

### Winter in Hieron 03: You Haven't Kept Up, Have You?

[Transcribed by Kara @karathenerd]

ALI: Last time on Friends at the Table:

[recap of Episode 01 begins]

AUSTIN: Currently, you, this party of four, like I said, is on their way from Velas to Rosemerrow.

**[Music begins: "Inside" by Jack de Quidt]**

At first glance this is like a cloaked figure that has a kind of spotted white cloak from the shoulders down, but then like you look closer at the legs, and those aren't sandals, those are just, it has two foot grouping—it has two—it has like two claws on each foot, and then you realize it's not brown s—

JANINE: It has bird feet.

AUSTIN: No. Not bird feet, my friend.

JANINE: No? Oh boy.

AUSTIN: It has kind of brown, chitinous skin.

JANINE: Ew.

AUSTIN: And then you realize it's not a cape, those are like wings?

[JANINE sighs, disgusted]

Dusty, white, thin wings. And then where it would be a throat is—I mean, it's still its throat, I guess, but it's this like really wrinkly, again, kind of chitinous, hard-shelled skin, and above that is the face of a moth.

[break]

AUSTIN: You've probably heard the kids...in Velas talk about Red Jack before. Red Jack is this kind of like mythological—or like urban legend? And it's just like the sort of like one, two, Red Jack's coming for you, style... You know, I think you probably have alternately used Red Jack as a way to tell kids to behave, um, and understood it to just be complete nonsense?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: He rides up on you and just, with both hands, he like removes both hands from the reins, and the horse like continues, and I think the last thought you have before being cut really badly [laughs] is, 'Wow! Like, that horse and he are really synced up!'

[break]

AUSTIN: Adaire, you reach that bl—you reach out with that blade, and the like—you're so sure you're gonna slash the foot. But she lifts her foot up just as you reach out, and then slams it down on your wrist, and then grips you by the wrist. With her foot.

JANINE: Cool.

ALI: Ew!

AUSTIN: And pulls you out and then like...

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Tosses off the side of her wing like—again, like a cloak. You look up and see that you are off the ground as she begins to flutter away.

[recap ends]

[music ends]

**[02:15]**

AUSTIN: Hey, everybody, Adaire is flying through the air.

[ALI laughs, JANINE groans]

ALI: [meekly] Bye...

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] [laughs] Good answer!

JANINE: [crosstalk] Great.

[JANINE, ALI, and ART laugh]

AUSTIN: What's your bond with Adaire, Hella?

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

ALI: It's a—it's a positive one—I just don't—

AUSTIN: No, but what is it? Let's—I want to hear it out loud.

ALI: Oh. I don't want to say this whole thing, I have to write this so much better. It's basically, whatever Adaire is doing to not be the person that I knew her as isn't my business, and so long as she's useful when I need her to be useful, that's fine.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. All right, so, so, it's not that tight, it's just sort of tight. Adaire, don't you have a much better one for Hella?

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Uh, yeah.

AUSTIN: What do you—what do you—what's yours say?

JANINE: My bond with Hella is, "Hella has my back when things go wrong."

[ALI, DRE laughing]

AUSTIN: Hmm.

ALI: Hella does, *Ali* doesn't.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Myeah...

ALI: I think that was an out of character goodbye...

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ALI: Um. How—wait, how above the ground is she?

AUSTIN: She is... Hey, Art, how—or Hadrian, how high up did you cast Darkness?

ART: Um... I mean, at the level of the archers, so—

AUSTIN: So like thirty feet up. So I'd say...

ALI: Oh, god.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] I'd say, Janine—or, sorry—

ART: [crosstalk] Well, a little lower, 'cause I was trying to get 'em down, but yeah.

AUSTIN: Right, right. So then, yeah, like twenty feet up.

ALI: God! W—okay, wait. Wait. So if Hella's like 6 feet, and extends her arm up. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh boy, Hella, no, that's not how it works.

[ALI and JANINE laughing]

That's not how it works.

JANINE: Then you've got like 9, and that's at most—

[AUSTIN laughs]

ALI: Yeah, I could—could I easily...

JANINE: If you're on your tippy toes.

ALI: Could I reasonably grab Adaire's foot and try to like,

AUSTIN: [laughing] No.

ALI: Yank her down?

AUSTIN: Twenty feet is higher than that.

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] You could maybe like...

ART: [crosstalk] Yeah, Ali, I'm six feet tall and I can't reach twenty feet.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Do you have your Air Jordans on?

[ALI laughing]

AUSTIN: You could—

ALI: Okay, but there—[wheezes with laughter]

AUSTIN: You could do like some cool acrobatics shit, maybe.

ALI: There's like, a moth person, and then Adaire is like, a certain amount of length...[

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, Adaire is like at 20 feet, that's what I said.

ALI: [laughing] Okay.

[JANINE laughs]

ART: Aw, it's gonna suck, you can hurt yourself pretty bad falling from twenty feet.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: There's a lot of trees, maybe I can roll good for once and grab one.

ALI: She could land on the...

AUSTIN: Nothing like falling onto a bunch of old wood. Great.

ART: That's what they say.

AUSTIN: Yup.

ALI: I don't have any ranged stuff!

AUSTIN: Yeah you do, everybody can do Volley.

ALI: [sighs] Sure, okay. Yeah...

JANINE: Oh man, my rapier's still on the ground, shit!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: I have a dagger, I'll throw it, I guess. Or can I aid Throndir in a thing?

AUSTIN: Sure! You can.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: How are you aiding Throndir in a thing?

ALI: [laughing] Throndir, do you want to do a thing?

DRE: [laughing] Yeah, sure, what thing do you have in mind?

[ALI and ART laugh]

ART: Is it shoot her with an arrow? I don't think that's gonna help!

[JANINE laughs]

ALI: [sighs] Yeah.. Well! Yeah, that's tough. You're in a tough spot. [laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughs] Champ.

[ALI laughs in surprise]

A tough one.

JANINE: Maybe they just wanna...just wanna talk, up in the nice dark spot.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Yeah.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Maybe it's fine.

ALI: Yikes. Yeah. I...man!

[Pause]

DRE: Do you want me to shoot, and you can catch?

ALI: [thrilled] Yes!

DRE: [laughs] Okay.

AUSTIN: There we go, we figured it out.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

Throndir, give me a roll.

DRE: Meeting of the minds. There we go, that's a 10.

AUSTIN: There's a 10.

JANINE: Nice!

AUSTIN: That's the shit you want. Do your damage...Throndir.

DRE: 6.

AUSTIN: That's a 6, that's a solid [ALI: Wow.] amount of damage. I'll make a mark of that. She has 1 armor. Boop. So, you catch her in the back. Like, the arrow goes in past her wings and hits her right in the back, like, you managed to time it such that it goes right through while they're flapping. There's a moment where she could either drop Adaire or the thing she's carrying, but she keeps the thing she's carrying. Then...Hella.

ALI: Hi.

AUSTIN: How you making this catch?

ALI: Um! [laughs]

AUSTIN: This is gonna be a Defy Danger.

ALI: Yeah, that seems fair. Um, oh.. By Dex, I guess?

JANINE: Could she make it charismatically?

[ALI, AUSTIN laugh]

AUSTIN: I think it's—

ALI: Wait.

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

ALI: Can this be a Strength catch?

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah. You don't necessarily get the best position but you're just trying to like, listen, I'll just fucking catch her, you know.

ALI: [laughs] Sure, okay... That's a 9!

AUSTIN: That's a 9. So on a 7 to 9 you stumble, hesitate or flinch, [ALI laughs] the GM will offer you a worse outcome, a hard bargain, or an ugly choice. Um.

ART: Austin, if you're looking for ideas, I just want to remind you that force is equal to mass times acceleration. [ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, right, totally. Totally. One of you gets hurt from this. You decide who, Hella.

ALI: Oh, cool. Great.

AUSTIN: Either she lands *hard* on your armor, or you like soften yourself such, like you kind of position yourself too weakly so that you're not really catching her so much as she—

JANINE: Like, loosen your knee joints?

AUSTIN: Yeah, and—so that as much as like, you're just getting hit with her.

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

ALI: But breaking her fall so she is safe.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: I think that my HP situation is like so much better than Janine's.

AUSTIN: Totally, totally!

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: So I'm actually just gonna... I'm going to do the damage—this counts as an attack from the moth lady on you.

ALI: [laughs] Sure.

AUSTIN: I'll just roll her damage. That's a 3. So, on you—

ALI: Does my armor count?

AUSTIN: Yeah! Sure.

ALI: Okay, then that's nothing.

AUSTIN: Not a problem.



JANINE: Nice!

AUSTIN: You kind of get jostled a little bit.

ART: Probably leaves a bruise, I mean it's probably not like great in the future but, you know.

ALI: [crosstalk] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Yeah, totally, but right this second—

JANINE: I probably say thanks.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: I definitely say thanks.

ALI: Hella's giving you the *dumbest* grin.

[JANINE and AUSTIN laugh]

[as HELLA]: [slyly] Hey. Welcome back.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Good!

JANINE [as ADAIRE]: Got my back!

AUSTIN: Kodiak is fine, Throndir.

DRE: Well, that's good.

AUSTIN: Kodiak is kind of like hrrrrmmm [worried dog grumble] and then, like. [crosstalk] Like for like three seconds—

DRE: [crosstalk] [strangled with laughter] What was he like? Can you—

AUSTIN: MHrrrrmmmmmm [repeats worried dog grumble].

DRE: Okay, thanks!

[ART laughs]

AUSTIN: And then like, three seconds later, just starts licking you. Just like, oh yeah.

JANINE: Aww.

AUSTIN: We're back to normal, everything's good! Um. Sol is now out of the back of the cart.

[as SOL]: Are they gone?

And he's like looking up over the side of the cart.

[as SOL]: I don't think they got much.

ART: Into the black?

AUSTIN: Yes, yes.

[ALI giggles]

[as SOL]: We should get moving...before they come back.

JANINE: Wait, did the big horse man go?

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Yeah, he also fled with the moth that he saved.

DRE: [crosstalk] Yeah, he's gone.

JANINE: Okay.

DRE: I mean, we could—do we wanna go? Do we wanna follow them?

JANINE: Do we have a dead moth corpse we could check out?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you have a dead moth corpse you could check out.

ALI: Yeah. I killed one.

AUSTIN: Spoken like a true thief!

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JANINE: Look, I gotta make—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] And you thought you'd have trouble, yeah.

JANINE: [crosstalk] of the land and, um...

AUSTIN: Yeah. In fact, I think you get treasure 'cause you killed a monster! Welcome to D&D!

[all laugh]

Welcome to games: when you kill a thing,..

...So the way that works is that you roll... I think you roll their damage and take... Let me just look it up really quick. It's like damage plus some other bullshit.

ART: I'm gonna—I'm gonna dispel the Darkness, just for clerical sake.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fair.

ART: I'm not just gonna like, walk away and leave this orb of darkness—

AUSTIN [interrupting] Wait, *Clerical* sake or clerical sake.

DRE: Wocka wocka.

[ALL laugh]

JANINE: So if he leaves Darkness up he has to do more paperwork when he gets back to Velas, it's just...

AUSTIN: Exactly. Yup.

JANINE: It's a nightmare.

AUSTIN: It's a whole thing! It's a whole thing.

ART: I have to register it with the Darkness bureau.

[JANINE and AUSTIN laugh]

AUSTIN: "Monsters, much like adventurers, collect shiny, useful things. When the players search the belongings of a monster, be they on their person or tucked away somewhere, describe them honestly. If the monster has accumulated some wealth, you can roll that randomly. Start with the monsters' damage dice, modified if the monster is a hoarder, far from

home, magical, divine, planar, a lord over others, or ancient and noteworthy,” it is none of those things.

JANINE: [crosstalk] I don’t know! This def looks like a moth king. King of moths.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Well! Actually, I think it is a hoarder, I think that these are all hoarders, actually. So you gotta roll—I’m going to roll the damage dice twice and take the higher result.

ART: Woo!

AUSTIN: They do...D8, so I’ll roll 2d8 and take high. That’s a 3. You get several coins, it had some coins on it. Which is nice. You get...there are 25 coins on this thing.

DRE: Jesus!

ALI: Oh!

JANINE: That’s decent.

AUSTIN: Well! It’s decent. They’re—

JANINE: It’s a moth, like.

AUSTIN: So I—yeah, let’s describe—yeah, well, what are you... What do you want to know about this dead moth? And then I’ll tell you what type—

JANINE: Is it still wearing its like, wing cloak?

AUSTIN: Yeah, dog, those are just its wings.

JANINE: But they’re like around it. Or are they not.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but like it’s just dead, so—they’re connected by muscle to its body. It’s just wings, like, that look like a cloak.

JANINE: So can we see like the front of the torso and stuff?

AUSTIN: You can move the wings, you want to touch the moth wings?

JANINE: [laughs] When you say it like that, I’m not sure I do!

AUSTIN: I mean—oh, you know what?

JANINE: Oh, I have gloves.

AUSTIN: It sounds like you're Discern—you know what, it sounds like you're Discerning Realities to me. So give me a—

JANINE: It does sound like that.

AUSTIN: That's what it sounds like to me, I'm gonna let you roll that.

JANINE: Wait, what do I roll?

AUSTIN: That is a Wisdom, I believe. I believe?

ART: That sounds right.

JANINE: I think it is.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yep.

JANINE: A 13!

DRE: Woof!

AUSTIN: Look at that. So you get three questions and take plus 1 forward while acting on the answers, a thing you should've done earlier, by the way. And I forgot to let you know.

JANINE: Yeah... I didn't—

AUSTIN: I don't think you ever failed by 1 though, so. In any case, you can ask—

JANINE: Wait, there was a definitely a time I could've used that plus 1 forward and totally forgot and it would have given me a 10.

AUSTIN: That's true.

JANINE: Oh wait, no, that was—that was when I was evading, so maybe it—I don't know, whatever, it doesn't matter now.

AUSTIN: Anyway.

JANINE: Okay. What here is useful or valuable to me, that's the easy one.

AUSTIN: So on top of finding the 25 quote-unquote “coins”...which it takes you a few moments, and then you realize like... You find a pouch of those coins, and you shake them and they're definitely like, it feels like currency in there and then you look and it is like, 25 silken coins. Like hard silk coins. These are not currency you can spend anywhere except wherever this thing is from.

JANINE [disappointed]: Oh.

AUSTIN: So that's, that's being honest. I've done my duty. It does not just happen to have Rosemerrow money on it. But too, the other thing that you find is a list, that is scrawled out in the normal tongue. Whatever like, the normal language of Hieron is. And it is a list of supplies, and like the first few are very clearly things that were dictated to it, where it's like, you know, five quarts of water, you know, ten bags of flour, et cetera et cetera, and then at the bottom is like a list of things that they wanted, specifically. Which one was this, this was Foliage? So is like, a new bow! Exclamation point.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Aww!

AUSTIN: And like under the next one is like... I think its favorite color is definitely like red, and so it's like “some red paint!” Just like and it's a list of extra things that it hopes to find during its raid.

JANINE: Aw.

AUSTIN: What's next? You have two more questions.

JANINE: Um. Who's really in control here?

AUSTIN: Y'all. Y'all—you.

JANINE: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: But no, that's important here, right, which is that like, the thing that you discern is based on the fact that Red Jack saved the other moth and then left? It's like, okay, it's dead now, they've given up on it. They're not coming back for it. It is safe here. They would've come back for you, or they would've come back for this moth, or more goods, but they're really and truly gone.

JANINE: Okay. What should I be on the lookout for?

AUSTIN: The thing that you realize is that they attacked you at night. You were obviously travelling in these woods all day and so you know to be extra cautious at nighttime.

JANINE: I guess they are moths.

AUSTIN: They are moths, after all.

JANINE: That adds up.

AUSTIN: So that is the thing to be aware of. All right.

JANINE: Okay.

DRE: Do they—does he have any arrows or anything on him?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're able to recover your—if you used ammo in this scene, you are able to recover your ammo. You could totally get—in fact, even if you broke a couple of arrows, Throndir, you're able to take a couple of theirs. And they're like different. They again have been—they're like made from a different sort of wood than what your arrows are made of, but they're totally usable.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Maybe you need to use some light modification during downtime but like it's not a problem.

DRE: Okay.

**[15:00]**

All right, any other questions before we move this scene forward?

[Pause]

ALL: I'm good.

AUSTIN: Sol is—go ahead.

JANINE: I was just gonna say we should ask Sol what the hell was up with that box that they took.

AUSTIN [as SOL]: It was water. It was this—[sighs] so my—[sighs] I have a cousin who used to live in Velas, and now he lives down in Twinbrook and he says the water there

just doesn't taste the same as the Velasian water, so every time I come I bring him some of the Velesian water.

JANINE [as ADAIRE]: In a box?

SOL: Well, it's a bunch of glass bottles inside of the box.

ADAIRE: Okay.

SOL: He's not gonna be happy. [sighs, sighs, sighs]

AUSTIN: He like, sighs like a cascade. Just like, one sigh turned into another sigh, which turns into a third sigh.

[as SOL]: You know, I just—I'm paying you guys a lot, so I was hoping you'd keep all the stuff, you know?

[Pause]

Nothing? Not even an apology, okay. That's fine. No, that's great.

[ALI laughs].

ADAIRE: I mean, look, if it's—we can just get some bottles and fill them up wherever, he doesn't have to know. A lot of that stuff's in the mind, you know.

SOL: Okay, yeah, that's a good idea. I have some extra bottles.

ADAIRE: Yeah, it's fine, everyone will be happy, it's fine.

SOL: Okay...

ALI [as HELLA]: You can help us fight next time you want to keep your shit.

[all laugh]

AUSTIN: Wow!

ART: Woah!

SOL: No one's paying me to fight! That's—I'm paying you to fight! That's the thing I'm doing. I don't know what your problem is!



[laughter]

Anyway, we should get going.

AUSTIN: And he like gets back in the front and like, does the reins on his horse.

JANINE: I pick up my rapier.

AUSTIN: Good job. Good.

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: I'm not that GM, I promise.

ART: Does anyone wanna—

AUSTIN: I'm not, I'm not. I've played games with that GM. I never want to be that GM.

ART [as HADRIAN]: Is anyone hurt in any serious way? I can try to quickly patch you up.

JANINE [as ADAIRE]: My wrist hurts a bit.

My wrist hurts 4.

[all laugh]

AUSTIN: Good. Yeah, you're—you know, I think it's like starting to scab over but like you're bleeding from the wrists. It's not great.

HADRIAN: Here, let me see it.

JANINE: Okay, I like go over and... I don't—I'm not—I should say that like, I go over and I'm cool with this, but also I'm not like, enthusiastic about Hadrian doing his thing.

AUSTIN: Okay. Have you seen—

JANINE: I'm just like, I need it, so, we're cool, but.

AUSTIN: Have you seen Hadrian ever do his thing before?

JANINE: No.

AUSTIN: What's your bond, do you have bonds?

JANINE: The thing I mean is that I'm not enthusiastic about Hadrian. My bond with Hadrian is "I don't trust Hadrian anymore than I trust his church."

AUSTIN: Ah, good. Okay. Good to know. Hadrian, do you have a bond with Adaire yet?

ART: I don't.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's good to know. All right, so what are you doing, Hadrian?

ART: I'm... I like take off my gloves, and I put my hand on her wrist...

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ART: And it heals by magic.

AUSTIN: [amused] Oh. Okay!

JANINE: That was pretty cool.

AUSTIN: How's that work. What's the roll on that?

ART: I roll Charisma, and then it either works or it doesn't.

AUSTIN: Oh. Okay. This is Lay On Hands?

ART: Yeah, this is Lay On Hands.

AUSTIN: Okay. Look at that!

ART: It works!

JANINE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: That's a 13! Lots of success today.

ALI: Ooh.

AUSTIN: All right, so yeah you heal 1d8 damage, so. Or remove a disease!

ART: Well, it's 2d8, I took the enhanced healing.

AUSTIN: Ooh, look at you!

JANINE: Nice!

ART: Or I guess, that's what that means, right?

AUSTIN: Yes!

ART: "When you heal an ally you heal plus 1d8 damage," yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so it's an additional 1d8, so 2d8. 14!

ALI: Oh wow.

AUSTIN: Damn.

JANINE: That's way more than I need, but.

ALI: [crosstalk] You're feeling great.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] You feel like rejuvenated. It feels—you got healed in ways you didn't know you were hurt! Like—you have a creak in your back—

JANINE: [crosstalk] 15 plus on my hitpoint thing here, I feel wonderful.

AUSTIN [laughs]: That's good. Okay. Anyway.

[Pause]

So like Sol begins to, Sol's like

[as SOL]: All right, let's go, McGillicuddy.

And like, shakes the reins, and everyone continues on towards Twinbrook.

DRE: Um, does anyone think it's weird that they stole water and they have water on the top of their like, pillaging grocery list?

JANINE: And we're like, between two rivers?

DRE: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Well, you're not at the first one yet. You're on the way to the first river. And-

JANINE: Oh, okay. All right, my bad... Still!

AUSTIN: You'll note it's actually way more water than they actually stole. They did not get to steal as much water as they—like, they wanted probably ten times as much water as what they just stole. And also there are other things like food, and like, it is like a must-have list. Glue is on that list. Fertilizer is on that list. And then like some things that just like, some nice flowers.

DRE: Some red paint.

JANINE: Aww.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JANINE: Yes? Yes. Yes?

DRE [as THRONDIR]: I mean, if Sol is really concerned about his merchandise, I can attempt to track that horse and we can try to get it back.

SOL: No, it's just the one. Eh...Adaire is right.

JANINE [as ADAIRE]: Mm, we can—and—yeah.

SOL: Adaire is right. He won't know the difference.

ADAIRE: That shit is all in your mind, like if you don't tell them that it's different, they're gonna think it tastes gr—like taste, it's all—especially water.

SOL: Yeah...she's probably right.

ADAIRE: As long as it's not brown and doesn't smell like shit, you're fine.

AUSTIN: Great. Good. Spoken like a good... Good. Okay. So you continue on and it's about, I'd say it's about midnight by the time you get there, which means that most of this little town is pretty much done. You cross over a bridge, you come up to a bridge and you start to cross over it and then you realize there is only water on the left side of the bridge. And to the right, there is in fact not a river at all, there is a dried out, kind of like, ravine.

ART: That's weird.

AUSTIN: Yeah, and then you realize you're not-

ART: What's under the bridge?

AUSTIN: It's a dam. They've converted this bridge into a dam.

ART: Oh.

AUSTIN: So I'm actually going to change that blue line. We're working with Adaire's maps here, so Adaire, this is strange for you? You were pretty fucking sure that this was a river.

JANINE: Mm-hm, up until very recently.

AUSTIN: And now it is not. Change...

JANINE: Adaire probably like, goes in her bag and like gets, takes a note or something 'cause she's gotta update this now, this is just work. [ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, this is—she's just got some work to do, great, thanks.

[Pause]

But then, yeah, you get into the town. And I haven't really drawn this town out, but I'm working on, like gimme—let's move you over here to this really hideous version of this town that doesn't exist yet at all, except there's these two rivers.

[ALI laughs]

ART: All right, I see what you're working with.

AUSTIN: Working with something here, I guess. Just give me a black line. I can make it work with a black line. Okay. [pause] So I'm gonna say there's just like this town, that is just like this area, it's just this kind of like- big area here. Right? I'll just draw some nice, round, shapes for buildings.

[JANINE laughs]

ALI: You know, how buildings.

AUSTIN: Like how buildings!

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Buildings, typically round.

[ALI and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Buildings, the round ones! And there is a wall to its south so it's kind of caught between—it's kind of this triangular shape between this, or kind of a trapezoidal shape or something between these two rivers. [mutters] With a bunch of different buildings. There's kind of a [louder] big building here, and then there's like another couple little ones up here. Lots of little homes. You know.

ART: Ah yes, this town full of puce asylums.

[all laugh]

AUSTIN: Yeah! You got it. They're beautiful. There's a nice one.

ALI: Oh, there's a square one, that must be important!

AUSTIN: There's two rectangles and then there's that. That's good, it's like some shops or something.

ART: Ah, the big equals sign, they call it!

AUSTIN: That's what they call it, Big Equals!

[DRE, ALI laugh]

This goes right up against here... There we go! There we go, and that's a town.

[all laugh]

ALI: I'll screenshot this real quick.

DRE: And that's a town!

AUSTIN: Yeah, please. Well, it's not done yet, I'm still working on it! 'Cause then there's this nice big—this is the tavern right here, like the inn. It's big and you can stay there.

ALI: Oh. That's... Ohh!

ART: Oh!

ALI: Is this like a—

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's fancy, pretty fancy.

JANINE: It's really close to those like, bug splats.

AUSTIN: Sorry, those are trees, and those belong up here. You gotta zoom in [JANINE: Okay!] and you can see that those are a bunch of trees.

ALI: Oh, so you can like request a room with a view.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah, definitely.

ALI: Of the river and the nice trees.

AUSTIN: Well, so, again, there is a river to the northwest. Uh. You get to town, what the fuck do you do? Let's start with that.

ALI: What were we doing here besides taking that guy?

AUSTIN: You were taking that guy, and then the plan was to like continue on to the south—let's like, actually talk about what your goal here is generally, which is to get to that red mark on the big Hieron map. That's in the woods to the south, south of Rosemerrow.

ALI: Okay, Right.

AUSTIN: Now, you could've taken a boat. [ALI, ART laugh] Which is—

JANINE: Adaire suggested taking a boat...

AUSTIN: Okay, but did Hella say no? Was Hella the one who s—?

ALI: No, that's all right.

AUSTIN: Nah, no boat from Velas?

ALI: Nope.

AUSTIN: 'Cause that was literally the plan, the first time, was to go to that red mark on the map through—

ALI: Yeah, it didn't work out last time.

AUSTIN: No, not so much. So...

ALI: Seas are safe for now. Don't worry about it.

ART:  $\frac{2}{3}$  of that group just abandoned that plan.

[Laughs]

AUSTIN: Yep!

JANINE: I have a thing that Adaire can do, that I can do.

AUSTIN: What can Adaire do?

JANINE: So I got a move called Connections?

AUSTIN: Ooh.

JANINE: That says “when you put word out to the criminal underbelly about something you want or need, roll Charisma.” A thing I want or need right now is information about that dam.

AUSTIN: Sure. Totally.

JANINE: I wanna know...how—you know I want to like find a—you know, as we’re walking through town like, find a dude I vaguely generally recognize [AUSTIN: Yeah.] or maybe like recognize his special coat that he wears 'cause he's with a group, and don't worry about it.

AUSTIN: is that what it is? Is that—wait, no no no—is that the thing, is it coats? Is there a special set of coats that people wear in Rosemerrow and adjacent places?

JANINE: It's probably... Mm-hm... I was gonna say yeah, it's probably different between places but like, what's the most...halfing society-ish way to identify that you are covertly part of a little group.

AUSTIN: I do like the notion of it being a type of coat.

JANINE: Like nice coats.

AUSTIN: Yeah, maybe it's like—

JANINE: Like coats with tails.

ART: A big, broad lapel.

JANINE: Cause like, do halflings normally wear...? Oh, yeah, like really wide lapels, those are cool too.

AUSTIN: *Really* wide lapels is good. [JANINE: Yeah.] Yeah, I like that a lot.



JANINE: So I find someone with really thick lapels.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: And to do this I roll Charisma. [AUSTIN: You do.] So I do that. 11!

AUSTIN: That's not bad. So what's it actually say happens on a 10 plus?

JANINE: 10 plus, someone has it *just* for you.

AUSTIN: Someone has what just for you? The information that you're looking for?

JANINE: The thing you need. In this case that's information about like what's the situation with this new dam. 'Cause this was not here last time.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. So you know a guy here named Lardwulf.

[JANINE, DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Who is, uh... He runs the entertainment at the tavern in town? What's the name of this tavern, who has a good tavern name? No one? No one has a good tavern name?

JANINE: The...Greasy Snifter? [crosstalk] No, that's terrible.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] The Greasy... No, too late!

DRE: [crosstalk] Yup!

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Someone said it! All right, fine.

ART: [crosstalk] Ugh! God, I don't want a drink here if your snifters are all greasy!

AUSTIN: I'm gonna...

ALI: Do we have...

AUSTIN [typing]: Greasy Snifter... The, *the* Greasy Snifter, and it's not the big one. That's a different little tavern, I'm gonna say. Let's make another tavern. It's this one over here.

ALI: [laughing] I like greasy, I don't like snifter for some reason. That's the problem I haveQ

JANINE: You know, like a snifter, like thing you drink fancy things out of.

ALI: Yeah... Right, but—

JANINE: But it's been washed poorly.

ALI: Good, yes.

AUSTIN: Well, you go—like, so does everyone else go to the regular tavern where they're—or like inn where they're going to check in and then Adaire sneaks off, as like I have some business here?

ART: To the Greasy Snifter?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: That does sound like a place you don't want to be. That sounds like where the bad element hangs out, the Greasy Snifter.

ALI: Yeah... I think even with an invitation, Hella's not going to the Greasy...

JANINE: Yeah, I think Adaire would probably like...not necessarily put that offer forth.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: With, you know—especially like Hadrian, she's probably not going to say to this, you know fancy armored cleric boy, hey, do you mind if we stop at the Greasy Snifter for a sec, I gotta do some business.

ART: Yeah, which is why [AUSTIN: Gross!] Hadrian keeps going to The Primping Badger, the respectable...outlet in town.

[all laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh! The Primping Badger! This is a good one.

JANINE: That's way better!

AUSTIN: Ask questions and use answers! [types] The Primping Badger. All right.

JANINE: So anyway, like, when they're passing by, she probably says like,

JANINE [as ADAIRE] I'll meet you guys there. I gotta...yeah.

AUSTIN: Right. So then you go and you meet up with Lardwulf, who is a...kinda like a super muscley halfling, which I think you don't s--

JANINE: Is Lardwulf one word or two?

AUSTIN: Oh, that's one word, and 'wulf' is spelled with a u.

JANINE: Okay...oh boy.

[ART groans]

AUSTIN: He likes to go by The Lardwulf but no one calls him that.

JANINE: Of course they don't.

ALI: Aww.

JANINE: / do.

ALI: You can't give yourself a nickname if you're top...

JANINE: Not when anyone else is listening. Just when it's just us.

AUSTIN: Oh, right. Of course, just when it's... So yeah, you met him at The Greasy Snifter which is oil lit, oil lamps all over it and I think probably have a bunch of... It has a bunch of paintings up that are replicas of really important paintings. Like there was a thing that happened once wherein archivists came here to take them and, like, they couldn't—the people who ran this place couldn't quite explain that they were fake because they pretend that they're real? And so they like had to do this whole thing where they ended up just straight up paying the archivists what the paintings were worth so that they wouldn't take—what the *actual* value of these pre-erasure paintings are supposed to be—so that they wouldn't take them. They're complete fucking criminal scum here.

JANINE: And that's why the snifter is greasy, 'cause they can't afford any soap anymore.

AUSTIN [laughing]: They can't, no, it's all fucked up.

ALI: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: It used to be called The Crystal Snifter and now it's The Greasy Snifter.

[ALI, JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: Someone just wrote Greasy over Crystal in paint and no one's ever bothered to change it.

ALI: They have like themed cocktails so you can like, even though it's Greasy, like, they taste okay, its fine.

AUSTIN: It's great, it's fine. Yeah.

ALI: It's fine.

ART: A lot of the letters are the same, or easily modified. You can get from Crystal to Greasy really easily.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's good.

[ALI laughs]

ART: Vandalism-wise.

[all laugh, pauses]

AUSTIN: Great, perfect. I have to find—I have to find The Lardwulf now. Okay.

[as LARDWULF]: So how ya doin'?

[ALI laughs]

Haven't seen you around here in awhile, Adaire.

JANINE [as ADAIRE]: You know. Well, it's—you know, travelling, it takes you all over the place.

AUSTIN: He's, he has like a glass in his hand that he's using a greasy rag to clean out. It's not working.

[as LARDWULF]: It's a—well, this winter, I don't know. Business hasn't been great.

ADAIRE: Well, maybe, you know, get into like heated drinks. You know.

LARDWULF: Oh, that's a good one!

ADAIRE: Short term.

LARDWULF: It's dangerous, all the grease.

ADAIRE: Yeah—that's a good point, actually, yeah, I hadn't thought of that.

[30:00]

LARDWULF: So, what is it you wanna know?

ADAIRE: What the hell's up with that dam? That was not—that's a new addition, and change...makes me a little nervous.

LARDWULF: Yeah... What with the cold, it was one of those things where it froze over, and it was very dangerous, 'cause if you got in it, you could fall in all the way under and then get taken away. So they did the thing where they dammed it up, so even when it freezes, at the very least you just—you can't get taken downstream underneath the ice. It's smart!

ADAIRE: How 'bout...

AUSTIN: And he like taps his head three times. Which is his symbol for smart. It's a thing that you noticed cuz you've known him for so long, every time he ever says the word smart, he taps his head with his left hand three times. One of his poker tells is when he says like, *smart play* and taps twice, you know he is bluffing.

[JANINE laughs]

ADAIRE: How has that affected the fishing?

LARDWULF: Ah, it's fine. You just—they're ice fishers now. They figured it out.

ADAIRE: Totally fine? Okay—well, okay.

LARDWULF: Smart!

AUSTIN: One two three.

ADAIRE: The fish haven't...had issues? Like, did—ice fish are very different fish than normal fish.

LARDWULF: Eh, they're smart too.

AUSTIN: One two three.

ADAIRE: Okay. Um...

LARDWULF: That it?

JANINE: Is it worth like a Discern Realities here? To see if there's like more I can get out... It seems—it seems...a river can always carry you away if you fall in it.

AUSTIN: He isn't-

JANINE: I don't know why the winter would necessarily make this especially—

AUSTIN: Because you'd hit the dam. The furthest you could go was the dam, so if they knew someone fell under, they wouldn't get past through the dam.

JANINE: Yeah, but my point is like, there's always a risk of falling in rivers and getting carried away. Why now? Why the dam now?

AUSTIN: Oh, because before you wouldn't get stuck under the ice. There wasn't ice before.  
[pause] Before the river froze, you'd be able to at least see where the person is

JANINE [hesitant]: Yeah..

AUSTIN: What happened was, a bunch of people who went out fishing like, would fall under, at places where it hadn't frozen over, and then get—

JANINE: Especially 'cause they weren't used to it maybe,

AUSTIN: Right, absolutely.

JANINE: So it exacerbated, okay.

AUSTIN: Yes. And so they got taken down river, where it was just like, oh—or, again, there are parts where it's like, oh, today it's sunny enough that the ice has melted and we can do regular fishing here, and then they get taken deep under, and then, get taken away.

JANINE: Okay... All right.

AUSTIN: You're also probably right about the fishing generally not being great. He is not tap-on-his-head-three-times as smart as he thinks he is? [JANINE: Mm-hm.] But, I think he probably just thinks like, eh, they'll figure it out. So yeah, I think that's about what you're gonna get from him.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What's everybody else doing other than just kinda going to bed? I think Sol goes—takes the cart up to the kind of like shops area, to the north of this town and...[typing] shops area...and drops off his stuff. And kind of goes to his cousin's house to crash.

[ALI laughs sympathetically]

But what are the rest of you doing?

ALI: It's like-

AUSTIN: This would also be a decent time to talk about quests and stuff. But what were you gonna say, Hella?

ALI: It's like nighttime by the time we get into town?

AUSTIN: It is midnight. Most things are shut down.

ALI: Oh. Okay.

AUSTIN: Even The Primping Badger is like, close to being closed. Like it's...

ALI: It like closes at two.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly.

ALI: Morning, yeah.

AUSTIN: If—it might close at one. [ALI: Okay.] I think this town, it closes at one. The Greasy Snifter, now that's a place that closes at—that quote-unquote closes at "two," but what that means is they turn the door sign from open to closed.

ALI: [crosstalk] Right. But if you're in there, you're in there.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] You're in there. You're in there! What are you gonna do? You're not gonna go home!

[DRE, ALI laugh]

ALI: Gotta sell those greasy drinks!

AUSTIN: Yep!

DRE: Ugh. No.

ART: All right.

AUSTIN: So do you wanna talk about your quest real quick, Hadrian?

ART: Yeah, let's figure this out.

AUSTIN: [amused] Sounds good.

ART: So I could just use the same...objective I had last time, which is "discover the truth of blank."

AUSTIN: Well, let's read—let's read the quest move so that people can catch up.

ART: All right. "When you dedicate yourself to a mission through prayer and ritual—and ritual cleansing, rather—state what you set out to do." And then there's three options: "Slay blank, a great plight on the land." Doesn't seem super..

AUSTIN: No.

ART: "Defend blank from the iniquities that beset them," which if we really...stretch the noun on that blank we could fit.

AUSTIN: I think we—

ART: Or "discover the truth of blank."

AUSTIN: So I think that there's—you could do... I think it's one of two things and this will depend—this will change this game a lot. The truth of Samoths is really easy and like, is a continuation of what we were doing before, right?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: I think defend from Hella from the iniquities that beset them is also really moving. And leans into your bond, which is, "Hella is in a spiritual crossroads and only I can see her through it."

ALI: Aw.

AUSTIN: I think whichever choice you make here like determines a lot about the tenor of the rest of this game. This season.



ART: Yeah, I also had that thought while I was reading the third option. [AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm.] And it's interesting but I don't want it to be like—I don't want to do that if it's going to come off as patronizing?

AUSTIN: I don't think it has to.

ART: Like not necessarily to Hella the character but to Ali the player.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Right. I mean, the thing to remember is like this is the thing Hadrian—the quest that Hadrian is putting himself on. And like, if it's patronizing, I think it would be an in-character sort of patronizing, which is interesting. [ART: Okay.] That like the guy who is losing his faith is like, I got to save that other person. [ALI laughs] Is a really good...or is questioning, not losing. Is like—his faith—his own faith is at a weird crossroad. I think defend Hella from the iniquities that beset them is a really good quest. You don't have to choose that, I could go any way you want to.

ART: No, I think that's better. [AUSTIN: Okay.] Discover the truth of Samothres is like, so straightforward. That's like—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Especially because—

ALI: [crosstalk] We know the scene that that happens in, at this point.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. We know how that resolves. There isn't as much drama there, and we also know what the answer of the truth of Samothres is. I don't know what the answer is of like what Hella is at the end of this season, so. [ALI giggles] Um. So yeah. So then you get to choose up to two boons.

ART: Yeah. “An unwavering sense of direction to blank; invulnerability to blank; a mark of divine authority; senses that pierce lies; a voice that transcends language; a freedom from hunger, thirst, and sleep.”

AUSTIN: Okay, so which of the—

ART: Senses that pierce lies is very useful and very boring. So I'm not going to be picking that.

[ALI, AUSTIN, DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: I love you, Art.

ART: Could I pick invulnerability to Hella's blade?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Woah!

AUSTIN: That's a fucking good choice.

[ALI laughs]

Fuck! That's a good choice for reasons you don't know yet!

ALI: Oh, no. Oh no! Maybe it'll be fine...

AUSTIN: Mm-hm!

ALI: [various worried noises] [laughing]

ART: And I would also like a voice that transcends language.

AUSTIN: Sure. Mark 'em down. [ART: All right.] "The GM will then tell you what vow or vows are required of you to maintain your blessing" and my choices are "Honor, in which cowardly tactics and tricks are forbidden. Temperance, in which gluttony in food, drink, and pleasure of the flesh are forbidden. Piety, in which you have to observe a daily holy service," which is boring and it won't be that one. "Valor, suffering an evil creature to live. Truth, in which you are forbidden to lie. Hospitality, in which you are required to comfort those in need, no matter who they are" ...I think it's two.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: I think you are required to lie—or—[laughs] required to lie—you are forbidden from lying?

ART: Okay!

AUSTIN: [pause] And you are forbidden from suffering an evil creature to live. [cross] Which makes this very complicated.

ART: [cross] Okay, it's worth noting if you want to...

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

ART: To adjust this.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Uh, well, one, creature is a real... I would never call Hella a creature, you monster.

AUSTIN: It—Hella is a creature. Everything is a creature. It's just that some creatures are also people.

ALI: Mmm...

ART: My alignment move is the same.

AUSTIN: Which is...deny mercy.

ART: Deny mercy to a criminal or unbeliever.

AUSTIN: No, because you could deny mercy but not kill them. [ART: Mm.] [ALI: Oh!] You could deny mercy by like sending them to prison forever, you could deny mercy to them by not healing them. [ART: Sure.] You have to kill evil things. And so that puts you in an immediate tension, which is that Hella is evil.

[pause]

ART: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Or at lea—your senses reveal to you that Hella is evil.

ART: Sure.

ALI: Cool. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Which—which isn't resolved but I think it means you have to constantly be actively thinking about Hella as being, moving away from evil. Like, that's... Do you know what I mean?

ART: Yeah, and what was the other one again? I'm sorry.

AUSTIN: You are forbidden to lie.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: You have to tell the truth at all times. And if you ever do, if you ever move on those, that—you lose the abilities that you have.

ART: Yeah, this is gonna be great. Tune in next week, guys.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! Good.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

ALI: Do you—‘cause it seems relevant, do you want me to say Hadrian—my bond with Hadrian?

AUSTIN: Yes, please.

ALI: Which is...“I don’t understand the extent of Hadrian’s troubles, but I’ve made hard choices and met gods as well. Hadrian has my ear and my blade when he needs it.”

AUSTIN: That’s a good one.

ALI: Mm.

[ART mutters]

AUSTIN: That’s a good one. You still don’t have one for Throndir.

ART: Also—Ali went for paragraphs on these. I’ve got like...[ALI and DRE laugh] pithy sentences and she’s got like...

AUSTIN: [cross] So yeah, what are yours, Hadrian?

ART: [cross] “When first I met Hadrian, he was a ...”

AUSTIN: What are yours?

ART: Me?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: “Hella is in a spiritual crossroads and only I can see her through,” [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] I have “Fantasmo saved my life and returned my faith to me, I owe him one.” I’m not going to repay it, I’m going to replace that bond as soon as we get somewhere here. [ALI and AUSTIN laugh] Sorry, Fantasmo.

AUSTIN: Shout outs to Fantasmo. And then what’s your third one?

ART: I wrote this this afternoon. “Throndir’s morality is a broken clock, I must lead him to the correct time.”

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: That's really good. That's really good. Speaking of Throndir, can I get your bond?

DRE: Yeah! My first one is that "I implicitly trust Hadrian for fighting to protect me."

[pause]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. That's a good boy.

DRE: Mm-hm! That'll—it'll be fine. Um. "Adaire, the new map maker, does not understand life in the wild, so I will teach them."

AUSTIN: This is—you're just such a good boy!

DRE: Mm-hm! And the third one is, "I could learn a lot of Hella about how to be a successful adventurer for hire."

ALI: Yeah, totally. Hi. Hey.

AUSTIN: Just, learning experience for everyone.

ART: Oh my god...

DRE: All I know about Hella is that Hadrian, my best friend and idol, took the time to write her a lot of letters, so she must be pretty great.

AUSTIN: Yeah, true.

ALI: I am! Hello. What would you like to know?

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: And Adaire, can we get yours with Hadrian and with Throndir? Or no—we've gotten Hadrian's already, but just—so Throndir.

JANINE: The one with Throndir is... "Throndir knows things that I can benefit from."

AUSTIN: Okay, that seems symbiotic. That seems like—

JANINE: Reciprocal, but also a little bit like...you know. *Y'know*.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mm-hm! I do. Yeah. Totally. Cool. It is the next morning, and it's only under daylight that you realize...that the eastern river, the Rose River, has dried up completely. And instead of being a river, it is a canyon. Your goal is to cross that canyon, and normally you would do that on a bridge. But the bridge is broken, and scattered...at the bottom of the canyon.

ALI: Oh no.

AUSTIN: What are your objectives today? What do you seek to do, in this town? Given the fact that this river—or this canyon is impassible. At least here in the town, like you might be able to get through it somewhere else: Adaire, do you have any maps that would help?

JANINE: Um...I—hang on—I have a question. [AUSTIN: Sure.] Are they like, trying to rebuild the bridge or is everyone just like, 'well we have the other bridge, whatever, we can go the other way'.

AUSTIN: So you talk to a couple of—well, you can go the other way and it takes you back to Velas, but you can't get down to Rosemerrow right now, which is a real problem [JANINE: Right.] for Sol, who wants to deliver the rest of his shit to Rosemerrow.

JANINE: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: The... So, you do some asking around. I think I kind of like—Adaire, do you stay at The Primping Badger or at The Greasy Sniffer?

JANINE: No, I think once Adaire was done talking to The Lardwulf, [AUSTIN: Uh-huh.] or Lardwulf if anyone's listening, [AUSTIN: Mm-hm.] she went back to The Primping Badger—she like got a soupbone from Lardwulf's kitchen, [AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.] brought it back for Kodiak, 'cause you know, sucking up with the dog, that's important. [AUSTIN: Mm-hm!] It's like a really big, substantial bone, and then she, you know, bunked down at The Primping Badger and is with the group in the morning.

AUSTIN: So you're—there's like a big dining area at the bottom floor, on the first floor basically. And so there's you four, plus, again, I think Sol is probably having breakfast with his cousin here. There's a couple of other people who are guests here. There are three people who you can immediately—I guess it's actually five people—but I'm just gonna say three of them are conversing when you first come in. Hella, you recognize the Ordennan accent immediately.

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: They are wearing—two of them are wearing black and gold armor. One of them is wearing a black robe with golden like...kind of flair on it. Kind of gold piping. And they are just talking about the bridge being out, and how their replacement should be here within the next

week or two and then they can get out of this fucking terrible little town. And then another one goes like—another one of the three just is like

[as ORDENNAN]: It's—I don't know, this place is okay.

ALI: Aww.

AUSTIN: There's three people. I don't think you've—you probably haven't met any of them yet, but I do wonder if they recognize you.

ALI: Yeah! Maybe.

AUSTIN: Do you like, make yourself known?

ALI: Um! ...Yeah, I probably, mm... Yeah, I probably just go over and say

[as HELLA]: Hey, what's up, what are you doing here.

But like in a nice way, like,

[as HELLA]: Hey, hi.

You know what I mean?

AUSTIN [as ORDENNAN]: The Queen Killer herself!

HELLA: Hi!

[Laughter]

ORDENNAN: Pleasure to meet you, miss.

HELLA: Mm.

AUSTIN: And he does a little bow, and this is kind of a tall sinewy boy in a...in the armor.

[as ORDENNAN]: Porto Porlo Pinta. Pleasure to meet you.

[Snorts of laughter]

HELLA: Mm. Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then there's kind of a nice, kind of a very round but like firm lady, who rolls her eyes when he does that.

[as MARIA]: It's a pleasure to meet you, my name's Maria, and I hope your travels are going well, Ms. Varal.

**[45:00]**

HELLA: Yeah, we were just trying to go through town, but this bridge situation is...sucks.

AUSTIN [as OTHER ORDENNAN]: It is *unbelievable*.

Says the third one, who is the one who's in the robe. With the hood above their head.

[as AVORA]: My name is Avora. It is an honor to meet you, you've done our land a great service by killing the witch queen.

HELLA: [chuckles] Yeah. Tell me about it.

AUSTIN: Chuckle, chuckle chuckle, in your head.

[ALI laughs]

[as AVORA]: What are you doing here?

HELLA: Yeah, I just said—I'm on my way to Rosemerrow.

AVORA: For what?

HELLA: Just on a mission with some people.

ALI: I kinda gesture to the rest of the party.

AUSTIN: Hmm. Avora leans close and says like

[as AVORA]: ...You travel with folks like that? Why don't you travel with...people of the commission?

HELLA: [sighs] I'm the one who can take the risks, right? Someone has to.

AUSTIN: Mm. Avora, they nod. Like,



[as AVORA]: That makes sense. I understand. You should meet our commanding officers. They would be pleased to see you, I'm sure.

HELLA: Uh—um...

AVORA: Sit with us, have breakfast.

ALI: Uh... I mean, she gives like a weird like shrug back to everyone else and sits down.

[Laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay! Good.

ALI: [crosstalk] Just like, eh...I'll catch up with you guys later...

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] What's everybody else doing for breakfast? What's everybody eating for breakfast?

ART: Eating a heaping plate of barging into that conversation!

[all laugh]

AUSTIN: Good! Great! Perfect. Are you?

ART: I really want to.

AUSTIN: You—yeah you can.

ALI: You can, yeah. Come on...

ART: [cross] Yeah, I pull up a chair.

ALI: [cross] I think if you approach the table, like, Hella introduces you like,

[as HELLA]: Oh, this is Hadrian, he's a paladin with the Velasian church.

AVORA: Oh...Samothes, yeah?

ART [as HADRIAN]: Yes. Uh, officer of the Order of the Eternal Princes.

[ALI laughs quietly]

AVORA: I see, I see. Does that make you special? Or are there a lot of you?

HADRIAN: Well, I mean...I wouldn't say it *makes* me special, it's more of a recognition of a certain amount of faith. I haven't met another officer in some time, not since the swearing-in, honestly.

AUSTIN: What was that like, by the way? What was the swearing-in like?

ART: Um. Hmm, I guess now that I think about it, it must have been at like some sort of regional, thing, it must have—

AUSTIN: Velas is the regional home, like Velas is the center of this region's church.

ART: Yeah, so I guess there must have been people from all over the region, [AUSTIN: Yeah.] but not many, like I say all over. There's probably like, four people?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think there's probably like, a couple from Rosemerrow, who were at the time like, real trailblazers 'cause the church hadn't really gotten its claws into Rosemerrow yet. Probably one orc from the Archives, who was a serious curiosity, 'cause it was at the very beginning of the orcs kind of really...moving into more constant connection. And probably someone who fled from the Last University when it fell. And then like, a couple of random villagers from the small towns that dot the countryside.

ART: And the person that did the swearing in must have been commander of the Order.

AUSTIN: No, it was Prelate Lucius.

ART: It was Lucius?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

ART: All right, then it was Lucius. Not introducing any new characters now!

[Laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, no, the...[pause] I think the situation of your swearing-in was strange, which is that like... You grew up knowing stories of the officers of the Eternal Order of Princes, but you never met one. And you heard specific stories, Prelate Lucius would tell you stories about how they slayed this or that, and, you know, found a...evil...you know, cult in this town or that they found a coven of witches in that town, or blasphemers and other ne'er do wells, but like... And like some specific, very heroic stories, besides just killing stuff. Like lots of saving orphans and such. And you've done some of that, so it's not entirely necessarily sounds like a lie in retrospect, but you've never met a member of the order older than you.

ART: All right. And I assume that there, somewhere there are initiates right? There are younger people in the order.

AUSTIN: Yes. That is true. There have been another class or two of officers since you joined.

ART: Hm.

AUSTIN: [pause] In fact, I think at saying all of this, Porlo Porto Pinta says uh...

[as PORTO PORLO PINTA]: Ah, we're in kind. Men like Hadrian, he also seeks out...evildoers, isn't that correct?

HADRIAN: Absolutely.

PORTO PORLO PINTA: See? We are all friends here. His armor is just...not as nice as ours. Eh!

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] And he kind of pours you a drink.

HADRIAN: [crosstalk] Times are tough on the mainland...

PORTO PORLO PINTA: Who are the rest of your friends?

AUSTIN: And he waves you over, the rest of your friends.

HELLA: Oh yeah, um. Yeah, guys. Mm.

ALI: And I guess Hella also gestures.

[as HELLA]: I have Adaire, a mapmaker here, and then...our friend Throndir who's a—an elf, uh, r...you know.

[DRE laughs]

PORTO PORLO PINTA: You like a m...

ALI: Is—is ranger like a...?

ART: A ranger, yeah.

ALI: A profession [AUSTIN: Yeah!] or is it just the class, I don't want to say like, oh, he's also a ranger.

AUSTIN: A ranger means something that—

JANINE: He's a dog pappy.

[Laughs]

AUSTIN: He's saying—again, he isn't a ranger, he's *the ranger*, right? [ALI: Right.] Which is like saying he's like the one dude who's really fucking good at moving through—like people would know him as the ranger. [ALI: Oh, okay.] Like that would be a total—that's like a nickname for Thrandir.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: At this point. Like people, you know, whispered about how the ranger went to go negotiate peace between the goblins and the elves. [ALI Okay.] In the snow. So. So yeah.

ALI: So I guess offhand-ly shes like,

[as HELLA]: You guys spend time in Velas? You know the ranger? That's him. He's younger than you'd think.

AUSTIN: Maria claps twice, and she's like

[as MARIA]: [clap] That [clap] is [clap] good. [ALI and DRE laugh] You magic, ranger? You know, we don't like magic.

DRE [laughs]: Um, I think Thrandir is taken aback by the clapping and so he goes

[as THRONDIR]: [clap] No, [clap] no [clap] magic!

[All laugh]

MARIA: That's what I like to hear!

AUSTIN: And she pours you some water from their thing.

[as AVORA]: So where have you been, Ms. Adaire?

Asks Avora, Avora Gental.

JANINE: So I think Adaire, before she was invited over, was like sitting not conspicuously nearby, but near enough. [AUSTIN: Mm-hm.] With like a cup of tea and a piece of cheese toast or something and just kinda having her morning and quietly listening, and when she gets

beckoned over, she—you know, she comes over, brings her tea or cheese toast. She's—you know, sits down. [AUSTIN: Mm-hm.] And, let's see...Wait, what do you mean? Sorry—just where have you—

AUSTIN: Where have you been. Like, generally, around the world. [JANINE: Oh, okay. Okay, like...] Not like where have you been in my life, not like. They aren't hitting on you.

[Laughs]

DRE: Yet.

JANINE: No, I thought they meant like, where have you been—I don't know—more familiar. It doesn't matter.

[as ADAIRE]: Well, you know, all over, I mostly sort of focus up in the sorta...northwest. Been to Ordenna, 's a lovely place.

AVORA: Yes.

ADAIRE: Lovely in a particular way, you know, it's lovely in a very unique way that not many other places in...this land really are.

AVORA: Of course. It's rare to find a person who has truly *traveled*. It's impressive.

ADAIRE: Thank you.

AUSTIN: Avora sips their tea.

[as AVORA]: Now where are Tavira and Stornras?

And at that, you hear a loud, like...someone who is not super good at being quiet, just like stomp down the stairs, in the sort of way that like children stomp without knowing it, you know what I mean? It's like, oh, will you please just—you don't have to walk that loudly. You don't have to do it that way. You could just be quieter. And Stornras, who some of you—at least Hella, I think—has met, back at Velas during the Day of High Sun. I think you and maybe one other character went onto Stornras's boat.

ALI: Oh yeah, I think that was me and Lem?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that was you and Lem. So that's Stornras who is this huge, broad-shouldered Ordennan dude. Like you, Hella, like maybe this is just a thing that happens with Ordennans, like, you shouldn't be that tall. Like, you're taller than most people are. Like I imagine he's like 6'8, 6'9, like, he's up there. And is too tall for this town that is built for regular

people and halflings. Um. Like it is not a comfortable fit for him here. His head is pretty close to the roof of this floor. He's just like a—I think, like Hadrian—is like that old fashioned bodybuilder, like an—that's just such a good analogy, Art, that I wanna steal it. [ART laughs evilly] Just like broad. Just a broad shit brickhouse, ready for anything that comes at him. And behind him is a woman who has sort of like...almost...I wanna say it's almost a greenish hue to her hair, and it's currently up in a bun. And she is—like if everybody else is wearing like their dress armor, like they're kind of like, 'this is my uniform and it's leather,' and—she is wearing like, spiky black, like hard-angled metal plate.

ALI: Ooh.

AUSTIN: And you know... Like, Stornras is not wearing his armor. Because he wants to be comfortable, like a human does—like a person does. And you can tell that it's not that she's—she wants to project authority. And she does. As soon as she steps down behind him. And she walks over and like, looks down at the group of you sitting with her soldiers, and just goes like,

[as TAVIRA]: Ahem.

And her soldiers get up and move to sit on the same side as you. And then she sits where they were sitting, and Stornras sits at another table nearby.

ALI: Would I recognize her?

AUSTIN: [sighs] Maybe. That sounds like a Spout Lore to me.

ALI: [laughs] Oh! Okay. Sure. What's the modifier on that?

AUSTIN: Oh, that's Intelligence.

ALI: Oh, great. Wonderful, just gonna keep gettin this ou—oh, okay, 7.

AUSTIN: 7's all right. So when you Spout Lore, "you consult your accumulated knowledge about something, roll plus INT. On a 10 plus I will tell you something interesting and something useful. On a 7 to 9, I'll only tell you something interesting, it's on you to know how to make it useful. I will then ask—I might ask you, how do you know this? Then you have to tell me the truth."

ALI: All right!

AUSTIN: So, this is Tavira Shal, who is a Justiciar-Captain. The Justiciar are part of an order known as the Commission of Smoke and Steel. They were recently formed after the fall of Nacre and after the spread of the curse of Nacre that has begun to make the undead sprout across northwestern Hieron, here and there. And they move in these groups of three or four or

five, go into small towns, kind of hunt out anything supernatural, or undead, or...unholy, anything that's heretical and dangerous, and they kill it. They aren't like the Golden Lance, in that they aren't about justice, they are about safety. And so they have no problems with hurting innocent people, if it means saving a town. So yeah, you totally know her. She is one of those. [ALI: Okay.] There are not that many of them at her level. She is like a pretty—like, on top of having her own elite squad, she's also probably in the process of kind of organizing and strategizing about the other squads in the region. And like, getting updates and re-assigning them different places and reading reports and all of that. In fact, she is probably doing that immediately, like she snaps her fingers [snaps fingers] and Stornras coughs and hands her...a piece of paper that she begins working on.

Stornras, by the way, his name is Stornras Glasseye. Again, big broad dude, has—his left eye is a glass eye, and it doesn't have like a painted-on eyeball, it's just glass that's in the eye socket. And there's a huge burn scar that runs down his left eye until his mouth, and then like the mouth on the left side of his face is disfigured such that it's like in a constant grimace. [ALI: Aw.] He can still smile and stuff but that left side is just like—it's like melted downwards. It's not—it looks bad, it looks painful. And she like, almost like a person doing their crosswords in the morning, is just like, pulls out a pen from a sleeve and begins to like, start taking notes and stuff. All of her soldiers have gotten incredibly quiet and are just eating now. She has not noticed you yet, Hella.

ALI [as HELLA]: This got awkward.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm!

ALI: [laughing] No, I say that in character.

AUSTIN: Oh, do you? Hella!

[ALI laughs]

[sighs] Tavira like puts down her paper and then recognizes you, and goes

[as TAVIRA]: [pleased] Ah! It's the regicide herself.

HELLA: Ah, hi.

TAVIRA: Amazing seeing you here. This is a good omen.

[Something falls in the background]

AUSTIN: I said that and something fell in my room.

[All laugh]

[as TAVIRA]: What are you doing in a shithole like this?

HELLA: [laughs] Well, you know me, I go to a lot of shitholes.

TAVIRA: Is that where the action is, that's where you find queens to kill?

HELLA: Mm, yeah, Nacre was kind of a shithole.

AUSTIN: Is this the way you talk around everybody?

[ALI laughs]

That's me, Austin, out of character, asking you this.

ALI: I think so?

AUSTIN: Okay. Making sure.

ALI: [stammers] Okay.

AUSTIN: That's good! It's fine.

ALI: I think—w—I think specifically here is that like, Hella A: doesn't know how to deal with the attention that people give her yet, [AUSTIN: Mm-hm.] and like

**[1:00:00]**

secondly was like sort of considered for the job that she has.

AUSTIN: Right, totally.

ALI: Right? Like, they were like you can be this thing but also we can give you this other title [AUSTIN: Yes. Totally.] and you can still like, you know, so like, yeah, I mean...

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: There's a reason why Hella isn't in the military and it's kinda 'cause she doesn't know how to act.

AUSTIN: That's a good fucking point. Um.

[ALI laughing, pause]



JANINE: Adaire like, kinda nudges Hella's foot under the table, just like, and like gives her a look just like, just relax.

[ALI, AUSTIN laugh]

AUSTIN: Good.

ALI: What! Just woke up!

ART: Hadrian just sort of bristles like a cat, like he like...

[Laughs]

AUSTIN: Perfect. Good.

ALI: Listen, they know me here, it's fine.

AUSTIN [as TAVIRA]: [sighs] So is this a group you've hired for one of your escapades?

ALI [as HELLA]: Um. No, I mean, we kinda traveled together. We were heading to Rosemerrow, but you know, the bridge and the whole thing...

AUSTIN: She like, crosses her arms in a very like, amused way.

[as TAVIRA]: What would you be doing in Rosemerrow? There are no queens in Rosemerrow. [ALI laughs] 'The merchant killer' just doesn't have the same ring to it.

HELLA: You're right, you're right.

AUSTIN: But she does—she like leans in conspiratorially and says like

[as TAVIRA]: But are you going to soften it up for us?

[pause]

ALI: Gosh, that's like...a weird thing to ask in front of my pals.

AUSTIN: Eh, she thinks that they're nothing.

ALI: Right. Eugh. I think like, Hella—

AUSTIN: Like, what are they going to do, go tell Rosemerrow that Ordenna is coming? Like, everyone in Rosemerrow is already scared that Ordenna might be coming.

ALI: Right, yeah, exactly, I...[laughing] Hella kinda glances at Hadrian and is like

[as HELLA]: Mm, I.. you know, we—I have business down there. I can't make any promises...

AUSTIN [laughs]: Wow, okay.

[ALI laughs]

[as TAVIRA]: [eagerly] What sort of business? Is it confidential?

ALI: Is it? I'm not sure that me, Ali knows if it's confidential.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so the Velasian Council, who we've spoken about before is hiring you, not only—again, like, Sol just happened to be going this direction, which is useful? Like, you just—Sol's kind of a side gig. And I would—it might even be the case that you told Adaire that—no, I guess that Adaire needs to be able to lead you to this spot. So the Velasian Council wants you to still go to that southern part of the map, [ALI: Right. Okay.] with the red mark, and they have provided enough rations at least to get to Rosemerrow, after which you'll have to see for yourselves. But like, that is the mission.

ALI: But it's not like just to go there, it's not specific like go did this thing.

AUSTIN: It's—so the first red mark was the tower of Severeia in the northwest [ALI: Okay.] where you found that book, and they would like to make sure that there aren't any other dangerous magical artifacts, and if there are, they want th—they want them. They want to own them.

ALI: [laughing] Okay, fair enough.

AUSTIN: But like, I mean, that is a—probably a little bit of a conflict of interest, right? So I think Hella, despite having an 8 Intelligence, knows maybe don't say, oh, I'm gonna go give one these political rivals a magic weapon, a magic thing.

ALI: Fair, yeah. Is there like a lying move with this? I'm like, so in The Sprawl.

AUSTIN: Defy Danger: Charisma.

ALI: [laughing] Okay, sure.

ART: We found it!

AUSTIN: Yep. Yeah.

[ALI laughs]

ART: Um. I'm wondering if Hadrian is stupid enough to take this pause to dive on this grenade.

AUSTIN: Oh, maybe.

JANINE: Yeah, I'm also having thoughts, 'cause I feel like Adaire is probably sitting there *dying*.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, totally. Whoever wants to act first can just act.

ART [as HADRIAN]: We're travelling there to try to...figure out some of the causes of the blight that affects this land still.

AUSTIN: Give me a roll.

[Pause]

ART: That's true!

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's still—

ALI: [laughing] I was just gonna say it's confidential.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Give me a roll to make that be the end of this part of the conversation. That's the danger you're defying, is that she'll drop it.

ALI: Oh, well!

AUSTIN: Look at that 12.

JANINE: Okay!

AUSTIN: She says,

[as TAVIRA]: I judged you folks all wrong. It's good to hear it. You know, I have mixed feelings about your... 'Samothes.' But...for this moment at least, I can see our interests are aligned.

ART: Weird way to say that word.

[as HADRIAN]: The church welcomes all virtuous people who share its aims.

TAVIRA: What about the non-virtuous?

AUSTIN: She smiles.

HADRIAN: Ha ha.

JANINE: Adaire half-rolled her eyes. Not at the lady, at Hadrian.

AUSTIN: Right. [laughs]

[as TAVIRA]: Shame about what happened to the Prelate.

HADRIAN: I know.

TAVIRA: Did you know that man?

HADRIAN: Quite well. Lucius was a mentor to me. It was...awful to see him undone.

TAVIRA: Well, he was a sinner.

HADRIAN: Absolutely. But so are we all.

TAVIRA: Speak for yourself. In the new world of Ordenna, the only sin is those who move against the state. And I am very loyal.

[Pause]

ART: That's a terrible ethical system, I don't...

ALI: Oh no, it's fine. What are you talking about?

JANINE: It's not that different.

[various laughs]

AUSTIN: No!

[as TAVIRA]: In any case, we'll be on our way as soon as I finish my paperwork.

ALI [as HELLA]: Where are you guys headed?

TAVIRA: Oh, to Rosemerrow.

HELLA: Mm.

TAVIRA: [crosstalk] Heard some-

JANINE: [crosstalk] How-

AUSTIN: Hm?

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: How?

ALI: I was gonna [laughing]

AUSTIN: Oh.

JANINE: Adaire is listening very closely now.

AUSTIN: Does she say how? Does she say how? Or does she..

JANINE: Uh. Hm. I think she's gonna say like—she's gonna be coy about it and says like,

[as ADAIRE]: The bridge is out, I was thinking about going up...sort of northeaster-ish to see if there's a shallower area there, but if you have any better ideas.

TAVIRA: Oh, yes, for folks like you, that would be a good idea. That's true. We're just waiting for the machines.

AUSTIN: And she's like looking at her paperwork and like filling stuff off.

ALI: God.

ART [as HADRIAN]: Sorry, what?

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: She looks at you over her glasses, which I have just decided she has.

[Laughs]

ALI: You just made that decision about her, huh?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah 'cause I made the—

JANINE: Built into the armor.

AUSTIN: 'Cause I emoted that. Oh, she has—her head is showing, she doesn't have her helmet on. Janine, please.

ART: Yeah, who comes into breakfast with their helmet on.

[Laughs]

Hadrian kicks his helmet under his chair.

JANINE: A lady who's trying to impress people and be imposing!

AUSTIN: Her eyes are way more imposing than a helmet could be, though. She says, oh...

[as TAVIRA]: Dear, you haven't kept up, have you?

HADRIAN: Apparently not.

AUSTIN: I think like that's the moment where we just get like, the wide angle—the camera starts pulling away, and we get like a slow pan out from Twinbrook, and you see like some **[Music begins: [“Inside” by Jack de Quidt](#)]** activity of the moth people in the woods to the south, and you get like some activity inside of the town of people like—in fact, I think you get—you pull out of the window and you see like children in Twinbrook singing the Red Jack song. And you pull out more and you see some activity out in the woods, of the moths, and you're pulling up further and further, it's kinda an aerial shot, and then marching on a road, the same road you traveled on, coming kind of from a connecting path from where Nacre is, is a battalion of metallic pala-din. And they're walking, there's probably a hundred of them, and each one has like a block of building materials in its arm, and they're marching like perfectly in unison, with a handful of Ordennan humans on horses mixed in with them.

[music plays out]

**[1:09:20]**