

[Live at the Table 10 Audio: April 2018 - Fall of Magic: Finale](#)

transcribed by thedreadbiter

[Music - "[Bright Morning, Cool Evening](#)" by Jack de Quidt plays]

[2:42 - Intro Ends]

Austin: Welcome the Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical world building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host for this April edition of Live at the Table. We are continuing our playthrough of—and maybe finishing, it seems like we'll be finishing—a playthrough of Fall of Magic, a game by Ross [Cow-man] Cowman. [Cow-man] Cowman? [Co-man] Cowman? I always—I don't know how to pronounce it. Um. Joining me today, Andrew Lee Swan.

Dre: Hey. You can find me on Twitter at [swandre3000](#).

Austin: Janine Hawkins!

Janine: [hoarsely] You can find me—oh dear. Mm. Sorry. [laughs]

Austin: It's Sunday, I get it. I get it. I'm there. Also.

Janine: [amused, in clear voice] You can find me on Twitter at [bleatingheart](#)...

Austin: That sounded like you had more to say!

Janine: Great. No!

Austin: You sounded like "at bleatingheart, dut dut dut dut dut...!"

[**Janine** laughs]

And Jack de Quidt, whose beautiful music you just heard.

Jack: Thank you! You can find me on Twitter at [notquitereal](#), and buy any of the music featured on the show, [amused] except that, at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#). All of the music for our live games, various Patreon stuff, will show up eventually, when there's enough of it?

Austin: Yes.

Jack: But not quite yet.

Austin: Sounds good. Um. Uh, Jack, you should join this game. You should join this game on Roll 20.

Jack: Yeah, I'm loading it up right now. I—

Austin: Okay. That's good.

Jack: I thought I'd sit this one out!

Austin: You thought just maybe, okay!

[Dre laughs]

[narrator voice] And so, Harp stayed behind on Sleeper Cinder Cone.

[Jack laughs]

Um. We should go over what happened in the previous game, [amused] and maybe even further back than that? Just so that we can, uh, *call, maybe*, what our journey has been thus far. Does that sound good? 'Cause I know a lot of people, including me, have not had time to go back and like actively relisten—

Jack: [sighing] Extremely.

Austin: —to the last seven hours of this game or whatever, right? So.

Jack: Mm.

Austin: I'm gonna—what am I gonna do? I'm gonna move this to GM layer only, so that maybe I can still see through this. This works. Y'all can't see that anymore, right, the big black thing on the left is gone for you?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Okay, cool. So. I don't wanna spend too much time on the way back side. I think part of the beauty of this game is that you can only see what you're looking at currently. But, really briefly, from the very beginning, right. Magic is dying and the [May-gus] Magus? Is what we decided on, [May-gus] Magus? Right? Not [Mage-us] Magus?

Dre: [May-gus] Magus?

Jack: I think [May-gus] Magus.

Austin: [May-gus] Magus.

Dre: Sounds right?

Austin: I think we said [May-gus] Magus. Um. Magic is dying, and the Magus is dying with it. We travel together to the realm of the—of Umbra, where magic was born. I am playing as

Caspian, who formerly had—was a Crab Singer of Istallia, and who was Kind—and over the journey, has gone from kind of like happy-go-lucky, like, kite bard, to um...a sadder, kind of more melancholy, adult? He has a beard now. It was vaguely revealed that maybe [breathes in] he has a history to a weird orphanage, maybe a weird magic orphanage, it's hard to say. And he gave up being a kite singer in the last adventure. He has the trait Kind. Janine, do you wanna tell me about your character?

Janine: My character is Fawn. She is a vinegar fox, also known as a bush dog. She talks. She's very gregarious. She...is also a very—or a moderately talented craftsman—a very talented craftsperson as far as like...dogs go?

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: Um. Like, by human standards, probably just like a passable hobbyist, an experienced hobbyist. Um. She has a fun hat, and a cape.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: And little boots that are toeless, so her claws can still do their thing. And she's got gold teeth, and a cool pattern razored into her haunches. 'Cause she's edgy.

Austin: And it was revealed in the last games that she has like a military history?

Janine: Oh, yeah, yeah. Early on, she fought a war against pigs.

Austin: Uh-huh! And then there was a weird statue last time? Of her? On—

Janine: Oh, I don't remember the statue.

Austin: There was a weird statue of Fawn with a meaningful expression, and it had a string, it had a thread—

Janine: Oh, right.

Austin: —tied to a finger.

Janine: Right. Right! Oh, I totally forg—it was in like the forest! It was like wood—

Austin: Uh-huh. It was in the forest of this volcano island, yeah.

Janine: Yes. Right.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: And she was aware of it. Okay.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: I remember now.

Austin: And she sought it out, in fact.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And Caspian was like, “Uh, what’s going on here?” and you were like, “Don’t worry about it.”

[**Janine** laughs]

Um.

[**Dre** laughs]

Janine: It’s been a while. Look.

Austin: Yeah. Totally. Uh, Jack, tell us about Harp!

Jack: Harp is a golem. They worked as a I guess a gardener in Ravenhall, the sort of home of the Magus.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: Uh, the sort of, the palace. Um, they...cannot—they can’t sing. They can’t—I guess they can’t vocalize music?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: Or whistle, or hum, or whatever. Um. Not exactly—

Austin: Which they believed—they believe that was a thing true for all golems.

Jack: For all golems. And then we met a—we’ve met multiple golems who can sing, right? Like we met—so we met a nice golem and his husband.

Austin: You’ve met the—and the—yep! uh-huh.

Jack: In a pub.

Austin: Yep!

Jack: Who just sung about golems.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: And Harp was sort of like, “Oh, okay.” Um. But it’s not—we’re not exactly sure really what’s going on, or what’s going on with golems as to where they come from, or how they’re made.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: We’ve heard like multiple different suggestions about that.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And I’m not even sure—we know how Harp was made, I believe, which was that they were just animated by the Magus.

Austin: By the Magus, yeah. Yeah. I think that that’s true.

Jack: I’m trying to see if we’ve—

Austin: You’re Beautiful.

Jack: I’m beautiful, I’m made of like an incredible sort of stone.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Um. And that’s about...that’s about it, right?

Austin: Okay. Yeah. It seems like it.

Jack: I think that’s all we know about Harp.

Austin: Uh-huh. Um. Then Piccolo. Dre.

Dre: Uh. Yeah, Piccolo was formerly the Swineherd of Barley Town.

Austin: Right. Which is over here.

Dre: Yep. All the way back in the beginning.

Austin: Yeah, one of our first places that we went to.

Dre: Uh, yeah. Piccolo is, for the most part, a very well-meaning, but very kind of naive and bumbling kind of young person. I kind of see him as probably like...I don’t know, like thirteen, fourteen, fifteen.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Dre: Very much like shounen anime protagonist age.

Austin: Right.

Dre: [laughs] But he has kind of become a little bit more competent and confident since we have started sailing on the Sea Wing. Um. Now help me remember, Austin, it's the captain of the ship, is Grandmother Black?

Austin: Yes.

Dre: And then her husband is the giant squid monster that like—

Austin: I can't recall—I definitely said wife—

Dre: —that's under the ship?

Austin: —and then also said husband.

Dre: Right.

Austin: And I don't know if it's a situation where she has multiple—where she has a wife and a husband, I don't quite recall. Because it has been—it was January when we recorded this, and it is April twenty-ninth now. [laughs]

Jack: She has a sort of romantic relationship with a like a monster—like—

Austin: With a sea monster.

Jack: —gigantic sea monster.

Austin: Yes. At least one.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: And also there had been ano—was she a bird? Is she a bird? She's a bird.

Jack: Yeah, she's like—she's a bird that got like turned into a ship captain, right?

Austin: A person. Right.

Dre: Okay. Yeah.

Janine: Isn't the boat itself also like a bird?

Austin: Or is the bird a mons—the bird. Maybe the boat was a bird.

Jack: I think she is the boat. I think the boat and her are the same thing, probably.

Janine: Mm.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Sarah says that—

Janine: It sounded weird below deck.

Austin: Sarah says that she didn't process that Piccolo was so young. I thought Piccolo was younger. I have just been picturing twelve years old for this entire trip.

Dre: Yeah. I mean, I think like twelve or thirteen is...

Austin: Fifteen is probably the right—is probably like the right age to do the trip that you're doing? Not like [laughs]

[**Jack** laughs]

Dre: Right.

Austin: Like twelve is probably too young. But.

Dre: When has that ever stopped shounen anime, Austin?

Austin: True. Exactly.

[**Janine** makes an amused noise]

Um. And now right, you were the first mate of the Sea Wing, which you've left, at this p—are we still on the Sea Wing? We're still on the Sea Wing, right?

Dre: Yeah. We sailed between these islands.

Austin: Or we just reached the Isle of Dreams. Right.

Dre and Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Really broadly, let's just walk through our path so far. Started in Ravenhall. Which is where the—you know, Harp is a golem of Ravenhall. We did some stuff there. We set out. There was a big—the Magus broke the...shattered the roof of the, um [sighs] the zoo or whatever, the glass roof of the menagerie, and all the an—a giant bird flew away and she was tracking that bird, to guide us eastward.

We went to—from there we went to the Oak Hills. We did a bunch of cool stuff in the woods. I don't remember a lot of stories there. There was a song, there was, [breathes] some other stuff...I don't remember much about the Oak Hills at all, actually. Oh, I think we talked about—yeah, we did do the morning ritual. We talked about what—I *think* we talked about what Piccolo did every morning. Or maybe it was what Fawn did every morning.

In any case, we eventually went to Barley Town, where we met the Barley Lord, who, remember, is just in the...fields of barley, if you look at them the right way, you stand on the right hill, you can see the Barley Lord in the kind of sheafs of barley out in the fields. Who welcomed us, and we did some stuff there. We met...Piccolo's aunt? Grandmother?

Jack: Oh yeah, with—the frog lady.

Austin: The frog lady.

Dre: Yeah, it was his aunt, I'm pretty sure.

Austin: Yes. That sounds right.

Dre: Like his great-aunt or something.

Austin: Exactly. Um. Then—what else? then we went to the Stormguard Mountains. Right? And it was really cold. And scary. And I think we saw that ahead was Castle Stormguard and the hospitality of the Storm Queen would be there. We passed through the snow and cold, and—

Jack: Piccolo drew an F.

Austin: Piccolo drew an F. Uh-huh.

Dre: Yeah. I don't—

Austin: That's right. Not allowed.

Dre: I don't wanna talk about it. [laughing] I'm ashamed.

Austin: Sha—deep, deeply ashamed.

[**Jack** and **Janine** laugh]

Oh! Oh, we skipped something very important, which is in Barley Town we met that real scammy fuckin.

Dre: Yeah! [laughs]

[**Jack** and **Janine** laugh]

Austin: Market guy, yeah, at the farmer's market. [laughs] We got to Castle Stormguard. I recall that now because that guy ended up in the fuckin stockade.

Dre: Bridge chalk. Yeah.

Janine: Oh, he *did!*

Austin: What'd you say—the bridge what?

Dre: It was bridge chalk. Remember?

Austin: Was that—oh, right, they had bridge chalk.

Dre: They had chalk to mark the invisible bridges.

[**Janine** laughs]

Austin: Yes. Very important.

Jack: [laughing] Oh!

Austin: Very very very important. Good.

Janine: The bridge chalk.

Jack: That you then used to write the F.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Which—right, which was then used to write the F.

Janine: Also oranges.

Austin: Yep.

Janine: So many oranges.

Austin: Ummmm. What else happened there? That's—

Jack: Oh—the Storm Queen we—

Austin: Castle Stormguard was beautiful. Was that where you danced with somebody, Fawn?

Jack: Yeah! We did a—

Janine: Yeah. Fawn danced with the dancer.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: And then made them a belt.

Austin: Uh-huh. And...I don't remember what Harp did there.

Jack: We did a bunch of stuff. The...Harp went to see like all these knights who were like queued up.

Austin: Right!

Jack: In this like corridor, and just like offended everybody.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Because they were bad knights. And then the Magus like basically played like combat tennis?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: With the Storm Queen?

Austin: With...No, with...was it with the Storm Queen? Or was it with...yes.

Jack: Oh, was it with—

Janine: It was—it was someone and the Magus. I thought.

Austin: I think it was Caspian and the Magus. I think—

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Or was it the—

Janine: And the Storm Queen was like ref...eree.

Austin: Was refereeing, yes. Yes, yes. I think Caspian was trying to like “Hey, what are we doing here? What’s going on?” Like “Hey, do you have a plan for this or not?” basically. And—or maybe it was with—maybe it was the Magus and the Storm—in any case, we got Justice of the Storm Queen, which recall, that was.

[**Jack** laughs]

The way in which we...it couldn't have been—in any case. Justice of the Storm Queen was that—

Janine: It was Caspian and the Magus, because the Magus was talking about how like “Hey, if someone dies, like, sometimes just some shit happens, I hope no one dies, but.”

Austin: I hope—right. Right.

Janine: “I don’t know. I don’t know what’s going to happen there.”

Austin: Right. And the Storm Queen judged that she would basically be our protector, and that anybody who comes and stays in the Castle Stormguard gets the protection of the Storm Queen.

Jack: Yeah!

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: And what that looks like is retribution. Which is how we got—

Jack: Like a sort of—

Austin: The stockade, the stockaded market guy.

Jack: Right.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: Because they went back out, and it’s kind of like a—what were you gonna say, Jack? I think you were gonna say the thing I was gonna say.

Jack: She’s sort of like a—it’s sort of like a large-scale retroactive revenge society, right?

Austin: Right. It’s sort of like—

Jack: Like they’ll like—

Austin: —the Icelandic sagas style thing of like so in—if you are—if you have something done to you, then it is like on honor to have—to get that revenge. You know?

[15:00]

Austin: Except this is like um a little bit more of a systemic, like. Governmental system.

Jack: Yeah, they’ll like send people—

Austin: Yes.

Jack: —out to a town, and then the town will just be like, “Oh. Guess we pissed off the Storm Queen!”

Austin: Yes. I’m gonna mess with some volume, people are saying volume is not exactly balanced. So I’m gonna tinker for a few seconds.

Janine: Oh, I can also — I can just turn myself down alittle if I need too.

Austin: I’m gonna turn myself up a little bit, and then... No, don’t — you don’t mess with it on your side ‘cause Discord lets me do it on an individual basis.

Janine: Mm. Okay.

Austin: And that’ll be fine.

Janine: All right.

Austin: Let me bring Jack up, Jack is very low. All right. There we go.

Jack: [intrigued] Oh.

Austin: That’s better. Um. Then what? Then we left there, and we went to the train station—the ice train station, and we took that train north, remember? Um.

Jack: Train ate my sword.

Austin: Excuse me? What?

Janine: It did.

Austin: Oh right, the train ate your sword.

Jack: The train ate my sword.

Austin: That’s true.

Dre: Oh yeah...

Austin: That’s true. And we went north to...up to Istallia. On the way north, lots of little things happened. Right? Um. I can’t see past the Mirror, here. Let me...uh. There were some ice trolls who were grumpy. [laughs] There were—I remember Caspian leaves early and goes ahead to Istallia, before everybody else.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Um. There was some other stuff that happened there.

Jack: Didn't you find something in like a—didn't Piccolo find something in like a—

Austin: Yes.

Jack: —luggage—in like a baggage car or something.

Dre: Oh yeah!

Austin: I don't remember what.

Dre: I don't...

Austin: But yes, that happened.

Dre: [laughing] I don't either!

Austin: [pauses] [quietly]...I totally forget.

Jack: I mean, this is kind of fine, right?

Austin: Yeah! Uh-huh. Time is weird.

Jack: Like, this is like a story of weird half-remembered fairy tales, and like?

Austin and Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Totally. In any case, we wind up in Istallia, where we meet the hospitali—we meet the Gilded One, who is a giant statue, who is the center of the city.

Jack: Oh yeah!

Austin: And who—

Jack: And is like really unpleasant. Right?

Austin: Very unpleasant. And like made o—

Janine: Made of anchors?

Austin: Made of anchors, yes! Made of magical anchors. Remember—

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, we find the anchor in the thing. They're transporting—aren't they carrying the anchor? In the—

Austin: That's what they're carrying, an anchor from the train.

Janine: Right.

Austin: And the train anchor ends up being part of—the Gilded One is all about—and also it's about boats, right? Boats all need magic anchors or something?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That sounds right.

Jack: [yawning] Yeah, that's it.

Janine: Yeah. That sounds like shit we would say for sure!

Austin: A hundred percent!

[Dre and Jack laugh]

I know Caspian goes to the Marketplace of Magic and loses the Crab Singer thing. Trades—

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: —trades away the...kite, and—I guess his role as crab singer. For something. And I don't remember what for. And that's a problem!

Jack: Well, I think the good news, Austin, is that I don't think you told us what he traded it for.

Austin: Oh. Interesting. I mean—

Jack: Which means that you can probably just make it up.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Yeah, I don't remember. I feel like he just came back like, "Well, I'm not that anymore."

Austin: Yeah. I remember he left...he left the train...early. He was like "I have to get ahead, I have to go fly through these hoops. I'm gonna stop being a crab singer. Because X Y Z." And I don't remember what the X Y Z was, and maybe he never—I thought he told Piccolo, but I don't—maybe he didn't. I think he was talkin about growin up. I think it was about growin up.

Janine: Wasn't it like a thing where like you couldn't come back a crab singer?

Jack: Oh, yeah yeah yeah.

Janine: Like, you left. But you couldn't—

Austin: Yes. You I—yes.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, that sounds right.

Janine: If you come back, it's like, "Well, you fucked it."

Austin: Right, that's it.

Jack: People in the chat are saying he grew physically older? Like.

Austin: Yeah, totally. He has a beard now, he's like in his thirties. He started like as the older—as like the twenty-two-year-old in a shounen anime, who is like your.

[**Jack** laughs]

You like older brother type character, and is now turning into like an older and older man. Um. What else happened there? The star fell inside of the magic school?

Jack: Oh yeah, and I had to like lift a whole, like the—a literal star back into a ceiling.

Austin: Uh-huh. Yep.

Jack: Um...Oh! Fawn [laughs] and Piccolo and I went to a clothes shop.

Janine: [laughs] Right.

Dre: Oh yeah [laughs].

Austin: Oh, that's true. That was very good.

Janine: 'Cause Fawn wanted to try on the really fancy shirt.

[**Austin** sighs]

But like knew that no one's gonna let a dog put a shirt on.

Austin: Most people suck, as far as I'm concerned.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: No, Harp didn't go. It was just Piccolo and Fawn.

Dre: Yes.

Austin: Right. Right.

Janine: Oh yeah, you played the uh...clerk.

Jack: I was the awful, awful woman.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: [laughs] Um. What else? Is that it? I think that's it there, and then we got into the Sea Wing! And again, I think we kind of got what happened on the Sea Wing. There was just, you know, the ships—we were eating food, remember there was a bunch of...[sighs] soups? Or something? There was like a whole collection of soups that we could eat?

Jack: Oh yeah, some kind of weird food situation!

[**Dre** laughs]

Austin: Yeah!

Janine: Wasn't it like made of like a seaweed that everyone was kind of sick of? It was like a lot of like sea...sea plants, kind of...

Austin: Seaw—wait, maybe it was like seaweed soup? Various types of seaweed soup, maybe?

Janine: Like kelp, kind of thing...?

Austin: Eh. That sounds right.

Janine: I thought that was part of it.

Austin: Yeah, that sounds like a thing we would do, again. Um.

[**Dre** and **Janine** laugh]

Uh, in any case then we went from there to the Mirror, which was that first town, that first island, that had the...the village of lights. Remember there was like an upside down city in the reflection?

Janine: Mm-hm.

Jack: Oh yeah yeah yeah. They were like preparing for a festival.

Austin: Right, well the festival was like when those two cities come together. But, remember, the actual—the island that we went to had been kind of emptied out, over time? And it was just like a bunch of very sweet older folks whose like families and children had kind of moved on, and were coming back less and less.

Janine: They spent a lot of time convincing themselves that like, “Ah, this year—they’ll show up this year.”

Austin: Yeah...This time. Yeah, for sure.

Janine: “This is the year.”

Austin: Totally. Um, and then from there we went to the Sleeping—

Janine: Oh wait, you forgot about the person who was melted like a candle in the towers.

Jack: The melted like a candle—the horrifying person who melted like a candle.

Austin: Oh my god, I forgot about that. Tell me more about that.

Jack: I blocked most of that out.

Janine: They’re our friend! We just hung out. It was fine.

Austin: [doubtful] Okay. Cool. Great. Love it.

[**Janine** laughs]

From there we went to Sleeping Cinder Cone, which was like a volcanic island which like hot spring. I remember that Harp had a really good scene with the...with a ice troll who didn’t—

Jack: In a hot spring!

Austin: Yeah, who did not want—who was not happy about the heat of the spring, but who was like, committed to—you know, it made his muscles feel better, so. You know.

Jack: Yeah, he was like [growly voice] “I’ll be here forever.”

Austin: “Right, ‘cause I’m — grr.”

Janine: Oh, the chat makes a good point. In the previous island, we forgot that Harp had like a twin, right? Or like a—

Austin: Yes.

Jack: Yeah, like another golem, just like—

Austin: Yes.

Janine: Yeah, there was another golem there.

Austin: Yes.

Jack: But it wasn't active, it was just a statue. It didn't talk or anything, it just—was like—

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: It was just like me, but...working in a...

Austin: Did it not? Okay. Huh.

Jack: I don't think it did, or if it—

Janine: No, I don't think there was anything...I think the big engagement there was with the Magus, because Harp was like, "What the hell?"

Austin: Right, right. Right right right.

Janine: And the Magus was like, "mm I dunno! Shit—you know, golems."

Austin: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Jack: I remember at one point—

Austin: Oh, but it moved! It was alive. It wasn't just a statue. It did do stuff.

Jack: I think so. I remember at one point—

Austin: People are saying it did tend the gardens, so.

Jack: Yeah, one of—I think Austin was like, or maybe the Magus was like, "Do you want to take its...like, rake?"

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Right.

Jack: "So you'd have two?" And I was like, "No, I've got one."

Austin: Forget it. Yeah.

[**Janine** laughs]

Jack: “It seems like that’s a thing *it* needs.”

Austin: Yeah. Um. Also also also, people note beef fudge. Classic—the Mirror beef fudge?

Jack: [horrified] Oh Jesus. Oh my god.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Janine: Damn right!

Austin: Very important. Very important. Um—

Jack: [genuinely] I’m looking forward to listening to this.

Austin: Yeah, it’s good.

[**Janine** laughs]

And then—and then we have, again, Sleeping Cinder Cone. Uh...we talked about the hot springs. We talked about the statue of Fawn. Um. What was Cascading Water: “washed and made”—Oh, that’s when you changed and became First Mate of the Sea! Was there.

Dre: Yes.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Oh, like a sort of a baptism, a—what are they called? That’s a ship baptism.

Austin: Christening.

Jack: No!

[**Dre** laughs]

Austin: Basically!

Jack: Don’t worry, keep talking, I’ll look it up.

Austin: I mean, that’s what—a ship baptism is.

Janine: You christen a ship, that’s when you break the bottle on the ship.

Jack: No, no!

Austin: Yeah, and a christening is literally a baptism. A christening and a baptism are literally—

Jack: No no no no no no! There's like an old nautical tradition where when you cross the equator, there's a ceremony you do, that it's basically like a weird baptism.

[Pause]

Janine: Uh...

Austin: Line crossing ceremony?

Jack: But it's like an older version of that. Has—equatorial baptism!

Janine: Ye Olde line crossing ceremony?

Jack: Equatorial baptism!

Austin: Huh.

Jack: [reading] Baptism on the line, also called equatorial baptism, is an initiation ritual sometimes performed as a ship crosses the equator, involving water baptism of passengers or crew who have never crossed the equator before. The ceremony is sometimes explained as being an initiation into the "Court of King Neptune."

Austin: You skipped the part of this where it includes hurting people. Jack.

Jack: Oh, I just skipped down to that. But yeah. It does seem—

[Austin laughs breathily]

—my understanding of it was that it was also like a sort of a hazing thing?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Like a, sailors just hazing someone as they go across the equator?

Janine: [doubtful] Yeah. Mm.

Austin: Ugh, god. Um. And then the last thing at Sleeping Cinder Cone was Fawn, as you were going back to the ship, you came across this like—you came across Caspian and these children at a well near—like on a beach, that the beach was kind of a giant crater? That kind of like fell into the ocean? An in the well, they just kept pulling out bucket after bucket after bucket of black smoke.

Jack: Oh!

Austin: Like forty buckets. They just kept pulling up, on the same line. They weren't putting down new buckets. They just kept pulling it up, and then, check out a bucket of smoke, and put

it down. And then let the line drop, and pull it back up, and there was another bucket of smoke. And that was a foreboding omen. And then we cut from that to the Isle of Dreams. The Sea Wing took us to the Isle of Dreams, where Dre, you described the clothes of the Painter, and a—the capital P Painter. Who...was painting the Magus.

Dre: Oh, yeah...

Austin: And you said that the Magus felt for the first time a sense of real magic again, not this kind of twisted magic that she had felt earlier. And the Magus—or the Painter had on like just paint-covered clothes, basically. So you were the last one to go, uh, which means, Harp, it is your turn to move.

Janine: I don't remember whose token is whose.

Austin: I can tell you. I'm the candle.

Janine: Thank god.

Austin: Yep. I'm the candle.

Dre: I'm the tree.

Austin: Yep. Uh...Fawn is the bird's, and then—

Janine: Okay.

Austin: The sword is...Harp.

Janine: All right. Good.

Jack: Okay. Um. Hm.

Austin: Uh, so [reading] each turn, move your character token and describe the scene from their perspective. Before your scene ends, use the story prompt to add an additional element to your scene. Um.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: So you [reading] move your character token to any of the scenes at the current—at the Magus's current location. And then describe the scene. [car honking] From the perspective of your character. What is this place like, what do you see and hear. What is going on right now. What is your character thinking and feeling. How you do this is up to you. Then make sure you use the story prompt before your turn ends, and when you are done you can pass the turn.

Jack: [sighs] Okay. So.

Austin: What are our options, for people just listening.

Jack: Ah, yes! [amused] A great point. Our options are: the Windmill, “work left undone;” the Painted Village, “what is moved by the wind;” Cobblestone Avenue, “leisure time;” or the Dreaming Place, “when you were happy.” The picture is of a sort of a road, along some sort of rocky cliffs, with a big, classic windmill in the left hand side. Um. And I’m gonna move my token to the Painted Village.

Austin: Mm!

Jack: [sighs] Okay. So.

Austin: What is moved by the wind is the prompt.

Jack: From the boat...Harp can look up and see, on the cliffside, a village. It is...Colorful buildings, you know, like red-painted buildings, green-painted buildings. There are people moving about. There’s folks coming in and out of shops carrying flowers from place to place. I picture it a lot like the sort of the town in like Howl’s Moving Castle, almost?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: But like smaller. Like, you know, it’s the sort of place where there are at least three hat shops. Except it is...it’s ephemeral? And it is moving with the wind. Perhaps with the wind cast by the windmill, or perhaps with the wind cast across the cliffs, but the entire village is shimmering and moving. And when Harp goes up onto the...up towards it, after they leave the ship, they see that the material of this whole village is...almost spectral. But it’s not like desaturated in the way that we often think of ghostly things, or light things.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: It’s much more like, you know, when you see something being projected a thing that’s moving, onto cloth that’s moving. The colors are very bright, people are moving. But the whole village is being carried by the wind, across the island. And Harp feels very sad about it, because looking at this village, they are struck...by a sense of lightness. [chiming sound] And by a sense of—

Janine: Sorry.

Jack: Oh my goodness.

Austin: [laughs] A sense of lightness.

Jack: Oh no, the alarm! The lightness alarm!

[Laughter]

They're struck by a sense of lightness, and by a sense of what it is to be light. Which is something that they have never experienced, and they can't experience. You put Harp in...water, and they sink. They are not a light thing. But looking at this village, this ephemeral village, kind of drifting just in the wind cast by the windmill, or the wind through the trees, they are struck by what it would be to be light.

Austin: Mm. Interesting. Cool! All right. What is—so what is—I'm just, before we leave, like, I'm curious what Harp is doing here. In the sight of this.

Jack: They...Um. They interact with it. They enter a shop, and they talk to someone. They spend some time in this village, and it's not like they are able to pass through, as though it is a ghost.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: They are able to interact with it. Their hand can grasp, you know, door handles, they can...

Austin: Right.

Jack: Buy and sell things. But the overall impression that they have being in it is of walking through thick, wet sand.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: Or of, you know, when you're having a dream and you can't move the way you want to in your dream. They're able to interact with this place, but heavily.

Austin: Cool. All right. Um, all right. Next up is Fawn.

Janine: Uh...

[30:00]

Janine: I think I'm going [stretching out words] tooooo doooo the Windmill, "work left undone." Um. So the windmill they have pictured here is like—looks pretty sturdy, pretty roomy, like, part of that is gonna be committed to windmill-y stuff but it seems like if you were visiting this place and didn't necessarily wanna go into town, and also didn't wanna sit outside on a cliff...I think for Fawn that would seem like a very attractive place to...

[Austin laughs]

to go to get some quiet workin' time in. Um. Fawn...as I've established previously, doesn't like doing crafts in front of people.

Austin: Hm.

Janine: It's like a mystery to people how she just goes away and comes back with a thing?

Austin: Right.

Janine: Um, and it's kind of never clear like is she using her mouth? Like what's happening there? [laughs] How is that working—and that's very much because she seeks out these kinds of quiet places where like. There might be someone who—there is probably someone who keeps this windmill and uses this windmill, but...they're probably not here all the time, and.

Austin: Right.

Janine: When she gets there, at least, I don't think they are? So I think she kind of doesn't mess with their shit that they're grinding or whatever, but just kinda like clears a little space for herself. And just kind of produces some of her basic like working tools. And kind of has them spread out on the floor in front of her, so there's like little...just little like things for punching holes, or like cutting, things like that. And then some leather scraps, I think. Most of this is coming out of pockets on the inside of her cape. Which is why her cape always stays in place on her back, because there's sort of some weight on each side of it, so it's not just flopping around back and forth, it's got a bit of a...yeah, it's weighed down so it stays put.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Um. Part of her kit, though, part of the stuff she's sort of unpacking on the floor, are two hands. Just like...just hands. Just two hands, and they look like—it's hard to tell what they're made of. I think without someone like taking them away and examining them closely, it would be very unclear if they were like some kind of...petrified stonelike material or if they were like some kind of treated wood.

Austin: Mm.

Janine: Or if they were some kind of like very old, tanned flesh. Like hands. For realz. I don't think it's clear. But she...she's probably doing this with like...herself between her work and the door, just to be safe, but these like little hands are what pick up the tools and start...her project.

Austin: [laughs] Perfect. [laughs]

Jack: Wait, these hands are like...there's nothing attached to the hands.

Austin: How—

Janine: No, there's just hands.

Jack: They just sort of—

Austin: Ah—ah.

Jack: They just sort of begin to do it.

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: [sighs] W—hm. Okay! Okay. I'm not gonna. Ask any more questions. [laughs]

[**Janine** laughs]

Dre: Are you sure? You can, if you want to.

[**Austin** makes a baffled noise]

[laughs]

Austin: Has anyone ever seen them? Have you been caught? Not caught but—witnessed?

Janine: Um. Hm, that's a complicated question. Uh...does witnessing something count if...if like...[laughing] I don't know how to say this without sounding...really scary! Does witnessing something count if the person doesn't remember witnessing or isn't able to—

Jack: Hm!

Janine: —testify about it after the fact? [laughs]

Jack: Hm.

Janine: Like does that still count as witnessing?

Austin: Yes.

Janine: Then yes.

Austin: Was Fawn's reaction to make sure they couldn't testify about it?

Janine: I'm sure on different occasions there have been different ways of handling it.

[**Dre** laughs]

Austin: Cool. [weakly]...Over in the chat, Altair says, "Does anyone remember what Fawn's hat looked like?" [laughs]

[**Janine** laughs]

A simpler time.

Janine: It had a little bird on it—the bird witnessed her.

Austin: Gotcha.

Janine: That's what happened.

Austin: I see.

Dre: You see these hands, you then have to catch these hands.

Austin: You gotta catch the hands, yeah, exactly. Great.

[**Janine** laughs]

Good. Anything else there?

Janine: Um. I think that's all I've got for that in mind. I—yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I wanted to address that. [laughs]

Austin: Fair. Good, I appreciate it. Um. All right, I'm up next. Can I have a scene with you, Piccolo?

Dre: Yeah!

Austin: Uh, I am going to. The...Dreaming Place. And I kind of want this to be—so I think the Dreaming Place is [laughs] is in the kind of painted city, in the painted village, there is an inn, called the Dreaming Place, and it's—there's a sign that's been kind of—I mean, everything's hand-painted, in a sense, right, but like it has—the signage looks like someone just kind of drew the words Dreaming Place in this kind of big—not like gothic font? Um. But an elaborate kind of script, an elaborate, flourish-y script, but not twisted-in flourishes, just kind of lots of tails on the letters, and it's still legible, but you know. Kind of corny looking, honestly? And as we walk towards it, Caspian is like,

Austin [as Caspian]: I knew a song about this place once. Ah...it. Given what we have to come, I think you and I should take the night and rest up here. Let it sweep us back to better days. The pillows are made of better things than the rest of the world.

Dre [as Piccolo]: So like...like a really high thread count?

Caspian: Incredibly high.

Piccolo: Okay.

Austin: And they go inside, and as Harp was, you know, there are people here to talk to, and it all kind of has a very kind of...you know, I definitely imagine this feeling a little bit like the stuff in Twilight Mirage with Polyphony, or the stuff I've talked before about in Mononoke, not Princess Mononoke but the anime Mononoke, where like, the people are kind of in the background a little bit, but are—you can deal with them? Like they're not—or like Tokyo Mirage Sessions, the kind of silhouetted people, but kind of here painted? And they lead us to rooms, and it's like—it's a bunk bed situation, but like the beds are made of this kind of...[sighs] it's like gooey paint, but like not...it doesn't feel bad to touch it. Do you know what I mean? Um. And Caspian climbs up to the top bunk, and I have this picture of just like a shot of like covering up with a painted blanket, that kind of sloshes on, and feels heavy—it's like a weighted, heavy blanket of paint, but's like semi-dried paint, so it has kind of like a almost like a latex paint feel, do you know what I mean?

Dre: Mm-hm.

Austin: Uh, and he says,

[as **Caspian**]: Now rest up. And remember, whatever we see here: it walks the line between real and not.

Dre [as **Piccolo**]: So like, kind of like most everything lately?

Caspian: [sighs] Kind of. I'll see you on the other side.

Piccolo: [doubtful] Okay.

Austin: And I blow out the candle, and the candle, like, the fire is paint, and so when you blow it out, it like splatters against the wall in orange, and then like—it's still lit, and then slowly kind of fades off, fades down, you know, from this kind of glowy orange down to nothing, as we drift off. And so the prompt is "when you were happy." And the thing I kind of want is for both of us to be in a place that is a weird combination of when we both were happy.

Dre: Hm.

Austin: Um. When were you happy? When was Piccolo happy?

[Pause]

Dre: Uh...hm...Gosh. I mean, most of this trip?

Austin: Right.

Dre: ...But I also think like, I mean.

Austin: I mean, that's a totally valid answer.

Dre: Yeah. I think probably most of this trip. Like I think like. You've met his weird aunt Mathilda, and what—

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: —he had to deal with in Barley Town! [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. So then maybe it is like, we get the Piccolo of now, but we get the Caspian of like Piccolo's age? Of like fifteen years old? And the two of them are in Istallia, and they're both part of the crab singing school. Which is—or like the home for young crab singers, basically. it's an orphanage. It is filled with magical children, or children who are potentially gifted, and I think we get lots of like, training, but like. Um.

The training to be a crab singer is basically that you leap off of these cliffs with the kite and begin to sing, and the singing is what gives you the air you need, the drafts you need to reach up to real drafts, and to make up the middle, to fill the gaps of what natural air currents are lacking, right.

And I think we've been partnered up as like teens, and we get this kind of like much more confident version of Caspian. And like, flying down through the canyons, and through the city streets of Istallia, and...you know, we actually see the...the ruler of Istallia, who in this image has waaay fewer anchors? Than he does now? Like not just like twenty years' worth, but like a lifetime's worth, a hundred years' worth. And in general, you can kind of feel the magic is in the air a little bit more than it is now.

And it's very much Caspian at an earlier age. And it's kind of—I think the other thing is, he's confident, but still not as confident as you are? It sounds like. 'Cause if you're—the you who is now the first mate of the Sea Wing, this is still Caspian, rookie crab singer.

[**Dre** laughs]

Um. And I wonder where we come to like—where we come to—like maybe it's like us in Istallia, like, having just finished a kiting session, right, and we've come to rest on a tall wall looking out over the ocean as the sun comes to set behind us, you know, casting out over the ocean in front of us. And Caspian is like,

[as **Caspian**]: You really love this. Adventuring and travelling.

Dre [as **Piccolo**]: Yeah, I mean. I guess you've been seeing everything from the sky for...a long time, and until this started, I only ever saw things from like through a barley field.

Caspian: But that barley field had a man in it. And—it called to us, and—the magic isn't of the sky alone.

Piccolo: I mean, that's true, but like...I don't know, you see the same thing over and over again, no matter how spectacular it is the first time you see it, when you see it a thousand times...It just gets to be there. I mean, it doesn't mean—I didn't *hate* it. I wasn't *unhappy*. But.

Caspian: But not as happy as when you were on a living bird ship.

Piccolo: I mean, yes, you just said living bird ship and I know exactly what you mean, so...

Caspian: [laughs] Oh...I wonder. [pause] I wonder if we can keep stringing new things together. For long enough. To make it worth it for you.

Piccolo: I mean, listen, I could...I mean, you know. Knock on wood. But, I mean, this could all end tomorrow and it'd be worth it.

Caspian: You wouldn't rather be back catching frogs for another thirty, forty years?

Piccolo: Oh...Okay. Now you're just—this is—*No*. [laughs]

Caspian: That's fair! I'm not s—

Piccolo: Do you know how hard it is to catch frogs, and to talk about frogs, when you're not supposed to say the first letter in frog?

Caspian: That doesn't seem that hard, actually. I don't think I name many letters in the day-to-day chores I need to do.

Piccolo: But like...I used to like, sell them. And so how do you write an invoice...

Caspian: [laughs] For "rogs." Fair.

Piccolo: 'Cause then somebody's like, yeah, what's a rog leg? And I'm like, aw, see, no, don't...

Caspian: [laughs] [pauses] There are missing pieces everywhere. There are letters many of us can't write. You can't write—

Austin: I look both ways and lean close—

[as **Caspian**]: [whispers] F. [normally] And once I left here I couldn't come back the way I was.

Dre [as **Piccolo**]: Why did you leave?

Caspian: Hm.

[45:00]

Caspian: Crab singers are meant to leave. And the home within the home...[sighs]
There was a tragedy one night. And I was the one who made it out. There's an old song about it. You'll hear it one day.

And I spent a long time doing what you're doing now. And I had an incredible time. And then I realized that...my joy...was tied *so deeply* to the novelty others could bring me. New songs. New lands. New characters for *my* tales. It is a deeply selfish way to live, Piccolo.

Anyway. We should wake up.

Austin: And he like climbs on top of the side of the wall and looks out into the ocean, and leaps off with the kite, one more time. And then just kind of glides slowly into the water [slight laugh] and just—we get the horizontal—we get the kind of...wide shot of him just sinking into the water, like just going diagonally down into the water, and off camera. And that's it for Caspian. Do you do any else while still in the Dreaming Place?

Dre: Uh, no, I think he just watches the sunset.

Austin: Hm. Um, when you wake up the next day...Caspian's red hair has now gone completely grey. I'm actually gonna change my token now...to this one of the candle having been burnt down. And that is my turn. It is your turn.

Dre: Hm. I know what scene I wanna do, and I'm trying to decide if I just want Harp or if I want everybody...I think I want everybody.

[**Austin** and **Janine** make amused noises]

Jack: The whole gang.

Dre: Yep! Um. So yeah. We're on the Cobblestone Avenue, and...I just forgot my character's name for a split second.

[**Austin** laughs]

Piccolo grabbed everybody at like lunch time? And was like,

[as **Piccolo**]: All right, y'all, I'm gonna show you a game we used to play, back in Barley Town.

[Austin continues laughing quietly]

Dre: Um. And he grabs one of the pieces of chalk, and a ball, and he's going to teach everyone how to play four square.

Austin: [laughs] Aw!

[Jack laughs]

[Dre laughs]

Oh, boy.

Dre: Does anyone else know how to play four square? Do any of you other characters know how to play four square?

Austin: [conceding] Caspian *probably* knows how to play four square. Right? 'S a city kid. Grew up with chalk—with cobblestone roads, also, you know?

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: [seriously] I do not.

Dre: [laughs] Good. I was hoping for that, for the sake of this scene. What about Fawn? Does Fawn know how to play four square?

Janine: Uh, no. And also I think—well. Hm...I wonder. Um. I think she says she doesn't.

Dre: [laughing] Okay!

[Jack laughs]

Austin: Ah! Uh-huh, we're being fuckin hustled by the fuckin vinegar fox.

[Dre laughs loudly]

Jack: Oh dear, the four square hustle!

Austin: God damn it.

[Janine laughs]

Jack: The rarest of them all!

[Pause]

Dre [as **Piccolo**]: All right, so, here's the rules. First I'm gonna draw this big square, and then I'm gonna make it into four squares, and that's the name, four square?

Jack [as **Harp**]: It is the title.

Janine [as **Fawn**]: Technically—technically it's five squares now.

Piccolo: No—

Austin [as **Caspian**]: That's not true, it's more than that, even. Isn't it?

Piccolo: [muttering] Oh...Oh boy.

Fawn: If you're counting rectangles? But I'm—

Harp: Correctly name the squares and we will play.

Piccolo: All right, so this one's one, two, three, and four. Um. I'll start in one. Harp, you can be in two. Um...And then Fawn, you can be in three, and Caspian—

Caspian: I need to be in three, I need to be in three, my knees are no good anymore, I need to be in three.

Piccolo: Oh, okay, you can be in three, and then I guess Fawn you'll be in four. Okay! So, I'm gonna take the ball, and I'm gonna hit it into someone's square, and you have to let it bounce once...but then you have to hit it in somebody else's square. If it bounces twice before you hit it, you're out.

Caspian: Hands only.

Fawn: How do we hit it?

Piccolo: Uh, well, I would say—yeah, with your hands, but I guess, Fawn, you just do what you gotta do.

Fawn: [laughing] I definitely don't have hands! So!

[**Austin** laughs]

Piccolo: You just do what you gotta do! Listen, we're—

Harp: May I leave my square?

Piccolo: Uh, no! Ah, great question! Good question. No, you may not lose—you may not leave your square. Uh.

Harp: Why.

Piccolo: ...Because that's your square.

Harp: It is mine.

Piccolo: Yes.

Harp: Excellent.

[**Dre** laughs]

Piccolo: Uh, let's—Caspian, am I forgetting any other rules? Oh, if it—if it bounces into your square, and then, before you hit it, it bounces out of bounds, which is like the area outside of your square, that mean you're also out.

Caspian: That's right. Um...Are we doing sequential rules, or free play?

Piccolo: I think—I—man, okay. Now you're gettin more complicated than me. We're just gonna—we're just gonna play for five or ten minutes and see how it goes.

Caspian: Okay.

Austin: How does this go?

Dre: I—yeah, Piccolo hits the ball into Harp's square.

Jack: Uh, it bounces once and Harp just absolutely punts it towards Caspian [laughs]—

[**Austin** and **Dre** laugh]

—with the force of a thousand suns.

Austin: Caspian gets hit by the ball, and just like, flops back onto his back.

[**Dre** and **Janine** laugh]

[as **Caspian**]: [strained] *Ohhh*.

[**Dre** calms down]

Jack [as **Harp**]: Victory.

[Pause, laughter]

Caspian: [strained] *Ohhh*...[coughs]

Dre [as **Piccolo**]: Uh. Yeah, I—yes.

Caspian: [strained] I'll—okay.

Harp: Excellent. Caspian, are you hurt?

Janine [as **Fawn**]: I thought you said you knew how to play this.

Harp: Yes.

Caspian: [strained] I do. [getting breath] It's just been a few years.

Piccolo: I think, uh—let's...let's, you know, we're just warming up. We're just playin for fun.

Caspian: [strained] Oh, that was just—that was just a warm up! Yeah! That's it!

Piccolo: Yeah, so—

Harp: That was so fun.

[**Janine** laughs]

Austin: Gets up and like—

Dre [as **Piccolo**]: Yeah—

Austin: Cracks back. Does some stretches.

[as **Caspian**]: [strained] I just needed to stretch, we should have had a stretching period. Normally we do this—

Dre [as **Piccolo**]: Yeah. I mean, do you need to like—do you wanna like step out for a second to—

Caspian: [sighs] [strained] No, I'm good. [stronger] I'm good.

Piccolo: Oh, okay.

[**Jack** laughs]

Well, I guess, since you won, Harp, you get to serve...

[**Austin** laughs]

Dre: And I think [laughs]

[Laughter]

Piccolo like backs to like the farthest away he can.

Austin: [amused] Oh...

Jack: [amused] Oh. Yeah, it goes about as fast. I think it goes slightly—you know, less in that it doesn't knock you over, but it's much the same, I think.

Dre: Who do they* serve to?

**pronoun corrected*

Jack: You.

Dre: Okay. [laughs] Yeah, I think Piccolo probably just like takes it in the gut, and is like,

[as **Piccolo**]: [strained] *Oh!*

[Quiet laughter]

Oh—okay. I'm gonna—let's—um—I think Fawn should get to serve, 'cause she hasn't—she hasn't done that yet. Oh...

Janine: Uh. How the fuck—I feel—mm. I feel like I can think of a way for Fawn to like...to return a serve. I don't know that I can think of a way for Fawn to serve.

[**Jack** laughs]

'Cause she—

Austin: You could toss it up in the air and then jump up and get it.

Jack: Yeah!

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: ...I guess. She's very short.

Austin: Ball—the ball's gonna fall down. You know? You like header it—

Janine: Yeah—

Austin: —like a soccer ball.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: [doubtful] Okay...Mm—I think she probably asks for someone to like k—if someone who's out can like chuck it to her so it gets a bit of height, and then she can bop it, but.

Austin: Fair.

Janine: If that's cool.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: [laughing] I think that's the best she can do... 'Cause she can't like—she can't like chuck it—I don't need to get hung up on the physics of this.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: [laughs] I just need someone to load it in.

Dre: [amused] Oh. Yeah. Now you're getting hung up on the physics of what is or is not possible for your dog to do?

[**Janine** and **Austin** laugh]

Austin: Does this turn into just though like a four square game where...Piccolo, Caspian, and Fawn just kind of carefully bat it back and forth—

Jack: [laughs] Yeah.

Austin: —to each other to prevent Harp from killing one of us? Until we slip up?

Dre: Yeah, probably.

Jack: Excerpt Harp...Harp is just standing there—Harp is having a great time.

[**Austin** laughs]

Harp does not feel—

[**Dre** laughs]

—that they are being left out of the game at any point. [laughs]

Austin: [laughing] Perfect!

[**Dre** laughs]

Ohh. I have a question! Does the chalk do anything here in the Isle of Dreams? In the Painted Village?

Dre: Oh, man!

Jack: Oh!

Dre: That's a good question.

Austin: Like does it react in any way?

Dre: You know, probably during the match. Like there's probably times where like...somebody like runs to like get to the very corner, and like the edges will just kind of like shrink and expand really quick.

Austin: Mm, cool. Perfect. God. Um. How does this resolve, or do we just kinda fade to the night, with us laughing, and playing?

Dre: Yeah! I think that's...

Austin: Nice.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: All right. It's time to unscroll this thing a little more, because Jack, you are in charge of the Magus as we...

Jack: Uh-oh.

Austin: As we move away from...um...

[**Janine** makes an amused noise]

one second, I just need to like...I need to fuck around with some shit. I'll move this to the back, and then move this to the back, and then move this to the back, then move—whoop! C'mon. There we go! Okay. [breathes in] Deep breaths. [breathes out]

Jack: Let's see where we go.

Austin: Slide this in. Slide this...out. And we are here—I guess we might have to unroll this, right? I think we're here. This is it!

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: [breathes out] There it is. The end of the map.

Dre: Damn!

Jack: Woah!

Austin: So. [breathes out] Uh, we are going to—uh, it's kind of hard to see here so I'm gonna move this just a little bit—we are going from this final island there, that we're at like here. To the Ruins of Crowhall, where the prompt is, "the hospitality of the Magus, question mark?" Um. You are the Magus, Jack. So. Go ahead and move us to the Ruins of Crowhall and the hospitality of the—oh, do I have to do that? I may have to do that. Boop. There we go.

Uh, the—do you wanna describe the picture here?

Jack: Yeah. So our options are—oh—we'll save options for the first one, but what we're looking at is...a ruined...country house, a ruined mansion. Its towers are kind of torn apart, and it has in front of it what would have been, I guess, an ornamental garden at some point? But is now just overgrown.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: The trees are all bare, there's no...there's no...there's nothing on the...trees. It's pretty bad, actually. It's pretty bad to look at. [slight laugh]

Austin: Yeah...Is that also what our Ruins of Crowhall look like, or do they look like something different? 'Cause that's what the picture looks like.

Jack: Mm, that is true, that is what the picture looks like. Um. Let me think. So...Hm. Okay. So...The—what's the boat called again? The...Oh, man, it's in the—

Austin: Wh—

Janine: Wait, something Wing?

Austin: Which—

Jack: Bit we can't see.

Austin: The Storm—

Janine: Sea Wing? Storm—

Austin: The Sea Wing, it's the Sea Wing.

Jack: It's the Sea Wing.

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah.

Jack: So the Sea Wing basically, you know, moors up some distance away from Crowhall, and we get into like a little rowing boat, and row up these like flint docks, almost like they're been

built out of bits of flint. There's—there's sort of rotted wood. The Magus gets out first, and her foot goes through the wood, and she kind of like pulls her foot back out.

[**Austin** huffs a laugh]

Together we walk up this very steep—steps cut into the cliff, until we can see the ruins of Crowhall. And they do look like this. And...as the Magus walks through the garden, it is as though they return to life, but only within a sort of radius of about two or three feet around her.

Austin: Huh.

Jack: Um. Grass verges that have overgrown tuck themselves back in. Bricks that were chipped become...unchipped, and then chipped again as the Magus passes by. She approaches the ruined front door of the house, and suddenly it is a, you know, it's a full, perfect—it's a perfect door. And...she knocks on the door, and it's opened by a butler—

[**Austin** huffs a laugh]

—a man wearing a, you know, fine clothes, who welcomes her.

[as **BUTLER**]: The Magus! Please, please, do come in.

And she nods to him, and follows in, being careful to tread close behind him, and as we walk through the ruined entryway, it is good! It's a beautiful entryway, but only around the Magus—in fact, we can see the entryway that we step towards, ruined, broken boards, broken stairs—but they are good when we approach them. And so the Magus sets everybody up in a room.

[**Austin** huffs a laugh]

A single room that is lovely. The wallpaper is beautiful, there's scented candles, there's—a fire. But as soon as we step out of that room, there will be...you know, the place will be ruined. And whenever the butler steps out of the way of the—out of the sort of the radius of the Magus, he becomes...similarly ruined. He becomes...

[1:00:00]

Jack: ...ancient, you know, almost corpselike. Almost like desiccated. Moving very slowly.

Austin: Huh.

Jack: But as he steps towards the Magus again, you know, carrying a cracked tray, he stands up to full stature, and his clothes become beautiful, and he hands the Magus or the guests a slice of cake, or some tea, or something.

Austin: Hm.

[Pause]

Jack: It's bad here.

Austin: Yeah. It does not seem good. [huffs]

Jack: I guess if anybody has—wants to talk to the Magus about this place or anything, the Magus is—the Mag—[laughs] In contrast to other places in the journey, the Magus seems fairly available.

Austin: Right. We're—is she staying—she's staying in the same room.

Jack: Oh yeah, there is one room that we can use. Well, we can use multiple rooms, but we can use [amused] one room at a time.

Austin: Right. Um. How many rooms are there?

Jack: Uh, s...forty?

Austin: Actually—I'm—let's make this actually an in character question.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: I think Caspian says, [breathes] you know, from this cramped, single room.

[as **Caspian**]: [tiredly] How big is this place?

Jack [as **The Magus**]: It's vast. It's...where I grew up. There's maybe forty, forty or fifty rooms. Or at least there were when I was last here. I don't know how many will have fallen by now.

Caspian: ...Which was your favorite?

The Magus: [deep sigh] There was a receiving room, where I was introduced to dignitaries as a child. You would think that I would resent the time, the imposition on my time, but instead, I saw it as an opportunity to forge connections, to become the person that I am. It was a beautiful space. There was a piano, which I could not play. There was a view out onto the garden. [sighs] It doesn't—I can't bring it back. It's one of the few rooms that I cannot restore. Try as I might.

Caspian: Hm.

The Magus: But one has to come to terms with that, doesn't one.

[Pause]

Caspian: Magus, this place doesn't feel safe.

The Magus: It's not.

Caspian: Then why do we stay? We are so close, I can feel it. Why stay even a night?

The Magus: Are you denying my hospitality, Caspian?

Caspian: Why does that sound like a threat? Magus.

The Magus: Well, this is my home. And it is only right that we spend some time in my home.

Caspian: Of course. Of course.

[Pause]

Jack: Does everyone sleep well in this place?

Austin: [outraged] No! [laughs]

Dre: Yeah, no.

Jack: That sounds about right! That sounds like the—is it because you can hear things out—like is it just a bad night? Or is it that there is something about the...about the mansion?

Austin: ...I think it's more about anxe—like, not just anxiety, but like, an anxious to be done?

Jack: Mm.

Austin: For Caspian...anyway.

Jack: The sort of reaching the last five percent thing.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And going, "Oh, it's so nearly there. Why aren't we doing it?" Yeah.

Austin: Right. He had convinced himself that the Dreaming Place would ge—oh, this is it! Got what we needed. Now we can just move on to the final...

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: The difficult final step. But like.

Jack: Oh god...

Austin: The difficult final step is supposed to be a climbing of a mountain, or like—it's supposed to be this active difficulty, and not "I'm in the creepiest fucking place in the world, and I've lost my freedom of movement." Especially with Caspian.

Jack: Yeah. And it—

Austin: But Caspian does not feel safe to leave. Alone. And that's why he's staying.

Jack: And the Magus seems to be all right here.

Austin: [amused] Right!

Jack: Yeah, she sleeps solidly. She just—

[**Austin** laughs]

you can hear her like turning over in bed, but it's not like tossing and turning. She's just out like a light.

Austin: Great. [pauses] Um. What about the rest—what about Fawn, and Piccolo?

Janine: Um, I don't think Fawn is particularly troubled either. I think...she is about as comfortable as the Magus with this place, for whatever reason. Um...She...Yeah, I don't think...I think it's probably a little conspicuous, the lack of reaction she has to stuff here.

Austin: Mm.

Dre: Um. How far in from the coast are we? 'Cause I think, if we're close enough to the coast that Piccolo would probably just sleep on the ship.

Jack: Oh, he can't. The Magus won't—that's not allowed.

Dre: Oh, yeah, it's—I don't wanna be rude!

[Amused noises]

Jack: This is it. You're guests.

Dre: Um. He probably does not sleep well. I think he probably like will like toss and turn for like three hours, and then get up and kind of like walk around for an hour, and then try to go—

[**Austin** huffs a laugh]

—back to sleep. And just toss and turn for a while.

Jack: [sighs] Cool.

Austin: Great. All right.

Jack: Cool and good.

Austin: Um. Janine, it is your scene.

Janine: Yeah. Um. What I should do is read all these places for people who are listening to this.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: Um, and also because I think this place is really cool. Uh...

[**Austin** laughs]

I should say, I played this game with another tabletop group for fun, and we finished it and I was like, I just thought this place was neat. All these things will sound familiar! So the places we can choose from are: the Bridge—

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: —“who you trust.”

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: The Sculpture Gardens.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: Where you can pick up traits like Lonely, Obsessed, and Doomed; the Scrying Pool, “who suffers in your absence;” and the Menagerie, “a nightmare given form.” I say these all sound familiar ‘cause they’re like in the first place.

Austin: They’re the first ones. Yeah, the first o—

Janine: Yeah, the first ones.

Austin: So it was originally, we start at Ravenhall.

Janine: Ravenhall. Yeah.

Austin: And that’s the Scrying Pool, “why you serve the Magus;” Rose Gardens, plus Beautiful, Legendary, or Fierce; the Menagerie, “the last time you saw real magic;” and the Bridge, “your face in the river.”

Janine: It's so good. [laughs]

Austin: It's very good.

Janine: Sorry to make all that explicit, it's just—I just think it's cool. I like this game a lot.

Austin: Yeah. It has been since November, so I think it's fair.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: It has, yeah. So, I think Fawn is...going to the Menagerie...And...I think Fawn asks Harp to come with her. Does Harp accept?

Jack: Yes. Absolutely.

Janine: [amused] All right. So...I remember the original menagerie, or the Ravenhall menagerie, was a place that there were small cages, but magic was used to manipulate the actual active space within those cages, and as the magic dwindled, so did the space in those cages, so it became more and more...depressing.

[**Jack** sighs]

I think that this place had a very similar setup, but because it is all—this place is—this is a dead place. There is nothing here, basically. Like it's...the things that are here are very bad and spooky. All the cool stuff has also gone all spooky. So I think this Menagerie might have once been kind of similar in that like there was all these tricks that made it look better than it was, but now it's just a bunch of sort of rusted out cages that look barely big enough to actually transport an animal, never mind keep it. Um. And...the grass is kind of all like...what's it called? Like when it's kind of all ammonia-burnt?

Jack: Oh yeah, like all discolored and—

Janine: It's all like patchy and brown and fucked up. And there are animals here, but they—it's mostly like...[sighs] I guess you can't even see them. You can probably hear animals, and they sound like small and hungry, but they don't really make themselves visible. It's possible that they are just sort of like, they have a...it's actually very likely they have a sort of den that is just sort of just under the surface of the ground. And they're kind of scurrying around doing shit, just out of sight.

So I think Fawn, though...leads Harp through this place with a kind of purpose. And gets to this sort of rusted-out cage that's like—it's not just rusted, it looks like something has kind of eaten away at it, like something corrosive? Which I guess rust is corrosive, but. The scale of the decay on this cage is not equal to the scale of decay on the other cages. And it has sort of a gate on the front of it, and I think Harp—or sorry I think Fawn—all these four-letter names—I think Fawn

like tugs—like paws the door open, 'cause it's not latched. And then starts digging? And then looks back expectantly at Harp.

Jack [as **Harp**]: Why have you brought us here?

Janine [as **Fawn**]: I need to get something. And you're better at this than me.

Harp: Digging?

Fawn: Yeah. I mean, you know, dirt stuff.

Harp: [sighs] You wish me to garden?

Fawn: Kinda.

Harp: Indicate whereupon the dirt I should dig.

Janine: [laughs] I think Fawn like scratches an X a little bit away from where she was digging, just like to the right or something of it.

Jack: Um, I think Harp just starts digging with their hands. But in the way that something whose hands are made of stone...would be able to [laughing] use them...[seriously] In a way that flesh can't. It's very shovellike, it's very mechanical.

[as **Harp**]: What am I digging for?

Janine [as **Fawn**]: You'll know when you see.

Harp: I would like guidance.

Fawn: Uh...well, it won't be dirt. Um. It probably won't be a rat's nest, either.

Harp: I can cope with either.

Fawn: [laughs] I'm not saying you can't. Um.

Janine: I think the thing that Fawn is looking for isn't buried all that deep.

Jack: Oh, so shows up quite quickly?

Janine: Yeah. It probably takes like an hooouuuuur or so, but like relatively—you know—

Jack: Oh, quite quickly.

Austin: Quite quickly, an hour of hard digging.

Janine: In like digging terms, it's, you know, that's—part of that time is just gonna be clearing the space once you hit the first bit of it.

Jack: That's true.

Janine: It is like a—it is a mostly complete human skeleton. Um.

Jack [as Harp]: [urgently] Fawn.

[Janine laughs]

Fawn.

Janine [as Fawn]: Yep. What's up?

Harp: Fawn, I have discovered a corpse.

[Austin laughs]

Fawn: It's just bones. It's only a corpse if it has meat on it, I think.

Harp: I have—this was a person once, Fawn.

Fawn: A real long time ago.

Harp: Fawn, there is a person beneath the earth.

[Austin laughs]

Fawn: There's a lot of those.

Harp: And I have discovered them.

[Janine laughs]

Do you wish me to remove them from the hole?

Fawn: I mean—no. No, that's okay. Um.

Harp: Excellent.

Janine: I think Fawn like hops into the hole. And now she's digging a little bit, but it's like a light kind of digging. And she...what does she get out of here?

Jack: [laughs] Great question!

Janine: [laughs] Um. I think the thing that she visibly picks up is like some kind of trinket? Like some kind of like, bauble. But with that, she probably is—she probably also just like—a few smaller bones probably like disappear into her cape. In a way that's a little maybe confusing.

And then she hops out of the hole. [laughs]

Jack [as Harp]: Fawn.

Janine [as Fawn]: What's up?

Harp: May I ask a question regarding the skeleton?

Fawn: Uh, sure.

Harp: Who is the skeleton?

[Austin laughs]

Fawn: Who is or who was?

Harp: Yes.

Fawn: No, you have to pick...one.

Harp: Who was the skeleton?

Janine: Uh...I think actually Fawn probably says this like really casually, as she's turning and leaving. I think she just says,

[as Fawn]: That was me.

Jack [as Harp]: Fantastic.

Jack: And I think I just let her go. [amused] I don't think that this is like a—

[Austin laughs]

Jack: I don't think there's a follow-up here.

Austin: [amused huff] Was that your scene, Janine?

Janine: I think that's my scene.

Austin: Okay. So I think we don't—I think we just stay on Harp, for a second, and then we get Caspian saying,

[as **Caspian**]: Harp! Harp!

[1:15:00]

Caspian: Where are you—

Jack [as **Harp**]: Yes.

Caspian: Where are you? Can—[sighs]

Harp: [calling] I'm over here. I'm over here. Do not—

Caspian: Can you come—can you come help me with something?

Harp: Do not come close. Indeed.

Austin: And like, pokes my head in but doesn't see the hole in the—

Jack: [laughs] Just a huge...

Austin: —sees the hole, but not see the skeleton, and is just like,

[as **Caspian**]: I—[sighs] Come with me, I need something. Um. I need help. From you.
[sighs]

Jack [as **Harp**]: Of course.

Austin: And I take you to the Scrying Pools. It says pool here, but they're pools. It's multiple. They are...a row of fifteen—or not a row, a...I guess it's actually twenty. It's four columns of five giant stone chalices, and a—a well in the middle of them. And you can see that there are four buckets—or probably more than that. Probably ten buckets of smoke. That are on the ground. And I've gone to the Scrying Pool, "who suffers in your absence" is my prompt. And Caspian says,

[as **Caspian**]: I—I—[sighs] Sorry, I'm trying to catch my breath. I need to fill these chalices with...the smoke. But there's a lot of it, and I can't do it alone, and I... [sighs] I need someone I can trust to help me with this. Who will not...who will not be surprised when it is over.

Will you help?

Jack [as **Harp**]: Why are we f—why are we filling the pools with smoke, Caspian?

Caspian: It's an opportunity. It's an opportunity that I didn't know I'd have. Until I saw them. I can...I can make something right. I can...that's not right. I can... [sighs] Oh, I can't find the words anymore.

Harp: I will fill the—I will fill the chalices with smoke.

Caspian: I'll help too, obviously, I—

Austin: and begins—

Jack [as Harp]: We will do it together.

Austin: And so we do, and we begin to fill it, and the day is passing on. And then it's done, and they're all filled. And there are twenty stone chalices with, you know—there were once gemmed—you know, gemmed inlays that have all broken, and you know, you can see little bits of rusted metal on the ground, and we have to like kick those away, and make sure—I, anyway, have to make sure I don't step on anything. Um. And, and I say,

[as **Caspian**]: [sighs] There was a time, a long [sighs]...It feels so long ago now. We were in the hills, the Oak Hills, do you remember the Oak Hills?

Jack [as Harp]: I do.

Caspian: And there were—you and I had the book, and I was trying to teach you to sing. And...you know how that went.

Harp: It did not go well.

Caspian: It didn't go well, but there were harpers, along the road, and they sung us a song. And I need you to help me play that song. All you have to do is—

Harp: How?

Caspian: All you need to do is [sighs] I'll tell you which chalices to move, which to blow on, which to run your hand along, which to stir up. And each will make a note. And I'll do the same, and I—

Austin: And he like looks around for like a branch, and grabs a branch.

[as **Caspian**]: And I just...We'll start slow. And then we'll pick up speed, and then together we'll play the song. And I just...Harp, please, I know that you have a whole thing with music, I know. But can you please help me with this?

Jack [as Harp]: It will be difficult, but I will try.

Caspian: All right.

Austin: And so like...so it's very slow. It's basically of like Simon Says, you know? It's like, "All right. Twist this chalice at its, you know, at its center. You know, splash in this one." And again, you're splashing smoke, right, but the smoke has an almost liquid quality to it. And they make humming sounds, it's like doing music on glassware. And the song is the song that we heard in Harper's Way, back on the Oak Hills, which is a song about an orphanage with five verses. Each verse is about a different child from the orphanage. Kabu, Ellamura, Justice, Vago. And Caspian, and River. So six verses, actually. And it is a song about—and it becomes clear, because as we play, the smoke begins to emanate out from the chalices, once we reach the right tempo—and it is the song of Caspian leaving the school of the crab singers behind. And it becomes clear that like the smoke takes on the shape of the children there, and the building, and the entire kind of Scrying Pool area becomes like a—the center of the kind of children's bunkhouse. As Caspian drains them all of their magic. And out the window, you can see the kind of light of magic leaving the world, and in his head, he is off to find the Magus, and try to help, but he has the thing Piccolo has, too, right, which is like, "I'm gonna go on an adventure."

Dre: Mnn.

Austin: "And I'm not strong enough to do it yet." And so we get old Caspian like kneeling as the other kids kind of like shout, as young smoke-Caspian takes off with the best kite, leaping from the roof of the school, and floating away west. He kind of like...older Caspian kneels down to each smoke-child and like, tearfully apologizes, and [scornfully] they don't say anything to him. This isn't how this works. This isn't how this works.

But as he moves from one to the other, the song begins to end, and...he...you know, the smoke world begins to kind of dissipate. And...like the smoke-built Caspian floats away into the sky, until it's hard to recognize the difference between the child and a cloud. A black cloud. And then he stands up, and like wipes some tears from his eyes, and rests a hand on your shoulder. And says,

[as **Caspian**]: Thank you so much.

Jack [as **Harp**]: Do you feel better?

Caspian: Yeah.

Harp: Then we have done well.

Caspian: Thank you. If you ever need anything, you know, um. I've seen—I have a lot to offer. I guess.

Harp: I have no need of anything, but I appreciate it.

Caspian: Of course. Of course. No needs.

Austin: And I think just kind of returns to the room, and waits in the kind of ruined, creepy room, until the Magus—unless, is the Magus still in that room?

Jack: Oh, in the kind of dorm?

Austin: The dorm, yeah.

Jack: No, the Magus has just been going around the house.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Like, occasionally you'll open the door to a room and it'll be great—

[**Austin** laughs]

—and you'll be like, "Oh, the Magus is here."

Austin: "Oh, the Magus is here." Yeah, so I think he just goes and waits back in the dorm until people are ready to leave, or unless someone else grabs him or something, you know. Um. But yeah, I think that's the scene. In fact, maybe he doesn't even leave this place. Maybe he actually just sits down here, like back against...back against one of the chalices and takes out the old leather notebook, and begins writing a song. But not a crab singer song. Just a regular song. And that is my turn. It should be clear that the children are who suffered in the absence. The children whose magic I stole.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Okay. Good. [pauses] That is my turn. And now it is...Dre, I think, right?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Piccolo.

Dre: Uh, Piccolo is going to go to the bridge.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: So I think one of the nights where Piccolo is not able to sleep at all, he's just taking a lily—like a really long walk, and he's even like walking like off the grounds...

Austin: Mm.

Dre: ...of this big manor. And just comes to like a very, very big river, and is just kind of following the river, and hits this bridge...and kind of starts walking up the bridge, but then it becomes apparent that like the middle part of the bridge is broken.

[**Austin** huffs a laugh]

And he kinda sits there for a while, and like, gets up to stretch?

[**Austin** huffs another laugh]

And just feels the weight of a piece of chalk in his pocket.

[**Austin** laughs]

And, very hurriedly, starts...just like scribbling with chalk? On this bridge. And nothing happens.

[**Austin** makes another amused noise]

And he goes...

[as **Piccolo**]: F.

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Dre: And puts the chalk back in his pocket.

Austin: Ohhh...

Dre: And then goes to go find...like I think in this kind of like ruined manor, there's probably like big old planks of like wood and stuff from like flooring or walls or something. And he just makes like a makeshift like crossing over this bridge.

Austin: Right.

Dre: And who he learns to trust is...not himself, but learning to trust the people who show up to do the work.

Austin: Right.

Dre: And not just the people who sell you the tools saying it'll make it easy.

Austin: Right.

[**Janine** makes an amused noise]

Sometimes you gotta build a bridge. Y'know?

Dre: Yep.

Austin: [laughs quietly] That's very good. All right. Is it stable? Can people walk across it?

Dre: Yeah, I mean, I don't think you'd wanna like take like a horse-drawn carriage across it. Um.

Austin: [amused] Right.

Dre: I guess we'll see what happens when Harp tries to cross it.

Austin: That's my question.

[**Jack** laughs]

Dre: I don't know, Harp can probably just jump.

[**Austin** snorts]

Jack: Just like one—

Janine: I can't do another game where everyone falls in a river.

[**Austin** and **Dre** laugh]

Austin: Fair. Fair.

Jack: [amused] Oh god.

Austin: All right! Um. Harp. It is your turn.

Jack: Okay. I'm gonna go to the Sculpture Gardens?

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Um. The Sculpture Gardens...this is what the Sculpture Gardens looks like. It is a long avenue, with a path, and down either side of the path are two parallel lines of statues facing each other. There are all sorts of statues here. There are statues carrying rakes and swords, there are statues carrying musical instruments, there are statues carrying umbrellas, there are statues with a statue of a bird on their arm, a statue carrying a book and a pen, there's just—there might be like [sighs] thirty statues down this long avenue, and there is one empty plinth. And I wanna be clear, these are not golems. These are—well, I mean, who am I to say—these are statues. Um.

Austin: These are statues.

Jack: But they look like Harp does. And Harp climbs up onto...one of the plinths. Austin, can you please play...the trees that are in the avenue in this scene?

Austin: Sure, what type of trees are they?

Jack: They're pine, pine trees.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Some deciduous trees in between them. Um, Janine, sort of various birds and things? Um.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Jack: And Dre, if you can play just sort of wind.

Dre: Okay.

Jack: And Harp walks slowly down the avenue and climbs up onto one of these plinths, and just sort of stands there for a while, and then says,

[as **Harp**]: Hello, golems. It is good to be here among you. I do not know what I am doing, or why I was made. I believed I was confident and I am no longer.

Magic is dying. Will I die with it? Golems, I need your help.

Austin: Trees just kind of sway in place. A few leaves fall from the trees, and I think in that moment you realize that...it has been fall here for a long time. But is becoming winter.

Dre: I think as the leaves are falling, the wind blows back and forth, almost as if to answer, "No, you will not die, even if magic dies."

Janine: Um.

Jack: Golems—oh. Go on.

Janine: [laughs] I was gonna say, there's like a little bird that lands on one of the statues, and it's the statue that sort of...part of its face is kind of cracked, and has sort of crumbled out, and the bird tries to put a nut in the statue's eye socket.

Jack [as **Harp**]: My friend.

[**Austin** laughs]

A bird has landed upon you. I have some great news: soon you will be able to see again. In spring, the nut will blossom, unless the bird comes back during the hard winter months and eats it, from the place where it has put it in your eye socket.

[Continued quiet noises from **Austin**]

Were I at home, I would be tending the garden through the autumn. There would be much to harvest. But I am not at home. I am in a horrible palace, marching towards the place where magic was born.

Golems, will you come with me?

[Pause]

Austin: There is the sound of an axeman chopping away at a tree.

[Pause]

[1:30:00]

Jack [as **Harp**]: Okay. Golems, I am a little disappointed.

[**Janine** makes a soft noise]

I came to the avenue hoping for guidance. [sighs] But if you did not react to a little bird, why would you react to one of your own?

I will go to the place where magic was born. But I will go alone. And I do not know what awaits me there.

Thank you very much for your time.

Jack: And Harp climbs off the plinth and walks back towards the Ruins of Crowhall, taking the Lonely tag.

Austin: Um.

Dre: I would say as you're walking away, the wind gusts, and pushes at your back.

Austin: [soft huff] And you like kind of—just before you make your way off the avenue, a single pinecone falls, and I think it just hits you on the head and then lands at your feet.

[**Jack** laughs]

Janine: The bird grabs it.

[Austin and Dre laugh]

Swoops in, swoops out.

Austin: Has the pinecone—

Janine: Sho—tries to like. Uh, where would you fit a pinecone?

Austin: [laughs] I don't—

Janine: Maybe one of the statues—maybe one of the statues has like. A book under its arm?

Austin: Mm. Sure.

Janine: And there's like a little gap in the sort of armpit there and the bird tries to stuff the pinecone in that.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack [as Harp]: A beautiful bird. A beautiful bird.

Jack: —says Harp, as they walk back.

Austin: Great. They are very good.

[Various sighs]

Jack: But lonely. Hm!

Austin: All right, yeah, add it. So now you are beautiful and lonely.

Janine: That's how it goes. That's how it goes.

Austin: And a golem of Ravenhall. Yeah. You are not a rav—you are not a golem of Crowhall. Apparently.

Jack: [amused] No.

Austin: Um. All right, Janine. Can you take the Magus into the Glow?

Janine: [dryly] Oh boy, can I.

Austin: Where magic was born. Uh-huh.

[Jack laughs]

Janine: So...yeah, I'm just gonna nestle them right in this lil—boop! Just like a lil nest. For a lil bird.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: I didn't mean to put that big ripple there, but I think it adds [laughs] to the overall effect.

Austin: 'Cause it's magic. Uh-huh.

Jack: Yeah, it's great!

Janine: [laughs] So. I guess we probably spend a night or so at Crowhall.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: Before moving on, and...

Austin: And crossing the bridge? Do we cross the bridge?

[Jack laughs]

Janine: Oh! Um.

Austin: Or does the Magus just have another direct—different path, like what happens?

Janine: That's a g—[sighs] I really—on the one hand. On the one hand, Piccolo put a lot of work into that bridge and I wanna reward that work. On the other hand, it's so much funnier if there's just like a trapdoor and then like a cellar that we go through.

Austin: [amused] Uh-huh.

Janine: And then we just like pop out on sort of like the edge of a hill, and it's just like, "Oh, there's this fuckin glow now right here, like right over this next crest of..."

Austin: Right. Right. [sighs]

Janine: 'Cause I'm just picturing like Piccolo's expression as it becomes clear they're not crossing the bridge?

[Austin makes a sympathetic noise]

[Dre laughs]

Austin: That's so mean!

Janine: It's a little mean. Um.

Dre: Very appropriate. [laughs]

Austin: [sighs] God! Can Piccolo see the bridge? Like off in the distance, behind him?

Janine: You know what, I bet he can see the bridge, and I bet there's like a deer using it.

Austin: [conceding] Okay. That's good.

Janine: There's like a little—how about a little—yeah, a little family of deer are like they're like sniffing around for food, and they like frolic across it. That's nice, right?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, can you describe what this picture is, for people who are only listening.

Janine: Oh yes. So the picture we are looking at is of sort of a hill, a hill with a dip in between—in the middle, between the two peaks. With like a little path winding between it. And then all these nice little sort of wildflowers and stuff in the foreground, and then, behind all that, behind the hills and at the end of the road, is just this big-ass glow. Where magic was born.

[**Austin** huffs a laugh]

So...I imagine that's the full sort of approach, is like you can't really see that glow from Crowhall. Maybe when Crowhall was at its peak and magic also at its peak, you could.

Austin: Right.

Janine: But at the moment, the glow is dim enough that like...you have to really kinda get up close to it. Once you do get up close to it, it feels—it still feels brilliant. It's not that the light necessarily is dimmer, it's that it doesn't carry as far. Visually.

Austin: Mm.

Janine: There's a point at which the halo just ceases to be perceptible. But sort of as you approach it, it is still blinding. It doesn't feel like this is a glow that would come from something that is dying, or flagging, necessarily. And sort of as [sighs] I don't wanna say there's like a barrier, but there is like a perceptible sort of area where that outermost halo reaches to, that everyone has to sort of pass through. And when you pass through it, it feels...it's like there's sort of a chlorineish tang to the air, that like hits you. I don't wanna say it's like nose torque, but there is an element of like...

[**Austin** laughs]

I feel like it burns your nose hairs a little bit, like it—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: It feels acrid to breathe. Not like painful, necessarily, not like you're gonna suffocate. But it does definitely feel like, "Oh, this is why they didn't just build Crowhall in here. For their magic shit."

Austin: Right.

Janine: Like. 'Cause it's.

Austin: Right right right.

Janine: 'Cause it sucks. Being in here. A little bit.

[**Austin** laughs]

And I think at this point, the Magus is like very directly leading the group. Because this is...this is the sort of end point. This is the point where [sighs] she didn't really know what this was going to be like. I don't think this is a routine trip.

Austin: Hm.

Janine: Um. That she would have like. I feel like even growing up at Crowhall, maybe she would come to the sort of—where you could see the glow. Like you could get to the sort of. Foot of the hills and whatever. But I don't think that it's something that you would generally go into.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Which is why she wouldn't have wanted to make any promises about what comes after that, because I don't think even she knows. Um. But sort of, the further you get into this glow, the softer the ground gets. And it's until the point of it feels just like...too soft. It feels like loose bits of something instead of like a solid thing underfoot. I'm trying to think of what a good...I'm trying to think of like a good...analogue for how it'd feel. Maybe like stepping on bedding or something, or like packing peanuts, or. Something with too much give but you don't really sink into it completely.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: And the ground itself is getting brighter. And it sort of starts to...move, writhe? Writhe. it's kinda wiggly. Um. And I think the Magus gets to the epicenter of it, and it is just blindingly bright worms.

Austin: Hm.

Janine: The whole ground. Is just these little...squirming tubes of light, basically.

Jack: [weakly]...Thank you, Janine.

Austin: [laughs] Great. Love it. I love it. I love it. Um. Can we take a five-minute break before we do this final set of things—

Jack: Yeah yeah yeah.

Dre: Yeah!

Janine: Yeah!

Austin: —so we can all kind of brainstorm what our—this is the Glow, this is the end. This is...

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: The next step is—this is it. This is the one. [laughs] Uh, so. Let's take five minutes, and then—

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: —I'll be right back. [without pause] Hi, I'm back. I'm back. And so are we!

Janine: Hooray.

Austin: Hi. Is—are Jack and Dre back?

Dre: Hello.

[creaking noises]

Austin: Dre is.

Dre: Yes.

Austin: [heaves a big sigh] Still waitin on Jack.

Dre: Well, Jack typed "Back."

Jack: Hello!

Austin: Oh, hi, Jack.

Jack: I'm back. Hi.

Austin: Hello.

Jack: I literally just put my headphones on to hear—

Austin: Good!

Jack: —you say, “Still waitin on Jack!”

Austin: Good timing!

[**Janine** huffs in amusement]

All right, so we got some wiggly glow worms. Delicious.

Jack: Oh? What? No? Hang on. What—that’s the food word, Austin.

Austin: Oh. Um. Sorry, I meant some...uh...*moving* glow worms, delicious.

[Laughter]

Dre: Yeah, wiggling is only for jello.

Austin: That’s right, exactly. Um. Okay. I guess I’m up. Uh, my choices are. Voices, “your face in the glow” is the prompt, and it’s a change—all of these are change prompts, all of these are—as a reminder, I think to people listening and to us, when you go to a place that has one of these kind of leaf icons on it, that is a change prompt. [reading] A leaf symbol indicates a change. Before you end your turn, change or remove something from your notecard. This could be your name, your title, or a trait. Then describe why your character thinks this is true.

That’s a big one. Um...Also, I really love the phrasing of describe why *your* character thinks this is true, regardless of whether or not it is true. [pauses] So...[pauses] [sighs] I think—so again, options: Voices, “your face in the glow;” Touching, “why you serve the Magus;” Almost, and the prompt there, “the last time you saw real magic.” Hey, these aren’t places like the rest of the prompts. [laughs] In the game.

Jack: No.

[**Janine** makes an amused noise]

Austin: It’s just Voices, Touching and Almost. Um...I think I want Touching. So, I’m gonna move there. And also, someone’s doubling up here. Right?

Dre: Okay.

Austin: At least one person. There’s only three options. Um. So I think I want a scene where...I think it’s the Magus and I. Maybe it’s all of us, actually...The worms—are the worms at the very center of the glow, Janine?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Okay. So, maybe before we quite get to there, or maybe when they're not very dense, maybe only the first few have begun to pop up. I want this to be a scene of like the brightness of the glow becomes dense in the air, and it's hard to see. And so we almost literally hold onto each other's hands, or like climb onto shoulders, or [huffs in amusement] I don't know if Fawn is on top of Harp's like—I don't know where Fawn is in this, because Fawn is a little vinegar fox. But I want it to be so bright, at least maybe for a segment of this, that either we need something to adjust, or we need something else, but like we need to be gripped onto each other's shoulders or hands or something. And just like, it's all of us. And we are walking through the brightness. And out—the front two is the Magus and I, and then, you know, reaching back behind me, maybe to Harp, and then to...Piccolo, and again Fawn is—maybe Fawn is able to...I don't know, tell me where Fawn is. Janine.

Janine: Um. I don't think Fawn like sinks into the ground the way that everyone else does.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Like I don't think its softness seems—effects her that much.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: So I think she probably just follows along like with her nose sort of.

Austin: Sure.

Janine: Pressed against the back of someone's leg or something, like.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Like so she's right up there and can follow, but.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Not too troubled.

Austin: Um. Who wants to play the Magus, 'cause I need a conversation with the Magus.

[Pause]

Jack: Hasn't it generally been the person who—

Austin: Yeah, so Janine, do you wanna keep—

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: Uh, sure! Yeah.

Austin: —saying? Okay. Um. [breathes in] Uh. I almost started shouting, as if it was *loud*.

[**Janine** laughs]

Um, it's not. It's only bright. And in fact, that's even s—that's even weirder, right, like there is not an ambient sound, right? There isn't a sound to this. It's *just* bright...Is that right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And then—

Janine: Maybe a little bit hard to breathe.

Austin: Right. So yeah, maybe that's why—so in fact, it's like—[gets quiet] it's actually very quiet. And I think [sighs] Caspian, whose beard has grown out even further now, whose hair is thinning, they—or gone! He's bald. Is like. Um.

[as **Caspian**]: What do we do when we get there, Magus? I need to be prepared.

Janine [as **The Magus**]: I don't know that it's something that we have to do. It might just be something that / have to do.

Caspian: Then why bring us this way? Why bring the boy? Why bring the golem? Why bring...the fox?

The Magus: To be prepared for every possibility.

Caspian: And you could not have known that you would not need us.

The Magus: Who says I didn't need you?

Caspian: I have been on this journey too.

Austin: Um. And I think a strange thing happens here. Which is, as the light...gets brighter and the wigglers become more and more numerous, Caspian does a spell...that he doesn't know he is doing. And Piccolo, you can feel, at first, because I think you're holding his hand, whereas I think he is only placing a hand on the Magus's shoulder. [computer beep]

I just lost connection.

Jack: No, I can hear you.

Janine: I can hear you.

Austin: OBS just lost connection.

Dre, Janine, and Jack: Oh no!

Austin: Um.

Jack: The worst one!

Austin: [computer beeps again] That's the worst one. I think we just reconnected. Um. [laughs quietly]

[1:45:00]

Austin: Back? Back, chat?

[Pause]

Dre: Uh, you're marked as live for me.

Austin: Okay. All right, so. Um. So, I think Piccolo, you feel it first, because I'm actually holding your hand, whereas my hand is only on the shoulder of the Magus, but it begins to turn into stone. Um. And.

Dre: Wait, your hand or my hand?

Austin: *My* hand.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: And my Kind trait is changing into the Golem... of the Glow trait. And Caspian can't anymore. He doesn't have...it in him anymore. Which doesn't mean—again, he could still also be kind. But...there is [sighs] such a weight? He can't give up service. Right? He served because he was scared and wanted to be needed and because he so badly was committed to this dream he had as a little boy, that he was gonna go help the Magus bring the Glow back, or bring the magic back.

And so he serves out of fear, because to confront the fact that he...made a mistake then, or that he was only needed in this minor way, or in a way that was not—how do you write the song about—this? You know, there isn't one. There isn't a song that makes much sense for where he feels like he has a place. But he can't give up serving, either. And so he makes himself into a golem.

And he is just [sighs] he is just a golem, he is just a statue of an old man with a beard. And balded head. And the clothes of a much younger man [laughs] um. You know. Kind of draped on his thinning body. His aging body. And continues walking. And does not speak unless spoken to.

[Long pause]

That is my turn. Piccolo.

Dre: Hm...I'm gonna do Almost, which is "the last time Piccolo saw real magic."

Austin: Mm-hm.

Dre: Um. So you know if you are in a place where like the lights are really bright, and you like close your eyes, you'll still sometimes get those kinda dancing spots like on your eyelids or whatever.

Austin: Yep.

Dre: So. I think even though we're not sleeping on top of the worms as they're blasting light into us, I think like Piccolo lays down to sleep, or maybe even just take a nap or something. And he's far enough away that like the light isn't overwhelming, but there's still that kind of like glow forming these kind of blobs and shapes on the back of his eyelids as he falls asleep. And as he's trying to fall asleep, these kind of like dancing black speck-dots on his eyelids kind of start to form into shapes.

Austin: Hm.

Dre: And figures. Um. And he sees kind of just the figures of three people. I think my very first prompt was Piccolo—with Piccolo was "why you serve the Magus—"

Austin: Mm-hm.

Dre: —I think, if I'm remembering correctly?

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: And I think it was that the Magus had done something for his parents, and like the Magus's price was that. I need your son to like come on this journey with me.

Austin: Right.

Dre: And I think his parents had always told him that the thing was that it was like you know, "It was a bad crop year and. [**Austin** laughs] No matter what we did, things weren't growing." Um. But I think it was that his parents—I mean, I guess it was...it was the worst crop year, 'cause they desperately wanted a kid, more than anything else. And for whatever reason, it just couldn't

happen. And I think when the last—the last time that Piccolo ever saw real magic was when he was conceived.

[Austin makes a small noise]

And that was maybe one of the last times that anybody saw some real magic.

[Pause]

Austin: Cool.

Dre: And I don't know what to...do I have to change his tag, or to add a tag?

Austin: So yeah, I think it does not say add, I think adding only comes—

Janine: You can change anything about it, though.

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Janine: Like you can change—

Austin: It is—change or remove something from your notecard.

Janine: —who you are, or where you're from, or.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Gotcha.

Austin: Your name, your title, or a trait. And then describe why your character thinks this is true. So again, your current thing is Piccolo, First Mate of the Sea Wing.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: So really, name or that trait.

Dre: I think it's the trait. 'Cause like I think like Piccolo was given to him by his parents.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: And like, those are his parents. This isn't like Piccolo being like "Oh, the Magus is my real dad!"

Austin: Right.

Dre: Or mom, or. Like no. His parents are his parents. Um...And. Them giving him that name is still important to him. Um. Man, I don't—maybe...[sighs] Maybe his trait is just like...

Austin: Could it be a thing where he takes a last name?

Dre: Yeah, maybe.

Austin: Keeps Piccolo, but adds to it?

Dre: Yeah. Um...

Austin: 'Cause it doesn't necessarily feel right for me—I don't know. It's up to you, it's your character, but I don't know that it's—it doesn't sound like he's giving up on being First Mate of the Sea Wing or something.

Dre: No, I don't think so either. 'Cause I think this is like for him, it's like, "Oh man, like, okay," it's like...it's one of these moments where you look on why things happened? And y'know. It's not that like. It just—everything seems to like make sense in a weird way for him now. Um. [pauses] Hm. What would a last name look like? I don't think—we haven't really met many people with last names here.

[Someone makes an amused noise]

Austin: Um, I think the only one we did was maybe the Queen Stormguard?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Trying to think of other people who had last names. I don't think we have, but I mean...Up to you, you know? [pauses]

Like is it one of those names that's like, um. Like. Magus-Touched, or you know. Magus-Servant or something like that—do you know what I mean, something about the—or like, Piccolo...you know. The Journeyer, or something like that. Do you know what I mean, something that's about the actions you've taken?

Dre: Yeah...

Austin: Yeah, Grandmother Black, also. Also had a last name.

Dre: Oh, that's true. Yeah.

Janine: What was the name of that pizza place that had Magus in it?

Austin: Excuse me?

Janine: They did the. [laughing] Magusta?

Austin: Oh, Magusta. [laughs]

Dre: [shocked] What?!

Austin: That was—that was Mag—uh...That was Magooz. That was a—that's a Waypoint thing. Don't worry about it.

Dre: Okay! [laughs]

Janine: I was just wondering if there was something there that had Magus in it. 'Cause...

Dre: Mm-hm!

Austin: No, sadly.

Dre: Um.

Janine: Halfway there.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Dre: ...Man. Yeah, I think...I like it being something like Adventurer. I'm gonna—let me—Google a word really quick. [typing]

Austin: [muttering] Mm! Not that.

Dre: Yeah, I think his name is now just, uh, Piccolo Wayfarer.

Austin: Oh, that's good! Yeah. I like that.

[Pause]

Dre: ...Trying to—I don't think I can change it, I think that's something you have control over.

Austin: Oh. I got you. Yeah. I got you. [typing] Boop. There we go. So why does he think this is true? Like, what's this look like in his own head?

Dre: Hm. 'Cause I think that he now like understands that in some way he was born to do this, and that's kind of why...again, I think he loved Barley Town, you know, he loved his parents. It's not like this is like, "Oh, finally! I'm free of this terrible, boring place, and I've...got my real, *good* destiny!" It's just that like.. there's a reason that he is like—he understands why he feels so like different and competent and like why he struggled to send that letter. That he was writing back home.

Austin: Mm. Mm-hm.

Dre: And I think a part of it is that he now wants to travel back home himself to tell them. So that he can get extra stories along the way.

Austin: [laughs] Right. Cool. All right. Is that it?

Dre: Yeah—

Austin: Is this something that he tells the rest of the group, at any point? Or is it just in his own head?

Dre: I don't think he tells anybody. But I think the Magus probably knows that he knows.

Austin: Right. Right.

Dre: Like and they probably don't talk about it, but it's probably just that like Piccolo like looks at the Magus different...And not in a bad way! But just like, they share a look. And it's like, yeah, I know.

Austin: [small amused noise]...Cool. All right. Harp.

Jack: Hm...I'm gonna go to Voices, "your face in the glow."

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Um. And I think that. Um. [pauses] At some point, the...chain that you were describing, Austin, of y'know like someone leaning with someone's arm on their shoulder, or holding hands, or y'know moving carefully, is broken?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: With Harp, and they become...separate. They become separated. And as they move through the glow, with these sort of writhing worms moving underneath their feet...they see golems coming out of the glow, towards them.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of golems. And I don't think these golems are—here in the same...In the same way that Piccolo's visions weren't necessarily there, these are...these are not golems that others could encounter, because there are so many of them that, y'know...Golems on golems. And they are all carrying the tools of service. They're carrying...the tools of service, not just to the Magus, but to the people before her. The people who y'know carried the magic in the same way. Um. And as they arrive, Harp hears a sound.

It's—because there's no—you know, there's no background noise here, there's just the sound of I guess the kind of the sound of the golems' footsteps.

And then there's a sound, and it's the rising sound of birdsong? Not the sort of calm birdsong of a summer's day, and not the alarm calls that birds make when they're disturbed, but somewhere in between, the sounds of birds moving together. Um. And they're singing, and they're singing really beautifully. And it is after a while, moving towards this glow, that Harp realizes that the place that these sounds are coming from is them. And they look down at their hands and their body, and where it used to be, it's not there anymore. Instead they're a cloud of birds, that lift up. And I don't want to say that they lift up above the glow, because I don't know if the glow has a top, at this point.

Austin: Right. Right.

Jack: You know. This is not something that you can just escape from, from going upwards. But I think that the others, in the bright light, could look up and could see this cloud of...you know, fifty to a hundred birds...moving in the way that large clouds of birds do, you know, where they sort of undulate, and they curl around each other. And they're singing. [breathes] And I think I'm gonna remove Golem of Ravenhall. I considered removing Lonely, because of all the birds.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: But I don't think that—

[**Austin** huffs a laugh]

I think that Harp is all the birds.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And I think that this is one thing. This is a flock of birds.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Rather than, you know.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And I think that the loneliness is still there, because the thing that they left behind in the glow were those hundreds and hundreds of golems. Those serving golems. So I don't think that they're—I think that they're no longer a golem of Ravenhall. I think what they are is—because I don't think this is magical at this point. I think what they are is...birds. They're not, you know, magical birds. They're just a bunch of birds.

Austin: Hm...*Not* magical. The effect here isn't magical? Like, it...

Jack: Oh, I think what has happened is *definitely* magical.

Austin: Okay. Okay. I was confused. I was like “Okay—”

Jack: But I don’t think that what we have—

Austin: “I must misunderstand a thing about birds in real life.”

Jack: No no no. I think a thing that, um...I think that the thing that has transformed them is extremely magical!

Austin: Right. Right right right.

Jack: The thing that they have become is not.

Austin: Right...Huh. Did you just flutter away in that moment, basically? Or do you stay in the area?

Jack: Uh, no, they’re staying in the—they are above the group.

Austin: Gotcha.

Jack: They are kind of arcing above the group, and swooping down, and singing.

Austin: Cool. Huh! Okay. Fawn.

Janine: Um. I think I’m also going to go with Voices, “your face in the glow.”

Austin: Okay.

[Typing noise]

Janine: And I think I imagine in my head—I imagine this cinematically of like...

[2:00:00]

Janine: ...the camera sort of searching for each character’s face, sequentially, to sort of reveal these scenes. And when it is searching for Fawn’s face, it doesn’t find the little dog face.

Austin: Mm.

Janine: That cute lil disgruntled dog face with the gold-capped teeth.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: I think what it finds is this...It's a beautiful woman's face, but it's made of sort of tanned leather. Like...y'know, it fits the form perfectly, it's like the leather was stretched over a shoe form, and it's like...smooth, and like imitates that form perfectly, but it is still very much like...leather.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Um. Maybe even like sueded around the edges, [**Austin** sighs] like it's weird. And sort of beneath this—or around this face, and beneath it, there is a cloak made of this very thick brown fur.

[**Austin** huffs a laugh]

Kind of. Um. Not too—not fluffy, not like mink, it's a little bit more otterlike. It's sort of smoother and shinier and shorter.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: And so all you can really see is this face, and then it's sort of...swaddled in this fur, that sort of hangs, draped very loosely, and then there are these two sort of hands.

Austin: Hm.

Janine: That come out from it, and you can't really...the fur ends a little bit after where the wrists should be but stop?

Austin: [laughs] Okay.

Janine: But it doesn't seem to behave as if there is any kind of gap there.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: So you can see that these hands are not attached, but...but there's no—there's no like physical—whatever this cloak is made of, it doesn't seem to be like confused about what it's supposed to be doing here.

Austin: Right right right. Yeah.

Janine: ...And Fawn's face is aglow in these sort of—this worm light. And I think she—you know, everyone else is kind of...we've all kind of gotten broken up, and the Magus...it seems like they don't really know...what to do with this other than be here, at this point. But Fawn is moving very very purposefully. And she has two—she reaches within her fur cloak thing, and pulls out two handfuls of various things. There's the, you know, there's bones in there, like finger bones, and there's...that bauble from the grave, it's like a pendant or something like that. There's loose threads, there's buttons. There's...sewing needles, there's a whole bunch of...it

would almost look like pocket garbage if not for the bones [laughs] um. Which probably don't look like pocket garbage. Um.

Austin: They look like bones.

Janine: They look like bones. And so she has these two fistfuls of this stuff, and she bends down and sort of plunges them deep into that sort of worm-y ground. And lets go of the...stuff. Before taking her hands out again.

Austin: Do her hands come back easily? From underground?

Janine: Yes.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: And I think when they come back, that wrist gap has been filled in. It's still—the material is still this—you can't tell if it's like stone, or wood, or leather, or like some sort of weird petrified whatever. It's still very hard to tell. But that wrist gap has been filled in. I think the leather mask had—has sort of closed eyelids, and before they looked sort of hollowed, but now they look like they have something behind those eyelids. They're still closed, but.

Austin: Mm.

Janine: There's something there. And, uh. How do I...? I gotta...change this thing.

Austin: Yeah, what are you trying to change? I don't, uh.

Janine: I'm t—I got it, I got it.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I'm changing Fawn's role from Fox of Mistwood to Hedge-magus of Mistwood.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: Oh wow.

Austin: Cool. All right. So. We are now at a crossroad of sorts, right? Um. I suppose I move the Magus to the end. Um, but I don't feel good about...unilateral decision making here? With what the Magus does, or something? I'd rather kind of talk it out here. What do we think happens?

Jack: Is there a sort of a—do we—does the rules give us anything other than—

Austin: Nothing.

Jack: —just move to the ending?

Austin: It doesn't even give us that.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Wow!

Austin: Mm-hm.

[Pause]

And unlike the rest, [feen] Fin doesn't have—[finn] Fin? Fin. Doesn't have...any sort of—there's no prompt there. Right.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: So I think it's fully on us.

Janine: But it is a space. So.

Austin: It is a space! I know.

Janine: Yeah, it's—there's still something to it.

Austin: Yeah, I'm within rights to be like, "I move it here, and here's what I say." [laughs]

Janine: Yeah.

[Dre laughs]

Austin: But I don't. Wanna do that. That doesn't—that sounds bad to me. Especially 'cause like the first rule is, "It's like a conversation." [laughs]

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: But I will move. I will move the Magus there. Um.

Janine: ...I think the big thing to answer is...Does this revive like...Are they gonna succeed or fail?

Austin: Well, there's lots of ways of succeed—

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: —there's lots of differences there, right?

Jack: There's lots of things a crab singer could be!

[Janine laughs]

Austin: Right, a golem, for instance.

[Dre laughs]

I guess my question is, does the thing that Fawn does, does that return magic or does it *change* magic? Is the age of what we think of as real magic, which is to say the sort of magic that the Magus wields, or wielded at the height of her power, the age of magic at the height of Istallia's grace...is that magic gone and replaced with the sort of...pockets-filled-with-bones-and-thread magic of Fawn?

Janine: I think...I think my sort of intention with Fawn is that it's like a connection, more than...more than adding from or taking to, it is...I think. That's kind of how I'm interpreting the magic I guess is a sort of connective tissue, more than a power in itself.

Dre: Mm.

Janine: I think—so I think that's [sighs] I don't know that I wanna say like “Oh, she's changing the nature of magic itself” so much as just like—

Austin: Well, it doesn't mean—

Janine: —making a, renewing a bond. You know what I mean?

Austin: Right. I guess I don't mean that like she's changing it, but like. *It's changing.* [laughs]
Right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: It's going away.

Janine: It's true. And I guess...

Austin: It doesn't sound like the Magus knows how to bring it back.

Janine: What we've seen of magic so far at least we have sort of an ephemeral definition of what magic is in this world versus what is just a talking anchor monster.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Golem. Governor, whatever.

Austin: So like—that governor predates the fall of magic, right?

Janine: But—yes. Yeah yeah. But...what we have seen of magic, there is a lot of...there is a lot of magic cast into...parts of like a strict social structure.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: Like the magic happens with leaders.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: It happens with people who live in nice country houses and people who govern cities, and like trains that are kind of the only means of transportation between certain areas, and like.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: It is all magic that is very top-down.

Austin: Right.

Janine: And...Fawn...you know, F—Mistwood is a forest.

Austin: Right right right.

Janine: There's no top-down in the forest.

Austin: Or like there's even an irony here in that what Dre said the last time he saw real magic as Piccolo was [inhales] the Magus like let this poor farming couple have a kid. Right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Like that is not what magic has been for, historically.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Magic has been for creating the crab singers of Istallia so that they can go spread the world—you know, the...message of Istallia across the world, or the magic anchors to help the fleet, or it's been about the Barley Man, who is the lord of Barley Town, right, like you said, it is about the powerful. And so I think there's an irony in that like what we know now as one of the last times real magic happened, the thing we think of as real magic, was subverting that to be like, "Oh, and then there's this little baby boy. For these poor farmers."

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: Not so there's an heir to the throne, not to, you know, increase the power of this lord or queen or whoever, right. Um. You know, it's interesting, we didn't go there. But to the north is the Nameless City. If we had gone underground we would have visited the Nameless City.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: We would have popped up—you can't see it here, because these island cards that we discarded are there, but there's a little icon, it's a little torch, which is where we would have popped up from underground, and the Nameless City is "the ravages of magic." Um. Y'know. Places where you can see there were battles, and where magic kind of ruined things?

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: And we didn't see that, and I don't know that that exists in our world, even, because we did not go to it. Um, I don't know—it could exist, it might not. But we can think of the ravages of magic in that other way, which is that like we know what magic wrought, right? Magic wrought...the rest of this map.

The old age of magic was one of Castle Stormguard, that has the you know the laws of retribution, and the you know Istallia, where the Gilded King, the Gilded One, builds himself out of the magic anchors of ships, and the old world is the one of the Stormguard Mountains, where you know there is just this...you can sense the magic on the distance, but you can't actually access it directly. You know, the old world of magic is one where people are too afraid to use the letter F. [laughs] Like that is the old world of magic!

[Dre laughs]

It has its own ravages. Um. So I think there is something maybe nice in this notion of, that is what is being left behind, and maybe a bit of why the Magus has not had an answer. How could she? Have an answer.

Janine: Yeah.

Dre: I think may—

Austin: This new world isn't hers. Go ahead.

Dre: Yeah, I mean maybe it is this change from like magic being almost the purview of this Magus or these other singular entities, and to where it is now like—I mean, Janine, you said like connective tissue. Like. And so it is instead of this giant thing that's just on one person, it's now been like part and parceled out to like everybody. And so like yeah, we don't have magic that is animating giant anchor golems anymore. But it's able to do lots of more consistent small things for way more people.

Austin: What's that look like for the anchor golems, and for the you know the queens who have fire whips, and the liv—

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: —and for the golems of the world? What's it look like for it to stop being their age?

Dre: Hm.

Austin: For the weird worm train?

[**Dre** laughs]

Because I don't wanna live—I am, as always, not super interested in the, “And then everything was good for everybody, and the bad guys fell apart.”

Dre: Right.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: I'm much more interested in like, “Hey, and also that train isn't there anymore,” or like. You know, like... [sighs]

Jack: Yeah, what if there are just some—we've already seen imagery of magical-reliant stuff just sort of like beginning to stop working.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: What if it just does?

Austin: Right. It just grinds to a halt.

Jack: What if—yeah, but...in the same way that...you know, perhaps sometimes it's like...the train just doesn't arrive at its destination.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: And they send people down the track to be like, wh—where did the train go? and it's just g—the train is just gone.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Along with everybody who was on it at the time. Perhaps in the port, they get word that the Sea Wing has just sunk?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Has just disappeared, below the waves? Um. I think—yeah—

Austin: Parents look down into the other city, at the mirror, and the reflection disappears.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That connection—*that* connection doesn't—or does that connection stay because it *is* that sort of new—the new magic?

Jack: Oh, it definitely...Yeah.

Austin: Right?

Jack: I think that stays, yeah. And I think—

Austin: In fact, becomes more firm?

Jack: Yeah. And I think that the like...the ice troll in the hot springs gets out of the hot springs.

[**Austin** laughs]

And is like, "I feel great!"

[**Austin** laughs]

[**Janine** makes an amused noise]

Austin: Right. Right.

Jack: 'Cause the magic is—that's what the magic does, and I suppose the question we need to ask ourselves now is, "Well, what does that do to the Magus?"

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: "Where does the Magus...How does the Magus live in this world of magic?"

Dre: Mm.

Austin: You think she does. You think she returns.

Jack: Oh, I think—that was an open-ended enough question that the answer could be, "She doesn't."

Austin: Mm.

Jack: In a world like this, what is the Magus fffffor?

Janine: ...Teaching, I feel. I don't know.

Austin: But what does she have to teach with this new sort of magic that she doesn't—she didn't reach into the ground to do this. She didn't know—she didn't tell us to do that.

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: Part of me wants her to go back to the ruins of Crowhall and...forever there will be rooms in Crowhall that are...perfect. Wherever she is. But maybe that's too lonely a thing for her. ...Or too rude. Or too cruel.

Dre: [sighs] I mean, she's probably learned like a lot of stuff just doing this huge journey. That has nothing to do with magic.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Yeah. Yeah, I think that's true. I think—

Austin: I just—[amused] we've never seen her help people!

Jack: No! Not at all.

Austin: Or maybe back in Barley Town.

Jack: Well, we've seen her help people in this...

[2:15:00]

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, and we've seen her help people in this kind of like very distant sort of institutional sense, where she's like, "I am the Magus!"

Austin: Right. Right.

Janine: Mm.

Dre: Um.

Austin: And we know that she's had a life of service. Right?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Or we believe that, based on we kind of talked about, at the top of this game.

Janine: It—yeah, it seems like she was born into this in a way where like...she takes that role seriously, but is also pretty dispassionate about it?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Mm.

Dre: Mm.

Janine: Like this is—she does it ‘cause it’s all she’s got to do, like.

Austin: Right!

Janine: ‘Cause it’s duty, it is obligation, it is the thing she knows...

Jack: ...Yeah.

Austin: I have an idea.

Jack: What’s your idea?

Austin: [quietly] One second. [clicking] I’m dealing myself a card. [pauses] There we go! The Drowning Library. I think she goes to the Drowning Library. I drew a card from the Island deck. It’s an island not on the route that the Sea Wing took us. I’m just gonna like read this thing, and let’s—we don’t even need to fill in the gaps, necessarily, but...here are the various locations and prompts.

The Drowning Library: “the language of the Curators.” Ancient Graffiti, with “an incomplete prophecy” as the prompt; Sunken Archives, with “a stolen tale” as the prompt; Shores of Remembrance, with “what is forgotten” as the prompt; and Ammonite Stacks, with “the knowledge you seek.” And then that’s a challenge one, where you roll a die, and it’s one to two, “the rising sea,” three to five, “an answer in tatters,” and six, “the corpse.” And I think maybe she goes to this place, or builds it.

Jack: Mm.

Austin: Maybe off the wave from the Mirror, maybe under, in the other realm of the mirror. And this is the last remnants of this age of magic. Right? Maybe this is like...she attends to this. Um. Teaching in a really broad way. Right, I can imagine...you know, a generation or two from now, someone says—or maybe more than that, says, “Whatever happened?” [huffs a laugh]

Jack: Mm.

Austin: And they find her there, old and...you know. Living bones, you know, with...long cloth, still in the robes of the Magus, but able to enlighten whoever would find her there.

I did not know that would be the top card, but it is exactly the thing I’d hoped it was. [laughs]

Janine: It's pretty good.

Jack: [laughs] It's perfect, yeah.

Austin: So, one more thing, and we'll be done. In a couple of sentences, I want an epilogue for all of the characters. Where do you all go, what do you all do? ...Who wants to start? Piccolo, Wayfarer? Gimme two sentences.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Three sentences.

Dre: [sighs]

[Music - "[Bright Morning. Cool Evening](#)" begins]

Dre: I think that there always has to be a captain of the Sea Wing.

[**Austin** huffs a laugh]

And the—

Austin: Is it a new Sea Wing?

Dre: Yeah, 'cause it's—I mean, it's probably not a big bird anymore.

Austin: [laughs] Fair.

Dre: Right, I think like it's—when they go to leave, there's just a—like a *nice* boat.

Austin: Right.

Dre: Like it's the same size as the Sea Wing, but it's just a boat made out of wood. Like anchored to the shore.

[Music - whistling starts]

Austin: Right.

Dre: And Grandmother Black's hat.

Austin: Right.

Dre: Is just like sitting on the wheel.

Austin: Harp, what about you?

Jack: Um...I think that Harp...I'm reluctant to characterize, to anthropomorphize...

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: ...at this point. I'm reluctant to say, you know, "And the birds go and do something that is you know narratively reflective—"

[Music - vocals begin to harmonize with whistling]

Jack: "—of what we know about Harp." Because...they don't return to places they've been before.

Austin: Right.

Jack: They do what birds do. They flock in the sky—

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: —and they get close together in the winter, and they sing, and they...you know, roost in trees. And I think they kind of continue—they kind of continue to do this. This is—this is the...if the old magic was a huge kind of roc.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Like a bramble roc. Um.

[Music - vocals fade; piano, gentle drums come in]

Jack: Insofar as the small way this flock of birds is magic...

Austin: Right.

[Music - wind instrument comes in]

Jack: ...The way they are magic is they're a flock of birds, they are a flock of birds.

Austin: Right. Right. Caspian's easy, so I'll go quickly. Caspian attaches himself to the front of the new Sea Wing, as its masthead, and Piccolo, you can ask questions whenever you need them. Whenever you need them answered.

Dre: Buddy!

Austin: Fawn?

[Music - singing and whistling resume]

Janine: Um. I think that...I think actually...I think Fawn goes back to Ravenhall.

Austin: Mm.

Janine: Because it was her home for a time, while she was figuring some things out, I guess. But I think that in the Magus's absence, and Fawn...now being what she is, I think Ravenhall gets reshaped.

Austin: Mm.

Janine: And the menagerie and the gardens kind of subsume everything.

Austin: Mm.

Janine: Until it is a kind of forest in itself.

[Music - "[Bright Morning. Cool Evening](#)" ends]

Austin: I love it. All right. That's the game. Let's go to time.is.

Jack: We didn't clap on our way in.

Janine: We didn't.

Austin: [amused] We didn't last time either. This is literally how the last recording ended.

[**Dre** and **Jack** laugh]

Janine: I noticed at the time, but I thought I was wrong to mention it. [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Let's, uh, let's clap at 50?

Dre: Sure.

Janine: Yeah.

[pause]

[claps]

Austin: All right, thank you for joining us, everybody, thanks to Ross Cowman for making this really fantastic game that I love a lot.

Jack: So good.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: We... people on the phone could not hear — on the phone, Jesus Christ. [Jack laughs] On Discord couldn't hear, but we timed out the end there literally perfectly to the song. So.

Janine: Ooh.

Austin: I was very careful, that's why I was like, uh, here's my quick thing, I can do this quick and give Janine enough time [Jack and Janine laugh] and I have a good idea of what it'll be and like, to the second, so. Thank you so much, this was really fun, this was one of my favorite things that I think we've played so far in the Lives, and it's been like proof that it's fun to do something over the course of a few months, like. We started this in November, we started this six months ago? [laughs]

Jack: Oh my god.

Janine: [laughing] Oh my god.

Austin: It was a little microcampaign, basically, it was on six months on and off.

Jack: [sighing] Yeah.

Austin: Um, I just wanna briefly shout out that Ross — again, Ross Cowman, who is the lead designer on this, has been teasing a new game called BFF! BFF, Best Friends Forever. It'll be on Kickstarter in two days, on May 1st. You can go to twitter.com/RossCowman. Cowman? C-O-W-M-A-N, for the image of that. And I don't wanna spoil what it is or like what's going on with it, but I've seen the Kickstarter page and it's fucking cool as hell, and if you like us...

Jack: It looks so good.

Austin: It looks so, so, so, so good. Um. The... It's so fucking cool, I'm very excited for people to see it. I don't want to talk any more about it 'cause I don't wanna spoil it, it's not my surprise to spoil. But go follow Ross and look for us — I'll retweet that when it goes on Kickstarter, because we really love this game and want to support things that great game designers do, so. And as always, if you want to support us, friendsatthetable.cash for that! And quick note there, Pusher update, another Pusher update should go up in the next day or two. I might be able to even sneak that in tonight, 'cause I have most of what I need for it. Any thing else? Jack, people can find music at notquitereal.bandcamp.com, right?

Jack: Mm-hm!

Austin: I think that's... One Song Pod on Twitter for [laughing] our Kanye West podcast, which has tackled [Jack: [laughs] Holy lord.] some of the last week of nonsense, but not all of the last week of nonsense, 'cause we recorded on Monday night and then the rest of the week happened.

Jack: There's been some new nonsense, even today!

Austin: Even today. Even today. All right, everybody, thank you so much. We will be in touch soon with more. Bye!

[2:23:40]