who can give an order. And they do need to be ordered. No one is— They’re not like, doing anything until they are ordered to do something. This is also the first time you’ve been able to get a good look at them, up close. And there is some, like— The thing that you notice this close to them, like— One, I’m guessing it’s— You tell me; how does it feel to be near things that are basically pala-din again?

ART: Strange. Very strange. [pauses] ‘Cause Hadrian sort of, like, looked that in the eye—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: And— And was lucky, y’know. It blinked?

AUSTIN: Two. This is like a weird world detail, more than a thing that’s useful. I don’t think it’s useful to you at all. But. The basics are the same between all the Anchor, but there is definitely some differentiation, and almost craftsmanship, like, difference in craftsmanship between some

of the models. And it doesn't just look like, "Oh, this is the higher rank model. This is the lower rank model." It's more that like, "Oh, different people in Ordenna built these." They have like different signature touches. Like, there are some of them that have humanoid faces, like, etched into the metal of their face. And there are others where it just looks like empty helmets. And there are some that have, like, big, bulky—like, boxy? Almost less than human, or like, nonhuman features. That are like, kind of like leaning in to a Tinman quality, almost? And there are others that are like, *svelte* in a way that— that only the most athletic people are. So there's definitely a differentiation among them, but then, inside of the differentiation though, they are[[ they are grouped together. So it's like, "Oh, this is a group of ten that all have faces. This is a group of ten that all— that *don't* have faces. This is a group of ten that, like, all have, y'know—that looks like that they are metal men wearing metal armor." But they all seem to function about the same. [pauses] So those are the things you know about, from watching.

[[11 MIN MARKER]]

ART: Alright—

AUSTIN: And it's numbers of hundreds—

ART: I have another thing, but I'm definitely holding it.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna saay— I have this actually written down; it's a specific answer. There are 300 here.

ART: Okay.

DRE: That's a lot.

AUSTIN: Mhm!

ART: That's just pala-din, or that's everyone?

AUSTIN: That's just the Anchor. And there's about, y'know, eight other human Ordennans with them. [pauses] That's in this group, anyway.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: I'll also give you this, if you're just hanging around, trying not to draw too much attention. Which is, like, they are in communication with other people in this town. They have mostly set up camp to the west of the dam, with a number of them having moved in, to Twinbrook. I'd probably say about, y'know, 50 of the Anchor have moved in to Twinbrook. And all of the— Not all. I'd say half of the people have. And they're talking with the regent, they're talking with the halfling merchants, they're talking with people in the taverns, like. There is

wheeling and dealing happening. They're looking at the bridge to the east, and some of them are up on the wall looking south, towards the moth encamp— encampment. Anything else today?

ART: Think I'm out.

AUSTIN: It's day three. Everyone wakes up, and there are loud noises to the north. But it is not the noises you expected. It is the falling of trees. You can hear them, like, creaking in the wind and then falling and then hitting the land. And then another one. And then another one. And the moths, who can fly up into the sky, report that they can see the trees being cut to the north. What do you do during day three?

DRE: How much water has started to come in?

AUSTIN: [pauses] Those options are now available to you, as things you can do. Like you could spend the day feeding the weavers or the Weaver King.

DRE: I feel like that— I'm torn, because I feel like that's like, the most ... I don't want to say efficient, but I feel like that is, like, the best like battle plan move? But I have another idea for what I want Thrandir to do that I think is better in-character. More Ranger-y.

AUSTIN: What do you want him to do?

DRE: So I think, when Thrandir hears from like the scouts that like, they've started basically just like destroying the forest— Like I— Like how Adaire went to Rosemerrow to like, recruit like human soldiers, Thrandir goes into the forest to recruit, like, bears and wolves.

AUSTIN: Yeah that's dope.

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: Sure. Okay.

JANINE: That's really good.

AUSTIN: Yep. Mhm. How do you do that? What's the— Is there a move for that?

DRE: I mean it's— I'm using my Talk to Animals thing, but I think it's—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: I mean, to me, I think there's a difference between like— 'Cause when he called for Ace and was riding Ace, I said that was more of like a, like a friendly like, y'know— He recognized that Ace was like Kodiak, in that they were more partners than, like—

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah yeah. Totally.

DRE: But I think in this, like, this is Throndir like appealing to like, the like— the animal hierarchy. And being like, "Look. Like, you may have an animal who's like your head of your pack and your alpha, but I'm here and I'm that now. And if you want to keep your home, you will listen to me."

AUSTIN: Mhm. Alright, I think you do some talking to some of the animals and they— They let you know that there is a— that there is a special squirrel—

[DRE laughs quietly]

AUSTIN: Who is kind of like, the one who holds things together in this region. [pauses] Like that's the one you got— If you can convince that squirrel, you can get things done.

[[15 MIN MARKER]]

DRE: This is some golden snitch shit right here. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: Alright! Where— I guess I ask where I can find this squirrel.

AUSTIN: In that glade that you met Sol in— where Sol betrayed you all.

DRE: Okay. Well, I wonder if the squirrel saw us get fucked over.

AUSTIN: Might help. [pauses] This is gonna be a Parley. But give me, give me— What's your pitch to the squirrel? I think the squirrel— Y'know like, in that grove— Is Kodiak with you?

DRE: Yeah. Absolutely.

AUSTIN: Um. A squirrel. Brown—like a deep brown—squirrel, very bushy tail, like, moves through the snow to you. And then just kind of like, goes up on its back legs. And like, waits.

[pause]

DRE: Okay. I think— I think Throndir opens with,  
DRE (as Throndir): What shall I call you?



AUSTIN (as the squirrel): Carrot. [chitters]

DRE (as Throndir): Okay. Carrot, I assume you've— you know what's going on to the north.

AUSTIN (as Carrot): I've been told. [clucks once, chitters]

DRE (as Throndir): The people—

DRE: What's— What's the name of the town? I keep forgetting the name of the village.

AUSTIN: Twinbrook.

DRE: Not Twinbrook, the uh—

AUSTIN: Oh. Old Man's Chin. 'Cause if you look at the map of— of Hieron, it's— That whole side is a weird man face.

DRE: Yeah. Gotcha.

DRE (as Throndir): Carrot, the people of Olds Man's Chin are getting ready and preparing to stand against this threat tomorrow. But it's not going to be enough.

AUSTIN (as Carrot): You're people. Why should I trust you?

AUSTIN: It like, begins circling you a little bit. But like, not in a— Not— It doesn't— So what it does is it does, like, a half cir— a quarter circle left, and then it goes back half to the right. It's like pacing in a circle around you. Because you're a Ranger, you sense that there are other eyes watching.

DRE: Yeah.

DRE (as Throndir): Ever since I've been here, I keep hearing that I'm a part of *these* people, *those* people... And I'm not. I'm not like anyone else that you have ever met. No one else you have ever met can easily speak to wolves and bears and squirrels and moth people. I'm not a person. I don't belong to a town or to a city; I belong to the trees and to the meadows and to the river, just like you.

AUSTIN: Give me a Parley.

DRE: Okay. Ah god, this is the thing that I'm worst at.

AUSTIN: Mhm!

DRE: [laughs] I was really hoping I could, like, gin this up into like a Defy Danger CON where I got into like a weird survival fest with a bear, or something.

AUSTIN: No— [laughs deeply] Gotta convince the squirrels before you can convince the bears.

DRE: Then I guess I'll use my last Prep Point. Let's get that up to 7.

AUSTIN: Okay. You're gonna need some sort of, of proof. Something you can offer right now.

DRE: Is this like a material thing I have to give?

AUSTIN: [reads] "Concrete assurance of your promise." So in this case, I think what you need is a concrete— I— Here's, here's what it says. It says,

AUSTIN (as Carrot): No. You're people. Here's the thing. If me— If my bear friends— If we go into Twinbrook, we're animals. If you go in, you're people. You're people. Show me why you're not.

DRE: What's a way that I can show my— my goblinness to them?

AUSTIN: Did we ever figure out if there was a specific like, goblinoid, like, element to you?

DRE: No. I mean, the closest thing we got to was that— like, the longer life part. Oh, maybe— Maybe I bleed a different color blood.

AUSTIN, a little grossed out: Eughha. Okay.

DRE: Like a really unsettling, like, purple.

AUSTIN: We learn new things every day!

DRE: Yeah.

[SOMEONE laughs]

AUSTIN: Give me a— Give me a 1d4 damage to yourself.

DRE: Yeah. Sure. [pauses] And I think the way that—

AUSTIN: There you go. That's a 1. Take 1 damage.

DRE: That he— That Thrandir does this, instead of like, y'know, pricking himself with an arrow or something... He holds out his hand and tells Kodiak to bite it as hard as he can.

AUSTIN: Eughha. Kodiak does not want to do this. :(

[SOMEONE chuckles]

AUSTIN: You take some— So you take some convincing.

AUSTIN (as Kodiak): Rrrroh. [a sad dog noise]

ALI: Just wrap like a piece of ham around your— [laughs] your hand.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN (as Kodiak): Awerf? [an interested dog noise]

DRE: I rub peanut butter all over my wrist! [chuckles]

AUSTIN (as Kodiak): Rur! [an excited dog noise]

JANINE: That's probably why it's only a 1, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Like, Kodiak can bite harder than a 1 if Kodiak wants to.

[[20 MIN MARKER]]

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Alright. Yep. Okay. So, weird purple blood. [pauses] Nnnmh.

AUSTIN (as Carrot): You're... people. But you're weird people.

DRE: [laughs] I'll take it!

AUSTIN (as Carrot): We'll be there.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna add another group to this— to this list of things that are in Twinbr— er, in Old Man's Chin. You got bears 'n shit. Nice. Nice work.

DRE: Hella, you might get to ride a bear.

[ALI snorts]

DRE: Now are you into this fight?

ALI: No.

[DRE, JANINE, and AUSTIN chuckle in sequence]

AUSTIN: Okay. Who else has stuff?

[SOMEONE sighs]

AUSTIN: Also, while all that was happening, the forest is continuing to be cut down. In between the two rivers.

ALI: Would I be able to get back to Twinbrook?

AUSTIN: You— You could start to. Like— One of the moths tells you— I'm not gonna like make you go up there and then learn this— There are Anchors all through the woods.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: That said, maybe you could get through?

ALI: They're not— Ge— Nnnnh. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Like because of your badge and the fact that you're Ordennan. Or, maybe they've been told that you've betrayed them. Like, you don't know.

ALI: [sighs, laughs] I'm trying very hard not to betray them. But, I— [pauses] Two things here. I've done what I have and I can go just wait it out. And then I would also, like— If I could talk to a Justicar, I would like to.

AUSTIN: Mhm. You can, if you go back. Totally. If you get— Yeah.

ALI: Alright.

AUSTIN: So do you walk back up?

ALI: [sighs] Yeah, I think so. I—

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: I think I— I either want to have a conversation with Adaire or Hadrian, first.

AUSTIN: Okay. I will say that we are— This is a very long recording, and we're not... moving—

ALI: Right. Okay.

AUSTIN: —very fast, which is fine, but. Like, there's shit to go still.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: If you want to have that conversation, that's a— I want— You can have this conversation, but for us to just— We might even slip into montage mode after this.

ALI: Right right right. Yeah, 'cause if— Mm. I mean it's kind of the same conversation but, basically just to tell them like,

ALI (as Hella): Try to— That thing in the middle can heal them. Like, maybe they'll be okay. Like. [sighs]

AUSTIN: Like you mean, if the Anchor comes?

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: That's a stupid thing to believe.

ALI: Really?

AUSTIN: You know how they work. Absol— They're here to kill people. Yeah. What.

ALI: But they're here to kill people *because* they're undead.

AUSTIN: I guess she has a -1 in intelligence.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yes. [pause] No no no, they're here to kill people— The case that Tavira made before she left was that this is cursed land. That these people are cursed. That they carry the curse. Because that's how one of her people got cursed. There— There is debate in Ordenna about how the curse spreads. Some people think it's like— it's like, if someone who has the curse kills you, you get it. Some people think if you're *near* people who have the curse, you get it. Some people think that it's like a natural trait coming off of monsters; that monsters spread the curse. And that's probably what she thinks about this place.

ALI: Okay. 'Cause I think Hella's thinking is that like, if Ordenna knows that there's something here that can heal it—

AUSTIN: I mean, also that's not good. Like—

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: A thing that can bring something back from the dead is bad. Also. That's not good. That's weird, evil magic. Like, dead things should stay dead.

ALI: [laughs] This is true. But when there's like, a weird in-between, like, you take what you can get.

AUSTIN: No, that's not—

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Ordenna does not take what it can get. It did that once, and then— It only has three Bloods now. It used to have four.

ALI: Right. Cool. [pauses] Oh, I'm having such a bad week. [laughs]

ART: I think— I think you should talk to Adaire. I think, like— I think a Hella-Hadrian conversation right now is gonna be... heavier than it demands.

[AUSTIN, ALI, and JANINE laugh]

ART: Like, are we making— What are we doing here, are we making Seven Samurai or are we making Inuyasha?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Right. Good talk.

[DRE laughs]

ALI: God...

DRE: Well I'm making Inuyasha over here, I don't know what you all are doin.

[ART laughs]

ALI: I'm—

ART: Easy, wolf boy!

[DRE and AUSTIN laugh loudly]

AUSTIN: Finally, all that Inuyasha has paid off for you, Art.

[DRE keeps laughing]

ART: I really used to hate it when they put it on Adult Swim after Futurama went off, and now it's all—

DRE: It's all comin back!

[pause as laughter eases off]

ALI: Yeah, I liked—

AUSTIN: I mean, but, wait— Is the bulk of that conversation just “hey, it'll be okay”? Like, what's the— What is that conversation? Before we devote ten minutes to it.

ALI: Yeah, I mean it's that conversation that we've already, like, shot down. Like—

AUSTIN: I mean, I just don't think it's that— When I said it was stupid, I wasn't saying *you* were stupid, to be clear. I think it's— Hella knows better than to— knows Ordenna enough to know that there is no, like, telling them that there's the weird, ancient *tree monster*, and that that's gonna make it okay.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Like, they have a mandate.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: And their mandate is to come kill things like this.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like.

[[25 MIN MARKER]]

ALI: Yeah, no, I still— Like, I— She's not gonna, like, commit treason. So, yeah. She's just gonna like, sneak—

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: —towards Rosemerrow, I guess. And like, I'll see you guys there.

AUSTIN: Okay! So you're not going to Twinbrook to talk to these people? To talk to the— To— You're not gonna, like, have— You're not gonna do— Okay. So, you were gonna go to Twinbrook to talk about—

ALI: Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: I gotcha. Cool.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you get to the Rose River... and it's, like, a huge canyon?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: And you can walk up it, but it's gonna take you some time to try to find a safe place to cross.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, but. Hella's gone. You don't say goodbye to people?

ALI: [sighs] I probab— Eh. [pauses] I sh—

AUSTIN: 'Cause that's a more interesting conversation.

ALI: [laughs] I don't think that she'd leave without saying it. She's— She's stated what she was gonna do. Like, she has— She stayed there—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Fair.

ALI: —and helped as much as she could. She said that she wasn't gonna fight with you guys, and she's not. Like, that's the— Bye, guys. [laughs]

ALI (as Hella): I'll see you in Rosemerrow. I hope this works out for you.

ART: Wait. That's just what you say to all of us?

[ALI laughs]

ART: You just sit us down and you say *that*?

[ALI laughs some more]

ART: That's your— I'm just tryin to just— I'm just— Just need a— I just need a mind picture right now. Just need a...

[AUSTIN sigh laughs]



ALI: Maybe in like, more words? I— Yeah, I don't know. Like.

ALI (as Hella): We've done our part. We've helped these people as much as we can. As much as we... not even are required to. But. [sighs]

AUSTIN: What's your quest, Art? Hadrian?

ART: Yeah, no, I'm— I'm workin on it.

AUSTIN: No, but what is it? Can you restate it for the— for the listener.

ART: It is—

AUSTIN: And also your Bond with Hella. For the record.

[ALI laughs]

ART: Well, if I'm gonna get the exact wording, it's... Defend Hella from the iniquities that beset them\*.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: And my Bond with Hella is: Hella is in a spiritual crossroads, and only I can see her through it.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: So I guess we're doin' this.

[ALI and AUSTIN snicker]

ART (as Hadrian): What allegiance do you still owe Ordenna?

ALI (as Hella): [scoffs]

ART (as Hadrian): Why is it more important than doing the right thing here?

ALI (as Hella): You are making a very big assumption about what's right.

ART (as Hadrian): Letting an army murder a town full of people that can barely defend themselves is not right.

ALI (as Hella): Letting an army murder a town full of people that are cursed is... is justifiable.

ART (as Hadrian): [long pause] ...No it isn't.

[ALI cackles, AUSTIN and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Good comeback!

ART (as Hadrian): Curses are undone all the time. That's— That's— I've— I've— I've read, it must be hundreds of stories. Curses are curable.

ALI (as Hella): Hadrian. It— It keeps getting worse. You don't see that—

ART (as Hadrian): So we make it better.

ALI (as Hella): [sighs deeply] If— If curses are undone, and you're so powerful and you can speak to Samoths yourself, then why haven't you done it yet?

ART (as Hadrian): *I* can't— What?

[ALI laughs]

ART (as Hadrian): That's not— That's not even what I said. But we can get someone here. Someone could work on this. There's— There's so many ways between... turning the other way and throwing a torch. [pauses] I won't see you in Rosemerrow, if you leave now.

ALI (as Hella): Hadrian.

ART (as Hadrian): Hella.

ALI (as Hella): I— I told you that when I came here—when we came here—that I stood with the Justiciar. We aren't in the time to make these distinctions.

ART (as Hadrian): All— All times are the times to make these distinctions.

ALI (as Hella): I'm— [sighs] I'm not committing treason for this, Hadrian.

ART (as Hadrian): Treason is a... is a stupid word.

[SEVERAL PEOPLE wheeze or chuckle]

AUSTIN: The end!

ART (as Hadrian): Is that your plan? You're gonna go to Rosemerrow, we're gonna do our job there, you're gonna go home, you're gonna live in your house in Ordenna?

ALI (as Hella): Yeah.

ART (as Hadrian): That's the Hella Varal story?

[AUSTIN ohohohos]

DRE: *Jesus*.

AUSTIN: *Fuck*.

ART (as Hadrian): 'Cause that's when treason matters. If you need to sit on your farm and play with your children, that's when someone— That's when treason matters.

AUSTIN: How's your kid by the way, Hadrian?

ART: Fuck if I know.

[ALI laughs explosively]

[[30 MIN MARKER]]

ART: I'm out here doing this work.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: He was fine when I left. But I don't get to spend time with my kid. I get to spend time out here, keeping armies from slaughtering bug monsters.

[AUSTIN and JANINE laugh]

ART (as Hadrian): I would give anything to spend today with Benjamin. [pauses] I don't need you to kill anyone. I don't need you to fight. If you're saying you won't take Ordennan blood, I think you're being ridiculous and naive, but that's fine. But you can't leave. You have to help. [pauses] You can— You can bandage the wounded. You can tell the Ordennans they're being ridiculous, that there are ways to solve problems that don't involve fire and blood. You're not leaving because you're patriotic; you're leaving because you're a coward.

AUSTIN: Is— Are Adaire and Thrandir here for all this? This a private situation?

ART: I mean, I kinda like the image of them just like...

AUSTIN: Yup! Me too!

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JANINE: Just on the sidelines, makin like “oooh” faces.

DRE: Just mouth open, like—

JANINE: Like, like 1990s studio audience.

AUSTIN: Yup!

DRE: Just going back and forth between them. [chuckles]

ART: It's like, “Do you think they have good fish and chips here?” “I dunno, I mean...”

[AUSTIN laughs]

ART: “... they don't seem to have cooking.”

[SEVERAL PEOPLE laugh briefly]

AUSTIN, quietly: They don't. It's true.

ALI: Let me— God. Just, ground myself again. Um.

AUSTIN: You were just called a coward.

ALI: I was. That happens.

AUSTIN: Back in the—

ALI: [sighs] That's her whole thing. Like, he's right.

AUSTIN: Mhm. [pauses] What's your Bond with Hadrian? Just for the record.

ALI: Yeah, it's— It says that I'll help him out.

AUSTIN: It says [reading] “I don’t understand the extent of Hadrian’s troubles. But I have made hard choices and met gods too. Hadrian has my ear and my blade when he needs it.”

ALI: Hm.

AUSTIN: It’s fine to resolve that here and change it.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: For sure. But.

ALI (as Hella): I’d rather be a coward than, than repeat what happened in Nacre. I—

ART (as Hadrian): You don’t repeat your mistakes by making sure you’re never in that situation again. You fix your mistakes by having the same situation and doing better.

ALI (as Hella): I am in the same exact situation where I’m listening to my morals and to gods, and— [sighs] What am I getting out of this? At the end of the day, what is morality going to get me?

ART (as Hadrian): A good night’s sleep?

ALI (as Hella): [sighs] I haven’t had one in months. So. I don’t know, Hadrian.

ART (as Hadrian): I think that— I think that’s what I’m saying to you.

[AUSTIN and ALI laugh]

ALI: Score 1 on the Hadrian board. God.

ART (as Hadrian): I promise you, after tomorrow, you’ll sleep so well.

AUSTIN: Hmm. You feel it first from the north. The heat. They’re not marching, or at least not yet, but the woods are ablaze. Smoke fills the air and it mingles with the smoke of the Anchor. Black and gray. And the reports begin to flood in, both from the moth scouts and also from the animals that Throndir had communicated with. The Anchor are marching, one after the other, deeper into the woods and setting a fire. Twinbrook will be saved. The treeline separates them. The Anchor have cut down a long, wide row between the city and the bulk of the forest and they’re using that timber for the new bridge eastward. So the fire can’t jump, but it does get closer. If it were time to flee— If you did decide to flee, now would be the time. [pauses] You got time, Adaire. Adaire, you have time for an action; this isn’t—

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: The fire ain't gonna *hit* here yet, you have time.

JANINE: Sounded kind of imminent. You were talking about a lot of smoke and shit.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's a lot of smoke and shit. But like, anything you do from here forward is under this fire that's getting ever closer to you. [pauses] You're quite a distance from Twinbrook. Remember you're like a day away, walking. But the fire is coming. I just wanted to punctuate this little discussion.

[[35 MIN MARKER]]

ALI: Right. Right. So actually, one thing that I realized I maybe should have done sooner, but that I'd like to do.

AUSTIN: Mhm?

ALI: I think that the conversation with Hadrian ends here. Hella—

AUSTIN: Do you walk away?

ALI: Yeah, but she doesn't leave. But what I would like to do, in a moment alone is—

AUSTIN: Ahuh.

ALI: —consult the spirits that reside in my signature weapon.

AUSTIN: Oh. Fucking couldn't wait! Let me—

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Give me the roll.

ALI: What is that? *Charisma*.

AUSTIN: That is a Charisma. You have a decent Charisma; you have a 13.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: How's your Prep? You got 1 Prep left.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, you got an 8.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: On an 8... So, you get to ask it something on the current— about the current situation.

ALI: I have to get in to Hella's mindset here in like, even communicating with this. 'Cause it's like—

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah.

ALI: I feel like, in the past, it's always told her to leave Nacre and was like, "This guy is bad" with Fantasma, I think? So like—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: I think she has like a weird trust with it, but I don't know what—

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: Yeah. I don't know what the question is. 'Cause I think she's decided not to leave, but I think it's like... I was gonna say "Which way should I swing?" but like, *no*. [laughs] That's— This isn't quite The Shield yet.

AUSTIN: No, no. Not yet.

[ART chuckles]

ALI: I think it's more like... I want to say, "Is Hadrian right—" or like "Ordenna wrong?" But like, sort of that kind of thing? I just can't get it in, like, a question. But like—

AUSTIN: Hm. Hmm.

ALI: Right?

AUSTIN: So like, specifically, are they wrong about the curse? Or are they wrong about something else?

ALI: [sighs] I— God—

AUSTIN: Or, or is like their broader ideology wrong? Or their— the broader notion of justice.

ALI: Yeah, I— I think the, the, the question is really vague, but it's probably where her mind is at. Where it's like, is taking the like complete extreme justifiable? Or, like, the right thing here?

AUSTIN: Mhm. You see in the blade— So the blade, how are you holding it? What are you doing as you consult it?

ALI: I think it's another like, Hella far away in the woods training again?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: But like.

AUSTIN: Alright. So we actually have a— a kind of visual language for this already.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Which was what happened when you saw Red Jack through the blade. Do you remember that?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You saw like this green hillside, like— er, green countryside. Hilly. A castle on the hills in the distance. You see as you take sword swings [pauses] a series of like very short vignettes in the, like, image of the blade— like the afterimage of the blade. Almost as if you're opening a brief window into a different space. On— This move is called Heirloom, and on a 7 to 9 I give you an impression, but not a good detail. You see five images? Five images. In the first, the world is barren, or near-barren. It is gray, and like, you almost don't even recognize it. You almost think it's people in the distance because of how gray and grim it looks; because it just looks like the real world? But there are like four or five figures. Robed. Colorless. On your next swing you see more bodies, more people, kind of joining together. And there's a little bit of color. Y'know. One of the— One of the robes is blue, one of them is orangey or red. And then on the third, there is a figure that towers above the others. Both in physicality and also in, in dominance of the image. And you can't make out, like— You don't recognize their face, but you do recognize the face of like, wanting vengeance. Like, the expression of, of, like, the moment where justice moves over to cruelty. And the way a fist— er, a hand goes from open to closed. And then, in the fourth image, you see these people working the ground. And like, like the literal ground moves upwards, as if lifted magically from the ground, and shaped. And then on the final image, you see a city on the hill. A castle. And in its chair, a man with fire for eyes. [pauses] Adaire, what are you doing? Before the fire comes.

[[40 MIN MARKER]]



JANINE: I want to try and teach the little oni children a game.

AUSTIN: Mhm. What game do you want to teach them?

JANINE: I want to see how strong they are.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: And the way I want to see how strong they are is by getting a bunch of sticks.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And we get a bunch of buckets.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: And I want each of them— [laughs] What she's gonna try and do, I should say—

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: —is teach them how to use a yoke. But she's not gonna say, like "This is how you use a yoke, and how you water crops—" Whatever. That's not what's— That's not gonna work.

AUSTIN: Right. Right.

JANINE: So it's a test to see how strong and fast they are. And it's a matter of—

AUSTIN: Mhm. I see.

JANINE: —you get a bucket on each end of the stick on your shoulders, and you fill them at the river, and then you bring them back.

AUSTIN: Ah huh. Ah huh. I see, you're givin me a two for one special.

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: Give me a roll.

JANINE: On what?

AUSTIN: Charisma. Defy Danger. Don't— You don't wanna— They could— They're bad. They're bad little boys.

JANINE: Yeah. That's— Yeah. That's true.

AUSTIN: Oh! That's an 11. Look at that.

JANINE: Nice!

AUSTIN: So like two things happen. The first is that they totally begin to feed— Er, are you bringing it to the Weaver King? Or are you bringing it to the weavers?

JANINE: Where's— Okay. Where are the weavers, versus where's the Weaver King?

AUSTIN: The weavers are near the fields. They live underground. They're like, rooted. And they pop up as— from time to time, as necessary. To the— So to the east. The kind of green area to the east.

JANINE: Mhm. Shit, what's more useful...

AUSTIN: By pure numbers? The— So the Weaver King will let you heal another 1d20 moths. So that's a big risk.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The weavers will become like— They'll, they'll be fed, and they'll move from being their kind of their dried-out kindling form to their switchling form. And will basically be giving that unit more— much more, like, double the HP that it has now. Basically. And another d12 of damage, basically.

JANINE: I'm gonna say to the— Eh. Y'know, thinking about it like Adaire would, I'm gonna say she'd probably say... She'd probably want to do the weavers knowing that like—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: —or thinking that like, "Well, maybe if some of them trip and spill it, then they'll get it in the thing anyway. So it'd be fine."

AUSTIN: That's— That— Okay. That doesn't happen.

JANINE: No, I know—

AUSTIN, crosstalking: They do— Hm—

JANINE, crosstalking: —But that's, y'know. Just gonna think. Maybe.

AUSTIN: Ah huh. So yeah, you— You are able to, to feed the weavers. And they go from their, like, kindling to their switchling states. One of them, like, burrows up out from the ground, and it's the first time that any of you have seen its\* weird, distended face. All stretched out.

AUSTIN (as a weaver), very softly: *Thaaaaaank youu.*

[JANINE chuckles]

AUSTIN: And it\* like, slides around you. Like a snake. Like, doesn't touch you, but it\* does like, encircle you, with some air between you and it\*. Like, joyously? Like, almost like— If you— I guess Adaire is pretty aware of this sort of stuff. Of sort of just like, being able to read—

JANINE, crosstalking: It probably still freaks her out like a little bit. But she—

AUSTIN, crosstalking: Oh, totally.

JANINE: —keeps it in, y'know?

AUSTIN: There's like a— There's a degree to which this feels like it's\* giving you a high five. But that's not what it's\* doing? But it\* does it in that sort of— That's the sort of gesture this seems to be.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And it\* *slinks away*. It's\* not really— It\* seems as weirded out by you as, as you are by it\*. Er, by them. By them.

JANINE, crosstalking: Out of character, I'm taking care of my babies—

AUSTIN, crosstalking: Yeah! I—

JANINE, crosstalking: In character, Adaire's just... You know. It's... okay.

AUSTIN, crosstalking: Mhm. Got to feed them.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I got you. Alright. [pauses] And also, the second thing that you notice is that like, they go into the woods to feed them like, as little boys, and when they come out, some of the oni have grown into, like, teens. Like, they're still like playing with each other, and like shoving each other, and like doing that sort of stuff. But like, they're literally bigger and tougher than they were before.

JANINE, quizzically: Hm.

AUSTIN: And are s— Like. And again, it's not 'cause they like, worked out hard. It's 'cause, like, interaction with people gives them strength. Oni are weird.

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: *These* oni are weird. [pauses] Alright. Does anybody else have a thing today?

ART: Yeah. I mean, unless—

AUSTIN, crosstalking: What's your—

ART: Unless talking to Hella was my thing.

AUSTIN: Eh, nah.

ART: An emotionally exhausting conversation.

[ALI giggles]

AUSTIN: Hoohh. Boy, was it.

[JANINE hehs]

ART: Do you think I can find an Anchor?

AUSTIN: Yes. It— I mean, you'll have to give me a roll to do that, but yeah. They're walking deeper into the forest. They're kind of like, going out in— They're like, leapfrogging each other and setting fires. And then retreating back through the fire.

ART: Mm. Great.

AUSTIN: So yeah. You can probably find them.

ART: I want to, like— I want to test something.

[[45 MIN MARKER]]

AUSTIN: Yeah. You've mentioned.

ART: I want to do— I want to like, find one. I want to try to keep my distance, so... There's probably a Defy Danger in here.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

[SOMEONE snickers]

ART: But— Uh, I guess this was in the clip show, so everyone probably remembers this moment. But you remember when Tabard reached up his hand, and moved my hand?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: I want to like, sorta try to do that to an Anchor.

AUSTIN: So I think that this is an I Am The Law. But, but let's start with the Defy Danger to get close enough.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: Basically, what you're— The timing of this is that, like, the fire is getting closer to you, and you're finding a section that has not been lit yet but that you expect will be. And finding the Anchor before it lights it.

ART: So... We're calling that... quick thinking?

AUSTIN: Nmm. I don't think quick *thinking*. That's not like an Intelligent thing. I think it's either Wisdom for like, scanning your environment, or it's Dex for getting close without being noticed.

ART: Hmm. Okay. I'm equally bad at both of those things. So let's call it Wisdom, just to—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: —keep running Wisdom back.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Hey! That ain't bad; that's a 10.

ART: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Alright. So you are able to get the drop on it.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: So give me an I Am the Law. And, and the results of this are going to be instructive.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: So you're just doing the arm thing. You're not like— There is no— You're actually not making a statement. You're just kind of, like, exuding will.

ART: Yeah, I'm— I'm like— I'm testing it, right? Like.

AUSTIN: Yep. Yeah, give me a Check. Because there's a couple things that could happen here.

ART, crosstalking: Alright. So that's Charisma.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Good. Hey, that's a good fuckin' roll. That's a 13.

ART: Yeah!

AUSTIN: So. Do you— Like, you're doing this without making eye contact or communicating with it.

ART: No, I'm— I'm actively trying not to be seen.

AUSTIN: Okay. When you're not seen, nothing happens. But as you like, test the waters, you— It catches you from, from out of the corner of your eye.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: And you are, with *intense* strength of will—like, it's exhausting—are able to exert effort over it. And the thing that's a little hard to know is is this like— So like, you rolled a 13 on this, right?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: You don't know if this is just like— This doesn't seem to go with the ease that Tabard had over the pala-din.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Or over your arm, when, when yours was turning into stone.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So there's a degree to which this is *great* because, like, oh wow, yeah, you totally have the ability to control these things. But it is a strenuous activity and it is not a simple one. It's, it's— And it maybe might not have anything to do with them being related to pala-din at all. It might just be that this is how strong you can be when you're— You know, when you have the support of Samoths. The full support.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: But also. Hey. It's working.

ART: Yeah. I'll call this— I'll call this meaningful data. And try to get away from this thing before it tries to kill me.

AUSTIN: Well no, you have con— What do you— What are you telling it to do?

ART: Oh. Can I just tell it to, to go?

AUSTIN: It like tilts its head, as if that's not a complete instruction.

ART: Uhh, sure. I need to tell it to go to a place. I mean, player Art has a great idea, but Hadrian doesn't.

AUSTIN: What's player Art's idea? Is it too evil for Hadrian?

ART: I want to— No, it's just, it's just knowledge Hadrian doesn't have.

AUSTIN: Oh. Okay.

ART: Like, you know where, you know where it'd be cool to send this thing? The museum in Rosemerrow.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah, there's not— That's a...

ART: Yeah. Do we think that dam is all the way destroyed?

AUSTIN: It's nearing it. Another day or two.

ART: I want to send him... to work on the dam.

AUSTIN: Okay. And I'm gonna have it just stay doing that. To the degree that I'm gonna literally come over to my list of 300 pala-din and turn it to 299.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: Er actually, I'm gonna say... [typing] One of the ones that was doing *this* is now doing *that*. So.

ART: Alright you guys, I'm only 299 13 Charisma rolls from solving this whole thing.

AUSTIN: Ahuh!

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: And also it's better at destroying the dam than people are. It doesn't have like— It's super strong and it doesn't have Wounds— Like, it doesn't fear pain. All sorts of stuff.

ART: And I hope that when it's done, it just kinda like, stays in the bottom of the river.

AUSTIN: Mhm. That sounds right. Alright. And hey, it means that this fire doesn't spread as quickly. 'Cause it didn't set fire. So that's good, right?

[SOMEONE snickers]

ART: Yeah. That's great.

AUSTIN: That means that like, this center row of fire is going to be back one, compared to the other ones. That's actually a pretty interesting tactical consideration.

[SOMEONE chuckles]

[[50 MIN MARKER]]

AUSTIN: Sooo. Yeah. You have weavers, you have Red Jack and his oni boys, you have the moths, and you have the halflings.

DRE: Where my bears at?

AUSTIN: Oh right, bears! Thank you. [pauses] So yeah, I think if you sketch these things, it's pretty— I guess like, my question is like, where are these people? Where are you putting these different groups? [pauses] Is it just like, everybody get together in the middle, and we'll fight 'em off?

ALI: That's probably a bad plan in the forest.

DRE: Yeah, that's probably not a great plan.

JANINE: That's a *terrible* plan.

ART: The fire seems to suggest they're, they're building a path though.



AUSTIN: Maybe. I mean, the fire is also terrifying. That's also a thing to note? Like, I haven't heard an answer for yet, also, is the fire is coming.

DRE: Yeah, I mean, we don't really have like, fire trucks.

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: Or water.

AUSTIN: It'll be here in a little over—

JANINE, crosstalking: Yeah. We got the bucket boys?

ART, crosstalking: We don't have an overabundance of water.

AUSTIN: You do have the bucket boys. But. That's a lot of fire.

JANINE: It was a multipurpose lesson. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Hm.

ALI: Should we have, like, some of the moth people try to put out— They don't have any water to pour it out with.

AUSTIN: They don't have any water and also they're terrified— They can't go near the fire.

JANINE: Moths are so bad at fire.

AUSTIN: Like, they'll just— They will just fly into the fire, Ali. It'll be bad.

DRE, crosstalking: Oh, man.

ALI, crosstalking: Right, yeah. That's how moths work.

AUSTIN, crosstalking: Mhm.

DRE: I guess a thing we could have done, and it's probably too late to do, is to do like, what they did, where you like, cut down the tree line immediately around the village.

AUSTIN: You could try it. It would be a tight one.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But you could try.

DRE: I mean, that could be somethin for the oni boys to do.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I mean, I think you're going to need all hands on deck to do this thing.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You're not gonna be able to do it with just them.

ALI: Yeah. You're not gonna want people to be really sore [pauses] when they come too.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: But also it doesn't need to be done *all* the way around the village too, 'cause you've got that barrier with the river. Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. It would just be this northeastern part where the fire is coming from.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But that would take you a day. That will take you— It will take everybody in the town a day to do. And someone has to lead that, that charge, and someone else can aid. Who wants to do it? Who wants to start choppin' those trees?

DRE: Hmm. What is that, like a—

ART, crosstalking: I'll do it.

DRE, crosstalking: Is that like a Defy Danger CON?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think it is.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Hadrian, you said—?

ART: Yeah, I'm comfortable with it.

AUSTIN: Alright. Hadrian picks up a fuckin' axe.

ART: Does someone aid before I roll, or after?

AUSTIN: You can— You can aid after. [pauses; the roll is successful] *Who needs aid?*

[ALI and DRE laugh]

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Nice. Very nice. So yeah, you manage to cut down— Everybody pitches in? Does anybody *not* pitch in? [pauses] One of you not pitching in won't make this not happen; I'm just curious who's, who's doin' it.

DRE: Throndir's pitching in, for sure.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Red Jack's back, right?

AUSTIN: Red Jack's back. He's still not in great shape.

JANINE: I kinda would rather spend some time with Red Jack than do the tree thing.

AUSTIN: That's fair. Mhm. Talk to me about your time with Red Jack— Just paint me a quick picture. And we'll...

JANINE: I probably wanna— Well. I already patched him up. I imagine when I patched him up before, I patched up the things that could be patched up.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: And a lot of the rest is just a “gonna be there for a bit” sort of thing.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Yeah.

JANINE: [sighs] I probably show up with booze, right?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. There you go. Now we're talkin'.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Gimme a— Gimme a Charisma roll.

JANINE: Thought you were gonna say Booze roll. [laughs]

AUSTIN, slurring a little: Give me a Booze roll.

ALI: I can't believe you gave me crack— leftover crackers. [laughs]

JANINE: They weren't open!

ALI, crosstalking: And you're giving this guy—

JANINE, crosstalking: And I didn't have time to get a souvenir.

ALI, crosstalking: —all the *good* shit.

AUSTIN: That's a 12. Look at that. Alright. That's a— That's a solid plus, right there. So you spend the day just drinking with Red Jack, as he like, yells at his boys with which— which trees to cut. And like, more of them again come back like, in their late teens than as children. They're like— They all look like little spitting images of Red Jack, except some of them are like yellow, and some of them are blue, and some of them are green. And they have different horns. Like, some of them just have a single horn coming out of their head; some of them have like, a crown of horns. All sorts of stuff.

JANINE: Mhh.

AUSTIN: Red Jack laughs a lot and is just in better shape, generally right now, than he was before. So that's— That's good. And in fact, at some point you just notice, like— You look away for a moment and you ask him for the bottle back, and he hands it to you with the other hand. The hand that should be missing.

JANINE: Yay! [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: That's good.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Nice work. Okay. Anybody else got things to do? I think that's about it. [pauses]  
You could've talked to him! Ali.

ALI: You told me I couldn't!

AUSTIN: Well that's 'cause someone fucked up their roll. And it wasn't you. That was Throndir's fault.

DRE: Yeah, that was my fault.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: He went into his house and locked himself up so he could consider the fact that he's about to die.

JANINE, disheartened: Aw.

[[55 MIN MARKER]]

[pause]

ALI: I could've talked to him about that. [pauses, snorts, laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Well.

ALI: I got— I'm gonna—

JANINE: Still time to hang out with the moth lady.

ALI, dramatically: I'm gonna put on like, a scarf. Fuckin'. Cover my face. So I can stay in this town...

AUSTIN: Ahuh.

[JANINE laughs]

ALI, dramatically: *Of jackasses.*

AUSTIN: Do you, like, disguise yourself?

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Okay. That's cool.

ART: Hella's gonna write a pop punk song about this.

[AUSTIN and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Christ.

ART, singing: This tooown~ ♪

AUSTIN: [laughs] Okay.

ALI: [laughs] There's like— I, I don't know. Could I talk to that moth lady, finally?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I— [sighs] I really want to be like, y'know,

ALI (as Hella): If you're gonna defend your people tonight, you should, like, know what it's like to fight with an Ordennan elite.

AUSTIN: She— She like, looks around. As if to say like, "Where?"

ALI, almost inaudible: I hate this fuckin town.

DRE: God damn.

AUSTIN: She doesn't know— She doesn't know who you are. How does she know you're Ordennan? You're a weird— You're a human. You're not like, a metal person.

ALI: [chuckles] I'm not a metal person. I'm like— I'm like, bigger than she is, though.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but she just doesn't know that you're—

ALI: Right. [laughs] No, I know. I—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I probably have a thing.

AUSTIN: Mhm. She— She like, nods and takes you out to the fields. And she like draws her blades and says, like— Shrug. Like,

AUSTIN (as Rosette): These?

ALI (as Hella): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Rosette): Are you sure?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: She like, gestures over to some, some, like, rakes and hoes and stuff and says,

AUSTIN (as Rosette): Or those?

ALI (as Hella): No, the— The blades.

AUSTIN (as Rosette): Okay.

AUSTIN: And just gestures like a "come on" gesture.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Give me a Hack and Slash.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, that's a 7. [exhales] And when you get a 7 on a Hack and Slash, you do damage but also you take damage.

ALI: That's a 4 plus a 3.

AUSTIN: Mhm. That was a 4 plus a 3. Well, wait. It was a th— It was a— Right. It was a 3 plus a 1 plus a 3.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Yes. Mhm. Do your damage.

ALI: I don't want to do too— [breaks into a laugh] I can do so much damage.

AUSTIN: You have *blades*. Yeah!

ALI, almost inaudible: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: This hurts a lot. You did do 9 damage to her. Which is... a *lot* of damage, frankly. That's a lot of damage. She's gonna do damage back to you. Just need to remember how much dama— I, I kind of hid how much damage they could all do, 'cause I didn't conceive of them hurting you again.

[ALI sighs]

AUSTIN: That's d10+1, piercing. You'll be fine. [pauses] 6. 6 damage back.

ALI: Okay. Sure.

AUSTIN: You like— Well. The thing that I kind of like about this image is like, Hella not holding back against these people who she doesn't really want to help.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I actually kind of love that image? And also, like, you're just better at this than she is. And, in a straight up fight, you make that clear. And like, you cut her a number— That 9 damage isn't from like, one big, devastating blow.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: You like, cut her again and again. And like, get in on her guard. And like— When she was like "I gotcha!" by— 'cause she stabbed under your arm, or whatever. And you're like "No." Like, "No, I got you."

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: And like, when it ends, she like bows deeply to you and says,

AUSTIN (as Rosette): You are a better warrior than any I have fought.

AUSTIN: And she coughs up some black blood. And goes to kneel by the Weaver King, who thankfully has enough water to keep— to heal her.

ALI: Okay. Cool.

AUSTIN: You have to— You have to hold that them 6. Them 6 Ls, though.

ALI: I'll take it. It's only 3; I have 3 Armor.

AUSTIN: Okay. [pauses] Is that it? Has everybody done their things?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. I think it is like, the middle of the middle of the night, but there is this huge fire that casts, like, a lot of light out there. And she has done— Rosette has done a very good job of like, keeping her moths together. And like, makes it clear that they cannot go on the northeastern front. If they do, like, she can't trust that the non-soldiers among them will not break and fly into the fire. [pauses] Where are the people at? Where are your people at? Where are you putting people?

ART: I think the least fire-afraid people should be on the fire front. I think the moths should be— Should be on one side, for flanking. And maybe us and—

AUSTIN: Yeah, they can— They can go anywhere 'cause they can fly, which is cool. Right?

ART: Sure. Maybe they should be just watching for flanks?

AUSTIN: Mm. That's interesting. I like that. [pauses] That's a lot of people you're not using— It's up to you guys. I don't— You know. You decide your—



JANINE: They do also use ranged weapons, so that helps, right? Some of them do? Have bows.

[[60 MIN MARKER]]

AUSTIN: Mhm. Yeah, they have Near— They have Near-range weapons, not Far-range weapons, which is, like, still good enough to be a ranged weapon. But they're not like, longbowmen, right? They're like skirmishers.

JANINE: Mhm.

DRE: I would propose Throndir being, like, in the woods, on a flank, with the animals.

ART: Sure! Do you want to take the more wooded side, on the, on the west?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So on the other side of the— Of the—

ART: Maybe like, northwest?

AUSTIN: Mark it on the map. Yep.

ART: Thinkin' like, there. Oh, you're thinking all the way up there?

DRE: Well I mean, y'know, somewhere in this, in this side area, yeah.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Just tell me where you're at, yeah. I'll move you— I'll bring you on to the board.

DRE: Let's do— Yeah, let's do there. Where I just pinged.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yep. Who's next? [pauses] You're not fighting, right?

ALI: No.

AUSTIN: Okay, I'm gonna put you in town. Adaire and Hadrian.

ART: I think Hadrian's at the front. I think Hadrian sees himself as—

AUSTIN, crosstalking: Yeah. That seems—

ART, crosstalking: Y'know. Hadrian and Red Jack are gonna stand shoulder to shoulder, and see how this goes.

[pause]

AUSTIN: Adaire?

JANINE: Are the— Are the fun teen oni also on this?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah, totally. I should've— Yeah, they're with Red Jack.

JANINE: Okay. So they're all in the front?

AUSTIN: With— They're wherever Red Jack is gonna be.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: You did not— You did not have time to teach these, like, mixed-unit strategies.

JANINE: No. I don't think Adaire would know those anyways. [pauses] I wish I had like a skill that was, like, for... Hrrngh.

AUSTIN: For?

JANINE: I wanna— I wanna do, like— I wanna be with the oni boys, being kinda like, throwin'— mixin' stuff up a little bit. Like. Like, I don't know.

AUSTIN: That's fine. Three—

JANINE: Tripping people? I don't fuckin' know.

AUSTIN: I mean— You were right. This is gonna be a sketch of like, a large-scale combat. So like, whatever rad sk— like, image of, of Adaire being cool in a big fight you want to sketch for us, that's cool.

JANINE: Yeah. 'Cause that's, that's not her being on the front line. That's very much like, her— Her cloak, I imagine her cloak, like, if she takes it off and flips it around, there's a little hood that pops up.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And she gets the little hood on and her—

AUSTIN, delighted: That's really good.

JANINE: Her deal is, is more kinda like, skirting around the outskirts of something and seeing what trouble she can cause, rather than getting into a direct scuffle. If— If it can be helped.

AUSTIN: Okay. Then I think that, like, she won't be part of whatever the first round of combat at that front is. Do you know what I mean?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay. So there's the moths, who are just kind of hanging out right now, and there are the weavers. What about them?

ART: I think having the weavers cover this flank is a, is a fine idea. Just where they are.

AUSTIN: Yep! Okay. Sounds good.

ART: If they come from *here*, Hella's in trouble.

AUSTIN: Yep. We'll see how that goes. Alright. Ready to, to do this nonsense? It's some big-ass numbers over here on the left, y'all.

[ALI exhales]

JANINE: Nmh.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: ... It's some big-ass numbers. The important part is that there are a *ton* of pala-din, a ton of Anchor, walking through the woods, backed by fire. And I think we have to start there. Hadrian, I will let you make this roll in, in like— as the leader of that front. Give me a Hack and Slash, but then the damage is going to be absurd, if, if you do it.

ART: So that's just rolling Strength?

AUSTIN: Just roll your Strength. Lead by example, here. [pauses] Hoo, okay. That's a 9. Uh, Adaire, I'll let you help here, actually. If you'd like.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Getting it to a 10 would be really good. Is what I'll say.

JANINE: Howww do—

ART: Roll plus Bond.

JANINE: I hate how I always ask how, but.

AUSTIN: You roll 2d6+1. What's your Bond with Hadrian?

JANINE: 1?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: "Hadrian has more use than most of his sort."

AUSTIN: Okay, yeah. That's good to know.

ART: And here I am, proving myself useful. It's poetry.

AUSTIN: Exactly. Yep. [pauses] Okay, that's not a good roll.

DRE: Oof.

JANINE: No.

AUSTIN: Okay. Hoo, boy. How would you have been helping?

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Sorry, can you describe the, the scene?

AUSTIN: So the scene here is like, there are huge— There are long ranks of the Anchor, stepping through the fire and towards Old Man's Chin. [pauses] From this route, there are only— Like, it's hot and frightening. And bright, despite the fact that it's the middle of the darkest part of the night. And it's just like, shining, reflected, like, fire, off of this— like, row after row after row of these metallic men walking towards you, as the oni, Red Jack, and Hadrian prepare to engage. That's the image. So how would you have helped? Before I see how things go bad, maybe.

[[65 MIN MARKER]]

JANINE: [sighs] Huhhm. I don't know.

AUSTIN: Maybe it's just what you were saying before, of just like— It's flipping around, and ranged attacks, and stuff like that.

JANINE: Looking for opportunities.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. Hadrian, do damage. Which in this case is going to be— You're gonna roll 2d10 and take the best of that, and then roll another 2d10 and add it on top. [pauses] So that's a 9.

ART: That's a 9.

AUSTIN: And then give me two more d10. [pauses] Plus 8 is— What is that, that's 17?

ART: 17.

AUSTIN: Alright. In this like, initial salvo, you and the oni kill— Oh, also do your damage on top of that, 'cause that's their damage. [pauses] That's a 1.

ART: That's a 1.

AUSTIN: So you do 18 damage, which is good. Unfortunately you got a 9 in your attack, which means that they get to— That this is like, you're in a melee. Like, the oni— The, the larger oni are like, trying to take after their dad. And they're very much, like, charging headfirst into battle, instead of being tricky, which is probably what they'd be better off doing. And so... Boy. You hurt a lot of them, which is nice. Got them down from [typing] a number down to a lower number. On the other hand— This might be, this might be bad, y'all. So I'm gonna take the best 4 of these 8d10. 10, 8, 6, 5. What's— Add that up, real quick.

DRE: 29.

ART: 29.

AUSTIN: 29! Okay. Things— Things go— Things go bad. Red Jack takes the brunt of this, dropping him down to 25 HP from 45. That's Red Jack and the oni. This is his boys. Many of them are not, like suited for this. And in this initial exchange, are getting hit really hard. Which is not, not great. [pauses] Adaire, you are going to take 1d10 damage direct. And so are you, Hadrian. So you're both gonna take... 5. So yeah, you're just like, in it. This is just like, a big fuckin' fight. You get in too deep, Adaire. I think like, you're trying to like, draw them away, and they *do* get drawn away, and then just surround you, and get a little too close for comfort. Thrandir and the animals, this could be a good flanking opportunity, maybe?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or, do you want to stay in place? That's a— Those are the— That's the question.

DRE: Well here's kinda what I want to do.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: One of my new skills that I got when leveling up is Camouflage, which is [reading] when I keep still in natural surroundings, enemies *never* spot me until I make a move.

AUSTIN: Ooh. Jesus. Okay.

DRE: So I want to— 'Cause you mentioned before that there's like, just a sprinkling of like, regular Ordennans in with this army—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: —that are basically commanding the Anchor?

AUSTIN: Yep.

DRE: I don't mind sending the animals in to attack, but Throndir wants to hold until he sees one of these commanders, and then he wants to try and—

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: —take one of their eyeballs, like he did the last time he met one of these people.

AUSTIN: Cool. Oh, so I'll do the animals, and then we'll do what happens with you and actual, humanoid Ordennans. [pauses] Animals... I wrote down— Hm. I wrote down "bears and shit".

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: And they'll do 2d8 damage. [pauses] That's 10. That's not bad.

DRE: That's somethin.

AUSTIN: That ain't bad. Doin' some damage here. The nice thing is like, every time you hurt them, they get less damage. Their damage decreases based on how many there are. So you're waiting for like a great opportunity to shoot across this river, when you hear a second group of these, these Anchors appear. To your north. And they like, are on you in a second but they don't see you. They like, walk straight past you. And there are about fifty of them, with one person on a horse. What do you do? You take the shot?

DRE: Yeah, I want to do Called Shot.

AUSTIN: Give me a roll, what's, what's the— How's that work?

DRE: [reading] When you attack a defenseless or surprised enemy at range, you can choose to deal your damage or name your target and roll DEX—

AUSTIN: Cool.

DRE: I'm going for the head. If I hit, they do nothing but stand and drool. For a few moments.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Um, question.

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: I have this item from like season one that I literally have never used.

AUSTIN: And you still have it.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: It's the glowing orb that we got from the tower that gives me a +1 on physical activity.

[[70 MIN MARKER]]

AUSTIN: Yep.

DRE: Can I use that here?

AUSTIN: You can totally use it.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you have this like, small sphere that like, glows with a bright, like, yellow-orange glow.

DRE: I want to say maybe Thrandir put this on like a necklace, or like a chain.

AUSTIN: Totally. That works.

DRE: Alright. So I'll just roll my DEX and then add 1—

AUSTIN: Hadrian, take +1 forward.

DRE: Ooh!

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: Just you feel, you feel a light of power. You feel like you are jus— you are justified in doing what you're doing. That's what it *fee/s* like. Throndir— yeah, use that and then take the shot.

DRE: I didn't even need that. But there we go.

AUSTIN: That's a 14 DEX. God, there's a— 15 with your other +1?

DRE: Yup.

AUSTIN: God damn. So how's Called Shot work?

DRE: So if it's a 10 plus, in addition to doing like, the, the special thing it does, I also get to roll damage.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. So give me damage first. This is a person, so it's just, gonna do a bunch of damage to a person.

DRE: So, 7.

AUSTIN: Okay. The— You were aiming for an eye, right?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, so that's like, the "stand and drool" thing. Yeah! So yeah, you catch, you catch this guy in the eye. I mean, you catch him in *the eye*. Like, that's not a good place to get shot with an arrow. And before you can even— Before he can respond to that already terrible fate, Kodiak has him pinned to the ground and is doing stuff I never wanna watch Kodiak do. Like—

DRE: That's fair.

AUSTIN: Just bru— Just bad. We don't have to ever see Kodiak be a mean boy, but he's being a *mean boy*.



[SEVERAL PEOPLE pfft and chuckle]

AUSTIN: And this— This group of pala-din stops moving. For now, at least. They only had one human with them. And they like, start to turn to you, but then Kodiak makes like, the last bite. And that's that. [pauses] I'm just going to say that this other group that you haven't seen yet, to the east, that is walking down the canyonway is beset by our friends, the halflings, that you set up, Adaire. And so they are busy, at the very least. I don't know what the outcome of that fight is going to be and I'm not gonna roll the dice to deal with it. [exhales a laugh] One moth flies down, Adiare— er, not Adaire. Hella. And it— It's— I guess actually it's Rosette, probably. And she lands and points southwest and then like, offers you a claw? Like— As if like, "Let me lift you."

[ALI giggles]

ALI (as Hella): Okay?

AUSTIN: And she flies you up to one of their watchtowers, and you see the boat, filled with pala-din, as it arrives. They are here. And are marching towards the river. And the town. They're coming off the coastline and just like— There is, again, one person on a horse with them. Big, Ordennan. In, in— Like, big Ordennan, who you can see is wearing the like— the, the kind of— a mix of the armor and heraldry of both the kind of army and also of the Justiciar. Normally, there's kind of a slight division. There's the— So there's the, the, the— what did we end up calling it— the Ordennan Impetus, which is like the, the kind of expansion effort. And so the Impetus has an army, and that's what, technically, the Anchor are part of. But also, the Justiciar are these, like, witch hunters. And so they are— They sometimes have a smaller group of, of Anchor with them, but often just like people. But this, this person's like wearing the uniform of both. And, and like, in kind of a shitty way. In kind of a way that's like, a little braggy. Like you don't have to do that, buddy.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: You know what I mean? It's like he's a general and a doctor, and he insists you call him *Doctor General*.

[DRE laughs]

[pause]

ALI: What are my, like, communication options?

AUSTIN: Who you trying to communicate with?

ALI: The— I guess the moth people who are like, in the middle.

AUSTIN: Yeah. They're— You can talk to them.

ALI: Yeah. To like, let them—

AUSTIN: They can understand you.

ALI: Yeah. To like, let them know like, “Hey—”

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: “I’m gonna go fight.”

AUSTIN: Alright. They begin to fly at the— the, the Anchor. The regular moths— oh, plus Rosette. Rosette’s helpin’. That’s good. She does good damage.

[ALI sighs]

AUSTIN: How’s Hella feelin’?

ALI: ... Not great.

[SEVERAL PEOPLE snicker]

AUSTIN: Oh. They didn’t do great, bud.

ALI: [laughs] Oh my god!

DRE: Wow!

AUSTIN: They— I rolled a d10 plus 4d6, and they did *9 damage*.

ALI: Wowee.

AUSTIN: That’s about right in my head, though.

ALI: God.

AUSTIN: So.

ALI: Can—

AUSTIN: Ahuh.

ALI: Can she like, drag some bodies back?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: What do you— Gimme a Defy Danger. Like, are you— Where are you dragging them to?

ALI: Back to town.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah.

[[75 MIN MARKER]]

ALI: Either to like, be healed, or just to like—

AUSTIN: Right. You have a mask on.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Right. Okay. Yeah.

ALI: And the ones that have died, like— Yeah.

AUSTIN: So give me a— Give me a Defy Danger Strength.

ALI: Strength? Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's about dragging people quick, right?

ALI: Yeah.

[ALI rolls]

DRE: *Woofa doofa.*

AUSTIN: How.

ALI: *Oh my god.*

AUSTIN: How did you roll a 5?

ALI, clapping on each syllable: I have a +3!

AUSTIN, crosstalking: How did you roll two 1s?

DRE: That's snake eyes. Wooof.

AUSTIN: *Oh my god.* Hella?

ALI: Yeah, hi...

AUSTIN: There's a human on a horse who sees you dragging the moth away. This is, this is the— This is Doctor General.

ALI, quietly: God.

AUSTIN: Doctor General Raporro Coro Don.

ALI: Took a risk in front of the *Doctor General!* Of all *fucking* people who are—

AUSTIN: You... rolled a 5. What, like, come on!

ALI, croaking: *No, I knowwww.*

AUSTIN: You're dragging bodies away!

ALI, still croaking: *I didn't want to be here.*

AUSTIN: — who draws his blade and says,

AUSTIN (as Raporro Coro Don): Human! Why do you consort with these beasts?

AUSTIN: And he spits at the corpse of the one you're dragging.

ALI: Ugh.

AUSTIN (as Raporro Coro Don): The Impetus needs strong arms. Halt this treason against humanity and join us in this fight to cleanse this village.

ALI: Man! ... [quietly] I hate this.

JANINE: You had to say "cleanse," huh.

ALI, quietly: God.

AUSTIN: They ain't the best forms of themselves. Like, they're not— Not all of them can be, like, the ones who give the rallying cries and great speeches. Some of them have to be the shitty ones.

ALI: Ahuh. And the guy flanking. [laughs] The Doctor General who's flanking—

AUSTIN: Yep!

ALI: — is the, the shittier one. [grumbles]

AUSTIN: I'm gonna see how much damage he does, by the way. Real quick. Alright, 21. That's not good. That's a lot of dead moths.

DRE: Oof.

AUSTIN: Hoo. Guys, *that's a lot of dead moths*. And the way that they're attacking, by the way, is a mix of things. It's, it's the pala-din— It's the Anchor, like, fighting. Like, shooting crossbows, and throwing spears into the air, and grabbing the, the moths, and stabbing them. It's also cannon fire into the village, from the ship. Not a lot of it, like it's not like a— It is not like a *big* vessel, but they have a cannon on it. And so every few minutes, like, there's a shot. And that is terrifying. And also just like, one bad shot could hit the Weaver King, and that would be it.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: So Hella, what do you do? He isn't, like, in attack— He won't— If you leave, he would have to chase you down specifically to fight you. Do you know what I mean? Like, there's like— This is one of those great wide shots of just like, there is 20 feet between the two of you.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: But also if you leave, you're not going to save this person.

ALI: Yeah. And I'm not enough of a target to like, lead him off or some nonsense like that.

AUSTIN: I would let you do that if you like taunt him, or something.

ALI: Yeah? [pauses] Yeah, fine. I'll—

AUSTIN: Where do you lead him off to?

DRE, whispering: Bring him my way.

ALI: Yeah, that was kind of the general dir— ‘Cause that’s really the only direction. But like, kind of to the, the westish, instead of to the town.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay. So yeah, you’re gonna bring him northish— northwestish? ‘Cause westish is just like, the ocean.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. So, you bring this boy northis— north*ish*. How are you taunting him? ‘Cause like, you’d have to give him something juicy to make him leave the Anchor behind.

ALI: Right. I don’t know how willing I am to fight this dude. Like— Trying to think, ‘cause this is like such a show of force that like—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Right?

AUSTIN: Like this— Is this, is this— You didn’t stick around in Nacre, right? Like, you left Nacre.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think that like, the cannon fire in the HBO original series of our show, a thing I say every episode— Like, the cannon fire would, at, at the v— Depending on who the director is.

[SOMEONE snerks]

AUSTIN: If it’s a really good director, it mirrors the cannon fire in Nacre such that it’s clear that that’s what it’s evoking. If it’s kind of like, a cheesy director, we would literally get flashbacks of the scenes of Nacre—

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: — as cannon fire hit the streets there.

ALI: Ahuh.

AUSTIN: But like, this is what it would have felt like— This is what Lem saw parts of.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: 'Cause Lem was in the streets, in a way that you were not. You were in the, the palace when that happened. And left from there. So like, this might be the first time you've seen the Ordennan Impetus in full force. Like, hundreds of these things just slaughtering people.

ALI: Right. Yeah, I think there's a difference here, 'cause she was like, delighted to see Nacre fall.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: If I'm being honest. But—

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Eugh, god. This seems like, I don't know. There's like not helping and then there's like, letting everyone else die? And by everyone else I mean like, the party. [exhales into a laugh]

AUSTIN: Yep.

ALI: I mean— I show my face. And I say—

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI (as Hella): You know exactly who I am. And there's not— What you're trying to take down isn't here.

AUSTIN: Hm. And then you lead him— You— Do you like, turn and run, or do you like, slowly back away?

ALI: I don't even— I don't think I'm doing that anymore. I'll fight him right here. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh. Alright. Yeah. Fuck it. Yeah.

ALI, laughing: Just right in the center of the town.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Fuckin'. Yeah. Hack— Hack and Slash this boy. That's right.

ALI: *God*. Ugh. Strength. Oh my god, if I fail another Strength roll, I'm gonna lose my mind.

[[80 MIN MARKER]]

AUSTIN: That's a 7, somehow. [pauses] This is— This is like Hadrian in the throne room bad rolls, right now. [ALI rolls damage] Look at that.

ALI: It's— Okay.

AUSTIN: That's 10 damage.

ALI: Alright.

AUSTIN: That ain't bad.

ALI: Is that a lot?

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's a lot for a person. Like, people— People don't have that much HP.

ALI: I have 28, so like, that's not even—

AUSTIN: That's 'cause you're like, this weird, super person.

ALI: Yes. Mhm.

AUSTIN: Like. Adaire, how much HP do you have? 15?

JANINE: 15.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Fantasma has 14. Like—

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: — there's not much out there. 10 is a pretty good deal. He's not dead, but— 'cause he has, he has some armor. And he does also counterattack you... But only does 1; who even cares.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: So yeah. It's like, "I am exactly who you think I am." He like charges at you with authority, but no skill. Like, as he turns to charge you, all of the other Anchors turn to face you, like in the way, again, that Tabard moved his hand to move Hadrian's hand two years ago or whatever of real life time. Hella— er, this guy. Whose name, again, is Raporro Coro Don. As he charges you, they also take his stance and begin to move towards you. They're like a wave,



like, 30 feet behind him, like crashing towards you. And you kind of have enough time to kill him. If you can kill him in the next move, then you'll be okay. But boy, if you don't.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Give me a roll.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Give me another Hack and Slash. That's a— That's a 9. That's another 9.

[ALI sighs]

AUSTIN: 'Kay. Give me your damage. That's 9. That's a pretty good roll. And then he does another 1 to you.

ALI: [laughs] Just—

AUSTIN: So yeah, I think you're just in on him. Do you know what I mean?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, you just have all of his shots called. It's like— I think we see this happening from Rosette's perspective, as she like, flies above, shooting— like, throwing knives down into the, into the Anchors. Of just like, her eyes on you, watching your incredible swordplay as you just like, completely counterattack everything he does. And just, eventually— How do you kill him? What's the final shot of you killing this guy?

ALI: I... don't know. [laughs] To be honest here. [pauses] I don't know. Yeah, no. I don't have one in my mind. I think it's like— I don't know what the shot is, but like— There's like, the two moons, and like there's this field, and there's like, fire in the back, and like— I bet it's great. But.

AUSTIN: Yeahh. Ahuh. It's fucking good. That's the thing you just said, and then I think you just like— I think it's just— I think it's just like, three quick hits. Do you know what I mean?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like. It's— It's— You know, you know what it is? It's like, the exact slash that you were training the moths with.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Right? It's exactly like, "Alright, first you gotta block left, then block right—"

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: “— Then come in straight up— Straight through the head.” And it’s just like: block left, block right, up, down, through— like, split his helmet in half.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then like, pull the blade out.

ALI: I think she like, stabs him and then like, puts her foot on him to like, pull it out.

AUSTIN: Nice. Good. Good.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Perfect.

ALI: I have to run away though, right?

AUSTIN: No. No, as he dies, no one is left to command these ones. ‘Cause there aren’t any other humans around. So they like— The Anchors crash, like a wave falling. ‘Cause they’re like running towards you, right?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: And then as he dies, they like lose their momentum and like, fall one on top of the other. Just like, in a pile. And then we get a shot of the waves behind them, as those— as those like, *pssshhhh whhhhu* [a wave sound]. Like, go in and out. Ebb and flow. [pauses] Main front. The weavers show up to help, seeing that there’s no one else coming their direction. Gimme another Hack and Slash, somebody up there.

JANINE: I was actually gonna use my turn to like, ask— er, to like, try to direct them?

AUSTIN: Sure. Sure.

JANINE: I wanted them to— ‘cause, you said when we sort of first discovered the weaver thing that they come up through the holes in the ground.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally.

JANINE: And I think I actually have a +1 Hold for things involving the holes in the ground. From when I Discerned Realities or something about the holes? [laughs]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I don't know if that still counts.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. I'll— Sure, take it. Just for ease.

JANINE: But just like, direct them to like, come up through the ground and then pop back down.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Sounds good. Are you shooting or are you— What are you doing to attack?  
'Cause like, they are basically going to be helping you in this sense. Do you know what I mean?

[[85 MIN MARKER]]

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think prob— It sounds like Volley to me? In that, like, y—

JANINE: Yeah, I've got those throwing daggers. I should probably make some use out of them.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And also, technically using them as a way to reach at things that are at a distance from me.

AUSTIN: Yeah, like— They're almost a ranged attack for you, right? Like, they're almost popping up out of the ground, in a weird, like, Mortal Kombat ranged projectile attack way.

JANINE: Yeah, that makes sense.

AUSTIN: Give me a roll. Give me a Volley. It's DEX.

[JANINE ch ch chs while doing the roll]

AUSTIN: Ah. That's an 11. Nice. Give me— Give me your damage. [pauses] That's 4. And then their damage roll... That's. That's okay. That's, y'know. That's a tota— That's 8.

JANINE: Hnnnnn.

AUSTIN: It's... 12 more. There are a lot of them up here, y'all. And there are enough people here where the trick of like, killing— killing just the people will take more than— Like, it's hard to do that here. Y'know?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But you're making progress. Is what I'll say. Hadrian and the oni?

ART: Alright. Here comes Hack and Slash.

AUSTIN: Yeah. The nice thing is, because you rolled a 10 on that, you didn't get— Adaire, you didn't like, waste ammo. You didn't g— They didn't get hit.

JANINE: Yeah. Yeah. There's no penalty.

AUSTIN: Right. Take +1 forward, remember, Hadrian. So that's a 10.

ART: Alright, so that's a 10.

AUSTIN: Do you want to add to your damage, or do you wanna— Do you want to just do it regular?

ART: I think I wanna *not* take—

AUSTIN: Sure. That's fair.

ART: Yeah, I want to not expose myself.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me your damage.

ART: My damage is...

[pause]

AUSTIN: 4.

ART: A 4.

AUSTIN: And then give me 4— Give me a 2d10 and then another 2d10. Of the first set, we take the best one. [pauses] So 5 from that, and then another 2d10. [pauses] Oh! That was almost super good.

ART: 5. Yeah.

AUSTIN: So. Alright, so 10 total. You're... picking through them, but there are a bunch of them. The nice thing about this is, I think between the bears and animals— all of the animals— the weavers, and the oni, like, you've managed to push them back a little bit. To where, like, they

are now holding their ground with the fire all around them. Instead of pushing forward. Throndir, what are you doing?

DRE: Um. So this person is dead, right?

AUSTIN: *Oh* yeah, that person's dead. And again, those Anchors are off. Unless another human finds them and turns them on— Another, another Ordennan.

DRE: I want to go to them and see kind of what they have on them.

AUSTIN: Their weapons.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Oh, the person! The dead person.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, as far as you can tell there's like... They have some money. They have some paper. What are you looking for specifically?

DRE: I assume they have some sort of Ordennan steel weapon on them?

AUSTIN: Yes. Their sword is Ordennan steel.

DRE: Okay. First I take that sword and I stab them with it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: So they don't come back.

AUSTIN: They're dead. Nice. Good job.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: *Good thinkin'*, buddy.

DRE: [laughs] I'm also— I'm just gonna keep that sword.

AUSTIN: Yep. That's a nice thing to have, isn't it.

DRE: Yeah. And I guess. [exhales] I mean, I think what I— What I'm ultimately looking for is if there's any sort of— And maybe this is a Discern Realities roll, or a Kindrali roll—

AUSTIN: It is.

DRE: To see if there's something on them that allows them to control the Anchor.

AUSTIN: Give me a Discern Realities.

DRE: 8.

AUSTIN: Ask me one question.

DRE: What here is useful or valuable to me?

AUSTIN: So there is a plate in the, in the like— It actually takes you a second to find it, 'cause it's just like, in a pouch. And it's like, flat against the pouch, almost like it— the pouch is lined with metal. It's like, it's like, slotted into a— kind of a metal, not a hole, but a metal slot basically. In the pouch. But you can pull it out and you can see that it's like— It is a small, square piece of Ordennan steel that has been stamped. And then, there's sort of like a red tinge to the stamp that's on it, and it's this person's— It's this person's name, which is Kena. [spelling] K E N A. And their like— what you assume is like, their family crest or something? Some identifying mark, basically.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: And, and it like, is literally a thing that says this thing gives you the right to command the Anchor. At, at such-and-sush— such-and-such rank, basically.

DRE: Okay. So if I like, pick it up, does anything happen?

AUSTIN: Nuh. Nothing happens. You like, play with it for a little bit and try to do something, but it doesn't seem to work

DRE: Well, I'm still gonna take it with me.

AUSTIN: Absolutely. Write it down.

DRE: And then. You said this person had a horse?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[[90 MIN MARKER]]

DRE: Okay. I take their horse and I— I guess I ride to join the main force with Hadrian and the oni.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Y'know what? Gimme a— Gimme a Volley. Do an attack as you come in.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, give me a cool, like—

[JANINE hehs]

DRE: Oh yeah!

AUSTIN: — Throndir shootin' on the back of that horse.

DRE: We like, *burst* out of the foliage and like—

AUSTIN: Yeah!

DRE: — Kodiak's mouth is all bloody and nasty lookin', and it's—

[JANINE snickers]

AUSTIN: *Yeah!*

DRE: That's a 10.

AUSTIN: That's a 10. Do your damage.

DRE: ... plus 2 for Kodiak, so 7.

AUSTIN: Alright, and then give me another 2d6 for these bears and shit.

DRE: Eh, that's a 5.

AUSTIN: Another 5. Boy. It's weird, like— Dice roll low some times, huh? You see like a big number, and you think like, "Oh, that's gonna be huge." It's not that big. Alright. So, that's another 10. You've knocked them down quite a bit. There are still way more than all of you, and they do swing on you. I'm taking the best three of these. 10, 7, 5. That's a 23 that they are going to spread out thusly—

ART: That's 22.

AUSTIN: Listen. Math. What's math? No one knows.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: It's a mystery. Isn't it. [pauses] So they continue to to do serious damage to the oni, and it becomes very clear that they are down to their last like, two or three. Those boys are getting killed. And weirdly, they are not— I mean, not weirdly, right? They are not getting back up; this is Ordennan steel. And Red Jack is not very happy about it. Like, Red Jack definitely has like— He's also taken some wounds himself. He hasn't lost another hand, but his will is fading as he sees his kin get killed. Maybe even his children? It's hard to tell; you don't really know how they work. And there are about 40 of the Anchors left and all the people here— another 5 people, commanding them here. Who— Their will is maybe fading much faster than the Anchors'. At this point, they're kind of holding back. And like, clearly waiting for— Like. "The cannon fire stopped. And... where are our reinforcements from the east? Like, none of it's happening." I think one more show of force might break them here.

ALI: Would my attempt to command the pala-din go over any better?

AUSTIN: I— You'd have to try. Right?

ALI: [inhales] What roll would that be?

AUSTIN: So, do you— I'm gonna— I guess w— Again, we get a great shot of you finding the same thing on that guy's dead body.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Give me a Charisma check. A Defy Danger Charisma. That's a 10!

ALI: It is!

[JANINE chuckles]

AUSTIN: So here's the— The thing that happens here is weird. Which is, you find the plate and you recognize— Like, you're able to decipher it in a way that Throndir isn't, because you kind of see— You know the language better. It's one of those things where it's like, "This gives you—" Y'know, Throndir read it as "Oh, this gives you the right to control blah blah blah." But you read a little extra emphasis, or a little— Like, you read a word slightly differently than he does, which is: this word means "Your sacrifice gives you the right to blah blah blah."

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: And as you pick it up... Take 4 damage, armor piercing. It's like— It burns your hand.



ALI, quietly: Okay.

AUSTIN: And the name on the plate changes to Varal. And. [exhales] It's like a very— A very strange thing happens, which is the remaining Anchors here go from their kind of like, steel silver to like, red. Dark red. Like the color of your hair. And they kneel before you.

ALI: Oh. She hates this. But—

AUSTIN: And then like, the— The thing that's like— So, it burns your hand, right?

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But like, you can smell the coppery smell of blood in the air and you feel a little light-headed. Like, like you could really use a cookie or somethin.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JANINE: Crackers. You have crackers.

ALI, quietly: I hate you.

AUSTIN: You do have crackers. Those are salty more than sugary, but like. Y'know.

ALI: Right.

JANINE: Some crackers are sweet.

AUSTIN: Maybe they're sugar— They're sugar crackers. They're sugar soup crackers. Welcome to Rosemerrow! We got the best—

JANINE, crosstalking: It's Rosemerrow, man.

AUSTIN: We got the best soup: Sugar, Sugar Tomato Soup. Ahh, it's to die for.

JANINE: There's peanut butter soup; that's a thing.

AUSTIN: It's delicious.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: That sounds like it could be a thing. I've had Thai food with like, a lot of peanut butter.

ALI: Right, this is true. This is true.

AUSTIN: Alright. So yeah, you have this— command of these ones.

ALI: Yeah. Alright. Go forward, to those other guys.

AUSTIN: So you're leading Anchors into battle against these other Anchors? Okay.  
[crosstalking] You went hard.

ALI, crosstalking: It's been a really weird day!

JANINE, crosstalking: It's really cool though.

AUSTIN, crosstalking: This is a weird—

ALI, crosstalking: Puttin' my scarf back on!

AUSTIN, crosstalking: Ahuh?

ALI, crosstalking: Seeing if that guy has any other shit that I want.

AUSTIN: We'll deal with that later— at some other point. Right?

[[95 MIN MARKER]]

ALI: Yeah. Yeah. We'll—

JANINE, crosstalking: His corpse isn't going anywhere.

ALI, crosstalking: That's a conversation we can have later. If I want some loot.

AUSTIN, crosstalking: Look at that! I even changed their color for you. I made them red!

ALI, a little sarcastically: ... Oh, you— Thank you.

AUSTIN: Uh-uh. Give me a Hack and Slash.

[DRE laughs]

ALI: If I fail this roll, I swear on my life...

AUSTIN: Ahuh. Give me a roll. *That's a 10.*

ALI, quietly: Oh my god, thank you. Jesus.

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: There you go. There you go.

ALI: God.

JANINE: It's all comin' together.

ALI: Do I roll damage?

AUSTIN: Gimme your damage—

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you roll damage, and you're gonna get to roll a lot more, too. 'Cause they were in good shape still.

ALI: That was 2 damage. I have a— I have a 1d10 plus a d4.

AUSTIN: Gimme a— And you rolled two 1s. Gimme a— Also give me a 3d10.

DRE: Jesus!

ALI: I'm just...

AUSTIN: I think maybe Hella just doesn't have any— I don't know, maybe— You tell me.

ALI: She's having a weird night.

AUSTIN: Mhm. That's 21. That's a pretty good amount of damage.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: And yeah, Hadrian you did forget to 2d— plus 2d4 damage, before. Go ahead and roll that.

ALI: Oh, does Hadrian have that too?

AUSTIN: He has it for something else. I forget what he has it for. What do you have that from?

ART: I get it when I'm on a quest.

AUSTIN: You get it when you're *on a quest*. That's a pretty good one to have.

ALI: Ohh, yeah.

AUSTIN: That's another 6, so that's a total of 27 damage. They are down to a dozen. With Hella's— Hella's like, unit of, of Anchors— What's everybody else think, as red Anchors show up with Hella at their front? From behind you?

[ALI snickers]

ART: Proud.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN, warmly: Aww. Aww!

ALI: Hi daddy.

DRE: Throndir's a little jealous. [pouts] "Humhh. That was my idea!"

JANINE: Adaire's probably gonna bring this up later.

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Yup.

JANINE: Where like, "You got something out of it, so."

AUSTIN: 'Kay. So I have a question. Alright, you've won this fight. Do you kill the rest of the people here? All it takes is for one of you to say yes, and it will happen.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Oh— Well. Okay.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: Uhh. Yeah, like—

ART: For the record, I was a "No". I just want to just, get that out there.

JANINE, crosstalking: Yeah, I was a "Meh".

AUSTIN, crosstalking: You know like— I think that the shot, again, is like, Hadrian like, “Hoohhh. We did it.” And like, Hella fuckin’ walks past—

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

ALI: Yeah, I don’t know, I—

AUSTIN: — with the— with— No, I think you’re— Yeah. Mhm!

ALI: Willing to be convinced, but I— You know what. [laughs]

JANINE: Witnesses are witnesses, right?

ALI: Witnesses are witnesses.

AUSTIN: Yep. They see the fuckin’ Queen Killer as they approach, lit by fire. And like—

DRE: Hm.

ALI: Oh, wait, no. But can I, like— Is this the time that I could talk to them?

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Like— And be like, “This is not—”

AUSTIN: What’s the thing? Give me the talk.

ALI: Oh, god. I don’t know. The talk is like—

AUSTIN: Gimme the— Give me the— Yeah, give me the stro— the broad strokes of the talk. You don’t have to give me the word to word.

ALI: The strokes of it is like, “This is not how you cure this. Like. These are just peaceful people trying to live their lives and like, going about their day.”

AUSTIN: Give me— Give me a Parley.

ALI: [groans] Ohh. What is Parley; is it Charisma?

AUSTIN: It’s Charisma. The leverage you have is their lives.

ALI: If I fail this, I’m killing them. I just wanted to try. [laughs]

AUSTIN: I understand.

JANINE: Where are they gonna run? The fire?

AUSTIN: That's a 6. Wait, you have a Prep. You have a Prep.

DRE: Yeah. I could also roll to assist.

AUSTIN: How are you— How are you helping?

DRE: I think like, as Hella, like, strolls up on them, I think like, Thrandir like pulls up alongside her on the horse and like, draws his bow as if to say like, "Don't fuckin' do anything funny."

AUSTIN: [laughs] Okay. Give me a roll. What's your Bond with Hella?

DRE: I've got the two.

AUSTIN: Oh right, I remember now. Yep. You have those two Bonds. Yeah. Awesome.

DRE: 7.

AUSTIN: Alright. So that's enough to get— They're going to need to see some proof of your leverage, basically. Which in this case, I think means you kill one of them. Like—

ALI: Ye— What is— Does that get me up to a—

AUSTIN: It's 7.

ALI: There's no way to get a 10 here. Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: No, there's no way to get a 10 here. You could get up to an 8 if you spent your— But that's not ... a difference.

ALI, crosstalking: Okay. Yeah, that's not what I do.

AUSTIN: So yeah, the way it works is— The way Parley works is [reading] "They'll do what you ask, but they need some concrete assurance of your promise right now." The promise you're making them is like, "If you don't do this, I'll kill you." I think one of them— I'll make this— I'll make this easy on you in some sense, which is like, Tavira Shal, the Justiciar-Captain, like, spits on the ground and says, like,

AUSTIN (as Tavira Shal): [sighs] Some hero.

AUSTIN: And charges at you. And you dispatch her. At that, Stornras Glasseye shakes his head. And he says— He shouts, like,

AUSTIN (as Stornras Glasseye): She's right, you know. All of this is a waste.

[ALI scoffs, DRE sighs]

AUSTIN: And you [fumbled whistle]— I did a bad whistle there. Mm. [another fumbled whistle] I can't whi— I have no whistling ability. [a slightly better whistle] I can't do it anymore; my whistles are gone.

ALI, crosstalking: We can do a whistle pickup.

JANINE: *He turned into a bird.*

AUSTIN: He turned into a bird. It's Fero! Fero's here!

[JANINE and DRE laugh]

ALI: Could you imagine?

AUSTIN: And he does like a— He— Yeah. He locks eyes with you, Hella, and he does a little like, wrap— Like he spins his hand in a circle with a finger in the air. As if "Hey, let's all go together now". It's a very familiar sight; you remember a person who did that with joy, before, once. And he leads the, the remaining people back towards Twinbrook, as the fire begins to fade. The wind picks up, and there is thunder and lightning. And snow begins to fall, which is creepy and weird. The blizzard is coming back. But hey. You turned these folks away, right?

[[100 MIN MARKER]]

[ALI and DRE sigh]

AUSTIN: Also the halflings probably... It didn't go great for either side of that fight.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JANINE: They kept each other busy.

AUSTIN: Yes. Exactly. I think that like, that— That person shows up eventually and is like, "Uh oh! Whoop— Mm. I'm gonna go back. Eh. Y'know. I'm just gonna pretend that nothing happened on my side. Peace!"

ALI: "Seeya later!"

AUSTIN: So, let's just— It's the la— It's the next day. Everybody— It's a mix of living and dead here. And undead. Like, the people who got killed from the cannon fire are probably undeaded and back. Lots of dead dead people, who will not come back to life. But you won. You did it.

ART, flatly: Yay!

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: How's— How's the mood, do you think?

ART: Probably bad.

ALI: Mhmm!

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm. *Well*. But you lived.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: [sighs] Red Jack— Red Jack insists on a party. Rosette is not convinced that a party makes much sense, but, but, but he insists. And. It's like— They bring out these— God, how do you have a party? How do you have like a big bonfire party in a place that can't do fire? So the, the— With the water—

ART: I can cast Light on a big pile of wood.

AUSTIN: [chuckles] No, I think what they do is they have mirrors that catch the moonlight. Which is like extra good on a night like this where the, the— both of the moons are out. And it like— It catches the water that's in the, the big pit where the Weaver King is. Also the Weaver King is revived now; the water is coming through as it should.

JANINE: Nice!

AUSTIN: Like, you got the good stuff. This village will live. There's music. They're all doing the thing where they can project sound to different places, the way that Rosette does— The way she does with language, but they're doing it with just like, music and are playing a kind of a— a mourning tune. A kind of like, a tune of remembrance as they bury their dead— Or after they've buried— They just spent the day burying their dead; now there's like— It's a, a time of— It's a wake, right? And the Weaver King is healing the ones that didn't quite all the way die, from the explosions and such. And it's alive. It's alive and like, the moths are tending to it, and the moonlight is shining out from that place. There's food to eat, and music, and it's one of those things. Red Jack is sitting on a— on like a bench near the Weaver King and the mirrors.

AUSTIN (as Red Jack): [sighs] Hohhh. Another one for the book.



AUSTIN: And he takes out a book and starts writing in it.

DRE: How big is the book?

AUSTIN: *Very big.*

DRE: [chuckles] I think Kodiak tries— er, Throndir tries to peek over his shoulder.

AUSTIN: [snerks] It's written in a language you don't understand. And one even Kindrali seems confused by. The, the thing— The note that you get— The thing that you understand really quickly is: the characters that he's drawing isn't the language; the language is the empty space between the ink. So it's almost like he's sketching in words. He's pretty dour over the loss of his boys though. Y'know, unless there's— Like, I, I— Do y'all want to talk? You wanna rap?

JANINE: I— I do have a thing that I want to do before the night closes out—

AUSTIN: What is it?

JANINE: — on this, like, scene.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Tell me.

JANINE: I wanna go to the weavers and I want to ask them for a favor.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Of course. What do you want to ask for?

JANINE: I want them to take Sol's watch.

AUSTIN: Fair. Okay.

DRE: Hell yeah.

AUSTIN: [exhales a laugh] They don't even go anywhere. They're just like— It's like— It gets passed to you, as if to say like,

AUSTIN (as a weaver): Oh, this?

JANINE (as Adaire): [laughs] Perfect.

AUSTIN (as a weaver): Men like Sol... are dealt with.

AUSTIN: And they like, weaver away.

[DRE chuckles]

[[105 MIN MARKER]]

JANINE: Adaire puts the watch in her pocket and goes to, to eat.

DRE: I don't know. I think the only thing Thrandir does to try and get Red Jack to cheer up is he says,

DRE (as Thrandir): Y'know, when you're done writing this story, would you maybe tell me another one?

AUSTIN (as Red Jack): Hm. Sure.

AUSTIN: He like, calls all of you over and says,

AUSTIN (as Red Jack): [sighs] I've been to many places.

[OUTRO MUSIC BEGINS]

AUSTIN (as Red Jack): This is only the most recent home. And I think I'll be leaving here soon. They don't need me anymore. They'll do well now. I'll leave a couple of my boys, but... Ah. There was another place I was, once.

AUSTIN: He looks at you, Hella.

AUSTIN (as Red Jack): It's a strange place. All fields and openness. Distance. But it is a prison, too. I said days ago that you were not to be trusted. It was because you carry that blade. But perhaps I was wrong. If your behavior has been any sign, perhaps you are good, too. A true friend, and someone who could be trusted with that power.

AUSTIN: He takes a sip of his drink— Not a sip. A gulp of his drink. [laughs]

AUSTIN (as Red Jack): If you ever go to that place, tell an old friend "Hi" for me.

AUSTIN: He heads over to his horse, and pets Ace. Unhitches it\*. And gets on.

[[1:47:30 END OF EPISODE]]