

## Autumn in Hieron 19: Violence Mulligan Mulligan

Amaya/@thepearlofdeath

AUSTIN: Have you ever read John Darnielle's like, 100 points, 100 reasons why "Ignition - Remix" is the best pop song ever? (Ali laughs)

KEITH: No.

JACK: No, but I've heard him do the very brief acoustic cover of it that he does at the end of The Boys Are Back in Town (laughs)?

AUSTIN: Right, I've heard that too.

KEITH: Uh -

AUSTIN: He just posts on some forums sometimes. He's cool. Anyway! (Ali laughs)

KEITH: I have his book, I still haven't started it.

ALI (overlapping Keith): You almost -

AUSTIN: That's a *great* book.

JACK (overlapping Austin): Special guest on tonight's podcast.

AUSTIN: John Darnielle!

JACK: Playing Keith Carberry, is John Darnielle!

KEITH (as John Darnielle): Hi.

AUSTIN: How you doing John? (Ali laughs)

KEITH (as John Darnielle): Pretty good, I really like wrestling a lot and heavy metal.

AUSTIN: Yeah, those are both cool things.

KEITH (as John Darnielle): Yeah. Do you want to hear 100 reasons why I like those two things? (laughter)

AUSTIN: Mmhm! Let's start at number 72.

KEITH (as John Darnielle): Ah, oh, number 72 is the food. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Mm. That's why you like heavy metal and wrestling.

KEITH (as John Darnielle): Yeah! The food at the shows is really good. I basically ha- I like, kind of my main deal is eating like a lot of fried things, like chicken fingers, and french fri- like I like that sort of thing?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH (as John Darnielle): And those are in, uh, *huge* supply at wrestling shows and heavy metal shows?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH (as John Darnielle): So I'm kinda, I'm kinda in on the food.

JACK: How many chords do you know?

KEITH (as John Darnielle): (pauses) Oh, just the four.

JACK: (pauses, laughs) Okay.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): How - how did -

KEITH (as John Darnielle): Basically all of my songs are bar chords?

AUSTIN: Oh okay.

KEITH (as John Darnielle): And it's just *one* chord.

AUSTIN: (jokingly) I'm more a power chord sort of guy.

KEITH (as John Darnielle): Yeah?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH (as John Darnielle): I can do a power chord, a power chord is just a lazy bar chord.

AUSTIN: Yes. (pauses) It's really hard for me not to fall into a bit, that by the time (Ali laughs) people hear this, will have been over a month old. (laughter) That we only did on a stream, that most of our listeners will not have heard. So. Let's clap.

JACK: Okay.

KEITH: Alright.

AUSTIN: 15 seconds?

JACK: Okay. Let's get back on this horse.

AUSTIN: Shake it off.

[fairly in-sync clapping]

[MUSIC: AUTUMN NOT WINTER]

AUSTIN: (surprised) That was pretty good!

KEITH: That was pretty good.

AUSTIN: (laughing) That might be the best we've ever done!

KEITH: That might be the best, we started right off the bat, I wouldn't be surprised if one of us didn't clap. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Did one of us not clap? (Jack laughs) Ali, did you not clap?

ALI: I clapped!

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: I clapped (laughter), there's a clap here.

KEITH: I didn't want to say Ali, so I'm glad Austin (laughter) just went right to it.

AUSTIN: (laughing) I know how Keith thinks.

ALI: It was - it was a,

JACK (overlapping Ali): Offensively.

ALI: it was a quiet clap? So I don't know... if it's gonna...

KEITH: (reassuringly) It'll show up. We'll be fine.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): It'll - we'll be fine.

ALI: Yeah! There's just one straight line.

KEITH: I have a new, I have a new way of syncing things, so it should be good.

AUSTIN: Ooh! Okay.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: One second, let me uh, stretch.

KEITH: Oh, let me stretch.

AUSTIN: Let's all stretch

KEITH: Stretch break.

JACK: Oh, let *me* stretch.

AUSTIN: Stretch break!

KEITH: Get limber. Get limber. Shake it out.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Get I- shake it out!

KEITH: Shake it out!

AUSTIN: Shout it out! (pause, laughter) Shout it -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): (laughing) All night!

AUSTIN: All night! Out of sight! All night!

KEITH: All night! (laughter)

AUSTIN: Uh.

ALI: (sighs)

AUSTIN: Okay! Ready?

ALI: Mhm!

KEITH: (screeching high-pitched voice) Say your last goodbye! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: (high-pitched voice, laughing) Say your last - say your last goodbye!

ALI: Oh my gosh... (laughter) oh boy.

AUSTIN: Let's just watch Home Movies.

JACK: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast (laughs).

AUSTIN: Focused on critical worldbuilding (laughter), smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. Presented by streamfriends.tv and runbutton.net. I'm Austin Walker, I'm your GM for the evening, and your host, I guess (someone laughs). Tonight we are continuing the Ghost Party campaign, of our Dungeon World ongoing campaign.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AUSTIN: I just realized - hey, maybe our listeners don't know that internally (Ali laughs), we call these, Ghost Party or Boat Party, on this side, and then Ice Party, on the other side.

KEITH: You also call them... Ghost Party, once...

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: They're in kind of a ghosty... bit, right now.

ALI: Hm.

AUSTIN: So they've been gh- they've been ghosting. But you guys are, this side is the *real* Ghost Party,

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: if you know what I mean.

JACK: I think, we should also probably mention, in case it's not immediately obvious, that like - (laughter) we have not recorded an episode of this, for *ages*!

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Three months, to the day, that we've recorded a Ghost Party episode. We've done - I've recorded a couple of Ice Party episodes since then, and we've recorded... the holiday special that you've heard by now. Hopefully.

KEITH: Mm.

AUSTIN: If you haven't heard the holiday special by now, listen.

JACK: It's really good!

AUSTIN: It's *better* than whatever this is gonna be. (laughter) No offense! I - I am, I have a lot of hope for this episode, because the last episode in this series, I think, is one of our best. And that's up - literally going up *tonight*.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, I -

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Which is why we're like, oh *shit*, we need to record again! (laughter)

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah, so, for you it'll be a week? And for us -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Two weeks.

JACK: It'll be - three - two weeks.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And for us, it'll be three months?

AUSTIN: Yep!

JACK: So it's, it'll be a bit like that bit in Interstellar? Except, we'll all have aged 40 years, instead of however many years they age or whatever.

AUSTIN: And also, we promise we'll only quote that poem once. (laughter)

JACK: Yes. And we're gonna do it now! (sing-songy) You shall not go gently into the - the, friendly night! (emphatically) Don't go!

AUSTIN: Please!

JACK: There, I'm done.

AUSTIN: Please hang out. As always, our agenda... is, to portray a fantastic world, to fill the - the characters' lives with adventure, and to play to find out what happens. Thanks again to [notification chimes] Sage LaTorra - fuck me! Thanks again (laughter) to Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel, who are the designers on Dungeon World, and to D. Vincent Baker, who made Apocalypse World, the game that Dungeon World is based on - I almost just *dropped* my phone, onto the ground, from like, three feet up (Ali laughs). Like - cause I thought, I, I've changed desks, I've changed apartments since I last recorded. And I changed desks, for a weird reason. And, I went to put it into like, a little shelving, thing? That just doesn't exist on this desk (Jack laughs). And it was just gonna fall to the ground! So, I'm glad that didn't happen. Okay.

JACK: We're so pro!

AUSTIN: (sighs) Uhhh, so. (laughs) The last time we played, we left off with you back in... the Sable Spire. Which is the large prison tower, in the Empire of Nacre. Kind of like the City of Nacre at this point, it's not - not much of an empire right now. Though, Adelaide Tristé, the Queen of Death, the Empress of Pearls, you know, the Reluctant Savior of the Longest Light, Blessed by the Far Sea, uh (Ali laughs), she... clearly has plans, to - to, make it an empire, once again. The... last session, kind of... (amused) last session was a *thing*. (Ali laughs) The last session in- included - and this is the thing that's tough for us, right, like, because I don't want to recap for the next 30 minutes - which we could totally do!

KEITH: Yeah, there was a lot of stuff.

AUSTIN: Because we haven't... listened to this new episode yet, Keith has, I listened to bits of it.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): I just - I just listened to it.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: I'm blanking on what happened in the last 10 minutes -

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Not 10 minutes, 5 minutes of it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Just because I was like, rushing it to get that done?

AUSTIN: So -

KEITH: Cause I *just* finished it, like, literally 2 minutes before we started recording? (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Right. So the, the last session was, we picked up with the fight. Against Brandish, in Tristero's... hotel room? From when he used to stay in Nacre.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There was a big fight, there was an explosion, I believe Emmanuel was hurt? In that explosion?

KEITH: Emmanuel - Emmanuel was, was thrown off of - or, he was hanging from the balcony.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): And then you saved him.

KEITH: It was unclear whether or not he was hurt.

AUSTIN: He was -

KEITH: Yeah, Ted and, Ted and uh... Lem.

AUSTIN: And Lem saved him.

ALI: Okay.

KEITH: Ted uh, Ted was just like some rando enemy that was hanging out with Brandish.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: He was the one whose head I *didn't* chop off.

KEITH: Yeah. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Um - right. (laughs) You did also chop off someone's head. There... during that fight -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): It was a violence mulligan. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) You can't now name this episode that! (laughter) We've already lost the ability that we - it's gone. The dream is dead. Hella was -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Unless we meet a character *named* Violence Mulligan! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: We'll come to that. (laughs) Hella was mortally wounded in that fight.

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: And, as part of the death mechanics, one of the things that can happen is that - you can be offered a, a, a hard choice to make to, to regain your life. And Hella was asked by Tristero, the, the kind of - *sort of* dethroned? Kind of? Maybe? God of the dead? To, kill, the man they know as Calhoun, in order to, to... live again. And she agreed to that.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Which Jack and - Jack and I still don't know.

AUSTIN: No, you have no idea.

KEITH: Right.

ALI: No. Nobody knows, except me.

AUSTIN: You were also basically captured, thrown into the Sable Spire, thrown - thrown into this prison, and then, and then paraded out to meet... Queen Adelaide, who... effectively welcomed you into her empire.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: And, and made it clear that she'd like you to stay, and like have a place, here. And gave you... some of you gifts. She gave Jack gifts, basically. She gave Jack... a couple of maps, a map of the old empire, from before the Mark - or, bef- before the Erasure. And then a, sort of like, this is what I *want* the empire to look like again? She gave... she promised Fero that he would be able to see the zoos of Nacre?

KEITH: Mmhm. Yeah.

AUSTIN: And, she didn't really give Hella anything, except a sidelong glance, and asked a *lot* about what the state of Ordenna was these days. (Ali laughs) It seemed that she used to spend some time at Or- in Ordenna, when she was a little girl. But now - but hasn't been there in quite some time.

KEITH: She did compliment its beauty.

AUSTIN: She did.

ALI: It's a nice place!

AUSTIN: It's a nice place.

KEITH: Yeah. Be great to have it in your empire.



AUSTIN: She also took your sword from you.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: If you recall.

ALI: Yep!

AUSTIN: And still has that. The last 10 minutes of the game, were being escorted back to the prison, from the palace. And... Ventaro Doce, who is the, the Empress's, like, regent advisor? Chief librarian?

KEITH: He had that special pin.

AUSTIN: He had that special pin, that marked him with a s- it was a similar, it was like the shared symbol as the one on the ring that Gregalos gave you.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Before you left Velas. And he kind of explained... he kind of like, (laughs) he was like real talk. This is what's happening. It would be cool if... you could convince Calhoun, to stay in town, as a symbol of a unified empire. Calhoun, you had found out in the last game, was the... the, the abdicated -

KEITH: Renegade prince?

AUSTIN: Renegade prince, yeah (Ali laughs), of Nacre. He, he abdicated the throne when his father died, also his father died because he killed his father.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: And... and, had been kind of whisked away to Velas, where he, he had hoped to find, democracy and freedom and not... this weird tyranny, that his father had wanted, his father had wanted to kind of extend Nacre to the entirety of the world, and return things to the good old days before the Erasure. So he was not, he was not down with that!

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So now, he is also in the Sable Spire -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Oh shit, I'm not down with that either!

AUSTIN: No, you are not down with that! And neither is the Empress, the Empress also said like no, that's kind of foolish, we can do better, you know, we're - we have the power to keep people from dying, that's pretty good.

KEITH: Yeah. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: It would be cool if that was everywhere.

KEITH: That was a very nice scene! The, it wa- in, it, probably two episode back, was when I saw the... old man, who dec- he's like, I've been a ghost for a while, I'm just gonna not be anymore.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): I'm just done now. Right, yeah.

JACK (overlapping Austin): Yeah.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Yeah! That was very nice.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Yeah. And this -

JACK (overlapping Austin): (wistfully) That was where I locked eyes with my pastry chef.

AUSTIN: Yes. Who you still don't know has a patisserie, I realized.

JACK: No - I don't know he's a pastry chef!

AUSTIN: No, you have no idea!

JACK: Which is really funny to me, because -

KEITH (overlapping Jack): (confused) Did you just say - patisserie?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

KEITH: Is that real?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah, that's a word!

KEITH (overlapping Ali): I've never heard that.

AUSTIN: That's what a pastry shop is.

JACK (overlapping Austin): It's a French word for...

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Yeah. I'm pretty sure.

KEITH: I just assumed that a pastry chef worked in a bakery. (Ali laughs)

JACK: No, they work in a patisserie.

ALI: No.

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: (pause) Also, we can't ever leave Nacre. We're stuck.

AUSTIN: Right, that was a thing -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Well, that's what they *said*.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: (laughing) But if you remember, the holiday episode happened later. (Ali laughs)

JACK: Also, even when we've been out of character talking about it, every single time we've mentioned it, Austin has said -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): (laughing) For three months now!

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: *very clearly*, 'You're not leaving Nacre.' (laughs)

AUSTIN: That is correct.

ALI: He... he drops the hammer pretty hard, every single time (laughs).

AUSTIN: Uh huh! You'll never leave Nacre, it's too late.

JACK: He did it again!

ALI: Mhm! (laughs)

AUSTIN: So... when we pick up, it's - I'm gonna say it's very early the next morning, in the Sable Spire. You've been put into a nicer room, you each have like bed- it's like a suite, it's a like a prison suite?

KEITH: Mhm. (Ali laughs) Did I, hold - did I not - like -

AUSTIN: Oh, there was another big thing! Right!

KEITH: I - I flew out the window! I flew out the - yeah!

AUSTIN: The last thing that happened.

ALI: Yeah!

KEITH: The last thing that happened was I turned into a bird.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: Flew out the window, because I - I - I b- I just, they left it open, they knew, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, they knew. (Ali laughs) It's like -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Like, they - they were like, oh, he can turn into a bird, and here's an open window.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And I flew out, and I saw... *warships* coming over.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Oh my god, I didn't - I'd for- completely forgotten about that.

AUSTIN: Yes!

ALI (overlapping Austin): Oh, I haven't - yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): Ordennan warships off the coast -

JACK (overlapping Austin): Do we know whose warships they are?

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Yes. They were Ordennan warships.

JACK (overlapping Austin): Did you -

KEITH (overlapping Jack): Yeah.

JACK (overlapping Keith): (laughing) Oh my god, ohh god.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Coming off the, like - like quite a bit away,

ALI (overlapping Austin): Yeahh.

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): but not like...

JACK (overlapping Austin): (with concern) Ahh.

AUSTIN: Not...

ALI: (uncertainly) It's fine.

JACK: A twist three months in the making...

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Right. (Ali laughs) And also, to be clear, Adelaide kind of made it clear that like, listen, we know we can't *actually* hold you here, but that doesn't even matter. Like

basically, from today on, you work from us, even if you don't know it. Is basically what she said to you.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Or even if you don't want to. (laughs) So. (pauses)

ALI: That's not good! (laughs)

AUSTIN: Did you come back? From... from your trip, over the seas?

KEITH: (laughs) No, I'm still flying around (Ali laughs) I gotta go check out those ships!

AUSTIN: *Are* you? Is that - is that what you want to do?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: I want to go check out those ships.

AUSTIN: You know, you... so we're gonna pick up in the middle of the night then, basically.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: (pauses) The fleet is at least... matched, to the one that's in the ports of Nacre. At *least*. They're bristling with cannons, and the, the... sea, trembles, at the ships.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: In a way that is... unnatural. You can sense the animals of the sea, you can sense the fish, kind of... opening up, for the Ordennan ships to pass by. Like they want *nothing* to do with the water around these ships.

KEITH: Cause I remember in the, in the... holiday episode, there was like that, that, anti-magic barrier

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: around the Ordennan ships?

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: (laughs) And I wonder how that is going to work with the...

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): That's a good question.

JACK (overlapping Keith): A magical town.

KEITH: (laughs) Like the ghost people that live in the magic town! (laughter)

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's a super good question, isn't it? Yeah, well this is -

JACK (overlapping Austin): Also, how do they know where Nacre is? Like.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): That's a good question too!

JACK: Also. I can't even ask these questions because we haven't had this information relayed back to us.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): You have no idea about this, yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So what are you doing?

KEITH: I'm gonna go... how far away are the ships? Are they - is it like, I could just fly there easily?

AUSTIN: Uh, you know, it would take you... the night, to fly there and back. And you would be exhausted.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): The night, to fly there and back?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Okay. Then, then... are... Hella and Lem's... windows open, also?

AUSTIN: That's the same suite. Like you can just go into their room, and...

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Oh okay, like we can just, okay. Then I'm just gonna go like, tell them. (laughing) I'm gonna go tell them what I saw. (Jack laughs)

AUSTIN: Sure. You should do that.

KEITH: Yeah I'm gonna go - okay. So, I, I, I pop back in, I (laughs) remember to not be a bird anymore.

AUSTIN: Good job.

KEITH: Uh, and... well I,

KEITH (as Fero): You guys! Okay! (laughter) Some... ships, some warships, they're coming, and, uh... they look, like there's a lot of them, and, trouble.

JACK (as Lem): (pauses) Where are they from?

KEITH: Do - Austin, I, I just assume that I know... what Ordennan warships look like?

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): (sighs) I think so, yeah. Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

KEITH (as Fero): Oh, they're Ordennan warships.

ALI (as Hella): (pauses) Oh. (laughter) That's weird.

KEITH (as Fero): That is super weird, right?

ALI (as Hella): (laughing worriedly) Yeah! That's kinda weird!

KEITH (as Fero): It's super weird, like we're probably gonna have to like, fight or whatever, right?

ALI (as Hella): Mm... no.

JACK (overlapping Ali): Can we see them from our window?

AUSTIN: No, no no no no. They're *off* the coast.

JACK: But they're moving, they're on their way.

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, but they're *far* away, they're not like... they're not like, no one in town can see them.

JACK: Okay. How long do you think we have?

AUSTIN: At the rate that they were going? (pauses) Y- Fero, you would estimate, at the rate that they were going, a day or two.

KEITH: A day or two?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Okay.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: They're moving very slowly, it's not like - they're not - it looks like they are... they're doing the job of a reconnaissance force, even though they're much bigger than that. Do you know what I mean? (Jack laughs)

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: Like, they're looking for something, they don't know where it is, so they're moving very carefully and cautiously.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: They're not making a beeline. But they - it's clear they're going in the general direction of here, you know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This isn't - this isn't just a reconnaissance thing, this isn't just a scouting vessel, this is a war group.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Yeah, they're just - they're just like maybe like, not exactly sure where they're going.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yeah. That's fair, yeah.

JACK (as Lem): How would we feel about... alerting the kingdom to the... nearby Ordennan fleet?

KEITH (as Fero): (incredulously) Oh, no, not good!

ALI (as Hella): Oh, no... no, we don't have to do that. And plus, now we have a ride out of here! (Jack laughs)

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah, cause like I'm - listen. It -

JACK (as Lem): (worried) Umm... (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: You're not leaving, I mean, that's okay though. (laughter)

KEITH: (laughs) He keeps doing that! Wait.

JACK (as Lem): Uh, no, hang on. Wait a second, wh- how - explain to me how this is a good thing?

ALI (as Hella): (pauses) No, it's fine!

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): We're - we're *captives* -

ALI (as Hella): I mean, I don't know why they're coming here, but it'll be fine, there are people I can talk to over there -

JACK (as Lem, overlapping Ali): No, look, we've got a lovely suite!

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, and...



KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): We don't know anybody's -

JACK (as Lem, overlapping Keith): I've got some maps, (Keith laughs) I've got a book of poetry -

ALI (as Hella): No, we - we can't stay here! We have things to do.

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): We can't stay here. I know that you -

KEITH: Hold on, I - I just want to remind everybody, Jack already promised that he *would* stay here (Ali laughs),

JACK: Yeah!

KEITH: before we were forced to (laughter) - before, before anybody told us, hey... you guys are gonna have to stay here forever. Emmanuel, told... Fero - no told - man / did it!

AUSTIN: *You* did it!

KEITH: Told - (laughter) / did it! I, I've never done that! Told Lem, I'll take, I'll show you stuff, but you're gonna have to... stay here forever, and, and Lem was like (dopey voice) yeah that's okay!

JACK (overlapping Keith): That's - I'll tell -

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): That's *sort* of what happened, I want to be clear. What he actually said was like, listen if you want to see things, you're going to *need* to stay here forever.

KEITH: Right. And then - but then, then Lem agreed.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: (pauses) And, and -

JACK: Yeah, I saw a cool hotel! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: What he said was, if you don't leave here, like right now -

JACK: Right now - yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay.

KEITH: Which - by the way! Lem. Didn't even give us the option, didn't even find us,

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): No.

ALI (overlapping Keith): Yeah!

KEITH: like hey, (laughing) we need to get out of here now!

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): (exaggerated voice) We gotta *go*. (laughter)

KEITH: (laughing) Like.

JACK: Look! Look, you can have, you can have, you can have cute, bumbley, naive Lem as much as you want! (Ali laughs) But you also have to have, like,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: (laughing) colossally misguided decision-making Lem! (laughter)

AUSTIN: This is true.

JACK (overlapping Austin): All the time.

AUSTIN: This is true.

JACK: Speaking of colossally misguided decisions.

JACK (as Lem): I'm not particularly happy about your... your big, actually the Ordennans are probably going to be goodies plan, you two.

KEITH (as Fero): I don't know that they're gonna be... I don't know that they're here to save us, or that that's even on their agenda, but, like, I don't really understand... I don't really understand the agenda of the people who are keeping us captive, and I kind of want to see how it plays out like a little bit. (Jack laughs) Like I want a chance to know what the stakes are before I pick what I want to do.

ALI: (pauses, noncommittally) Yeah. I mean, my alliance is pretty... (Austin laughs) Pretty...

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): And it's Hella's hometown!

ALI (as Hella): Yeah! I mean, well, there'll be people I probably know there. And, I mean, we're -

ALI: (uncertainly) Our ship was like, destroyed? (pauses) What happened with that, actually?

AUSTIN: Your ship is parked.

ALI (overlapping Austin): No, our -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Our ship is, our - parked off the coast.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Your ship is parked, northwest of the coast.

ALI: Ohh, yeah, that's right.

KEITH (overlapping Ali): Yeah. It's a -

ALI (overlapping Keith): There's probably, like, really tired people on that ship (laughter).

AUSTIN: For the sake of, the sake of...

ALI (overlapping Austin): Oh my god! (laughs)

AUSTIN: Of dramatic clarity, there was this moment last game where you thought you recog- you saw someone briefly, like, do I know them from somewhere? And you couldn't quite place it.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: (pauses) It was like in town. So.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: So yeah. (pauses)

KEITH: Um.

ALI (overlapping Keith): (quietly) It'll be fine.

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): So it sounds like you're, you're kind of at an impasse about this. (Ali laughs) Except that, except that it sounds like Lem wants to tell people.

KEITH (as Fero): Lem, I want to know why you want to tell people. I don't know what we gain for that, except for the trust of the people that have us in prison.

JACK (as Lem): That's - okay, A: we're not in prison.

ALI (as Hella): This is a prison. (laughs)

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): We're kind of in prison! (Ali laughs) We're in a giant spire and we're, like, (laughs) they keep on telling us we can't leave ever no matter what.

JACK (as Lem): Look. My bed -

ALI (as Hella, overlapping Jack): Yeah, this is a prison, they even locked us in here.

KEITH (overlapping Ali): They even got to Austin! (laughter)

JACK (as Lem): My bed has carvings of - (breaks into laughter) My bed has carvings of birds on it! Um.

KEITH (as Fero): (exasperated) I'm a bird! I just, can just be a bird, you can look at me and carve *me* into stuff! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: (horrified noise) (laughter)

KEITH (as Fero): (laughing) Draw me like one of your French birds, Lem! (horrified laughter)

ALI: Huh huh, anyway...

JACK (as Lem): No, but like, here's the thing. (pauses) This is *tremendously* exciting.

JACK: This is, essentially, I've found Atlantis, right?

AUSTIN: Yes. This is - well -

JACK (overlapping Austin): And, not just that, I've found Atlantis, that - that's just full of people! Just like, (laughing) going about their lives!

KEITH (overlapping Jack): Ghost people.

JACK: Well, and some human people. Or some, like, living people.

KEITH: I mean, I wasn't saying ghost people as a detractor.

JACK: Right, yeah, sure. Okay, so I've found -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): (laughing) I want to be clear that *Lem* isn't - you're not speaking as Lem right now, right?

JACK: Yeah, I'm speaking as a cross between Lem and me, I guess?

AUSTIN: Okay, okay. (laughs)

JACK: No, I am - I am speaking as Lem! Yeah, I am speaking as Lem!

AUSTIN: (laughing) Lem doesn't - or I mean, *Atlantis* isn't a thing.

JACK: Well okay - right (Austin laughs). Yeah, I guess, in that case, (Ali laughs), I am conveying to Lem.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Or, conveying to Fero -

AUSTIN: (laughing) *You* did it! (laughter) Jesus christ!

KEITH: It's been a while.

JACK: Keith, do you just want to swap?

AUSTIN: Yeah, let's just (laughter) - just switch it off. (Keith laughs)

JACK: The audience will love that.

AUSTIN: Let's just rotate, *I'll* be Fero, Jack, you're the GM... and Keith, you can be Lem.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I'm a hummingbird now!

JACK (overlapping Austin): Au- Austin! Austin! You're not leaving Nacre. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughs) Okay.

JACK: Um, okay. Okay. No, look. I've found Atlantis.

JACK (as Lem): And, warships are arriving in this city that I had thought... was a myth, for literally, like, my entire upbringing. And *warships* are coming towards it? Of course I'm going to feel a motivation to tell somebody. A, it's my job, and B, like,

JACK: Lem is, like - like he just gets -

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Jack): Well hold on, it's not your job!

ALI (as Hella, overlapping Keith): Yeah, how is it your job?

KEITH (as Fero): You got *fired* because you stole a thing and you're on the run. You're being hunted by the people that fired you for stealing.

JACK (as Lem, overlapping Keith): I didn't *want* to get fired. (pauses) Like, look -

KEITH (as Fero): (grudgingly) No, but it's also, it's not your *job* anymore.

JACK (as Lem, overlapping Keith): Well okay, but -

KEITH (as Fero): It's like maybe, part of - it's like maybe, who you *are*, but it's obviously - (laughter) but -

AUSTIN: (laughing) Yeah, I guess, that's all!

JACK (as Lem): But like - (intensely) well, no, because for the Archivists there's no distinction between growing up in the Archives, and, your job, right? You know. You grow up in the Archives, and that's what you do, so.

JACK: I guess, I'm just - I don't, I just don't want to see, like, the city of Pompeii, get, just destroyed by warships turning up. It would be a bit of a dick move by the warships. (Austin laughs)

ALI (as Hella): (dismissively) I - they might not destroy the *whole* place. (laughs)

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): I think they're mostly gonna focus -

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): (incredulously) *What?*

ALI: (laughing): I think Hella says that like,

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): I think - no no no no no.

ALI (overlapping Keith): really casually, just like waving her hand.

KEITH: He-

ALI (overlapping Keith): Like, no! It's - eh, we'll see what happens. (laughter)

KEITH (as Fero): I think they're, I think the ships are gonna mostly focus on destroying other ships.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah.

JACK (as Lem): (seriously) No.

ALI (as Hella): That's usually what they do.

JACK (as Lem): No, I super disagree. Okay. Right.

AUSTIN: It sounds like there's an impasse here, and, you know.

JACK: Yep. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: No one's - it, we'll see what happens. Are you - what are you doing?

KEITH: Jack's not -

JACK (overlapping Keith): Do I have, do I have like a little bell?

AUSTIN: (pauses) Uh...

KEITH: Hold on, hold on! Hold on! (laughter) Hold on! Uh (laughs) I'm going to grab Lem. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: (shocked) Whoa!

JACK: Wait! Whoa, no, dude. I would like to -

KEITH (overlapping Jack): You're gonna ring that bell!

JACK: You're - (laughs)

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Jack): Don't ring bells! Bells will bring guards.

ALI (as Hella): (vaguely threateningly) Yeah, don't - *don't* ring that bell. Let, let's -

JACK: You're about half my size! (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs darkly)

JACK: (laughing) Um.

ALI: *I'm* not.

KEITH: (laughing) Whoa - look -

JACK (overlapping Keith, in background): Okay, look, yeah, okay, alright, okay.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): *That's* true.

KEITH: Do you tell - do you tell - (laughs) do you tell Fero that I'm half your size. Is that a thing that you -

JACK (overlapping Keith): No.

KEITH: Okay. (Ali laughs)

JACK: No. If only just to avoid complications (laughter).

JACK (as Lem): But no, I really want to ring that bell. Bite me.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, but don't. Let's just, let's just not.

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): Hold on, I can also literally bite you (laughter).

AUSTIN: I - we can do that, if that's the way you want to take this thing. (laughs) If one of you wants to die alone in this prison... (laughter)

JACK (as Lem): Nobody has made a good enough case yet for me to just, like, let these warships arrive in this city?

KEITH (as Fero): Well, we might - what I'm saying is, we don't know who the - we don't know who we think are the good guys or the bad guys yet. All we know is that you like libraries.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): It sounds like Lem is saying that he does, right? Like that is what the argument I'm hearing - the argument that I'm hearing is, is... Hella has a pretty clear idea of who *she* thinks is good, because of her just, natural allegiances.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: And, then, so does Lem.

JACK: Yep.

KEITH: Right. And I just want to wait and see. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Right. Yep!

KEITH: So

KEITH (as Fero): Everybody fucking just let me wait and see! Like I don't know what the - like wait a *little* bit! If we - (laughs) okay.

JACK (as Lem): (irritably) Okay. Fine. Right. Let's just - right.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, they don't need to know. It's, it's -

JACK (as Lem): (irritably) No, they don't need to know.

ALI (as Hella): No. (pauses) No no no. Don't touch that bell.

JACK (as Lem): No, I'm not going to! It's fine, it's fine. It's fine.

AUSTIN: Alright, so this is -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Do you mean -

AUSTIN: till like 4 am, so what are you - what are you doing?

KEITH (as Fero): Put the, put the bell -

JACK: I'm sulking.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH (as Fero): Put the bell where we can all see the bell. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: (sighs, laughs) You know that like, you're gonna end up seeing other people again, no matter what, right? (Ali laughs) Like whether it's 4 am, or 7 am...

KEITH: (pauses) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I guess I'm just reading that, fucking, poetry book that I was given.

AUSTIN: It's an interesting book, here's how it's gonna work. Any time you want to spout lore about Nacre,

JACK: (gleefully) Oh, what! Is this a mechanic?



AUSTIN: Yeah, you can just, you can just... you will automatically be able to ask one additional question.

JACK: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: So even if you fail your roll on Spout Lore, you'll still get one question to ask.

JACK: That's great. So this is like epic poetry, or is it -

AUSTIN: Right. Well, it's - no, it's not, I think this is, some, this is poetry written by Tristero, Once God of the Dead, while he was visiting Nacre.

JACK: Oh so it's like... Bill Bryson, Holiday,

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): I don't know Bill Bryson, but, but sure.

JACK: It's an American holiday writer.

AUSTIN: Okay. But it's all poetry - it's all in the form of poetry, and it is all about the city, which, again, has mostly stayed unchanged since that time, you know? Despite the many, many, many centuries. Yeah.

KEITH: Um, I have a... I have a thing that I want to say to Lem.

JACK: Okay.

KEITH (as Fero): Uh, I'm going - okay. They're gonna, they're gonna fuck- they're gonna take me to the zoo tomorrow (laughter).

AUSTIN: That's true.

KEITH (as Fero): They're gonna take me to the zoo later. I'll fucking, I'll see - it'll take those ships a couple days to get here. I'm gonna learn what I can learn, and then I'll get back to you on whether or not you can start ringing any bells.

JACK (as Lem): Okay. Cool.

KEITH (as Fero): Is that cool? Are we cool?

JACK (as Lem): Yeah yeah yeah, cool, cool.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay.

JACK (as Lem): Yeah, cool, cool.

ALI (as Hella, overlapping Jack): I'm not - but -

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): Cause I just want to know who - I just want to know if these people are dickheads or not.

JACK (as Lem): Yeah, sure.

ALI (as Hella): We're not... we're not doing that.

KEITH: No, that was just to L- I wasn't talking to Hella.

ALI: Mm, that's fine.

KEITH: That was not... involved in this.

ALI: That was a secret... okay, sure.

AUSTIN: This is a, this is a secret side convo?

KEITH (overlapping Austin): This is a - this is a - yeah, this is like a, cause, yeah.

ALI: Mmhm.

KEITH: It wasn't, I wasn't trying to be sly, but I was like -

AUSTIN: Wow. So sly.

ALI: No, that's, that's sly, though.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: You're playing both sides!

KEITH: (indignantly) I'm not playing - I'm playing *neither* side (laughter).

AUSTIN: He's playing both sides. Let's - uh, Ali just, just said that there might be a chance that... there is, uh, some, some audio problems on her side. Let's take a quick break. I'm also gonna run to the bathroom and get some more coffee.

KEITH: Okay.

JACK: Cool.

AUSTIN: You guys should take a look at that while we're going on break.

ALI: Okay.

KEITH: Alright.

AUSTIN: Should we clap or anything, for break?

KEITH: Uh, don't clap for break. Well, let's, if anybody pauses - if we're, I guess Hella's gonna have to pause her...

AUSTIN: I'm not pausing - yeah.

KEITH: ...thing.

AUSTIN: Should we all pause? Are you sure -

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH (overlapping Austin and Ali): We'll clap - we'll clap, we'll clap when... when...

ALI: When we come back?

AUSTIN: We pick back up?

KEITH: We pick back up.

AUSTIN: Good call.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. I'll be right back.

KEITH: Yeah. Cool.

[sort of in-sync clapping]

AUSTIN: Hm.

KEITH: That was alright. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Can you work with it?

KEITH: It's close enough.

ALI: Are you sure?

KEITH: With the - with the OBS thing, I don't even need...

AUSTIN: Right. Right.

ALI: Oh, okay.

KEITH: Like we need to, we need to clap still, but it doesn't even need to be on target.

AUSTIN: (laughter) Okay, cool.

ALI: Okay!

KEITH: Yep.

AUSTIN: So, that was like at 4am, the last conversation you all had.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And it seems like everybody went their way. Is that - was that correct?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Everyone went back to their bedrooms, inside of this - this suite that you have? So around 7, Ventaro shows up with... with, I think probably like two trays of food for Lem and for Hella. And then he like, he looks at you and says... so again, I should describe Ventaro, because, because it's been a while, it's been three months (laughs) since we've talked about - about these characters. (laughs) Which is - which is a long time.

KEITH: Ah.

AUSTIN: He's like a thin, tall ghost, and his ghostliness is less color saturated than the other ghosts. Like he doesn't have like the blue or the gold shimmer that some of the other ghosts do. He is like, basically grey. Like, so he's still blueish on the blue side, I think, but not - but not - he doesn't have that Jedi glow. You know? (laughs) And he says, uh...

AUSTIN (as Ventaro, in a deep voice): You and I, little one, will have breakfast in the zoo.

ALI: Aww.

KEITH (as Fero): Oh, great!

ALI: Cute.

AUSTIN: And he leaves, uh, he leaves Lem and, and Hella to their devices, locks the door behind - or he doesn't, probably, a guard does. There's kind of a guard positioned, I think, outside of... the way I'm imagining this room is kind of like, three bedrooms with a big, nice living room in the middle.

KEITH: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: And probably some sort of washroom nearby, and then kind of a... a hallway in, with like a regular door, and then on the other side - on the far side of the hallway is like a *big* gate. Like a big metal door (Ali laughs). So that like, on the inside of the living room area, it just looks like a nice house!

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: But then the second you open up that, that living room door -

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It just like, stones, and bricks, and metal.

JACK: It's not a prison! It's not a prison.

ALI: (laughs) Yeah! Just -

KEITH (overlapping Ali): As we watch - as I'm leaving, as I'm leaving the room, I want to like, ask the guy, like -

KEITH (as Fero): Just to double check, you're not putting me *in* the zoo, right?

KEITH: (laughter) And then I look back at, at Hella and Lem, and I give them like a wink (laughter).

ALI: Great. Great.

AUSTIN: (laughing) He just kind of laughs a little bit.

JACK: Ventaro Doce seems like a, like a really nice guy.

AUSTIN: He's very old, you know? He's, he's, I think he...

JACK: He's a ghost! (laughs)

AUSTIN: Right, and he's like an old ghost.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: He... you get the impression, that... okay, so you know a couple weeks ago, I guess a month ago now, I was looking for apartments? And I talked about, there was this one apartment that I went to where the dude was there, he was just like an older gentleman who loved talking to me about his, like, country music, and the cars he was rebuilding (laughter). And like, all he wanted in life was to have someone to like, talk to about stuff?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You kind of get that, that impression from Ventaro. Like he's very - your youth is invigorating to him.

JACK: Aww.

AUSTIN: And, and the fact that, you know, you don't - you didn't spend, you haven't spent the last few centuries in Nacre, right? Like you have this outside world,

KEITH: Mhm.

AUSTIN: and you convey that through your - through a million little things that we don't, that we all take for granted. Right? Like the little mannerisms.

JACK (overlapping Austin): So -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): So this is not one of the, this guy's not one of the guys that gasped when I called the Queen "Queenie?"

AUSTIN: (pauses) He might have.

KEITH: (laughs) Yeah?

AUSTIN: (Ali laughs) Like that's still a little rude. Like she's still the Empress of Pearls, you know what I mean? Like she's still Blessed by the Far Sea, you can't call her *Queenie*. #00:30:00#

KEITH: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But like, there is -

KEITH: (laughing) I think I also called her the Queen of Diamonds, which is... (laughs)

AUSTIN: (sighs, laughter) Great. (pauses) What are the suits? What are the suits of, for cards in Hieron?

JACK: In Hieron?

AUSTIN: Yeah. What are the, what are the popular - the four suits? Four suits? Is it four suits in a deck of cards in Hieron?

JACK: (decisively) Five.

AUSTIN: Five. Right.

JACK: Like European cards.

AUSTIN: Right. So what are they? Diamonds, we already know diamonds is one.

JACK: Yep. Um, uh... (laughs) oh god, Austin and I have already done this once for another project, is the problem (Austin laughs). And we failed!

AUSTIN: No we didn't! That project is still gonna come out one day...

JACK: Oh, the cards' names, we failed at.

AUSTIN: Oh. That is true. We did.

JACK: Hares, like h-a-r-e-s.

AUSTIN: Okay. I thought you said pears.

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: Not hares.

JACK: So diamonds, diamonds, hares, lilies...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Mm... (pauses) I'm out. Help! (Austin laughs)

KEITH: Uh, gates.

AUSTIN: Ooh! Gates is good.

JACK: Gates. We need one more.

AUSTIN: This random noun generator suggests South Africa. Which, no! (laughter)

JACK: Sundials. Sundials!

AUSTIN: Sundials is good. Is that four?

JACK: That's five. Yep, diamonds, hares... gates...

AUSTIN: Diamonds, hares, gates...

JACK: Lilies.

AUSTIN: Lilies, sundials.

JACK: And sundials. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Good.

JACK: Yeah, that seems right. Cool.

AUSTIN: Yep! All according to plan.

JACK: Well that's for when our merch - our merch deals go through.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yes, exactly. Okay. So. (pauses) I think Ventaro takes you to the zoo, and... the thing that's interesting here, you know, we talked already a little bit about this, is... that the fauna in Nacre exists in this space that is not quite living and not quite dead.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Or like, there's some of it that's alive, but there's plenty of it that is undead, and not in a way that is necessarily creepy. It's just like, there's this *other* state of life.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And in some ways, I think it's more... part of what makes that more, like, easy to grasp for you is that... animal life has always been transitional, in a way, or rendered transitional, talked about in transitional ways, where human, or humanoid, life is not.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: Like obviously we talk about babies and adults, and, and, you know, seniors, and blah blah blah.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: But, you know, there's already all of these metaphors for transformation in the animal kingdom. Right? Where we talk about things going through metamorphoses.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: And this is just one more metamorphosis. Like, it's weird that the zebra is now a ghost zebra (laughs)!

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: But, like, it's not *that* weird! Like that's, is that *that* different than a caterpillar becoming a -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Also, is there a zebra?

AUSTIN: Yeah, there's a zebra.

KEITH: Okay. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: You've never seen a zebra before, I don't think. I think zebras are definitely part of the, the... Kingdom of Nacre's, like, the last zebras in this world are these zebras here. They're definitely a pre-Erasure thing. There's probably all sorts of animals. What other sorts of animals are here? What do we think are the animals of Nacre?

JACK: Snakes.

ALI: Yeah? (laughs)

AUSTIN: What sort? Like little snakes, or big snakes?

JACK: Like vipers I think.



AUSTIN: Ooh.

JACK: Like the little, little vipers and stuff. Yeah, of course, like this is, like -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): What are the - what are the viewing things for the vipers? Like...

JACK: Um, like those little glass domes that you pop your head up into.

AUSTIN: (surprised) Wait, you pop your head *into* them? What?!

ALI: That's - that's a horrible thing, wait -

KEITH (overlapping Ali): I want Jack, I want everybody to contextualize this -

JACK (overlapping Keith): Not into the snakes!

KEITH: Jack is so afraid of snakes that on a previous episode, Jack recoiled when I *mentioned* there being snakes in England. (laughter)

JACK: Well, no, but like, if... I don't know, Nacre feels kind of, like, Mediterranean to me, and also...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I guess sea snakes, maybe? And also like, lots of political machinations are going on here.

AUSTIN: Wait, I still want to know what you mean by 'there is a little glass thing and you stick your head into it.'

KEITH: Oh, I know what he means! There's like a, it's like a -

ALI (overlapping Keith): Yeah, no, that's -

JACK (overlapping Ali): Wait, wait -

KEITH: (overlapping both): It's like a big terrarium -

JACK: (overlapping Keith): Austin, what did you think I mean? Wait, wait, wait (laughter) - what did you think...

AUSTIN: I don't know - in my mind, here's what's happening. In my mind, there's like, a terrarium that exists, like, on the ceiling, coming down.

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: (disbelievably) And you pop your head up into a little viewing dome?

JACK: Mhm. Yep.

ALI: Yeah!

KEITH: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Is that real?!

ALI: That's exactly it, yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I guess I haven't been to a zoo with a reptile, like, house, in a *long* time.

JACK: Oh, I've never seen it with a reptile house.

ALI: You should go to the aquarium in Toronto (laughs).

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's far.

KEITH: I've never - yeah, I've never seen that with snakes, but I've seen it with like, polar bears.

AUSTIN: I've never seen that. That's really interesting.

JACK: I - no, I, I, I don't think it's real, but I just thought that it would be the sort of weird thing that they'd do in -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Ali just said (Ali laughs) that in the city I hung out with her in two weeks ago, it was there and real.

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah, no, I've seen that, just not with snakes.

JACK: (overlapping Keith): With snakes?

AUSTIN: Not with snakes.

ALI: Well, no, yeah, it was with sharks, but.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Oh, yeah.

ALI: Basically. Snake-like.

KEITH: Sharks, the snakes of the sea. (laughter)

JACK: (laughing) Or, snakes, the sharks of the land.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): (laughing) They call them sea snakes, which is very - which is very confusing. (laughter) Um, so what other animals? So zebras, pit vipers (laughs).

JACK: They're coral snakes, actually, they're kind of blue, you know.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, those are very pretty.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Oh, giant-wi- giant bats.

AUSTIN: Giant bats.

KEITH: Like *huge* bats.

ALI: Oh, yeah. Brightly-colored bats.

**#00:35:00#**

AUSTIN: Oh, and - brightly-colored bats. I, yeah, I can see that.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We already know that there was those birds that turn into other, more birds.

JACK: Lots of really fragile little...

KEITH (overlapping Jack): Oh, yeah, those dope birds!

JACK: sort of mammals, with big eyes, and little wiffely noses (Ali laughs).

AUSTIN: Right. Remind me of the way your druid stuff works, Fero?

KEITH: Uh, you mean how I transform into stuff, or like how I...

AUSTIN: Can you, can you study an animal? And...

KEITH: I can study an animal, yeah.

AUSTIN: And then learn how to be it, right?

KEITH: I can, so yeah, I can spend an amount of time to study an animal and learn how to be it.

AUSTIN: What - what animal would you like that to be? Here, at the zoo.

KEITH: Oh, okay. Um... (pauses)

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, a critical zoo podcast (laughter).

KEITH: Critical (laughs) very critical about zoos! This water isn't clean enough! (Austin laughs)  
Um... I think, let me, let me see... I probably, there's probably no poisonous snake that I can be already.

AUSTIN: Probably not. I guess not.

KEITH: But I do, I do birds all the time, but it would be great to be birds -

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): You do!

KEITH: so I can be a bunch of birds!

AUSTIN: Yeah, but think about that dope giant pirate bird, that could turn into other birds!  
(laughs)

KEITH: That's so cool, yeah! Like I can already turn into birds, but I can't turn into a *hundred* birds!

AUSTIN: Right. Right. (laughing) I'm - I would like to push you in that direction!

KEITH: Oh, but you know what I *can* do?

AUSTIN: What can you do?

KEITH: I can be a bird and like, call on other birds.

AUSTIN: You can, but that's - such a different thing.

KEITH: That's different. That's a different thing.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Oh my god, my Playstation just turned on, I'm so sorry recorder.  
(Ali laughs)

KEITH: I can't hear it at all.

AUSTIN: Okay, good.

KEITH: I just heard one beep.

AUSTIN: That was me pressing the button to see if I could turn it off. I couldn't (laughs).

KEITH: Are you saying that it won't let you?

AUSTIN: It will not let me (laughter). I can't let you do that, Austin.

KEITH: (laughs) Playstation Nacre!

AUSTIN: (laughter) Yeah! I can never leave Playstation!

KEITH: Um... (indecisively) yeah, maybe, ah... a, being a giant bat sounds good, but that giant bat can't turn into a bunch of tiny bats (Ali laughs), unless it can!

AUSTIN: It can't.

KEITH: Hm?

AUSTIN: It can't.

KEITH: Okay. Um...

AUSTIN: And I, I imagine that those birds - of those birds, there's only like two of them in the entire place. Whereas like, I feel like there's like a million of those little colored bats. Um, but I feel like -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Alright, I'll be... a bird.

AUSTIN: I am imagining these birds as being... for people who don't remember this, there was the, the session a few... a few months ago, for us (laughs).

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: A few episodes ago, for you, where Brandish, the Pirate King, had... a, a pet bird that split into a bunch of, of other little birds. It was kind of a big, black...

JACK: Like a Swiss Army bird (laughter).

AUSTIN: Like a Swiss Army bird! A big, black Swiss Army bird.

KEITH: (laughing) What if the bird was a can opener!

AUSTIN: And I'm imagining the exhibit for them to be sort of like, one, it works on the honor system, there is no roof, like. They live there because that's the place they want to live. And they return home to there, but there is no keeping them there. How could there be?

JACK: Mmhm. Yep.

AUSTIN: Two, two, uh... I imagine in my mind it looks like a panther... like, uh, area, do you know what I mean?

JACK: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: Like, and it kind of conveys that same sort of like... ooh, the panthers are out today, like you can look at them and they're cool. Or, like, they're not, they're just like not around, and too bad.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: You're on the fucking panther schedule, you're not on... (Ali laughs) you're on the panther-bird schedule, you're not on the... the, whatever, like, there's always the... The elephants aren't going anywhere! You're gonna see those elephants.

KEITH: Right. You can always see the elephants.

AUSTIN: So... and, and I kind of feel like they kind of laze about in a similar way. And there's only like the two of them, so.

KEITH: Yeah. I was trying to - I'm trying to f- I was just trying, I was trying to figure out a way to not end up... just being another type of bird? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: You can't be...

KEITH (overlapping Jack): Because I'm always birds?

JACK (overlapping Jack): You can't -

KEITH: But I want to be those fucking cool birds.

AUSTIN: They're cool. I think I'm just gonna call them panther-birds for now.

KEITH: Panther-birds?

JACK: He can't be a fish, can he?

AUSTIN: Yeah he could, he could totally be a fish.

JACK: Is there a kraken? Or like some sort of...

AUSTIN: Oh, not - not -

KEITH: Well, I can already be a... a, a... a Gila [pronounced hila] monster? Or Gila [pronounced gila] monster?

AUSTIN: A Gila [pronounced gila] monster.

KEITH: Which are, they can swim pretty fucking good.

JACK: Oh.

AUSTIN: Can they? I didn't know that. I believe you.

KEITH: (pauses) Um, I believe me too. I just now, now that you're guessing me - (laughter)

AUSTIN: (typing) Can Gila monsters swim, dot org.

KEITH: Swimming, yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: Keith is now watching a video of a Gila monster swimming.

KEITH: Yep! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Can they swim pretty good?

KEITH: Um, it's, the video's loading.

AUSTIN: Oh boy, this is good radio (laughs).

KEITH: Uh, (stutters) yeah, I'm, I'm, I'm gonna be one of the panthers.

AUSTIN: The panther-birds.

JACK: (laughs) This sounds like a deflection, Keith.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Panther... panther... panther-fish? Panther... that's not, that's the opposite.

KEITH: It isn't - it doesn't seem like it's *the best* at swimming. (laughter) It can definitely swim.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Okay.

KEITH: Like it's not, like it's not like, oh man! Look at that fucking thing go! But it's definitely swimming. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Okay, great.

JACK: It can swim like I can, in that regard (laughs).

AUSTIN: Yeah. Maybe there aren't panthers in this world! There are only these things, and these things are called panthers.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Well, here's the thing - here's, here's a fun thing about panthers, is that there's no such thing as a panther.

AUSTIN: Right, there's only, like, cougars, and mount- #00:40:00#

KEITH (overlapping Austin): There's only - panthers are just like different types of...

AUSTIN: Leopards?

KEITH: Black, yeah, leopards, and...

AUSTIN: Black leopards, right.

KEITH: Black leopards, and, and, uh... stuff like that, that people are like, ah, it's a black panther! And it's like yeah, but it's not a thing.

JACK: Ah, we're learning everything today! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: This is a learning podcast.

KEITH: Yeah, so we can just call these panthers, cause panthers aren't a thing here *or* there.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Right, it's a waste of a cool word.

JACK (overlapping Ali): Yeah, why don't we just call them panthers? That's kind of cool.

ALI: That's - yeah.

AUSTIN: I like that. These are panthers. That's, yes, agreed. (laughter)

JACK: (pauses) But the zebras are actually dogs. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) It's very strange! (pauses) Okay. Meanwhile... I think the breakfast here is, is... citrusy, like citrus and, and, like citrusy and fatty meats, with some toast. That's for - sorry, that's for, for... Lem, and Hella, that's what they kind of brought you. I'm guessing this is probably a kind of quiet meal (laughter). Is there much talking happening after last night?

ALI & JACK: Um...

JACK: I think... (sighs) I can't decide -

KEITH (overlapping Jack): Is there much talking between the two of them usually?

AUSTIN: Right, well this is an opportunity.

JACK: Well, I can't decide whether or not Lem is the sort of person who would be petty enough to sulk (Ali laughs), or... so afraid of silences that he just, like, (laughter) just chatter, pointlessly. And I am leaning towards him just chattering pointlessly?

AUSTIN: Uh huh? (laughter)

JACK: Over dinner, like -

JACK (as Lem): (nervously) Mm, wow, look at this, look at this meat, yeah, it's really - oh, look, there, our view outside the window, it's really cool, yeah, hm! (Ali laughs) I wonder how Fero's getting on? Yeah, wow! Ah, I really think we should warn them about that, those warships - oh, what? (laughter)

ALI (as Hella): Mm, no.



JACK (as Lem): No, okay, fine. (disappointedly) Mm, aw, kay, fine. (brighter) Hey, did you read that thing? (pauses) Um.

ALI (as Hella): What - mm, what thing?

JACK (as Lem): Like all those... b-books! (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) Ohh! Oh, this is the worst, this is the worst! (laughter)

ALI (as Hella): No... No, I've been getting rest, mostly. (Keith laughs)

JACK (as Lem): (awkwardly) Oh, okay.

ALI (as Hella): I didn't read any of those books.

JACK (as Lem): Alright.

AUSTIN: The beds are really nice in this room.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This room is definitely meant to be, like... you're being wooed, here. You know?

ALI: Yeah (laughs).

JACK: Yeah, it's working! (laughter)

KEITH: It's one third working. (laughter)

AUSTIN: After a few quiet hours of this... like there is, you're kind of being left here for a while, while, while... (laughing) you know, Fero is having his fun day out - also, the food that you have at the zoo is pretty nice. There's a nice little cafe at the center of the zoo.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm imagining the zoo -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): I'll indulge. I don't need to eat, but I'll indulge.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm imagining the zoo as actually - I should, I should pop it on this map somewhere, but like... right in this little sector. It's just like, one whole city block is kind of... walled off. There's some nice greenery there. It's, it's very nice. You can kind of see the palace over it. It's a city zoo, you know, we're not talking about a massive, sprawling thing, but... it's very nice.

KEITH: I... am I going to have a chance to talk to, what's this guy's name again?

AUSTIN: Ventaro. Yeah, he's with you the whole day.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like, he's hanging out.

KEITH: Can I like, can I - like, is he receptive to me poking him for like...

AUSTIN: Sure, you can ask him questions.

KEITH: any sort of intentions of these people?

AUSTIN: (uncertainly) Well, you... I mean, what, what are you saying, what are you doing?

KEITH: I...

AUSTIN: Are you, are you... um, well what are you doing, yeah? Yeah.

KEITH: I, I, I, well what is, what...

KEITH (as Fero): What does the Queen want with this empire? Like what is - why?

AUSTIN: (pauses) He... he sort of sighs, and says,

AUSTIN (as Ventaro): (sighs) Her Highness has spent a lot of time seeing her people live full lives, and... wondering, if this could go on for much longer, or if... what we have now, will soon stagnate. We've been here for a long time, and... you can only (pauses) you can only see some people decide to leave their lives behind so many times before feeling like it's a failure of your own. That if you offered them more, a larger world, more to - to do, that they wouldn't choose to leave this, this plane of existence. And at the same time, she sees that there are long lives, longer than what you know, filled with joy, and sadness, and - and humanity. And feels like it is somehow her responsibility to offer that to everyone. Why would it not be a just thing? To... #00:45:00#

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Austin): What's - so what, what, what's up with this whole 'can't leave' thing? Can't they just like, just like go, just like, you know, travel.

AUSTIN (as Ventaro): It's dangerous for people like us.

KEITH (as Fero): Well, it's dangerous for everybody.

AUSTIN (as Ventaro): Not like us.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay, how come? (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: He... clenches up a little bit.

AUSTIN (as Ventaro): Do you have anyone you care about deeply, little bird?

KEITH (as Fero): (hesitates) Sure.

AUSTIN: Do you? Real talk, does Fero have anyone he really cares about?

KEITH: (pauses) I'm sure on - I'm sure on some level, Fero has attachments to his family that he left.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: I don't, I don't think... I think when he says sure, he's assuming that he knows what...

AUSTIN: Right, yes.

KEITH: this guy's talking about, and maybe not grasping it fully.

AUSTIN: Right, sure.

AUSTIN (as Ventaro): Imagine if they left, and something terrible happened to them. They went off to trade at a distant market, and an accident befell them. An accident that would kill someone else. What do you think happens when it doesn't kill them? (pauses) What do you think happens to them when they live, bleeding from the neck, in some nowhere town's small hospital? What a curiosity they become, trapped there, surrounded by people who are afraid of them and scared of them. It is a miserable thing to be a thing like us, in a world that fears a thing like us.

KEITH (as Fero): (pauses) I mean, we got used to it pretty quick.

AUSTIN (as Ventaro): (sighs and laughs) I - that's true, and you're citizens of Nacre now, so this fear should be yours too.

KEITH (as Fero): Nah, I mean, but like what I'm saying was - like, we came in, and at first I was like AH! Ghost birds! And then I was fine. Like, it's, you know. Baby steps.

AUSTIN (as Ventaro): That's our hope. This is, this is our hope, this is why the Queen wants to expand - extend the empire. We think that as people... (carefully) as people come into the kingdom, they will understand that what we have is a gift, and not a curse. And they will enjoy it as well.

KEITH (as Fero): (long pause) (dismissively) Alright, I think I get your whole deal.

AUSTIN: He laughs.

AUSTIN (as Ventaro): (laughs) I've been here for centuries, and I'm not sure I get our whole "deal," (Keith laughs) but. I do appreciate the... the intention. Now, I have things to be do- to do. (sighs) Would you see yourself back to the spire? Could I count on you for that?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah, sure.

KEITH: I transform into my new bird, and fly back.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Great. So -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Into a panther.

JACK (overlapping Keith): Terrifying everybody in Nacre. (laughter)

KEITH: (laughs) Yeah! Nah, they're all like, fucking, they're like, ah man, the panther's out!

AUSTIN: Right (laughs). Yeah.

JACK: (gasps) There's three of them! They must have had a baby!

AUSTIN: (laughing) They'll say oh, they must have had a baby! Weird.

ALI: Aww.

AUSTIN: Alright, so, you return. I think it's just been this awkward situation back at the... at the spire.

JACK (as Lem): (awkwardly) Hey Hella! Uhh, (stammers) how'd you get that... dent in your armor? Hm? (laughter)

ALI (as Hella): Oh, this one? *This* is a great story. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Oh, this actually sounds really sweet! This sounds like a nice experience, actually! (Ali laughs)

KEITH: Yeah, but he, Lem accident- Lem accidentally hit on the one thing that like - (laughter) like, like awkwardly just like throwing suggestions for conversations around, and found the one thing, like. Like oh yeah, dent in your armor! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: That's the *one* -

JACK: The one beforehand was, what's your favorite opera? And - (laughter)

AUSTIN: That one didn't do so well!

JACK: (laughs) No. (pauses) So yeah, I guess we've just been... just sitting in silence, really. Largely.

KEITH: *Did you read that thing?* (laughs) Really good.

ALI: It's been a - it's been a rough day, for Hella, to be fair (laughs).

AUSTIN: I will say that it's interesting to see a panther fly in your window. Because like, the last time you saw one of those things, it was trying to kill you.

JACK: (laughs) Oh, yeah. Yeah. I guess we just sort of freak - well, I guess I freak out, I don't know what Hella does.

KEITH: I'm going - okay, so. My, my move, as I land in the windowsill, is to like, like... as soon as my claws touch the thing, to start transforming back into a... into a halfling.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Like, sort of one fluid motion from the perch down onto the ground.

AUSTIN: Sure, sure.

JACK: Okay, that's chill, yeah. That's...

ALI: Yeah, that's cool.

KEITH: And it was really cool. (Austin laughs) And then I'm like,

KEITH (as Fero): Okay, guys, I've got some stuff to talk about. (pauses, laughter)

KEITH: (laughing) So did you read that thing???

AUSTIN: (laughing) Ohhh.

KEITH: And then (laughs) - no.

KEITH (as Fero): So I talked to um, to, to...

KEITH: What's that guy's name, that keeps coming around?

AUSTIN: Ventaro.

KEITH: Ventaro?

AUSTIN: Yeah. #00:50:00#

KEITH (as Fero): I talked to that guy. So here's - (laughs) I understand their motives now. You know how we were talking about that thing, where I was gonna, you know, try and figure out what's what?

JACK (as Lem): Mmhm.

KEITH (as Fero): So, the reason that they want to take over the world, is because... (laughter) The reason that they want to take over the world is because they want to force everybody else to be weird ghosts like them, so that they know that it's a gift, not a curse.

ALI (as Hella): That's horrible. (laughs)

KEITH (as Fero): Uh, and... they don't - I don't know why they can't just like, have a committee... like a, and kind of go out and be like, this is what we are and we're cool! They, they want to instead capture everybody. But, that's what they want to do, and that sounds kind of shitty.

ALI (as Hella): (pauses) Yeah, that's horrible. I'm not with that.

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): Yeah, they want to turn everybody - Jack, they want to turn everybody into ghosts.

JACK (as Lem): Yeah, that's... that does sound a bit weird. (Austin laughs)

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah.

JACK (as Lem): (pauses) But -

KEITH (as Fero): They want to turn everybody into ghosts so that they don't get bullied if they travel. (laughter)

ALI (as Hella): (pauses) What???

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah. That's what they said. (laughter)

JACK (as Lem): (pauses) Let me be clear. I still don't know if that's a good reason to have, like... how many warships did you see?

KEITH (as Fero): Well, but, but, but Lem, the, I saw -

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): A couple - a couple dozen.

KEITH (as Fero): I saw as, at least as many as were in the ar- this harbor.

JACK (as Lem): Right. I don't know if that's a good enough reason for the like...

KEITH (as Fero): Well, it's either those warships here, or these warships everywhere else. It's the... like, it's the war either way. It's either a war like in two days, or a war in a week.

JACK (as Lem): (uncomfortably) Uhh... What's your favorite opera? (laughter)

AUSTIN: Great.

KEITH (as Fero): I saw this - I - Lem. I saw this *amazing* opera, where a flying masked man went and was burgling all of the houses, in a city? (Austin laughs) And was stopped by a bunch of ghosts.

JACK (as Lem): Right?

KEITH (as Fero): No joke.

JACK (as Lem): (confused) Okay. Cool, I haven't seen that one.

KEITH (as Fero): (seriously) It was really good. What's your favorite opera?

JACK (as Lem): (uncomfortably) Oh... (laughter)

ALI (as Hella): (under her breath) Oh my gosh.

JACK (as Lem): Uh, De Welbellin.

KEITH (as Jack): De Welbellin?

JACK (as Lem): Yeah, you know, the -

KEITH (as Jack): I don't know what that is.

JACK (as Lem): (quietly) It's from Velas, it's really great. It's really - (intensely) okay, I'm gonna ring the bell now! (laughter)

ALI (as Hella): (angrily) No!

AUSTIN: Before you can ring the bell, the door opens. And a man who is stately, and imposing, walks in. He's a very broad-shouldered guy, and he's wearing sort of a dress uniform, like kind of like a... it's very clear that like, it's not -

KEITH (overlapping Austin) Long and flowing?

AUSTIN: No. Though it does have a skirt. It is like a skirted set of armor, you know? Light armor, but still like... still like meant to, you know, almost like, um... what a, you know, a general or something would wear on the field of battle, but like, not like on the front lines, you know?

ALI & JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Like back at base camp. So I'm picturing like, long, flowing, black and gold skirt from the waist down, and then like, kind of hefty armor up top. I'm imagining this guy - in my mind, he has kind of a, like, 1950s, like, American... army movie look to him? Like crew cut, white hair, grizzled - grizzled face, grizzled facial features, a little wrinkly... a couple of key scars... he'd have an eyepatch if I was a worse GM. (laughter) That's the sort of guy this is. (laughs)

KEITH (as Fero): Hey, you're gruff.

ALI: That's - (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) He gives you a *fucking* look. (laughter)

AUSTIN (as Warden): If I had my way, none of you would be here right now. But I am a loyal servant to our Queen, and she has need of you, as she has told you. Come this way.

AUSTIN: He turns and leaves, and like, there are a couple of other guards with him who move in to kind of... shepherd you out of the room. And he marches you up, and up, and up, and up the spire. There's kind of a central staircase that spirals up the middle of the tower, and it's a *long* walk. (laughs) And no, just in case you ask, uh, Fero, you are *not* allowed to turn into a bird. (laughter) They do not like that. And also, the environment here is just so, like, heavy. This whole place has an otherworldly weight to it.

KEITH: How about like, a very friendly dog?

AUSTIN: (exasperated) No. I mean, you are, you can *do* that.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): I'm not gonna - I'm not gonna transform.

AUSTIN: They will not respond... they will... not respond well. (laughs)

KEITH: Okay. #00:55:00#

AUSTIN: Eventually they lead you to a cell at the very top of the spire.

JACK: Oh, no.

AUSTIN: It has a view out onto the city, and it's about as high as the top of the palace here. You're about at the same height, even though the palace is, of course, raised up, onto a, a... a kind of higher pedestal, kind of, higher terrace, looking out over the city. And inside, on a little cot, is Calhoun.

ALI: (sadly) Aw.

AUSTIN: He is... he is quietly singing a sea shanty to himself, laying on his back, with his head - with his hands behind his head. The man who lead you here, Veneer, he's the Warden of the Sable Spire, says...

AUSTIN (as Veneer): You have an hour. My men will be right outside. I have work to attend to. If you try anything, you know it will go poorly.

KEITH (as Fero): (quietly) This guy's grumpy.

AUSTIN (as Veneer): (hisses angrily)

AUSTIN: And then walks away. Like, holding himself back. They open the... they open the gate to the cell, which has a, a kind of... I'm imagining it as, it's one of these windows where it's like, it's so high up that eh, it doesn't matter that it's open enough for him to leave.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Like, he could crawl out this window to his death if he wants, but... good luck, it's Nacre. Like, he's not dying.



JACK: (laughs) Right.

AUSTIN: He's just gonna hurt himself real bad, and then be -

JACK: Wait, so yeah, like, to be clear, he'd probably just like, break his legs? And that would be it?

AUSTIN: No, he'd probably like... he might, he might break his whole - he might die and become a zombie.

JACK: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: You know. So. (pauses) You go in, what do you do?

KEITH (as Fero): (cheerily) Sup Calhoun?

ALI (as Hella): (sweetly) Hey!

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (sighs) Oh. You?

KEITH (as Fero): How you holding up?

ALI (as Hella): Hey buddy!

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): They captured you too, huh?

KEITH (as Fero): Well, it's weird.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah...

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (grunts)

ALI (as Hella): You alright?

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): I'm fine.

ALI (as Hella): How you doing? (awkward pause)

KEITH (as Fero): (uncomfortably) Uh, we all felt that... maybe, uh (clears throat) we,

KEITH: And I look at Hella. (Ali laughs)

KEITH (as Fero): shouldn't have let you get captured, so we came to rescue you?

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, sorry about that.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): That worked out really well, (Ali laughs) it looks like.

KEITH (as Fero): It worked out - I mean, it's not as bad as it looks. There's like - listen,

KEITH: And like, I lean in, and like,

KEITH (as Fero): (conspiratorially) we've got some shit in motion.

KEITH: And then I - (laughter)

JACK (as Lem): Have we? (laughs)

KEITH (as Fero): (uncertainly) Yeah. (pauses) Um, so here's the deal. They want - okay. (laughs) We're gonna tell you what they told us to tell you, and then you gotta tell us a bunch of more - you gotta tell us what the fuck is going - is up with your whole thing.

JACK (as Lem, overlapping Keith): Yeah, hang on - wait a second, can we do a huddle please? Can we just do a quick huddle?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah. Okay. Hold on, sorry, Calhoun, one second, huddle. (laughter) Okay. (to Lem) What's up buddy?

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (humming vaguely throughout huddle)

JACK (as Lem): What if we're just like, entirely open with him?

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, we should be open with him.

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Ali): Oh yeah, I was gonna be open with him. Yeah.

JACK (as Lem): Yeah? Okay.

ALI (as Hella): I want to find out what he wants.

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah.

JACK (as Lem): Cool, yep, great, okay. Okay!

KEITH (as Fero): That's my whole thing, is being maybe *too* open.

JACK (as Lem): (louder) Sorry about that. Okay.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): Mmhm? Okay.

AUSTIN: He stops humming.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (sighs)

KEITH (as Fero): (pauses) Uh.

JACK (as Lem): Fero? Do you want to do the honors?

KEITH (as Fero): Oh - (nervously) yeah, so, they want us to, they want us to convince you to stay on as like, some sort of, uh, king-figurehead. (pauses) Or whatever. Um. And... that's weird, because we didn't know that you were a... king, and also that you murdered your dad and, and...

ALI (as Hella): Ah -

KEITH (as Fero): So basically they're like, they're -

ALI (as Hella): Fero.

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah?

ALI (as Hella): (laughs) Just...

KEITH (as Fero): Oh. Okay.

ALI (as Hella): Maybe cool it on that?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah. I mean - okay. It's probably been a while, but, alright. Calhoun... (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (irritated) Can you - ah. Not- you have nothing to say to me here. You're better off going back to your cells, and... figuring out how to live your lives here.

KEITH (as Fero): No, we just want, like, to figure - we just want you to tell us the stuff that is going on, because it was a, a little bit of... confusing, that you weren't -

AUSTIN (as Calhoun, overlapping Keith): It sounds like you have the full picture to me.

KEITH (as Fero): (pauses) Oh, okay, so that's it?

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): I murdered my father, I wanted to leave.

KEITH (as Fero): You murdered your father, he was a despot or whatever, and you were like, ahh, I don't want to be - okay, so here's an important part. You left Nacre, right?

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): I did.

KEITH (as Fero): They keep telling us that we can't leave Nacre. (laughs) Can you clear that up? (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): Ah (sighs). Citizenship of Nacre is the... is the sort of thing that... (pauses, sighs) I'll never *really* die. I mean, not by any, anyone except my own choice. (pauses) That's true for all citizens of Nacre.

KEITH (as Fero): (pauses) Except if they execute you? Do they have like a special thing?

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): No, their - their execution is convincing me that I shouldn't be alive anymore. And they have ways of convincing people of that.

KEITH (as Fero): Ugh, that sounds creepy.

JACK (as Lem): Oh, because of course you can just give up.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): Right.

JACK (as Lem): And be a ghost.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): Or - or, hm.

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Austin): Okay, right, so, and then give up ghosthood.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): Right.

KEITH (as Fero): And be a... be a nothing. #01:00:00#

JACK (as Lem): So it's more like a kind of reverse cult deprogramming?

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (angrily) No. They torture me until I don't want to be here anymore.

ALI (as Hella): (under her breath) The ignorance, please.

KEITH (as Fero): Yep.

JACK (as Lem): What - (flustered) hang on.

JACK: Wait a second. (Ali laughs) Out of character huddle here. Hella, I'd just like to remind you what (laughter) *your* contract is here.

ALI: (laughing) I know, but - we don't have to talk to this guy directly about all of the horrible things!

JACK: Oh no, you're right, *you* just have -

ALI: Like, yeah, just the whole - (laughs)

JACK: *You* just have to torture him to death, yes.

ALI: Like, so, so Hella like - understands that he meant torture, and you guys were like, wait a minute, what's the details in there?

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Oh no, I understood also. (Ali laughs)

KEITH (as Fero): Um, what, uh, are you pr- or what - what are you gonna, what are your, like what are your thoughts on that whole thing? Cause you could also just be that figurehead thing.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (darkly) I haven't decided yet.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): I have time.

JACK (as Lem): Well, you - you've got about an hour.

KEITH (as Fero): I - I think it would be great, and like, I'm not a hundred percent worked out on the details? But the three of us - well, we, the three... *mostly* the three of us want to escape -

JACK (as Lem): Hang on, we need to do another huddle. (Ali laughs)

KEITH (as Fero): Okay.

JACK (as Lem): Sorry.

KEITH (as Fero): Sorry!

AUSTIN: (laughing) Oh my god.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (humming throughout huddle)

JACK (as Lem): Fero.

ALI (as Hella): No, can you guys huddle, and I'll talk to Calhoun, maybe? (laughs)

JACK (as Lem): Fero, listen. You have to make a decision.

AUSTIN: Let's do their huddle, and then we'll do the Hella talking. Okay.

KEITH: Okay.

JACK (as Lem): You have to make a decision. If, if, *if* this plan with Calhoun goes through in the way that you're currently setting it up to, you're just opening Nacre up to... this thing that you don't want it to be, right? It seems like central to the Empress's plan is Calhoun doing what... what she wants him to do, which is what she's asked you to get him to do, right?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah.

JACK (as Lem): So you're throwing yourself really wholeheartedly into like, yeah, you should be the king, man!

ALI (as Hella): Well -

KEITH (as Fero): No no, I just wanted to see where he was at with the whole, should I live or should I die thing. (Ali laughs) What I really want is for neither of those to happen, uh, or - I don't want him to be king or dead, I want him to be escaped, and be... we can all be Boat Party again. (Austin laughs)

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, I mean we, we came here to save him, right?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah, to like get him out of this place.

JACK (as Lem, overlapping Keith): Not really, did we?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah!

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah, that's why we're here.

ALI (as Hella, overlapping Keith): Yeah, it's like - it's like, we'll have an opening.

KEITH (as Fero): (laughs) Hold on - Lem, why did you think that we were here? (Ali laughs)

JACK (as Lem): I... kind of forgot. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Hella, you wanted to talk to Calhoun.

ALI: Um, yeah, I'll, I'll pull away from the huddle.

AUSTIN: Please.

ALI: And sort of like, sit down on the edge of this bed, and like...

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): He like, swings his legs up and, and... (sighs)

ALI (overlapping Austin): try to talk squarely with him, and like, like...

ALI (as Hella): So. Like, really. Where are you at with this?

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (pauses, sighs) I can't believe. I *can't* believe you let them take me.

ALI (as Hella): I - if I had known any of this, I would've...

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (sarcastically) What was I supposed to say?

ALI (as Hella, overlapping Austin): If I knew you would've -

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (sarcastically) I was the exiled former king of a land of ghostmen?

ALI (as Hella): (sighs) Listen, I - it was a tough decision! But I've gotten you out of worse.

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): (angrily) I can't believe you gave them over to me.

ALI (as Hella): (sighs) I know, but... I, mm. I came here to help you. And that, that's...

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): And now you're in the prison with me. Good job.

ALI (as Hella): That was the wrong thing - I - (sighs). I knew Brandish would be here, I knew you would be here, and I thought - we just -

AUSTIN (as Calhoun, overlapping Ali): Did you come here to save me or did you come here to kill Brandish?

ALI (as Hella): (pauses, sighs) Calhoun...

AUSTIN (as Calhoun): My name is Angelo.

ALI (as Hella): That's not -

AUSTIN (as Angelo): That's my name.

ALI (as Hella): That's not - that's not your name to me. (sighs) I wanted to help you. I - I don't want to leave here without you. If there's a way that we can still help you, I would like to. But it's -

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (irritated) I'll give it some thought. But I need some time.

ALI (as Hella): (quietly) Okay.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): My sister knows, and will not... (hesitates) my sister will give me the time I need, I'm sure of it.

ALI (as Hella): Okay. Um... um, okay, um, I mean, so, like, hm. If you stay here... (pauses) what - would you just work for her, or...?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): I don't know, I think she wants me, you know. Talking to the people, and she'll put my face on a coin or something, I don't know.

ALI (as Hella): (sympathetically) That sounds awful.

AUSTIN: (laughter) Talking to people and having your face on a coin! Hella's worst nightmare! (laughter) (pauses) He kind of like looks, he like stands up now, and looks out the - the window, to the spire. Or not to the spire, to the palace.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): It wouldn't be such a bad life, and... maybe I could rein her aspirations in.

ALI (as Hella): I just... I don't know, I, I hope that that's an option, if you would like it.  
#01:05:00#

AUSTIN (as Angelo): What if she's not wrong? You know? I... Calhoun was the name of a good drunk I knew, when I first moved to Velas. And I watched him grow old, and I watched his family die, and then I watched him die. What if he didn't need to? What's that world look like?

ALI (as Hella): (incredulously) Everyone has to die. This is unnatural! This place is - is horrible!

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (laughs angrily) The place you're from didn't used to exist! Let's not have debates about what's natural.

ALI (as Hella): (laughs) Calhoun, there's reasons for that. That's - nowhere used to exist.

KEITH (as Fero, calling from a distance): That's a good point though! (laughter)

KEITH: (laughing) It's a small room!

AUSTIN: It is a small room! (laughter) You could move closer probably, even. And we can at this point - let's say that the, the... huddle is over (Ali laughs), and we are all one big happy conversation again. (laughter)

JACK (as Lem): Calhoun, how do you feel about -

AUSTIN (as Angelo, overlapping Jack): My name is Angelo.

JACK (as Lem, overlapping Austin): I'm sorry, Angelo, Angelo, Angelo, Angelo, Angelo.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): Just once. (Keith laughs) It's not Angelo Angelo Angelo. It's Angelo Tristé.

JACK (as Lem): Okay.

JACK: Lem *really* wants to ask about the coin that he'd have his face on, but he's not gonna (laughter). Like, I'm gonna make that - (laughs)

JACK (as Lem): Um, how do you feel about Ordenna?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): I've only been... a few times, you know, as my duties as a captain. It's a... (pauses, sighs) I... think they'll have a major role to play in the next century.

KEITH (as Fero): Uh, here's a more specific question, Angelo Angelo (laughter). How do you feel about their warships, and about a bunch of them at once?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): What - what do you mean?



KEITH (as Fero): Hm?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (irritated) What do you mean?

KEITH (as Fero): Listen.

JACK (as Lem): Uh, um, Fero -

ALI (as Hella): (laughs uncomfortably)

AUSTIN (as Angelo): What do you *mean*?

JACK (as Lem): Um, hang on -

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Lem): I just mean like there's maybe like a bunch of them around here!

JACK (as Lem): F- Fero -

ALI (as Hella): (laughs nervously)

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (intensely) You have to go. You have to turn them around right now.

KEITH (as Fero): For - how come? What's up?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): They *can't* be here.

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Austin): This is what I'm trying to say -

ALI (as Hella): (confused) But, if they come here we can get out of here! We can get you out of here!

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (laughs) You don't understand. They're -

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Austin): What is - okay.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (pauses) They c- hm.

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Austin): Is this like that whole, 'you'll never leave' thing?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (talking over Fero) So long as my sister and I live... yes.

AUSTIN: He looks at you and says,

AUSTIN (as Angelo): So long as my sister and I both live, or one of us lives, so long as the line of Tristero is unbroken, anyone who spends the night in Nacre becomes a citizen of our realm.

ALI (as Hella): (pauses) But - hm. Questions.

KEITH (as Fero): They do have that - they do have that no magic stuff, though.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): I'm not sure that it matters.

JACK (as Lem): (pauses) Wait, so just so - just so we're clear here, the reason that you want these ships to turn around is so that they don't suffer the way that you all do? (pauses) It's for their sake, not yours?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (laughs, annoyed) What - (sighs) do you know, as Archivist. What do you know about the old Empire of Nacre?

JACK (as Lem): (takes a breath) Uh, well, we thought it was largely - we thought it was made up.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): So nothing.

JACK (as Lem): (pauses, laughter) Yeah... like, we have songs, and that's it. Um.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): It... it used to be said, that Nacre was a place so beautiful that you carried it with you when you left. That's how the Empire of Nacre spread, not through war, not through conquest, not through faith. When someone came here, (pauses) I don't know, they carried it with them out. No one really leaves the Kingdom of Nacre, because wherever they go *is* the Kingdom of Nacre. Whatever soil they touch, whatever bed they sleep in, whoever else travels there in the future is in Nacre, and the same is said for them.

JACK: Do I have my maps with me? My Nacre maps?

AUSTIN: Sure, sure.

JACK: I want to show him the plan.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: The, the... Nacre in the future, and I want to say like,

JACK (as Lem): Is this what this is about?

AUSTIN: He laughs.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): Yeah.

JACK (as Lem): So the Empress *wants* the Ordennan ships to land?

AUSTIN: He, like, laughs, and,

AUSTIN (as Angelo): I can't believe her. She... ah. Her ambition is greater than our father's.  
#01:10:00#

KEITH (as Fero): (abruptly) Ohh, she said that her ambition was /ess than her father's! She's the worst! (laughter)

AUSTIN: Well (laughs), there's like different versions of ambition, right?

JACK (as Lem): Wait, so she's, she's essentially precipitat- (laughs incredulously) she's precipitating an invasion, that purely by the fact that she's being invaded is always going to result in her victory.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (pauses) Ah, I -

JACK (as Lem): Cause they'll land. And then presumably they'll leave. And then Nacre will just, like -

AUSTIN (as Angelo): They -

JACK (as Lem): Velas will just be Nacre, if an Ordennan ship lands in Nacre.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): Or if it -

KEITH (as Fero, overlapping Austin): Well, only the people that were on the ship.

JACK (as Lem, overlapping both): That's -

AUSTIN (as Angelo): Or if it goes to the Archives, or if it goes to the University, or if it goes south, who knows. We're in -

JACK (as Lem): (emphatically) Where is my tiny bell?

ALI (as Hella): (laughs) Why?

JACK (as Lem): Where's my tiny bell?

ALI (as Hella): Wait, Fero, can you do that bird thing? And like maybe go over there?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah yeah yeah.

KEITH: Poof.

AUSTIN: Wait, what? (laughs) What - (laughter) I don't understand what just happened.

KEITH: (caws like a bird)

ALI (as Hella): Um, no, I mean like to the Ordennan ships, and tell them not to come here.

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah, I understood.

ALI (as Hella): Okay.

JACK (as Lem, overlapping Ali): No, but like the Ordennan ships are gonna - like -

AUSTIN: (laughs) What are you - yeah.

JACK (as Lem): No, that'll be like landing on a warship prepped for war and being like, (reassuringly) no guys, don't invade this! Like, you're gonna lose even if you win! Don't do it! (laughs)

ALI: Can I - can I give him like a badge or something? (laughs) Like a handwritten letter? That says like, maybe don't. Not a letter, but.

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): Do you have anything? Hella, do you have anything that proves who you are?

ALI: I - I must.

AUSTIN: You must have something, right? Let's see. I mean, you don't have your sword anymore.

ALI: Right. But like, that wouldn't be like, an identifying thing.

AUSTIN: No...

ALI: But like, I feel like I've done enough work for like...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

ALI: The mayor, or whoever. That like.

KEITH: (laughing) The mayor?

ALI: (laughs) That I probably have like a badge, or like something similar to... like a ring.

KEITH: Did you bring your key to the city? (laughter)

ALI: Just like something that I can go to a place and be like, yeah, I'm working here on behalf of whoever.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ALI: So if I need like a meal, or a bed, you should probably just give it to me.

KEITH: Just so I understand, just so that I understand how this works.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Ordennan ships land in the harbor.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: They come. If they win, right, they fly - they... fly, *sail* back off to Ordenna.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): They go wherever, they go where they're gonna go from here.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): And then - they go wherever, and then those ships -

JACK (overlapping Keith): I mean their place is landlocked, so.

ALI: Yeah, but it wouldn't like, spread... cause it's just the people, right?

KEITH (overlapping Ali): But like, then anybody that sleeps on those ships?

JACK: Yep.

AUSTIN: Yeah, presumably.

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: Because those ships are now, also...

AUSTIN: There's an element here that you're not -

JACK (overlapping Austin): I don't know, but this is some Kurt Vonnegut shit.

AUSTIN: There's an element here that you're not thinking about quite yet.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which is that you keep thinking that they're gonna return to their ships.

KEITH: (pauses) I'm ju- I was just saying *if* they return to their ships.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Wait.

AUSTIN: What if they don't?

JACK: Then they'll be - they'll be cursed with the un- with the -

AUSTIN: What if they don't - what if they keep moving from here, but not through their ships?  
(pauses) What if this is -

JACK (overlapping Austin): Then... these boats will just open up into Hieron?

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Yeah. Mmhm. Wait. (laughs)

JACK: But like, that's kind of inevitable, right? That's how an ordinary invasion would work.

AUSTIN: It is. But I'm just saying, it, it - it might not be the case that they're going to land here and then boat away. It might be the case that they're going to - that this is their staging point for something bigger.

JACK: Oh, god. Hang on a second. What if the Ordennans know this?

AUSTIN: That's a good question.

JACK: What if this is an - what if this is an Ordenna- what if this is a ver- what if this is Omaha Beach (Ali laughs) for the Ordennan invasion of - they're on a fucking island! What if this is their mainland invasion, and they've picked the specific place where they can absolutely guarantee that they'll be able to spread a particular weird sort of magic - magic warfare?

ALI: Well I mean - their whole thing is *not* magic warfare, though.

JACK: Well, but they'd probably say that this wasn't magic. They'd probably just be like yeah, no, well, this is just... (pauses) I think that landing on -

KEITH (overlapping Jack): (jokingly) I think it's the *opposite* of magic.

ALI: No.

JACK: I think that landing on the ships and saying, you need to turn around because, because - (laughs) this, cause this'll be a bad idea for you, their reaction will just be like, that, okay, fine, yep, we don't -

ALI: No, but that's like the whole point! They would be like, afraid of that. That's why Hella's afraid of that.

JACK: Unless...

ALI: I mean, cause the Queen, I guess, spent some time there, so maybe if she like... spoke to some guy, and was like yeah, this would work out for you? But like, that's supposedly against the whole Ordennan philosophy.

AUSTIN: That is true.

ALI: So. I mean, that - that isn't a thing that they would do.

JACK (overlapping Ali): Okay, so what if the Queen *doesn't* want them to land. What if the Queen doesn't know this invasion is happening? What if the whole, like... what if the instigators of this, what if the people who know what's going on here somehow are the... wait a second... um. (pauses) I'm trying to think. Who had the symbol that was similar to the... Gregalos's ring?

AUSTIN: Uh, the...

KEITH: Oh, Hamtaro. (laughter) #01:15:00#

AUSTIN: Yeah, Hamtaro had it. (laughter) Ventaro, the Regent, and, and... the former Regent, and the uh, the librarian.

JACK: Oh god Fero, you should have asked him about the warships! Okay, right. We need to work out -

KEITH: I feel like he would have told on - ohhhhh. (laughter)

JACK (as Lem): We need to - we need to work out what we're gonna do here, because these warships are moving. Um. (pauses) Okay.

AUSTIN: Angelo is kind of distraught.

JACK: Lem goes up to him, and he just goes like,

JACK (as Lem): Are you distraught because of *us*, (Ali laughs) or because of the warships?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): Yes.

ALI (as Hella): (sighs)

KEITH (as Fero): (laughs) Angelo Angelo, uh, but if you - if you think that maybe, cause a minute ago you were like ah, my sister maybe has the right idea. If you're so afraid of these ships even *coming* here, I don't think that maybe (laughs) I don't think that you think that she has such a good idea! Anymore.

AUSTIN (as Angelo, overlapping Keith): She is a - hm. (sighs)

AUSTIN: He like, almost growls.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (sighs, pauses) I don't know what she thinks. I have - ahh. What - (sighs) what if it doesn't matter to her if she's the one who brings this to the world? (pauses) What if she, so foolishly, believes in this ideal that... even if it's not her just hand carrying it forward, she would see a world in which no one dies? What if, even if that meant the power of Ordenna offered that to the world? (pauses) I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong. (pauses) Maybe I'm wrong.

JACK: So like, the Ordennans have been like, the warmongers from the start, right? Or at least...

AUSTIN: Um, this is Austin talking, like, yes and no? Like, they're a warlike people, they, they... do war good, but like they've never been like,

ALI (overlapping Austin): Right.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): In a war?

AUSTIN: There've been some skirmishes. There were some skirmishes with Velas that we've talked about. But like, there's, they're at, like...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: peace, right now.

ALI: Yeah, I mean -

JACK: Right. What was the... can we ask what the Ordennan warship was doing... the Ordennans were... trying to break out an ambassador, weren't they?

KEITH (overlapping Jack): They're - they're warlike by way of the fact that they can use their steel.

AUSTIN: (to Jack) Right, but that hasn't happened yet, remember?

JACK: No, I'm - right (laughs).

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: I'm not allowed to metagame like that, am I?

AUSTIN: Mm-mm.

JACK: I'm not allowed to try and work out why they'd be trying to -

AUSTIN: Mm! You the player, like you the reader of this text certainly are, but like, that shouldn't influence your decision.

JACK: Like Lem doesn't - okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or, except, it should in this kind of neat, thematic way, in like the thematic irony sense, but not in the...

JACK: Right, so -

ALI: Right.



AUSTIN: my character is motivated by this, sense. This is one of the reasons why I don't mind - this is why I don't do pull-asides anymore, in games like this. (Ali laughs) It's because like...

JACK: Yep.

AUSTIN: Hey, it's really c- you can do really cool shit when you know spoilers, and when you know what's going on behind closed doors.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: Like, you can lean into it in interesting ways, because, like, whatever, it doesn't matter. Like, if... you just do, do the cool thing, you know? That's, that's my goal.

JACK (overlapping Austin): So I think that - I think that Lem is... is... is now pretty, um... agitated about the prospect of an Ordennan invasion attempt as just being, just, really bad.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: Because whereas before he was afraid that the Ordennan invasion attempt was going to squash all this cool history in Nacre,

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: now he's scared that it's going to, like, just... squash Hieron. And I think that that really bothers him. But like, we're just trapped in this tower room. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Speaking of that, the guard opens the gate.

AUSTIN (as Guard): Hour's up.

KEITH (as Fero): (casually) Can we get another hour later on?

AUSTIN (as Guard): I don't make the decisions, bud.

KEITH (as Fero): Who can I talk to about that?

AUSTIN (as Guard): (exasperated noise)

ALI (as Hella): Can I - can I just have a minute with Calhoun?

AUSTIN (as Guard): (sighs)

ALI (as Hella): Just five minutes. An hour is a lot. Don't listen to the bird.

JACK (overlapping Ali): Don't kill him! Don't kill him!

AUSTIN: Give me a... give me a... I think that needs to be a Parley check. I don't know how your... I don't know what your leverage is on this guy (Ali laughs). But you need to - on the, on the guard.

KEITH: Human kindness?

AUSTIN: (laughs) I don't think you can leverage human kindness.

KEITH: Not on this guy you can't! (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughs, sounds joke offended) You don't - no? This guys name is... William... Talford. That's the guard's name. I just decided. When you have leverage on a GM character and manipulate them, roll plus charisma, or +KA - +CHA. Leverage is something they need or want. On a hit, they ask you for something, um... sorry. On a hit, they ask you for something... and do it, if you make them a promise first. On a 7-9, they need some concrete assurance of your promise right now. So what are you promising this guy? To - to give you these few minutes?  
#01:20:00#

ALI: Um... I can lie, so, um...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can - you can totally lie, also.

ALI: (laughs) Okay.

ALI (as Hella): (quietly) So, like, we came here for that mission for the Queen, and I think we're getting really close to cracking him. Can I just talk to him, just for a second?

AUSTIN (as William): (sighs)

AUSTIN: Give me the roll. (Ali laughs) You're kind of vaguely offering, like, social capital here, right?

ALI: (laughs) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, you're kind of saying like, I'll put in a good word with you for the - with the Queen. Ah, it was a good roll.

KEITH: Nice!

ALI: Is it? Oh god, I can't even see it.

JACK (overlapping Ali): Oh wow, yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): That's a 10, you rolled a 10.

ALI: Fuck, thank you.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah. A 10 says -

KEITH: Unless your charisma is -1.

ALI: (pauses) Uh, my charisma's +1.

AUSTIN: No, yeah, she's good.

KEITH: Okay.

ALI: No, my charisma is 1, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah, she's fine. (pauses) It uh, Parley again says... on a 10 - on a hit they ask you for something and do it if you make them a promise. Okay, so he says,

AUSTIN (as William): Well listen. (quietly but intensely) I'm *sick* of this fucking posting. A monkey could do this job. Just - try to convince the Queen or the Queen's boy to get me into a better place.

ALI (as Hella): No, I feel you buddy, I was there too.

AUSTIN (as William): Yeah. (Keith laughs)

ALI (as Hella): It's like, no, I get it.

AUSTIN (as William): Cool.

ALI (as Hella): You want to be out there, I get it.

AUSTIN (as William): I want to be in the world, you know?

ALI (as Hella): I get it. Yeah! Yeah, the world's great, you gotta get out of here.

AUSTIN (as William): Like maybe near the factories, or maybe the garden district. Yeah!

ALI (as Hella): Ohh.

KEITH (as Fero): Ooh, the garden district's really nice, I was there when I was at the zoo.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah! Yeah! Come to the garden zoo. Come visit me, and when you get there, we'll talk.

AUSTIN (as William): Cool, cool, alright. (harshly) The other - you two, get out of here! (Ali laughs)

KEITH (as Fero): (disappointed) Aww, aww.

AUSTIN: And he like, ushers you down. (pauses) Hella, what are you doing?

ALI (as Hella): Ah... Calhoun...

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (sighs)

ALI (as Hella): This is gonna be a weird question, and I know we don't usually talk about stuff like this, but... (sighs) can you, uh, this thing with you dad, can you... what kind of relationship did you guys have?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (laughs sadly, sounding distraught) I - I was a little boy, and my father was the King of the Undead. What - you know.

ALI (as Hella): I - but -

AUSTIN (as Angelo): It was... it was tenuous.

ALI (as Hella): Hm.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): He - (hesitates) he was a very noble man. And sometimes nobility convinces you that you know better for the world than what... than what the world knows for itself. And I was young, and thought that that could *never* be true. (pauses) That's the sort of relationship I had with my father.

ALI (as Hella): (sighs) Yeah, um, he doesn't sound like a great guy. Um...

[MUSIC: EVE'S LIGHT PARADE]

ALI (as Hella): You asked me before if I came here to help you, and I - (shakily) I really did. I, I get angry, and I get distracted, and I - that's what happened when I let them take you. Um. (pauses, choking back tears) I can't - um - so! Uh. I, I don't have my sword, so I, I, I guess I... you could... I've met your dad!

AUSTIN (as Angelo): Excuse me?

ALI (as Hella): (through tears) I met your dad. Um.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): My father is dead. I killed him.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, no, but he - he - (laughs through tears) you're from Nacre, you don't know how this works?

AUSTIN (as Angelo): I - I don't know what you're talking about, but I think you should leave.

ALI (as Hella): I just -

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (loudly) Guards!

ALI: (as Hella): (desperately) No - no, he want - he wants me to kill you. (Angelo laughs incredulously) And I - I don't *want* to, um, but if she's going to, then why don't I? If you're gonna be tortured -

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (disbelieving laughter, near tears)

AUSTIN: He stands up, and he's like (laughter) - he's like looking over his shoulders.

AUSTIN (as Angelo): (incredulously) You threw me to the dogs, and now you're gonna kill me. This is what's gonna happen right now. Alright, fine. (with a sense of angry resignation) Let's go. Why *not* here?

AUSTIN: He starts crying.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

[END OF EPISODE #01:24:26#]