

Winter in Hieron 22: A Holy Place

Transcriber: Alix Binder Bickford (IG [@genderpunx](#))

>0:00:00 Opening

AUSTIN: As you walk down this stairwell, it connects to a bridge which leads you towards The Buoy: A massive city, built on a pillar, seemingly floating on nothing in the sky, surrounded by other, smaller, pieces of land, also floating on nothing. Bridges connect out to other landmasses, sometimes ending in the sky, but you've seen [laughs] that sometimes something disappearing does not mean it's disappearing at all, but is connecting into some other strata. The city in front of you is dense; it's not as large as Rosemerrow or even Velas, but it contains a diversity of places, styles, structures that is mind-boggling. It's actually hard to look at because so many different types of buildings sit next to each other. There are cathedrals and towers, massive pagodas and strange stalks standing out of. . . a sea that rests in the middle of this flat table city floating in the air.

♪ "Inside" starts playing ♪

AUSTIN: And in the middle of it all is a very strange sight. There is a tree high in the sky, pine, and when you follow its trunk down, you see its root structure, floating in the air, connected to another root structure that goes downwards, connecting to another trunk and another tree, standing on its tip on the ground. It is one of the largest things you've seen. Hadrian, for you the closest thing to this in size or in scope was Samot's tower in the Mark of the Erasure. Imagining that standing up. But at the same time, it's—it has that appearance, but it can't be that big, right? Because this whole place isn't that big. And every step you take, The Buoy deceives you. There is something—there is something like something behind what you see. It's as if you're looking at, not a city, but a painting of a city. You can't quite be sure what is real and what is not.

And Calhoun Cleanblade, leader of the Cleanblade Mercenary Company, steps into the main road that connects you to The Buoy and gives you a little wave, and says, "Well, if you need me, my company is up by the water, across from Green Perch. Good luck." And he walks away, and you are left in the middle of tens of thousands of people. What do you do?

♪ Inside stops playing ♪

>0:03:13 Intros

AUSTIN: Hey everybody, welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your GM, Austin Walker, we are continuing our game of Dungeon World, a game by uh—by Adam Koebel and Sage LaTorra. Joining me: Ali Acampora.

ALI: Um hi! My name is... you just said my name [laughs]

AUSTIN: I did.

ALI: You can find me... [laughs] My name is Alicia Acampora you can find me @ali_west on Twitter uh you can also follow the show over @friends_table

AUSTIN: We're on Facebook too, I believe.

ALI: Mhm!

AUSTIN: I don't know how to get there, cause I'm not a Facebook person these days.

ALI: Um [facebook.com/friendsatthetable](https://www.facebook.com/friendsatthetable) ?

AUSTIN: Question mark. Put a question mark.

ART: Wait how are we supposed to get the good content at [facebook.com/austinwalkergames](https://www.facebook.com/austinwalkergames) or whatever it is

AUSTIN: Okay. I forget—I think that's what it is. I do think it's [facebook.com/austinwalkergames](https://www.facebook.com/austinwalkergames). It's just a mirror of my Twitter feed but hey. I'll take it. Also joining me—the voice of Art Tebbel.

ART: Art *Martinez*-Tebbel.

AUSTIN: Fuck I did it again!

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: I need to—we need to hang out more... in a situation when I say your name!

ART: [laughs] Sure.

ALI: This is it.

ART: This is really the—the hang out we do where you say my full name the most.

AUSTIN: What if I start doing it whenever we talk, in any context?

ART: I mean, o—okay? I mean if it makes you feel any better I still don't have the official, certified marriage license copy yet

AUSTIN: No. That's not how names work.

ART: So for all I know the state doesn't care yet,

AUSTIN: Yeah... So they won't arrest me is what you're saying.

ART: No one will arrest you.

JANINE: Just every time—every time someone talks about or mentions Art, in your head go “Oh! Art Martinez-Tebbel”

[laughing]

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: And then you'll get it—you'll get it very naturally.

AUSTIN: That's true. Uhh...that's Janine Hawkins. Whose name hasn't changed as far as I know.

JANINE: Uh.

DRE: [laughs]

JANINE: [laughs] Soon. Um. I'm Janine Hawkins. I'm @bleatingheart on Twitter.

AUSTIN: And that wonderful laugh was our own Andrew Lee Swan.

ALI: [laughs]

DRE: Hey you can find me on Twitter @swandre3000

>5:13 Recap

AUSTIN: Okay. So just a quick recap because we've been bouncing between different games and it's just important for everyone to be on the same page as always. You are now in this city called The Buoy, which is deep underground. You got here by walking through what you thought would be one of the five towers um, but in fact seemed to be—it felt like a tower to you all, but also went down instead of up, and then connected to a weird hovering bridge, and then there was a whole fight with some members of the church of Samoths, or *something*. It's hard to say. There's a lot of questions. But core to it all is: you're on your way to do the mission you were sent to do from Velas from the jump of this season, which was to go to where that second tower was and recover some sort of artifact of power, the first of which had previously been recovered by the same—by part of this group, by Hella and Hadrian and some others, from the tower of Severia on Eventide Isle back in the first season. Um, now you're coming to get the second one and Alyosha joined you, uh—Exarch, one of the three Northern exarchs of Samoths and he encouraged you to come do this despite all the things happening in Velas, in

Rosemerrow, and elsewhere. I think that's like the big picture stuff. I think that's, like, basically what you're doing here. And just to like—for your sake, I just want to be clear that what the other team is doing—what the other party is looking into—they know Arrell is going to the Archives and they're supposed to be investigating what the fuck is happening there,. Also, some people in that party are also trying to figure out how to get the sun back. Ephrim was told “hey I can get the sun back if I bring it somewhere and do something with it.” We'll see how that shakes out. [laughs] Who can say.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: Ephrim is in a place right now so...

>7:15

AUSTIN: So you're in this city. This is going to be a kind of a big open space for you to ask questions and investigate and what I'll say is uh, you're looking at a map with a bunch of different buildings on it. Most of those have stuff in my head that is happening there or on my notes, but also you have to imagine there are a ton of buildings in between the ones I've drawn here or I've dropped models in here of, and so if there's a thing where you're like “oh is there a [blank] in this town,” you can ask me that and we can figure out how you would find that out. But for now, I just kind of wanna know, you've arrived here. There are two suns, because there was a sun here and then Hella has the ring of the second one.

ALI: Wait, does it disappear when I put it on?

AUSTIN: It—no, it disappears when you take it off, right? So maybe there isn't—there aren't two suns. I can't remember if you had it on or off when we last played.

ALI: No no no when she took it off, the second sun appeared, right?

AUSTIN: You're right. Yes yes yes yes. When it was on the ground is when—yes, you're right.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: When she took it off. Yeah.

ALI: So Hella is now wearing it under her gloves, so there isn't a second sun following her.

AUSTIN: Correct there is just the one, but hey it's here which is nice.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Uh it's bright, and hard to see, um I actually should say that for the foreseeable—for like until you spend some time here, you should all take—unless, did I already do this with you all last time? You all take confusion?

JANINE: You did that last time. I was hoping you'd forget. I had wrote it in a big note,

AUSTIN: No.

JANINE: But I wasn't going to mention it again.

ALI: Wait take what?

AUSTIN: Confusion, the—I think it was Confusion, the um...

JANINE: Oh I thought you s—last time you said -1 Forward because your eyes are adjusting.

AUSTIN: Oh that's fine then. Forward is fine cause it just means it's until your next thing

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So until you next roll you would've taken -1 Forward. By now, I'm guessing everyone has done a roll since then? Unless that just happened.

JANINE: I don't think I have.

AUSTIN: Okay so then your next roll you take a -1 on it. Um, so yeah, you are—let's just make a little—let me just make a little mark on the thing. I'm gonna do a search on the model thing here and see if there is a token for just like "team." I'm gonna make a little team.

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: These are—ope, yeah. Got one. We're good. Boom.

[laughing]

ALI: There we did it.

AUSTIN: That's us. That's y'all.

DRE: That's us.

ALI: That's all of us.

AUSTIN: Uh do you want to describe what I just put on the table?

ALI: [laughing] I don't know that I can

ART: What if a—what if a 90s after school special needed some graffiti

[Austin & Ali laughing]

ART: And they wanted to make sure it was super non-threatening, even within the context of a mid-nineties after school special.

JANINE: Is this—

DRE: Is that a cherry on the right?

[laughing]

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Yes that's a cherry.

ART: The word team and there's an eight ball and a cherry.

JANINE: Did they just rip this out of that new Jaffe game? Is that what this is?

AUSTIN: There's also an "M" and part of the "M" is an arrow pointing down.

ALI: Yeah so Hella is the "M" pointing down. Everybody else [laughs] can claim theirs. I got dibs.

JANINE: I mean there's just an "A" right in there.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: You're good. And a "T."

JANINE: Yeah.

DRE: The "T" looks kind of like it's shrugging, so I'll be the "T."

[laughing]

AUSTIN: So Hadrian, are you the "E," the eight ball or, the cherry?

[laughing]

ART: I guess...Hadrian's the eight ball.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Oh wow. Yeah, inspired choice

AUSTIN: Then uh, I'll say Kodiak is the "E" and Alyosha is the cherry.

DRE: Okay perfect.

[laughing]

JANINE: Mmm okay.

AUSTIN: I didn't want to go the other way so...

[laughing]

>10:49

AUSTIN: Alright so—uh yeah, so you're in the city and I think I've described it a couple of times now, but like there's a bunch of different weird buildings. It's clear that, you know, as you approach from above there's a big weird stairwell. You can see that there is a natural organic division in terms of what types of buildings are where, um that suggest a sort of like, different types of neighborhoods that connect to different types of cultures and stuff, but you don't really recognize—there's nothing here that really jumps out at you as you know oh yeah "this is that one place." Um, I think that maybe the one place where that's not true is Hadrian, that, like, cathedral-looking thing in the Southwest looks like the sorts of buildings that you saw when you briefly, vaguely teleported to the City of First Light.

ART: Southwest. Okay.

AUSTIN: The one that looks like a cathedral.

ART: Yeah. Got it.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna say North is where the—I'm gonna draw a thing. It's—we're good.

ALI: [laughing] Okay. While you're drawing, can I ask you a question?

AUSTIN: Please!

ALI: Um, so the places are super diverse and like places that we recognize; is the population just halflings or...?

AUSTIN: No. It's—it's a bunch of different things. It's also super diverse. Um, the bulk is actually like Calhoun and {name? 12:13} are: what you would call dwarves.

ALI: Oh Okay. I meant to say dwarves.

AUSTIN: Kind of stocky. It's fine. Um, stocky, short, um probably about the same height as a halfling...[clicking] and that's there and that's here. So yeah we're gonna call *that way* North. Does that make sense?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. [mumbling and clicking]

ALI: Um...I don't know. I guess we'll walk around. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay what are you looking for, I guess is again my question here. You're in a city for the first time. I—there's gonna be some degree of this being self-lead because I don't have a—I'm not like "okay this thing is gonna happen." You're in a city. There's a ton of stuff all around you. You tell me what you're interested in and we'll go that direction, you know.

DRE: Oh boy. Um, so there's this big body of water here in the middle.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: I guess this will probably move me somewhere; I'm interested in how people get across that body of water. Is there a ferry or something?

AUSTIN: Totally. So I guess like as you—are you taking this big kind of main road down.

DRE: Mhmm...yeah.

[laughing]

DRE: I mean I'm kind of immediately drawn to like, Giant Tree.

AUSTIN: Totally. Alright. So, as you walk down, the first place you walk past is this building that has like the mast next to it, which you can tell is—maybe you can't tell from the outside what it is. There is like a lot of people shouting and yelling. It's clearly a bar of some kind maybe, or a tavern, or an inn. But there is like this strange—it's as if there is like the yelling and screaming and all the stuff that's happening is just part of the daily whatever. Like there isn't—no one's

calling the cops on what's happening here, if that makes sense, right? Like no ones like "oh no, it's dangerous." This seems to be a part of just an everyday occurrence, and even maybe a little sacrosanct. Like the rest of the city isn't like that. You pass other bars, you pass other taverns, and people are behaving themselves more, but whatever this place is, is like allowed to be like that. Um, you keep going, and you come across another small building that has—much smaller building than the one you walked past before—that has a little yard that's been kind of bricked in, that has a cherry blossom growing in it, and there is a door going into both the main house and to the yard and there are lines to both. Like lines of people, like a queue of like a couple dozen people, all makes and sizes—all sorts of people waiting in line to go into that building—those buildings, and then beyond that is the tree which is, again, very big um, and when you like tilt your head as you approach, it's as if there is, again, there's like more of it than there could be. Like the air around it kind of bends and twists, and sometimes like you'll see a—it's almost as if there's a mirror in the sky where you'll see stuff that's behind you or across the lake in a way that there can't be. Or, you'll see briefly a flash of one of the other strata. It's impossible to really pin down and be like, "oh there—okay, if I stand perfectly still, I can see straight through whatever." It's as if it's rotating and changing this kind of like—air around it is changing itself constantly. Um, but yeah you're below this thing that's almost like just two massive redwoods, standing one on top of each other, connected by their root structures—one pointing down, one pointing up. What are you looking for particularly?

DRE: Is there—

AUSTIN: And also is everybody going together, or is the team split at this point?

ART: I think that tree is the most interesting thing.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: I mean there's a lot of stuff I want to see, but this—everyone should start at the giant tree right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Totally. So yeah what were you specifically looking for specifically, Throndir? Or like what sort of questions are you looking for?

DRE: Um, are there any—I mean, there's no, like, structures or people or creatures in this tree?

AUSTIN: Um, nothing lives in the tree. There are—and you know again for people at home, it's resting on kind of a big, brown, maroon, flat circle of stone that's probably—I don't know—half a kilometer across or something, you know like in diameter, and no one is standing on that. No one is even approaching it, but it's also not guarded.

DRE: I think I'm gonna stand on that.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, you approach and feel a kind of—from here, a deep weight pulling you down—like physically. Like you're—there is a sense of gravity here—not a metaphorical sense of gravity—there's a physical sense in which it wants to pull you further down. From closer though, you can also start to see some differentiation between the top tree and bottom tree, or I guess you've probably lost sight of the top tree when you get that close. But at the very bottom, you can see that some of the branches are dead and falling off. You can even hear bits of cracking timber from that bottom tree.

DRE: This is a very Gravity Rush-esque landscape you've given us here, Austin. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, a little bit. Little bit. It sounds like maybe Thrandir, you're making some sort of investigation move but I'm not sure what. Are you looking to like, Spout Lore here? Are you looking to Discern Realities?

DRE: Yeah I mean maybe it's a—maybe it's a Kindrali thing.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah maybe it is a Kindrali's Chosen.

DRE: Because this is just very bizarre. So I can imagine like maybe Thrandir even like goes up and like places his hand on the trunk and closes his eyes,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: And just kind of tries to feel it out.

AUSTIN: Okay give me a roll. Um, but you can't reach the trunk. The trunk is like so deep in; it's like a forest right?

DRE: Oh I gotcha.

AUSTIN: So—but you can reach—you can touch a branch.

DRE: Okay. Maybe I pick up—maybe I break off a branch, and pick it up?

AUSTIN: Yeah that's a good visual.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Right so what are your ques—how does Kindrali's Chosen work again?

DRE: Uh, get something interesting and useful. Um...yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, so. God what would Kindrali—how would Kindrali—what you end up feeling is you remember kind of the first time you used Kindrali's Chosen was to see the Tower of Samot falling. Um, you get the sense that this tree—it's not even a sense, it's like you see that vision again of the Tower of Samot falling, and then you see it going in reverse and rebuilding itself and then, as it does it, its shape fluffs out and it becomes like a tree, and you realize that there are a number of towers in this small city, and you realize that this is effectively a Tower of **Samot** in the Buoy.

DRE: This tree structure

AUSTIN: This strange tree structure here. [amused] Um, all of the other towers are not trees. They are towers.

DRE: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Um but this is a holy place for sure. Like Kindrali recognizes this and you kind of sense—there's almost like a need to genuflect, whether or not you do it or not is totally up to you, but like you sense Kindrali dropping to one knee.

DRE: How uh—how like um—how disrespectful would it be if I [laughs] started to climb this tree?

AUSTIN: That's—how many people do you know here?

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: You know what I mean, like?

DRE: I mean nobody.

AUSTIN: Right so—

DRE: That's a good question.

ART: [laughs]

DRE: I don't know. I feel like if we're on a mission to find an artifact of power inside of a tower, that this tree would be worth investigating further.

AUSTIN: You can totally try to climb this tree. I'm not going to stop you.

JANINE: There are a lot of ways to investigate things.

[laughing]

ALI: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: Mhm...what I'll say—

ART: It would be cool if it turned out he knew a bunch of people here though.

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah he's got cousins. Totally.

DRE: There's Jeremy. There's Larry.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm. Is everyone else—what's everyone else doing as Throndir is petting this tree?

[laughing]

ALI: Wanting no part of that, I guess. [laughs]

JANINE: Yeahh.

ART: Yeah. How do we look like we're not climbing the tree? What's the most—

[laughing]

AUSTIN: No one is like paying attention to you is a weird thing maybe. Like [laughing] there are so many different types of people here who have so many different types of dress on, who are doing things that are like—you know there are people who are walking around in—who are pacing in circles like doing prayer beads. There are people who are, like, pushing carts through

the streets. There are so many smells you've never smelled before. They're like, "Okay yeah. Another weird tree climber. Okay. "

[laughing]

AUSTIN: "Must be Wednesday."

[laughing]

JANINE: Okay well, to be honest, Adaire's not super interested in this tree.

AUSTIN: Sounds good.

ART: [laughs]

JANINE: Uh...I think I want to go back to that bar with the mast.

ALI: Yeah! I was about to say the same—yeah. I want to go to the rowdy boys thing.

AUSTIN: Okay, so—

JANINE: Yeah let's go to the rowdy boys bar.

AUSTIN: So is everybody going or is it just Adaire and Hella?

ART: I think I'm going to follow Hella cause she has—I don't want that ring to get lost;

ALI: [laughs]

ART: I don't know if Hella cares enough if the ring gets lost.

ALI: I'm literally wearing it under a glove! [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Alyosha—

ART: Yeah. Nothing ever happens to you.

AUSTIN: Alyosha puts his hand on your shoulder Hadrian and says, you know um,

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): Good. Watch them close. I will head to the cathedral and see how things are here.

ART (as Hadrian): I'll meet up with you soon.

AUSTIN: He nods and disappears into a crowd of people. Thrandir, do you want to stay communing with this tree for a while?

DRE: I think it's that, like, people kind of walk off and then Thrandir turns around just in time to see people walking away and like half run-walks like "Hey wait up! I'm coming!"

AUSTIN: Oh I should've answered your original question which is like there are docks with boats up and down this kind of like—I'm calling it the Standing Sea, but it's something between a river, a lake, and an ocean. So, there are a couple of boats and stuff that you could totally—or that do move between a handful of these larger islands, and then you don't see any that go to that long—to that—in the Northeast there is the other kind of body. None of them go there as far as you can see.

>22:59

AUSTIN: Okay. So. This place. You kind of come back to it, and I'll say at this point it's getting to be like sunset? Which means that the sun is dipping below the horizon of this floating city, um [laughs] which is weird because it's still—the light literally comes up from above during sunset. Like it gets to the horizon and then keeps going, and you can kind of—there are parts of the city where because of the angle it still comes up and then reflects off of nearby other floating—you know, islands in the sky. And so, there is still, like, a sense of daytime in certain parts of the city. But here, the sky is like that nice purple-pink and the lights come on inside of the bar. The name of the bar is the Topgallant, which I'll move here to, and it is—when you go inside, there's like—there is a front hall where you are asked to take off your shoes and there is no one who is being rowdy at that part. Um, usually people are like "turn in your weapons, take off your shoes, and then you can head inside." I'd say that there is probably like a middle-aged dwarf asking you to do that.

ALI: [conflicted] Mmmm...

AUSTIN: That's just the way it's done here.

[crosstalk]

JANINE: Yeah no. Adaire's just gonna take off her boots.

THRONDIR: Yeah. Thrandir will as well.

AUSTIN (as dwarf): But also your weapons.

JANINE (as Adaire): [quietly] Mmm...

ART: You guys know how suspicious this looks right?

[laughing]

AUSTIN (as dwarf): Please don't make—if you don't want to give up your weapons, you can't come inside.

JANINE: Yeah I'm gonna hand him my rapier.

AUSTIN: Do you have other stuff on you? You have throwing knives.

JANINE: I don't know how obvious it is.

AUSTIN: You'll have to make a check if you're sneaking weapons inside.

JANINE: Uhh I'll just hand over the throwing knives.

AUSTIN: Okay. I just wa—you're allowed to try to sneak throwing knives into this place, but that's a thing.

JANINE: No yeah. I don't know that I need to be like inviting something to pop off in such an obvious way.

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Mhm. Yep. Uhh everybody else?

DRE: Yeah I'll check my stuff.

ART: Yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: Hella?

ALI (as Hella): I have this one sword that I really don't like putting down...

AUSTIN (as dwarf): Mhm?

ALI (as Hella): I kind of have to hold onto it...

AUSTIN: Mmm. This guy Raoul—he's like,

AUSTIN (as Raoul): I *can't* let you in. This is my job. I need my job.

ALI (as Hella): Okayy.

AUSTIN (as Raoul): I promise I'll take good care of it.

JANINE: We could tell him it's like a cursed sword, and like it will kill you if you take it away and then we just volunteer to tie your hand behind your back or something.

ART: That's a worse idea!

ALI: [laughing] It could be a cursed sword.

AUSTIN: Yeah it could be. Who could say.

JANINE: Although then again, he might not, like, be excited about that either.

ART: Don't tell people how important your shit is before you give it to them. It's like—

[laughing]

ART: My wallet has a lot of money in it; don't lose it

JANINE: Well curses aren't like a thing that he's going to be like excited to get into like, "Oh wow a curse. I could have a curse on me."

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[continued laughing]

JANINE: "My lucky day!"

ALI (as Hella): Um, sure.

AUSTIN: He like takes it from you very carefully, like he's showing you deference in that "I understand this is an important thing for you," and he has like a whole—like a ticket system where he gives you each little wooden chips that have different numbers on them for each thing, and he's like

AUSTIN (as Raoul): Alright. Just come back through. Pick 'em up. It's not going to be a big deal. Enjoy yourselves.

>26:51

AUSTIN: And inside, you see—the first thing that catches your eye is this huge, um like—figurehead, like from the front of a ship, that I think most of you at this point would

recognize as being a depiction of Severea, one of the five Samon—you know—Sam—what's the...? There's a fandom name for the group of them isn't there?

ALI: They're all Doritos so...

AUSTIN: Excuse me?

ALI: [laughing] Oh did you not know this?

AUSTIN: I did not know that they were all Doritos. I don't keep that close an eye currently on the fandom.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: The word I was just going to say was "Samtheon," which...

ALI: Oh yes. That's the one. Um, yeah.

AUSTIN: Which Dorito is she?

ALI: [laughing] I don't know. I just know that normal Samoths is Original Flavor and I think Maelgwyn Samoths is Cool Ranch?

AUSTIN: Good great good.

ART: What's the "Original Flavor Dorito?"

ALI: [laughing] You know,

ALI & AUSTIN (simultaneously): Nacho Cheese.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Those are Nacho Cheese flavor.

AUSTIN: That's original

[crosstalk]

AUSTIN: There's Pickle Doritos what?

JANINE: It might be like a Canadian thing.

ALI: Yeah probably.

JANINE: It was called Electric Pickle or something?

ALI: I just want to know who Doritos Roulette is and no one will tell me.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: Good. Umm—alright so, there is this figure of Severea, who is goddess of a bunch of things including animals, and also trade, and also roads, and boats, and certain types of doors. She has a big—a lot of things that she kind of covers. Um, but she's not here; it's just a figurehead of her.

__: [laughs]

AUSTIN: And then there are probably sixty or seventy people at these long tables, eating meals, shouting at each other, getting into like—fake fights. A huge bar at the—end of the front of the room under that figurehead, a big fire behind that, lots of alcohol, and like—a pretty hefty bartender who—she looks like she's completely in control despite all of the craziness around, and then kind of a timid-looking guy who's near a door—a stairwell that kind of goes up to some rooms—to like some inn rooms that you can stay at, who is I guess like the receptionist for that part of this business, and no one's really going to him, but he's there and he's the only person who doesn't really look like he fits in.

ALI: [laughs] Can I approach the bartender lady and order a drink first?

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: And then also kind of like ask her what the whole—

ALI (as Hella): Hey what's the deal here? Hey I'm new in town and I kind of don't get this?

AUSTIN (as bartender lady): That's a broad question. What're you drinking?

ALI (as Hella): Um I—what do you recommend?

AUSTIN (as bartender lady): Well where are you from?

ALI (as Hella): Uh, oh, um—zero? People keep calling me a zero?

[laughing]

AUSTIN: I have never owned myself, um—

[more laughing]

AUSTIN: She like smiles and says,

AUSTIN (as bartender lady): I gotcha honey.

AUSTIN: And then just like pours you a beer and slides it your way. She's shorter than you but is probably just as heavy, like she's an—she's dense. She has on a brown apron and like denim—a light denim shirt and dark denim pants with sleeves rolled up, and she's strong. She got muscles. She says,

AUSTIN (as bartender lady): Welcome to the Topgallant. I am the Proprietress and Priestess here. You can call me Lauranee.

ALI (as Hella): Alright. Nice to meet you. My name is Hella.

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): What's your lack, Hella?

ALI (as Hella): Oh, fuck. [laughs] Someone told me what the answer to that was, and I still don't understand it so much—

JANINE: It's like "what do you need," right?

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: "What's up? What can I get you?"

ALI: Um, but like more philosophical, right?

AUSTIN: A little bit yeah, in your experience. Uh to remind you I guess, the previous lacks that you'd learned were, Miko and Sebastian Drinkwater: lack of home, um the—Calhoun Cleanblade: lacked a good death, and Alejandro Evensteps lacked the satisfaction of a hard day's work. So some things pretty simple, other things a little more—a little more ambiguous.

AUSTIN: She sees you kind of like, "hmmm," hemming and hawing, and she's like,

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): [sighs] Listen. I lack the will to leave, so anything you're going to tell me honey, ain't going to be a big deal.

ALI: Um, I'm going to say this and I don't know how much Hella is lying when she says it, but um,

ALI (as Hella): Uh, I lack stability.

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): Hmm...

>32:08

AUSTIN: Is everyone else following Hella's lead here? Or are you kind of dispersing throughout the room, or...? Just kind of laying the picture of where people are at.

ART: I think I'm gonna stick with Hella.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Um, what else is going on in this room?

AUSTIN: It's like a bunch of people like—you know, tossing elbows, and chatting, and, like, flirting and punching and like—playfully. Like lots of shadow boxing is happening in the corners, and like lots of storytelling and boasting and uh, clearly some gambling is going on: lot's of like—someone passes a bag of gold to somebody else, you know. Everybody is just trying to be kinda top dog in this place, and again it's an amazing mix of people—like there are orcs here who are wearing a type of lacquered armor you've never seen before. There are halflings here who are dressed like super—and what you can only kind of say is like religious dress—like flowing robes—that you have never seen a halfling wear, like almost *reserved* for what the Rosemerrow halflings were like, and there are other halflings here who are wearing barely any clothing at all, who are basically like “Oh yeah, I am dressed in a thong and I have like—some bone and rock jewelry on. Like wildly different worlds colliding in the Topgallant.

DRE: Hmm.

AUSTIN: Um, going back to you, Hella, Lauranee says um,

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): So what do you mean what's going on? You're new here. Get specific. What do you want to know?

ALI: I think she kind of glances toward Hadrian and like—isn't sure how much she should be gaming this, um—

AUSTIN: Mm.

ALI: But is like also just trying to be friendly and be like,

ALI (as Hella): Well it's kind of—I've been to bars before...

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yes.

ALI (as Hella): I've been to some bars like this before, but also...

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI (as Hella): There's like a vibe here and you said you were a priestess? What's that about? I'm just kind of interested. It seems kind of cool.

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): This place is old. It used to be a boat—it used to be a—rumors say—

AUSTIN: She, like, catches herself.

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): There are days where I feel more comfortable as proprietress, less as priestess, but the faith says this was the first boat. It crashed here and uh, the only thing left of it was the big mast so—set that thing up, prayed to Severeia a couple times a day, climb in (?) every now and then, but otherwise do the things Severeia likes: bring people together, get 'em drunk, see what happens.

ART: For contrast, while Hella looks very comfortable, Hadrian looks like he's ready to crawl out of his skin.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: Ohh.

JANINE: Does he have a drink yet?

AUSTIN: Good question

ART: [muffled] I'm sorry. I bit into a cracker. Didn't catch that.

[laughing]

ART: [muffled] I had to be away from the mic for a couple seconds.

[continued laughing]

ALI: I think Hella says,

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, I mean I've been around boats so, you know—my respects.

ALI: And then she, like, nods and then drinks her beer.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Um,

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): If you're new here, I be tellin' ya, not a better place in the whole Buoy worth spending the night in. I'll get you a good rate: the zero special.

ALI (as Hella): [laughs] That sounds like you're trying to trick me.

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): I am the proprietress and priestess at the crashed ship bar of a goddess. Tricking's in the business sometimes.

ALI (as Hella): [laughs] Fair E-nough.

ART: Augh!

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: How're you doing?

ART: Um, I was—I was trying to find a drink for Hadrian to order, but I wanted like it to be clear he had never like been in—he had never like developed a real drinking habit, although I guess now that I think about it he was drinking at the end of the last season, but I looked up “cocktails for jerks,” after “cocktails for posers” didn't give me anything,

[laughing]

ART: And the second result on “cocktails for jerks” is an article from the fine people at Vice—

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. Uh huh.

ART: —dot com. Um, “Getting Wasted on Cum Cocktails”

[miscellaneous discontented “hmms” and “yeahs”]

AUSTIN: Okay. They don't have those here...

JANINE: They probably don't...Yeah.

[crosstalk]

AUSTIN: I mean listen: “draw maps, but leave blank spaces.”

DRE: [laughing] Oh god!

ART: So I guess my answer is Hadrian orders a beer and nurses it.

AUSTIN: Okay

[laughing]

AUSTIN: Um, as she ha—

ART: And Hadrian is very happy that Google doesn't exist in this world.

[chuckling]

AUSTIN: Um, as she hands it to you, she asks,

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): What about you? I could take a guess, the way you're moving, but what do you lack?

ART (as Hadrian): Direction?

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): Hmm...Yeah that's fair.

>37:14

AUSTIN: Um, probably about this time, the people who aren't at the bar notice a—I guess maybe Thrandir—yeah Thrandir recognizes her straight away. There's a woman who comes in who is human—you know, big, full body. Uhh, has spent some time indoors in the winter, eating food and studying books, because it is Sunder Havelton, the mage. The last time you saw her was in the Mark of the Erasure.

DRE: Whaat?

AUSTIN: Um she barely made it out along with you, along with the orcish semiotician, Uklan Tel, and you can see in her eyes that she is immediately like reading the room, and like doesn't notice *you*, but does wind up sitting down with a group of people of—I would call them—not adventurers, but, um—a different group of people who like goes out to try and find money. They do what you do except their goal is money. Their goal is like “what if we found some stuff and sold it and made *money*.” And she like settles in with them pretty easily, orders some drinks, and begins chatting.

DRE: Umm—

AUSTIN: It's loud so you can't hear her over the rest of the noise in the bar, you know?

DRE: No um I'm gonna—Thrandir walks up behind her and kind of taps her on the shoulder.

AUSTIN: Uh—oh is Kodiak allowed in here?

DRE: He better be!

[crosstalk]

JANINE: There's halflings in thongs!

AUSTIN: Yeah...yeah it's Severea. Severea made dogs. It's a rough place.

ART: Is that a new thing or have we always known that?

AUSTIN: We've always known that. Severa made all the animals in the world.

ART: Oh sure dogs are animals. Got it. We're right there with you.

AUSTIN: Yep. Um, the—she turns around, and her eyes go wide.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Holy hell! Um, uh—Kodiak, and hhh—what is your—?

ART: [laughs]

DRE (as Thrandir): That's rude. That's really rude.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): It's just—you have a really great dog!

DRE (as Thrandir): Okay. Yeah, no that's fair.

AUSTIN (as Sunder, simultaneously): Thrandir—

DRE (as Thrandir): Yeah, hey!

AUSTIN (as Sunder, simultaneously): Thrandro—Got it the first time!

DRE (as Thrandir): Yeah nailed it in one.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Sit down. Everyone, this is Thrandir! This is the guy I was telling you, we went into the shadow of—of different worlds. It was a lot—it was like—it was way creepier.

AUSTIN: Everyone's like [low voice] "ooh." And she's like is giving a version of the Mark of the Erasure story that like is already—that story is already pretty fantastical, but like

AUSTIN (as Sunder): —there were an army of automatons that we had to fight through—

AUSTIN: Like she's really kind of adding some flourishes on top of what is there already. At a certain point she kind of tosses to you. She like,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): —it's when we saw him. Right Thrandir? ...Right, Thrandir?

DRE (as Thrandir): Um...we need to talk, and this is not a storytime talk.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): [sighs] Okay. Great.

DRE (as Thrandir): A lot—a lot has changed, um—

AUSTIN (as Sunder): [sighs]

DRE: And I flash my Golden Lance badge at her.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Oh. Uheuh!

AUSTIN: She covers her eyes and like does like the thing where she reaches out and like cl—where is your Golden—are you just like holding it, or is it like on your clothing, or like...?

DRE: I think it's—I think it's pinned on my collar.

AUSTIN: Okay she like covers your collar. She like folds it the other way so you can't show it.

AUSTIN (as Sunder, whispering): Put that away let's tal—

AUSTIN (as Sunder, aloud to the group): [halfheartedly] Yeah so nice to see you all. I'll be around. We'll catch up soon.

AUSTIN: And she stands up and heads outside.

DRE: Yeah I go with her.

>41:10

AUSTIN: Adaire, what are you up to?

JANINE: Uhhh... [sighs] That's a good question. I think after like going to the bar with Hella and Hadrian and ordering a drink,

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Do you dodge the—

JANINE: Um Adaire probably—

AUSTIN: —Waiwaiwait. What is your lack? You order a drink, she wants to know what that lack is.

JANINE: Uhhhh, a true connection.

AUSTIN: Are you lying?

JANINE: No.

AUSTIN: Okay

ALI: Adaire!

JANINE: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Mhm! So then what?

JANINE: Adaire probably orders a like—I'm gonna say I order like a—some sort of very cordial-y thing, you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: One of those lightly fizzy, sort of fruity—something like that.

AUSTIN: Uhh someone pay a coin for all these. Just one for everybody in the party.

ALI: I got it.

JANINE: Who's the richest? Okay.

ALI: That's you Adaire, but I'll pay it.

AUSTIN: Quick to buy drinks for the crew. That's what I need to hear.

JANINE: Directly after Adaire says I don't have any connections to anybody.

AUSTIN: Yeah In front of everyone. Yeah. Good.

JANINE: A true connection, you know it's—

AUSTIN: Hwoahh

JANINE: A special kind of—look—

ALI: [laughs]

JANINE: [laughing] After that, I'm gonna like, go off into the crowd and like—I'm wanna find someone who's the quiet guy. Quiet like innkeeper dude?

AUSTIN: Yep.

JANINE: I wanna go talk to him.

AUSTIN: Okay. So he's also what you would call dwarven and kind of bulky for—like he's bulkier than a halfling but he's not built as most of his kin are. He has on a little suit that is definitely not—it needs to get to the cleaner soon at some point someone's gotta—it has like some food stains on it. His shirt is very clearly on its third day of wear. His hair is thinning—both his beard hair and his top hair, and he's got on little glasses.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): How's it going?

JANINE (as Adaire): Ah it's going.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, simultaneously): [breathing] Uh what's your lack?

JANINE (as Adaire): You seem a little nervous.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): It's just we don't get many visitors.

JANINE (as Adaire): You get a lot of visitors.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Not my—not—most people don't talk to me.

JANINE (as Adaire): You seem nice. That's a shame.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, simultaneously): Confidence. Mine is confidence. My lack is confidence.

JANINE (as Adaire): Aww. Buddy.

JANINE (as Adaire): Mine is true connection.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, simultaneously): Working on it every day.

JANINE (as Adaire): You'll get there.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): [nervously] Mmmm.

JANINE (as Adaire): You're in a job where you'll have to get there eventually.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Rooms are 5 gold a nigh-t. They come with meals, and... also privacy... Hh hm

JANINE (as Adaire): You said that sort of weird but I'm going to let it go.

DRE: [laughs]

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): There are lots of people. It's very important for us to give our clients a good sense of privacy. Mm...

JANINE (as Adaire): [laughing] Again you said that really weird. Uh, that's okay. Look I'm kind of new—I'm new in this area and in town. I'm not really—you know, I'm not quite oriented yet so I was wondering do you have any like, travel tips or whatever?

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Where are you from?

JANINE (as Adaire): Up.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Ohh... I don't know many up—up—I don't know that many people from abov—I don't know that many people. Umm, wh—The Buoy is great. You're gonna love it here.

JANINE (as Adaire): I mean, okay what would you tell someone from down?

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Uhh. I d—I wouldn—Uh, "if you're from down, you know more than me," that's what I'd say. "You can handle yourself... buddy."

JANINE (as Adaire): Okay, what would you tell your... long lost cousin—

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): You were gonna say friend—you were gonna say friend and you realized.

JANINE (as Adaire): [laughs] I was going to say long lost cousin because friends would probably already be local.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): [groans slightly]

JANINE (as Adaire): Logically.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Yeah, logically. Uh, this is The Topgallant. It is the Buoy's premier inn and tavern, and it is also a church to Severea. [strained] You could also visit the other great religious institutions of the Buoy. [breathing]

JANINE (as Adaire): Those are?

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Entire mmm—the entire old—deep breath, okay. The entire pantheon is represented in the Buoy. [breathes] In the Southwest, there is,

AUSTIN: And his voice like drops a little bit,

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): ...in the North there is the House of First Light, the old lighthouse itself, hand-built by Samothos. And in the Northeast, there are [voice trembles] those isolationists that don't want to be bothered. I really respect them. And you can find their church to Samaantine herself there. Uh, and of course there is Greenperch, uh for Samol out on one of the islands in the Northwest. And there's so much more, here on the Buoy.

JANINE (as Adaire): [laughs quietly]

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, whispering): I did it, yes!

ART (?): [laughs sympathetically]

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, whispering): Crushed it!

JANINE (as Adaire): Hey can I—okay... that was good actually. That helped me a lot. I got a lot of good inf—can I like give you a little bit of advice?

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): [inhales deeply] I'm not sure that's allowed. No tips at all that's what I was told.

JANINE (as Adaire): That usually means money, not like informative tips

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Ohhhhh. I didn't... mm. Okay... sure...

JANINE (as Adaire): Okay so, when I'm talking to someone, and I'm trying to like convey a feeling or information,

AUSTIN: He's like cowering away as you tell him things.

JANINE (as Adaire): Oh buddy. Hey. Come on.

JANINE: Can I like—am I standing? Can I, like, pull up a chair and sit so we're a little more level?

AUSTIN: Yeah... I don't know if that's—you can—yes, you can do that.

JANINE: Okay I'm going to do that.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE (as Adaire): You know when I'm trying to like talk to someone and you know, a thing that really helps me cause you know, it can be—especially a stranger because you don't know how they're going to react—the way that helps me is I try to imagine if I was talking to a mirror instead. So, I'm alone and I'm just getting things out there, but at the same time I can use their expression and then try and adjust my expression to project onto them.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): That's a lot.

ALI: [laughs]

JANINE (as Adaire): That's a lot.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): [breathes heavily]

JANINE (as Adaire): Just b—

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): How do you keep it all together?

JANINE (as Adaire): It's a lot of practice. Um, it's a lot of thinking about other things,

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, to himself): Lot of practice...

JANINE (as Adaire): Think a little bit ahead and get out of the moment just a little bit.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, strained): Alright, I'll try. Okay. [breathes really long]

JANINE (as Adaire): You can also, when I was younger, I had like a stone in my pocket and that sometimes—

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, very stressed): One thing at a time! One thing!

JANINE (as Adaire): —like a smooth stone—

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, very stressed, simultaneously): [babbles]

JANINE (as Adaire): Okay!

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, very stressed): Let me do this mirror thing first!

JANINE (as Adaire): Alright, okay. Work on that.

AUSTIN: He like tries to bulk himself up a little, and like sticks his chest out.

JANINE (as Adaire): That's good!

AUSTIN (as innkeeper, forcefully): In the Southeast, there is the Duke of Halted Expeditions and Unexpected Alliances. He's an orc. They call him the Gray Duke because his skin is gray. And also,

AUSTIN: He gets this big grin on his face that's just like—

JANINE: [laughs]

AUSTIN: It's not helping at all.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): And there is—

JANINE: Adaire is going to grin back though.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Not like a big grin, but a nice like, "Yes, okay."

AUSTIN: You grin back, he grins bigger.

[chuckling]

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): And the grand temple to ghosts of past and future. I think it's really spooky! But lots of people seem to like it!

[laughing]

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): And of course! In the Southwest! There—hng—there is—there is the Re—

AUSTIN: And his eyes like dip. He's looking past you for a second. This is really hard for him to talk about.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): The Rector and College of the Last Living Spirits, In Memoriam, For Their Service Awarded the Gra—the Gra-ce—the Grace and Wis-dom of Our—of Our Protector, the Dark S—the Dark Son of Originality. [breathes] Memoriam College and the Cathedral of the Dark Son. [breathes]

AUSTIN: And like,

JANINE (as Adaire): That was a rough one, huh.

AUSTIN: You can—even saying the words, has made—there's a moment you see his breath in the air and it's not that cold. You shouldn't see his breath in the air. It's like invoking the full name was a sort of magic.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Don't go there. Don't go there.

JANINE (as Adaire): No? Not a good tourist spot?

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): No. There's one mo—there's one more place I try to go to at least once a week. It's near the big tree! It's called the Lack House [exhales]... and it's a place for you to really think about your lack... and... how to get better. That trick really helped! Thank you.

JANINE (as Adaire): I'm glad. Can I clap you on the arm? Like gently?

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Noo!

[laughing]

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Please don't touch me!

JANINE (as Adaire): [laughing] Okay. I'm glad I asked.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Would you like a room... please

JANINE (as Adaire): Uhh maybe la—I'm not quite ready to call it a day, you know.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Ohh okay.

JANINE (as Adaire): And I got some friends and like—but I'll let you know.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Ohh okay. [forced] Thank you.

JANINE (as Adaire): ...Thank you.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): Can I have the chair?

JANINE (as Adaire): Oh yeah, totally. Yeah here you go.

AUSTIN: He, like, hops up on the chair and just sits and like is sweating profusely, takes out a handkerchief, rubs it on his face and his shirt, which is soaked with sweat.

AUSTIN (as innkeeper): [breathes heavily]

AUSTIN: I don't know, whatever vibe you had of "this guy just lacks confidence" is mmm, there's also other—there's something else here.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: You know.

JANINE: Does he want any water? I'll get him water?

AUSTIN: He probably—he probably has a big thing of water. He probably has a bucket of water and also like a wooden cup and he grabs a ladle and adds—he grabs a ladle to drop water in the cup but like does it twice and then just starts drinking from the ladle and then from the bucket.

JANINE: Alright I'm going to give this dude some time to recover.

AUSTIN: That's fair.

JANINE: I'm going to go. Yeah.

>53:30

AUSTIN: At this point I think Lauranee, who's across the room, has seen all of this happen and she just shakes her head and is like,

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): Nepotism, man.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah?

AUSTIN: Doesn't give you an explanation about that but,

JANINE: [laughs]

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): His daddy had the job before him, you know, so...

ALI (as Hella): Ohh...

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): Not really—

ART (as Hadrian): What was that all about? That... that was horrific.

[laughing]

AUSTIN (as Lauranee): He's not really a tour guide, you know. He's a—normally I just have him take the money and say go upstairs I think he's had a long couple of years.

ART: Wait, did we hear all of that?

AUSTIN: No. I don't think—but Adaire could bring you up to speed, you know.

ART: Sure but that takes time. This—we're still having fun right now.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Hadrian and Hella, is there more that you're curious—actually let's go to Throndir who's outside now with Sunder Havelton.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Throndir what'd you get yourself into?

AUSTIN: I imagine she's smoking in this scene and I don't know that we've established that that's a thing—

DRE (simultaneously): Aw man, that's edgy.

AUSTIN: —but in my mind, she's definitely—she—hmmm.

JANINE: I mean pipeweed is a thing so...

AUSTIN: Yeah true. True true true true. And I imagine that orcs are definitely the sorts of people that roll their own cigarettes, so I think she starts doing that while talking to you throughout this scene. You can see like her red hair has gone a little gray since the last time you've seen her. She was always older. She's in her late 40s-early 50s give or take. Um,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): What'd you get yourself into?

DRE (as Throndir): Uhh—

AUSTIN: She has pre-rolled cigarettes. She needs to have a pack of cigarettes that she's tapping one out.

DRE: Oh god.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: She's like getting one out while—that's the image right? Okay.

JANINE: Is it a pack, or is it a case with a little clasp?

AUSTIN: Ohh... It's—it's both.

JANINE: [laughs]

AUSTIN: It's like a leather and metal case, like a flask almost, but the whole top of it slides off like she slides down and then still has to do the thing where she taps it to get a cigarette out. And they're cigarettes she rolled for sure. Uh one more time,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): What'd you get yourself int—

[laughing]

DRE: Take three.

AUSTIN: Yep.

DRE (as Throndir): Uhh I got myself into figuring out the truth behind Fantasma, which would have been cool if you had shared with us wayyy earlier.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): What are you t—what about Fantasma?

DRE (as Throndir): You don't know about Arrell?

AUSTIN (as Sunder): No? Arrell who?

DRE (as Throndir): Weren't you at the college?

AUSTIN: I'm trying to decide if Throndir can do the math. She's 40 or 50. Um Arrell dropped the name Arrell—Tutor Arrell 40 or 50 years ago.

DRE (as Throndir): Hmm. So you didn't know either huh?

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Know what? Where's Fantasma? He's not with you?

DRE (as Throndir): He—no. He well—he's not really anything.

AUSTIN (as Sunder, suspicious/concerned): What do you mean?

DRE (as Throndir): So there's this teacher at the University, I guess before your time; his name was Arrell. Um,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Wait. Hhh. Slow down.

DRE (as Throndir): This is a lot.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Slow down! Slow down!

DRE (as Throndir): This is a whole thing.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): I mean Fantasma and me got lunch together. What do you mean he isn't real?

DRE (as Throndir): I mean... this guy Arrell, he wanted to learn things that he felt that he couldn't learn because of the type of person he was, so he created another person that he could experience things through, and that's what Fantasma was.

AUSTIN: You can see her trying to like recall information to see if this adds up in any way.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Mm. [negatively] Mmm m. No. Come on. You've been baff—this is a trick. You've been tricked. This isn't real. No. [sighs] Listen the Archives right now, there's all this illusion magic going around it's

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah I know. We met that guy. Uh listen, Arrell killed me so I can verify that he is definitely a thing.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): [breathes heavily] Right, you're a, [dismayed] mmmmm.

DRE (as Throndir): It's more complicated than that.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): I *know* what the Golden Lance is. I wasn't born yesterday.

DRE (as Throndir): Well then, you know how complicated it is.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): I know you better be damn careful. I'll look into this Fantasma stuff myself. [breathes] What are you here for?

DRE (as Throndir): The same job when I met you the first time. Different place but...

AUSTIN (as Sunder): [sighs] It's been a long time. Lot's changing.

DRE (as Throndir): Sunder,

AUSTIN (as Sunder, affirmatively): Mm.

DRE (as Throndir): What's your lack?

AUSTIN: She like takes a long drag on the cigarette. Drops it to the ground and like steps on it with a heavy boot.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): I used to be so curious... Not anymore. [breathes] You?

DRE (as Throndir): A place where I can make this badge do something, mean something.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): [sighs] I met a lot of those Golden Lance people in my time. Just remember the badge is never what makes justice happen. See if you can live with that. I'm staying here; I'll be here for a little while. Archives work that needs to be done. If you need anything, just come by and let me know.

DRE (as Throndir): Where's uh—is—is—

DRE: What was the name of her partner?

AUSTIN: Uklan. Uklan Tel, yeah.

DRE (simultaneously): Was it Uklan Tel?

DRE (as Throndir): Is Uklan with you?

AUSTIN (as Sunder): No he's

ALI (whispering): He's dead. He's a dead guy

AUSTIN (normal volume): No, he's not.

ALI: Oh I thought he died in the holiday special?

AUSTIN: No, that was Elgash Or.

ALI: Ohhhh.

AUSTIN: Elgash Or. Different orc. Different orc.

ALI: That's too bad.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: [laughs sheepishly] Go on, sorry.

AUSTIN: She says um,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): He's at the Archives. There's this whole thing. There's illusion magic and [sighs] I'll see him again soon once the door opens back up. I'm here on a—obviously this place has a lot of information. It has a lot of—okay let me—god you're new you don't—okay—let me expl—

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah I'm getting that a lot. The whole zero thing

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Me too though right? So we're kind of on an even playing field, right. So I'm here because—I'm here to see if this illusion magic really works. We had this guy who convinced us and he could open up a door between the Archives and here through using illusory components to a pattern and I said I would take the risk and go through the door. And it worked. I'm here now. So that's why I'm here. But I—I'm still working out what here really is. Here's what I've got so far: you remember in the Mark, there are all those places, all those parts of the tower that were like different possible worlds?

DRE (as Throndir): Mhm.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): This isn't going to make any damn sense.

DRE (as Throndir): Ohh try me!

AUSTIN (as Sunder): [sighs] It's like—alright stick with me—it's like the world—it's like all of Hieron has been rebuilt over and over and over and over again, and... there's debris. There are leftovers, there's the rubbings, the eraser bits, and they've all crumbled together and wound up here. Uklan told me there used to be a point in time once, where this was a thing that happened all the time. That guy in the tower we went to, Samot—he could do that. Samoths could do that. All those guys, they could all do it. And in my head, you know, I just thought you remake the world, you remake the world. It's clay: you rebuild it. But it's like it—it's like he kept adding more clay and pushing down the old bits, and now we're just in the middle of it all somewhere. Those weird worlds that we saw at the Mark, those were worlds that didn't exist. The ones here are all pasts. Real ones. That were just as real as you or me, and these people built a city out of it. God damn. Don't call them dwarves! Whatever you do.

DRE (as Throndir): Okay? What should I call them?

AUSTIN (as Sunder): I—you don't really need to call them anything, right? Like, they're just—just—

DRE (as Throndir): Okay, just call them their name?

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Just don't—take it from me—I didn't get the whole thing, I just happened to say it once in conversation. It was a big misstep.

DRE (as Throndir): Okay that's good advice. Can I—I need to ask you two favors, Sunder.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): I owe you that much at least.

DRE (as Throndir): Okay, the first one, the people I'm with, you know Hadrian I don't know if you've—we've got two other people. Hella and Adaire are their names.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Hella's is the one—

DRE (as Throndir): You'll know Hella. Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Yeah.

DRE (as Throndir): Okay yeah no. You would recognize Hella.

AUSTIN: Listeners at home might remember that there was an alternate history version of Hella they encountered in the Mark of the Erasure tower so...

DRE: And Fantasma blew it all up.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. It's when he learned how to make the bubble universes so that was good.

ALI: Rest in peace Hella.

AUSTIN: Rip. Yeah rip.

ART: Was that one of these? Is there like some missing layer?

AUSTIN: Hmm?

ART: Was that one of these?

AUSTIN: No. That's what Sunder is trying to make clear. Those were possible futures. This is specific pasts that were undone.

ART: Sure. Next we have to find possible pasts.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE & JANINE: Ooh!

DRE (as Throndir): But yeah they know what this badge means, but they don't know what this badge *means* if you catch my drift.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Yeah I getcha.

DRE (as Throndir): Okay the second: if you see Arrell-Fantasma, don't—just don't—

AUSTIN (as Sunder): He'll know me.

DRE (as Throndir): That's what I'm worried about. He's ta—his plan is he takes people and he puts them in like these pockets that are separate from—okay you remember the bubble, right? The alternate place we went into—

AUSTIN: We can just zoom—we can just cut out of this scene with you slowly explaining the Arrell stuff because the audience knows, we know, and I can conceive of Throndir successfully explaining all of that stuff... Alright.

DRE: It's very kind that you think that Throndir grasps metaphysical matters.

AUSTIN: Well you know. Even if he doesn't, Sunder does and can walk you through it.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think Sunder is gonna go back inside, up to her room. Actually, no. It's nighttime. She's gonna go do some Sunder Havelton nighttime investigation shit.

[laughing]

>1:06:09 (66:09)

AUSTIN: Everybody else what's up?

ART: I would really like to check in on—

AUSTIN: Alyosha?

ART: Yeah Alyosha.

AUSTIN: At Memoriam.

ART: Who we may have sent to a bad place.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: Mmm maybe.

ART: We didn't *send* him,

AUSTIN: Yeah he wanted to go.

ART: When we're assigning blame later. Let's all remember it was his idea.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: God.

ALI: Have we met up with Adaire? Do we know that that place is spooky?

AUSTIN: It's up to you guys. How much talking have you done?

JANINE: Yeah I would've shared that. Cause it's—I got a pretty good list of the major landmark points of interest here. I'm gonna spread that info around.

ALI: Yeah I feel that if we're going there we should capital-G Go there.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: You mean like walk quickly?

AUSTIN: I think like all of you.

ALI: Yea. Whole party goes there. This is a big deal.

AUSTIN: Um, so—

JANINE: Is that like a right now thing, or like an in a bit thing?

ART: I think it's a right now thing when one of our traveling companions has inadvertently gone to the giant cathedral of a potentially dangerous cult. I think that's a right now thing.

ALI: Fair.

JANINE: Seemed kinda 'vertent but yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay um,

JANINE: Advertant?

AUSTIN: I don't know? I don't know. Okay that means I get to move this big team logo across the street

DRE: [laughing] God, this fucking logo.

AUSTIN: And again the architecture slowly changes here from—the Topgallant was actually a building that could've come out of Velas. A very similar design, minus the giant mast which isn't really—I mean even the sort of a nautical theme is all through Velas though so really it's just like Velas turned to eleven. And then bit by bit you start seeing—there's like some overlap in design where like “Oh that's another little like nautical mast” and “Oh like it's actually kind of a Marielda-style canopy that's hanging from one building to another one” and then bit by bit, you get towards what looks like what we've described in the past as the Chrysanthemum district? What was the—that was Chrysanthemum, right? The central, rich, garden district of Marielda. God, I can't believe I can't remember—

[laughing]

AUSTIN: I haven't looked at a map of Marielda in so long!

DRE: A long time.

AUSTIN: A long-ass time. It's sad! But—so as I described last episode, there's clearly some darker um, obsidian woven into some of these buildings, but in general it's lots of like whites, cause that's what Chrysanthemum Parish looked like. And you see this giant cathedral as you approach. It's giant, not just in height right. It's not big like the towers are big, it's just giant like “Oh that's a huge chunk of this sector of the Buoy is just that stuff.” And there isn't like a wall separating this neighborhood from the rest of the Buoy, but there is a sort of—you get the vibe that you've moved into a different town, you know. So where are you going? Are you just going to the front door? Are you going to—I guess I'll defer to Hadrian here.

ART: Yeah I think we should, in classic Hadrian style, I firmly believe we should just walk in the front door and calmly collect our friend.

AUSTIN: Okay. There are—as you walk through this part of town, there are—you pass other people who are wearing the clothing of the Church of Samothēs, like literally what people of Samothēs wear. Very similar. Local flair I'd say, right. So, like, maybe a slightly different color, or maybe the ring that is the symbol of Samothēs is like—has a little swirl to it or doesn't, but like nothing outrageous. And people recognize your stature, and you're still wearing the ring, right?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And they recognize that and bow in deference to you, as you near the front. So this is like a cathedral attached to a university, and the two mingle with each other in a weird way, where what looks like the rectory to the cathedral is also like a central building of the university. It's really hard to see where one ends and the other begins, but it's really easy to tell the ends: “Okay this is the university. This is the cathedral.” But that middle area is like very strange, and there's bits where you think it's going to connect and it doesn't, but on the kind of Eastern side is the side that is the university. The Western side is where the cathedral is, and you can easily decide which one of those two to go to. So which one are you going to?

ART: Cathedral, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah sure. It reminds you of the church in the Sun District back in Velas except much bigger and much more lavish but still very devoted? Like it is an object of great religious value. It is not—you saw the church in Rosemerrow and that was a church built for a person, you know what I mean? That was a church about amplifying the voice of a single man. This is a church built for Samothēs. This is—you can't paint a painting for Samothēs. You have to do something bigger than that, and so they've built this cathedral.

>1:12:15 (72:15)

AUSTIN: Um, and inside it is the end of an evening service, when you come inside. The four of you entered to hear the end of a sermon and there is a man of similar build to yours, Hadrian, with slightly lighter skin—still dark skin but kind of tannish. He has kind of long, dark hair um, feathered, and a goatee and he is ending his sermon that is about—I guess it's fundamentally about taking a leap of faith, right. It's about that "the future is going to be difficult, but that Samoths knows what is best for us all and that it can be really hard to work out why he asks as much as he does but that fundamentally he wants a world—or he wants to bring us to a world that is better, and that that requires sacrifice and that requires hard work um and that you should not only give of yourself, but—not only give yourself to your church and to Samoths, but to others so that they can help too. Um, it's—you've heard this sermon before. Like, it's maybe a little darker, you know. Maybe a little more cataclysmic in nature, but the core message is not so foreign to you and there, sitting in a back pew, is Alyosha. The person giving the sermon finishes, and then there's choral music, and the service kind of just ends and people leave and like there are people who nod at you as if you're part of the church already. Do you know what I mean? As if like "oh yeah, nice seeing you too." They don't know you. There is not actual recognition. It's like, "Oh we better nod at this guy. He's clearly official." They don't know what to make of the rest of you who are clearly not in your Sunday clothes. Unless are any of you in your Sunday clothes? Do you have Sunday clothes? Is that a—?

JANINE: Only for people who don't actually know what Sunday clothes look like.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Alyosha stands up and sees you and comes over to the group of you.

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): I'm—this is s—I don't know the words for this place, Hadrian. It's just... Mmm...

AUSTIN: He shakes his head and holds his temples a little bit.

ART (as Hadrian): Yeah. It's something isn't it.

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): Whatever it is, it is genuine, and that is not what I expected.

ART: I lower my voice to you know, basically as low as anyone can hear me and say,

ART (as Hadrian, low-voiced): Someone told Adaire that these people are Dark Sun.

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): They are.

AUSTIN: And he like, looks up above you and points at the sign that says like, “Cathedral of the Dark Sun of Originality,” except it’s “Son.”

ART: Mmm!

ALI: [exhales]

ART: What—mmm....

ALI: [laughs]

DRE: Homonyms man. They’ll get you every time.

[nervous laughter]

AUSTIN: And—

ART (as Hadrian): Well that could still be related.

AUSTIN: He nods.

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): That is what I fear.

AUSTIN: And um, the man who is at the pulpit comes down and opens his arms to you both.

AUSTIN (as man): Guests! A pleasure. Please come dine! You come from the surface, yes?

ART (as Hadrian): Yes. Yes.

AUSTIN: Um, he’s what you would think of as a dwarf.

AUSTIN (as man): Um, any members of the church are welcome. And their friends!

AUSTIN: And he gestures to the rest of you.

AUSTIN (as man): We have another member of the church: one of the Southern exarchs is staying with us. She’d be—she’d love to meet you I’m sure.

AUSTIN: And Alyosha like raises an eyebrow. He is of course one of the Northern exarchs, so...

AUSTIN (as man): My manners, my manners. Prelate Springe.

AUSTIN: And he bows.

ART (as Hadrian): Uh, this is Exarch Alyosha. I am Hadrian, Officer of the Order of Eternal Princes.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): [breathes] Of course! Of course! [breathes] Clearly... I lack manners.

AUSTIN: And he smiles like [lowered voice] oooh mmm [laughs]. There's something—there's something there! MmMm!

AUSTIN: And he like

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Excuse me let me just say goodbye to the rest of the parishioners, and then please join us for supper.

ART (as Hadrian): Of course.

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): I am not sure, Hadrian. Perhaps we should go. This is not—the rest of you, I don't want you to get—this is—I didn't expect this.

ART (as Hadrian): You don't want to know?

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): I'll stay. You'll stay. But not your friends.

ART (as Hadrian): If something goes down you don't want Hella here?

DRE: [laughs]

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): Oy...

ALI (as Hella): It's kind of a group expedition.

DRE (as Throndir): I mean in for a penny, in for a pound

JANINE (as Adaire): I mean yeah I'll go.

AUSTIN: [laughs loudly] "I got your back!" "Yeah teamwork!" "Ehhh"

[laughing}

JANINE: I don't like churches.

AUSTIN: It's fair. Um—

JANINE: Even the good ones are spooky. They're creepy. Weirdos in 'em.

AUSTIN: We do our best. And eventually though the group empties out—or the church empties out and you're left with like a couple of other lay clergy and who are like picking up the books and putting them away, or who are like making sure that everything is where it's supposed to be. Someone finds a hat that someone left behind and goes to turn it in to the little box where they keep lost and found things in. It's a church. Like it's a church as far as you can tell. And then eventually the prelate, Prelate Springe, comes back and is—says,

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Come come come! There is a dining hall in the connected hallways between the cathedral and the college.

AUSTIN: And leads you down a hallway, and yeah that's what he's doing. Are you just following or are you doing anything else?

ALI: Ummm... So if we're walking down the hallway and looking—are there connecting hallways where we can see the rooms and like—?

AUSTIN: Totally. Yeah it's sort of labyrinthine in here. Like it's kind of like—you get the im—you get this weird feeling of walking through the forest as before, where like there could be a door anywhere., There are definitely times you feel like you didn't see a door and then looked again and there was a door there. Do you know what I mean? Like mmm. But it feels mechanical. It feels like it's just been built to be incredibly intricate. This doesn't feel like it's a magical effect necessarily. It's just lots of weird hallways and side rooms and closets.

ALI: Okay...

AUSTIN: —and stairwells.

ALI: And no markings otherwise, like there's like no “classrooms this way” and like “the library is that way,”

AUSTIN: If you got further into the university side there would be—or the college side there would be,

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: But on the—especially not on the cathedral side. On the cathedral side it feels built for people who know how it works. Do you know what I mean?

ALI: Right. Fair. That's—they tend to be.

AUSTIN: But there are—there are—Hadrian, what kind of decorations are in a church to Samothēs?

ART: Um, I'm gonna tell you the first thing that came into my mind and then I'm going to tell you why I don't think it's a good answer.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: But like fantastically ornate crafts, and like but the thing that came to my mind was like furniture. I bet there's really amazing furniture.

AUSTIN: Right. Because Samothēs is the god who built stuff.

ART: Yeah. And like most people can't be blacksmiths, right, or—

AUSTIN: Or carpenters but that's maybe on the nose.

ART: —carpenters yeah.

ALI & JANINE: [laughing]

AUSTIN: Whoops.

ART: But like if you dedicated your life—or if you dedicated a year of your life to building a chair, I bet you could do okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. You could probably make a pretty goddamn good chair.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I kinda like that. You see that stuff here.

ART: I think people who do have those skills use their skills, right.

AUSTIN: Yeah. There's like a really good guardrail on one of the staircases.

ART: Sure yeah.

AUSTIN: And again, none of it's signed, which is part of this. None of it is like "yeah that was made by This Monk who's famous for making this stuff." It's like a gift for the church and for Samothēs. It is not for a person's reputation. Certainly the people in the church might know, "Oh yeah that Sister Isabelle or Brother Maelyn or whatever," but like that's not a thing that is

on the handrail. It—that's a part of the thing that's strange about this place for you is how familia—deeply familiar it is.

>1:22:38 (82:38)

AUSTIN: And eventually you are led to a room that is a dining hall that has windows on the Eastern side that face out onto some trees, and then it has a long table with—it's like too big of a room for the—I mean you have I guess there's a big group here, right? You yourselves are six if you count Kodiak, plus the prelate, plus the exarch. You know who you see here is also Candor. Candor Rinse, who is one of the guys that you saw with the symbol of Samoths on, who were trying to capture Miko and Sebastian. Your ring is hidden, right Hella?

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Mhm!

AUSTIN: Cause, they were not there to see all that part of it shake out, which is good.

DRE: Did they see the part where I killed their friend?

AUSTIN: Ye—that whole thing was a fucking mess and you all ran away and this is a holy place. Like, people do work. "Friend" is also probably strong. Um, and it's just him. The other guy is not here. Anton is not here, just Candor. Um,

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Thank you everybody for coming! We have guests! We have more guests!

AUSTIN: And he goes around the room and introduces you and asks for your lack, as is custom, but he does it as is custom; he doesn't do it—he does not believe that part, right? It's very "When in Rome, you ask what your lack is" even though he is a dwarf, this is clearly not his thing, you know. You get the impression he doesn't lack anything actually, and that's strange. You get the impression that he believes he doesn't lack anything at the very least. And then at the end of the table in like the seat of honor is a thin woman who is wearing my computer just went to sleep, uh—a thin woman who is—who has has brown hair up in a bun, who is wearing a white and gray suit, like white and gray pants that are—she looks like—she looks like she's an inspector or something, you know? Like she does not have a particularly religious vibe about her. She has dark brown eyes and kind of just holds herself very professionally. There's like kind of a governmental angle about her. She bows her head and says—she is—I guess she's actually probably—she might be elven actually. She would be. Uh, not a snow elf though. She's like one of the Southern—oh wait, you know maybe she would be a snow elf. I'm trying to remember from Marielda. Were those snow elves in the West in Marielda, or did they just become snow elves because the snow came?

DRE: Yeah I think they become snow elves.

AUSTIN: Yeah—well yeah...

DRE: I don't remember though.

AUSTIN: Yeah me neither. I think she's the—only people who pay very close attention would be able to differentiate anyway. She's elven, which is to say she has pointed ears and kind of like higher cheekbones and all the things elves traditionally have. And she does a bow and says,

AUSTIN (as Exarch Braeven): Exarch Braeven. Pleasure.

AUSTIN: And then very carefully sits back down.

ALI: What does—can I like glance at Alyosha and see if they like—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Alyosha says like—he sits down kind of near her, probably at the corner and says,

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): A pleasure to finally meet you after hearing so many good things about the work you've done in the South.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: So some loose familiarity. She just says like,

ALI (simultaneously): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Exarch Braeven): We all try every day to do well by His name.

AUSTIN: And the prelate sits down and then food starts to come in, and there's just like this group of people here. Candor definitely gives you some looks, Throndir, but he's not like ready to jump you, you know?

DRE: Yeah okay. I give looks back!

AUSTIN: What sorts of things are you talking about at the dinner table?

ART: Just—just before we get started, what here is evil?

DRE: [laughs]

AUSTIN: I—did you ask—the third guy died—the guy who was in Candor’s group died—the evil one, okay so not him. Um...

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Let’s talk about What Here is Evil. Let’s talk about that move here. How do you think that works?

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: I know we’ve had this conversation in Season 1, but things have definitely changed. Let’s talk about the pure mechanics of it here.

ART: Yeah... Let me—can I just pull up the—?

AUSTIN: Yes. Please.

ART: Okay so the actual move says,

AUSTIN: When you pray for guidance even for a moment and ask “what here is evil?” the GM will tell you honestly.

ART: Okay. Um...

AUSTIN: But like for me, I think the key there is “pray for guidance,” right?

ART: Sure. Um—I mean I think that is—it’s a—I guess the momentary thing is what gets me. Like what does praying for like a second do? Is it like just closing your eyes for a second and kinda like getting centered and then opening your eyes and you sorta like—in that moment you feel it. You feel the malice in their heart or whatever. How ever we’re defining “evil” supernaturally here.

AUSTIN: Yeah I think that that’s—so I want to zero in on that part a little bit more and work out—cause this is the point at which Hadrian himself can work through that better than he’s ever been able to before because conditions are what they are. Um,

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: When we first talked about this, it was talking to Mee Kosh in the woods outside the Erasure, and it was just kind of like “what, you know—is evil socially constructed or what?” and we kind of zeroed in on this notion that like, well it’s the god that you’re talking to, but also social convention, and also it’s this mess of things. Um, the... the most interesting answer here

for really what you're feeling for What Here is Evil is to have it be complicated right now. Hella is definitely evil still.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: But then there are people for whom you are being pulled multiple directions, and that is the first time that's happened. Um, both Exarchs are, in this place, reading to you with a twinge of evil. You know like, not even a twinge. Like they're both reading as Yes Evil, but you *just* talked to Alyosha. You know Alyosha is not evil and that's the confusing bit is what I'd say.

ART: Hmm.

>1:29:56 (89:56)

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): So what brings you all here?

AUSTIN: Asks the Prelate to your group. He knows what Exarch Braeven was here for.

ART (as Hadrian): Uh...

ART: What a—what a question.

[chuckling]

ART (as Hadrian): We were looking for something at the tower and then the tower came down here?

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Mmm. Did you find what you were looking for?

ART (as Hadrian): We did not.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Hmm...

AUSTIN: He nods.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): We are all searching, hm?

AUSTIN: Alyosha is like okay—

[laughing and crosstalk]

ALI: Yeah just turn it off. That's alright.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): And are all of you members of the church? I know it has been a while since I've been to the surface, but I've not seen members [laughing] of the church who dress like you, is all.

[silence]

ART (as Hadrian): No uh—

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe, simultaneously): I'll take that as a no.

ART (as Hadrian): I uh, thought one of you was gonna talk.

ALI (as Hella): I've spent time around people who are faithful. I have all the respects, but no.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Mmm.

AUSTIN: Um, Exarch Braeven has been like eyeing you Hella in like, she's sizing you up. Um,

AUSTIN (as Exarch Braeven): Quite a blade.

ALI (as Hella): Yeahh.

[laughing]

AUSTIN (as Exarch Braeven): Tell us about it. Good diner—good dining conversation.

ALI (as Hella): Are you sure?

AUSTIN (as Exarch Braeven): Our lord invented the blade, hm?

ALI (as Hella): Like in a broad sense or this one specifically or...?

AUSTIN (as Exarch Braeven): At a certain point you realize there is no difference. If he had not struck the first sword into being, that one would not exist.

ALI (as Hella): That's true. Good ole Samoths.

ART: You guys are doing great, I wanna just—

[Ali & Austin laughing]

ART: This is how people love being talked to.

[Ali & Janine laughing]

AUSTIN: Yeah uh, Braeven is definitely holding back a little somethin. Like a little bit of like—you say that and she’s just like “Mhm.” Under the table she’s definitely texting a friend that image of two women touching hands and talking shit to each other from Twitter.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: That image is from Twitter, right? Not 200 years ago or whenever that painting was done; it was a Twitter image?

[crosstalk]

ALI: —just about talking shit about people

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Good.

AUSTIN: “*Girlll!*” That’s what she just texted.

ALI: Yeah...

>1:32:50 (92:50)

AUSTIN (as Exarch Braeven): So tell us where you found it.

ALI (as Hella): I [laughs]—I um, was awarded it. Years ago when I was a teen. I’m from Ordenna-Zero—I’m not sure how?? this all works but uh I helped someone and their farm was being attacked. I—

ALI: Okay so, sidebar

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

ALI: Does Ordenna have wolves? No, right?

AUSTIN: It *did* before there were no more wolves.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Has that come up yet? Has that happened yet? Yes that happened—

ALI: That did happen

AUSTIN: —at the beginning of this season. The very beginning of this season. Yeah. Okay.

ALI: Cause I—that's the way that I've always imagined this story and then the wolves became like a symbolic thing and I didn't know if I had to like—

AUSTIN: No tell me about the wol—wait wait wait!

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: We've never heard this story in or out of character. Tell us the story about how Hella found this sword.

ALI: [laughing] It was supposed to be a—

AUSTIN: But tell the story as Hella. I want Hella to tell this room about this thing.

ALI: [continuing to laugh] Okay.

ALI (as Hella): Um yeah I was travelling with my father because he goes from mine to mine—I'm not sure how familiar you are with Ordenna but that's kind of what happens and there was this—a farm that was being attacked, and all the livestock was being attacked by wolves every night, um so while we were staying there in town, me and him hunted them down, and because the farmer had been losing all of his profits, he gave me this sword instead because he didn't have any money and I've had it ever since.

AUSTIN (as Exarch Braeven): Hella the Wolf-Killer...

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: And smiles a big, toothy grin.

ALI (as Hella): [laughs softly] I've been a killer of many things, yeah.

AUSTIN (as Exarch Braeven): Mm. Our lord would be proud.

ALI: [laughing] She glances at Hadrian and is like,

ALI (as Hella): I would hope so.

>1:35:04 (95:04)

AUSTIN: The conversation—throughout all of this also Candor—I guess actually, that was the other thing is that Candor definitely at this point butts in, and he's like,

AUSTIN (as Candor): No Ordenna down here. Thankfully.

ALI (as Hella): Hey!

AUSTIN (as Candor, simultaneously): Don't need the damn place.

ALI (as Hella): Can I ask everyone at the table a question? Do y'all get snow down here?

AUSTIN (as Candor): Depends on the lamina—the strata.

ALI (as Hella): Okay. Huh.

AUSTIN (as Candor): Heard rumor you're having a bit of a snow problem up top.

AUSTIN: The prelate says just like,

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe, in a warning tone): Candor.

AUSTIN: And he's like,

AUSTIN (as Candor, grumbling): Mmrmm.

AUSTIN: "I'll play nice," you know, and goes back to eating his food. I wonder what they're eating. What are they fucking eating? Um, they've cooked something that is the blandest thing you've ever eaten, and you realize halfway through that only your dishes are bland and that their dishes are like—you catch like a whiff of spice that you just do not have on your dishes. As zeros of course, they just assume like "Hmm, nah. You don't have all these cool, past, history spices. You're not used to it."

ART: Huh.

AUSTIN: They're also probably right that you wouldn't be able to handle their spiciness.

ALI: That's rude.

DRE: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Maybe—mmm, I guess, yeah; Hella might be able to; they don't have Ordennan spices down here so—

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Or I guess there's a little bit of Ordenna down here, but like *very* little. By and large, there is no Ordenna down here so—

ALI: Man!

AUSTIN: You know when time—you know when they stopped being able to reconfigure, so—

ALI: Mhm...

AUSTIN: There was kind of a small window between—

ALI: [laughs awkwardly]

AUSTIN: —when they could make past worlds that got kind of crushed down here and when they lost that ability to do it, so...

ALI: I know, but as Hella who doesn't know, she's like "Man!" [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yes. I understand.

AUSTIN: I mean that's a question: Throndir, did you share what Sunder said about this place to everybody?

DRE: Uh, yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cause that's weird, right?

ALI: Yeah. I think Hella, being Hella, and also not having a grasp on this is also sort of like,

ALI (as Hella): Yeah we don't want to be down here.

AUSTIN: Hmm...

ALI (as Hella): That's the point; that's to get to Ordenna

AUSTIN: [laughs] Um,

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): So where are you staying?

AUSTIN: —asks the prelate.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Please we have so much room.

ART (as Hadrian): We haven't really been here long enough to know.

AUSTIN: Alyosha says—[laughs slightly] Alyosha says,

AUSTIN (as Alyosha, pointedly): Oh uh, Hadrian, earlier when I stepped away, I took care of getting us some lodgings, so it is already taken care of.

AUSTIN: And he smiles and nods at the prelate, and then the prelate nods back.

ALI (as Hella): Oh.

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): Hm?

ALI (as Hella): [laughing] No it's fine.

JANINE (as Adaire): Here?

ALI (as Hella): Yeah I think—I think we—I had kind of a deal at the Topgallant.

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): That's where I got the uh arrangements. We are good.

JANINE (as Adaire, simultaneously): Okay. Okay.

ALI (as Hella): I was getting a vibe from the bartender there so I wanted to go back

JANINE (as Adaire): [breathes heavily]

AUSTIN: Oooh! Eyebrows raise.

[laughing]

AUSTIN: Uh, Alyosha says—Alyosha says, um,

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): When you're in new places there's always camaraderie to be found if you look hard enough.

AUSTIN: And he smiles and nods at you which is just like, "you do you."

[laughing]

AUSTIN: Like, "go for it."

[continued laughing]

AUSTIN: Actually then probably the other exarch says um—I think this probably devolves into a weird theocratic debate about—

ALI: Oh cool. [laughs]

AUSTIN: —hookups, in which Alyosha is like in defense of like—you know, in the stories Samoths was a man of the people who dealt with real people, who had temptation and desire, and who fulfilled that desire and who—we're better off for it. And Exarch Braven is just listing all of the terrible times that Samoths had to clean up after some shitty person because they got like—they hooked up with someone who they should not have, and then there was vengeance stuff happening, and there were—there was jealousy and blah blah blah. And it—but it's all dressed up. And that is like—the remainder of the meal is them just like tossing different verses at each other.

JANINE: Oh god.

AUSTIN: It's gr—listen. Adaire, you love it—it's the best right? This is exactly why you love churches.

JANINE: Mhmm.

AUSTIN: Fucking talking about what other people can and can't do.

ALI: [laughs] I think Hella quietly whispers to Adaire like,

ALI (as Hella, whispering): I said that so they *wouldn't* ask questions.

[laughing]

JANINE (as Adaire): They're not asking questions, are they?

AUSTIN (in a character voice): Now when you say you had a connection to her— [laughing] tell us more about what you meant.

ALI: [laughing hard]

DRE: Oh boy.

ALI: God! I just wanted to know what she could bench!

[laughing]

>1:40:18 (100:18)

AUSTIN: Yeah there is no—the meal ends and the prelate says,

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): It is such a shame that you have to go but please, while you're in town, if you need anything, just let us know.

ART (as Hadrian): That's—that's so generous. Uh, this—I just couldn't find a place for this in—during the meal, but do you know there's a group on the surface that uses a very similar name to you...

AUSTIN: He like, turns his head sideways a little bit.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): What are they called?

ART (as Hadrian): Well see, I'm going to say it and you're not gonna understand, so I just wanna like, get out in front of this that there like—there *is* a difference.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): What is the difference?

ART (as Hadrian): Well they're *Dark Sun*, but they don't refer to a family member; they refer to you know, Our Lord's Greatest Labor in the sky.

AUSTIN: He like, looks questioningly towards you,

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): And you haven't met our missionaries...?

ART (as Hadrian): I don't—you have missionaries on t—[hesitantly] Z-zero?

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): You can say "the surface" with me. It's fine

ART (as Hadrian): Alright. Why isn't that one One is my q—like?

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Cause it's the top one. It's Zero and then One is like a negative one.

ART (as Hadrian): Mmm. Okay.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): And then Plus One would be like, I guess an—an unwritten future... It's not my field.

AUSTIN: Smiles at you.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Um, of course we have missionaries.

AUSTIN: And he, like, gestures to Exarch Alyosha.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): The church is throughout all strata; the touch of Samoths must be felt.

ART (as Hadrian): So—so who would those people be?

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe, slowly): Well in—let me think... Um, in [sighs] the town of Velas we had a prelate: Prelate Lucius. Um, in Rosemerrow—

AUSTIN: And then he just, like, names all the people you know. But then also names people who were in the Cult of the Dark Sun, so like he says the name of the—the priest who you learned was in the Cult of the Dark Sun, but he also then says,

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe, slowly): Um, we also have uh, Ariana Slayton, and we have Elan Showman in Rosemerrow, doing just wonderful work.

AUSTIN: And for him there is no difference, it becomes very clear.

>1:43:14 (103:14)

♪ “Inside” starts playing ♪

ART (as Hadrian): Okay... Yeah I—yeah I’ve met some of those—some of those people.

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): But they use a “u”... You’ve seen it written out?

ART (as Hadrian): Ahh... Some...certainly.

ALI: We saw it written out on the list right? Like this is—

AUSTIN: You saw it written out by...who?

ALI: By Gloria—

AUSTIN (simultaneously): Gloria and Victoria.Yeah.

ART: Yeah.

ALI: Okay.

ART (as Hadrian): So I guess not a first party source; more of a—

AUSTIN (as Prelate Springe): Mmmm.

ART (as Hadrian): I guess it could've been a—a misunderstanding. Well it's definitely it's own—there's definitely two groups—there's definitely a second group they're referring to...

AUSTIN: Alyosha says,

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): It is getting late for [breathes] this sort of talk.

ART (as Hadrian): Sure yeah.

AUSTIN (as Alyosha): We should resume tomorrow.

ART (as Hadrian): Of course.

AUSTIN: And very subtly puts his hand on your back.

ART (as Hadrian): Yeah of c—yeah we'll be back.

♪ “Inside” stops playing ♪

>1:45:17 End (105:17)