

Spring in Hieron 43: The Second Spring Pt. 5

Transcriber: Cole

[**Jack** de Quidt's "[Under the Boughs](#)" begins playing]

Austin: Three months before the arrival of the Frost Shepherd, the Bard, Lem waited patiently at the place he promised to meet his boyfriend, the baker, Emmanuel. In the old world of Hieron, it was rare that Lem would be the one left waiting. He was notoriously distractible, and despite his best efforts to remain disentangled from the causes, he always seemed to find himself caught up in some grand adventure or political ploy.

Here in the rhizome though, it was Emmanuel who found himself pulled to and fro by the demands of others. Perhaps it was the baker's easy demeanor and straightforward confidence which made him easy to call upon in new chaotic circumstances. Or maybe it was simply that there were more mouths to feed than ever. And his knack for making more, and more delicious from less, had made him a bit of a folk hero in the community.

Regardless, he was late. 'And why had he chosen this place anyway?,' Lem wondered. It had been a hell to get here. A grasshopper to the third branch. A vine ladder through the hollow trunk? 'Certainly there were better views than this.' And then Lem saw it. A small brick made from an old, but familiar sort of stone. The sort of which that was only used in one city that Lem had ever been to, Nacre.

Austin (as Emmanuel): It's not much, but.

Jack (as Lem): Well! Did it just show up?

Austin (as Emmanuel): One of the patrols found it and told me. They said they'd never seen anything like it before. The marble. And I said, 'Oh, it sounds like home.'

Jack (as Lem): And it is.

Austin (as Emmanuel): And it is.

Jack (as Lem): Well, welcome home, Emmanuel. How- how do you feel?

Austin (as Emmanuel): Still homesick.

Jack (as Lem): Yeah

Austin (as Emmanuel): I look out there, and I wonder, for all of the Nacres that must exist here in this mess, are any of them mine?

Jack (as Lem): Do you think yours was missing a particular slab of marble with a- Is this is a mason's mark?

Austin (as Emmanuel): By the time we left, it was missing many blocks of marble.

Jack (as Lem): Yeah, the Ordennan cannons, uh-

Austin (as Emmanuel): Yeah, they made a mess.

Jack (as Lem): You think about it a lot, don't you?

Austin (as Emmanuel): Less and less. Less and less. Uh, here. A cigarette. For old times.

[music plays to end]

Austin: Where were we? Did we-

Keith: Autumn. Five. Clubs... Five.

Austin: It was Ali? This is your card right?

Janine: I think it was Ali's, yeah.

Ali: Yeah, that was me.

Keith: Yeah, it was.

Austin: Do we-? Is there anything that we need to go over? You know.

Ali: Yeah. We're midseason. So like, [overlapped] we don't really have to do that.

Austin: We're midseason. But, uh, here's-

Dre: Uh, bugs.

Austin: Y'all just figured out bug rodeos.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: There's using bug- Your bug knights. Your bug travelers.

Art: That was two turns ago.

Keith: And it's- but it's really working for everyone.

Austin: I think if-

Art: We're out of contempt tokens. Can we have some more contempt tokens?

Austin: We're not out. Are you out?

Art: Oh, no. Nevermind.

Austin: There's a bunch of them.

Ali: Yeah, there's ten.

Art: I just wasn't zoomed out far enough.

Austin: Okay. I was like, wait, I made a bunch of new ones. So, bugs everywhere. Two weeks ago everyone started ridin' bugs around. Actually, I bet that took place over the course of like, months, right? I guess no cause you ended it early.

Art: This was a card that like- that supercharged it. Yeah

Austin: [laughing] This card is so silly. What a good game!

Keith: Yeah, we added three, but then finished it after the first one tick.

Austin: 'This is gonna take us a whole season. This is gonna take us nine weeks.' And then like, 'Wait. Actually, let's just all ride bugs.' [Keith laughs]

Art: Everyone gets super into it is, I believe, what happened fictionally. Everyone was just like-

Austin: Yes.

Art: 'Yo, bugs now.'

Austin: 'Bugs now?'

Art: 'Bugs now.'

Janine: I think- I think my head canon is that like, the spoon seller or something used to be like, a rodeo champ.

Austin: Mm.

Janine: But was like, living in secret shame because it was just like, 'My skill set doesn't apply to this world. Never- It hasn't applied in a long time. In ten years, my skill set hasn't applied.' And then they hear like, 'Oh, there's a bug rodeo school.' And they're like, 'I gotta put the hat on.'

Austin: Right.

Janine: 'I got go.' [**Austin** laughs]

Dre: My planet needs me. [**Keith** laughs]

Art: It's a real Lethal Weapon vibe.

Austin: God.

Art: Oh, we went in different directions.

Janine: GTA meme.

Austin: Current- How about this? Current projects. Current- current project dice. Throndir is looking for Red Jack. There are five more ticks to go on that. Hadrian, Hella, maybe Ephrim? I don't remember if Ephrim was involved in any way. And a little bit of- a little bit of Lem. Lem has books and understand processes. Building a new church, creating a new belief system. Lem, also, actually very busy with Galenica right now, as he talks to them about the- maybe reconfiguring the world, or not doing that. Galenica is visiting for two more weeks. And then there is an ongoing trip to Velas. I forget who is in charge of this one. I forget who-

Jack: Ephrim? Sylvia¹, were you heading out to Velas?

Sylvia Oh, yeah! I start- I restarted that um-

Austin: That clock.

Sylvia That clock, yeah. Yeah. It was the same-

Austin: Okay, I'm just gonna-

Sylvia Yeah.

Austin: Make sure-

Jack: With a combined- combined with bug army.

Austin: Right. Alright. So, Ali, can you read us the card?

Ali: Yeah. So, I have the Five of Autumn, and my options are, [reading] 'The parish arrives. Who are they? Why have they chosen your community, and for what?' Or, 'A small gang of marauders is making its way through local terrain. How many are there? What weapons do they carry?' Yeah.

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

Austin: So, what do you think?

Ali: I'm still really torn on this card because it's a really interesting one to have in this moment, I think.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: Our community is definitely on an upswing, [laughs] I think.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: We just had all of those bugs. We all came together to like, do a thing. And I think like, fictionally, it makes sense that we would be attractive to people again-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -in a way that we were like, in spring. Especially when like, you know, lost community is spread across the map are still a thing. But I don't know if that's like, too soft. Especially when we like- Being able to defend ourselves as a big maybe still. [laughs]

Austin: Right. Right. Oh, right. We should note your abundance- your abundant resources right now are sunlight and maps. Your scarce resources are knowledge and population. And then somewhere in the middle is flight, community, safety, good tools, food and water, and roads and paths. So, lots of progress has been made. But it's- The cup doesn't run over, you know?

Ali: Yeah, I don't know. I don't know if I want to like, introduce violence right now. Even though the Grey Duke stuff has just been kind of off screen for a little bit, I don't know with that society, if they would use this as an opportunity to be like, 'Hey, we're coming back.'

Austin: I- you know, I don't have sole authorship over anything on the screen, right?

Ali: No, I know.

Austin: I know what you're saying. Um, it depends, right? Like, I- Or you know, one, it could be them, if you wanted to do a small gang of marauders. It could be somebody else. They aren't the only people with weapons in this world. Especially not the only people who maybe thought, 'Hey, we should take advantage of the chaos to become marauders.' You know? To- to enact violence. But I also would be curious what the parish is in your mind. So, I don't have a- I don't have a horse in this race. Keith notes like, 'Yeah, the Archive gangs are out there still for sure.' [Ali laughs] That's- that's a thing. The Toy Boys, et cetera.

Ali: Oh god. Yeah. Boy.

Austin: I thought of somebody else recently. Like, the remnants of Ordenna. You know what I mean? Like, there's still plenty of people out there who we have seen be violent. So- But I think that's secondary to whether or not you, the player and collaborator, want to introduce violence

right in this moment, you know? Though, of course, the next card could be something that's like, 'An army marches in.' [Austin and Ali laughs] But, you know, that's a distinct- That would be a distinct thing.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Exact- No, I guess it's- It's just like, what's the thing that I want to... If this society is coming together and like, being able to make progress, is the thing that I want to do have people recognize that in a good way or a bad way?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: It's like, a huge- [laughing] It's a really big choice to make. I also have been curious about what's going on with Ordenna though.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Because I mean kind of through this whole game, I've just been like, the map got fucked up. We haven't even left this like, weird- this like V of tree that we're all in.

Austin: Right. This one chunk. Yeah.

Ali: I think I'm gonna go with the parish arrives just because, again, I think that like, the- the forward motion here before we get to winter is pretty good. And when like, you know, we're-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: We're doing alright.

Austin: Mhm. So, who are they? Why have they chosen our community, and what for?

Ali: Yeah, I don't know. I mean like, I think that Hella being like, 'I'm willing to be a spiritual leader in this place,' and then being like, 'See ya! There's trees now. [laughs] And I just haven't looked into it.' [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. God.

Ali: Was a little bit... It was irresponsible is what I'll say. [laughs more]

Austin: Uh huh. [Ali continues laughs] Things happen.

Ali: Right. Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Now it's been ten months or whatever, so maybe- you know, maybe things should happen a different way.

Ali: It's been less than a year. So, it's not like-

Austin: Right. Right.

Ali: -outrageous. But it's- it's- you know. But I- Especially in framing this as a parish, it's like, 'Yeah. That's what that is.'

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: That's what the responsibility of that action is. And it's also like, 'Hey, you guys have food. You guys made a map? What are you-'

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: 'How'd you do that?' But then again- I guess the anchor sort of are fine in the- They're not like the Alcyon...

Austin: In what way?

Ali: Well, because... they're like, so much more mechanic, and also, weren't they made out of Ordennan steel?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: So like-

Austin: Totally.

Ali: -they're probably breaking down in a way that like, traditional pala-din aren't, right?

Austin: There's definitely different challenges, for sure. I think like, Alcyon probably is- and we talked about this during the Alcyon arc- that part of the reason that the more reactionary parts of that community didn't want to bring them in was because of the fact that they didn't necessarily have techniques yet to take care of all of the different types of anchor. They had already taken most of the anchor, but then it was the- the Iduna Fel uh, Fel anchor who specifically looked like they may have had even different needs than regular anchor- or than- than standard, you know, equipment anchor.

But- but yeah. I think even there, there is a- there is a difference. And you're probably right that there is a- that the... They resisted the Spring just the same, right? Like, so, the Spring, you know, poison plants still weren't affecting them or whatever. But I can imagine that you think about something like them as being more mechanical and requiring a more- a more... not practiced, but like, finer degrees of maintenance. Tightening screws and applying oils and not just kind of like, the sort of polishing work that you might imagine, you know, goes on with the regular- with the- with the old school pala-din. So, yeah. I think that's probably fair.

Ali: Okay. Yeah.

Austin: I don't want to paint a picture of them as being incapable. Do you know what I mean? Like.

Ali: No, no, no.

Austin: But I do think you're right.

Ali: But I think that there's- Yeah. I mean I think there's a- definitely like, a version of this world where it's like, 'Well, we used to have access-'

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: '-to a bunch of like, fine grapes that we could like, refine into oil. Now we don't.'

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: And like, I think especially like, 'Why have they chosen your community, and for what?' Like, again, I think that this card works in this moment because our community does look really efficient.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: At least compared to other ones. And also just like, being like, 'Do you have these things? And if you don't, since you have other resources, can you point us to where we can find these things that we need for ourselves?'

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: So, yeah.

Austin: So, how many- how many is it? How many- Is this like, a couple of dozen people? Is a hundred people? Is it a thousand and-? Like, what- how many is it?

Ali: I think it's maybe like, a convoy of like, twelve?

Austin: Okay.

Ali: But they- they've come from- They've like, essentially dropped the rice behind them-

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: But they've come from a really long way. I think they're probably like, offscreen back where this- Maybe if you followed the Weaver arm. [laughs]

Austin: Right. Right. Like, down- Right. Okay. If you go east or whatever, down that arm. Yeah, sure.

Ali: Right. Right. Yeah.

Austin: Cool.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Do you want to add them or something to the map?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Or figure out something there? I will tick these clocks. Velas goes up to three. Let me make that actually bigger. Velas goes up to three. Galenica visit on its last tick now. Lem, you've spent your first week with Galenica. New church continues to be built. Throndir, you keep looking for Red Jack. Nothing completes. What is your action for the week?

Ali: Um, I- Hm. I think that I should... start a project.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: Um... Damn, what do we need right now? [laughs]

Austin: Mm. Good question.

Ali: Um... Yeah. You know, this is a thing that I've been kind of like, considering doing, but having- haven't found a right moment for it. And I think if like, Hella's defining action of like, being a good person was like, taking a census...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: As- as like, societies are spread out, and as it is becoming more and more clear, especially with new arrivals from, you know, people she's familiar with and has a responsibility to take care of, there's a part of her that's like, 'We should- You know, we have all of these people who are going out making maps. We should like, have them kind of like, seek out other people deliberately instead of like, seeking out cool fields of grass- **[Austin laughs]** or places where we can mine materials or whatever.' Um, so...

Austin: Yeah, I like that idea.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: How long do you think that's going to take?

Ali: That's probably an eight step.

Austin: Yeah? Is it-

Ali: Because that's like-

Austin: Is it off-map?

Janine: Would it- would it shorten it if Adaire helped... like coordinate?

Austin: I mean Adaire's not doing anything else right now, right? So like-

Janine: Exactly, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Oh sure. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. That a six?

Ali: Yeah.

[0:15:00]

Austin: If this is like, Hella and Adaire, plus all of the Adaire mapmakers **[Ali laughs]** kind of doing a follow up census? Or like a-

Ali: All the top graduates. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. **[Ali laughs]** I'm gonna put this over here. Like, in the middle of the tree. To the east.

Ali: Okay, cool.

Austin: I'm writing Census 2.0, but I know it's more than that. **[Ali laughs]** I know it's also like, finding new people and looking into-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -into cultures and stuff like that, too.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Alright. Good turn. There are, just so people know, three more cards in autumn.

Keith: Ugh, thank God. No- no pressure on me to pull a summer card yet.

Austin: Ooo, alright. This is an interesting one. Either- I have the Ten of Autumn. **[reading]** 'Harvest is here and plentiful. Add an abundance.' Or 'Cold autumn winds drive out your enemies. Remove a threatening force from the map and the area.' Hm... **[sighs]** I had a good

idea related to removing the Grey Duke last week- er last time we recorded, whenever that was. Three days ago? [lightly laughs] That was tied to something already happening or something else on the map. But now I need to relook at the map and see if that idea is still good.

Janine: Red Jack murdered the Grey Duke.

Austin: That's it. [laughs lightly]

Janine: That's where he went.

Art: Famed assassin Red Jack.

Janine: I mean... [Austin laughs]

Keith: The group down here- This is just still the Grey Duke army, right? We just didn't delete-

Austin: On the bottom. Yeah, I didn't delete them.

Keith: -that when we made the camps?

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly that. The thing-

Janine: Who's that little grey man?

Ali: That's my- [laughs]

Austin: That's a- that's a census taker... I think.

Ali: I'm trying to figure out what Ordennan robots look like. And it's a grey man-

Janine: Oh. [laughs lightly]

Ali: -with some cool, red lines.

Austin: Oh, I see. That's the anchors. Gotcha. Sure. Um. Aw, they're smiling. [Janine and Ali laugh lightly]

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: That's good. It does make it look like they're surfing on this rain. Which is very funny to me.

Ali: You know, it's sick is what it is. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Rain! Oh, that's those- [laughs]

Austin: The big orange swipes are rain.

Janine: Pollen hail is-

Austin: No. That's-

Janine: Oh, right. The- Sorry, the orange swipes. Yeah, okay.

Austin: The orange swipes are- Yeah. Are the- are the hurricane. It's pollen hurricane, but. Um, I love the phrasing of 'cold autumn winds drive out your enemies' because it is- it is not a big war. Right? There isn't a huge skirmish, but also, in a world of magic, cold autumn winds can be anything. You know? There is a degree to which it feels like nature is pushing back on them, but also, in a world where multiple people at this table have weird nature powers, it is not outside of the realm of possibility that like, there is some divine or spiritual connection or- or magical connection here. Um...

Though I do also like the 'breath of harvest here is abundant.' -er is- 'Harvest is here and plentiful,' and it leaves open the Grey Duke as a potential threat still. Um... hm. Does the community need to remove a threat? In some ways, removing the threat would also give an abundance, right? Because we've said that safety would happen if the Grey Duke was taken care of. Hm. I'm really mad at myself for not remembering what I had in mind for- for a unique, weird... I'm gonna look at some notes really quick.

Janine: What if we all just react like you did some really cool twist, and then if you remember it later, you can just put it in? [laughs lightly]

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: No, because it wasn't that cool. It wasn't that- It wasn't-

Art: [gasps as his fake reaction] [Ali laughs]

Keith: I should put it down. I could- [giving his fake reaction] 'That's interesting!'

Austin: There you go. Thank you. I appreciate that. No, it wasn't- it wasn't like a twist. It was just like... [sighs] It was just cool. It was just like, a cool thing from something that we hadn't seen in a while or connected to a thing we hadn't seen in a while. But now I don't remember what it was. And so, I feel bad.

Dre: Was it bugs?

Austin: It wasn't bug. It leaned-

Janine: It was a bunny. Were they-

Austin: It wasn't-

Janine: Are they scared of bunnies?

Austin: No, cause we're feeding all the bunnies to the spider now. Um- [laughs]

Janine: Not all of the bunnies. We'd run out of bunnies.

Austin: Enough. Enough bunnies.

Keith: Bunnies reproduce very rapidly, and spiders don't eat that much.

Austin: Do they not eat that much? I guess that's the whole thing, right? Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: [sighs] I think I'm going to... I think I'm actually gonna-

Keith: They're like alligators, they're cold blooded.

Austin: Huh. Okay. I think I'm gonna choose 'Harvest here is plentiful. Add an abundance.' And the reason for that is I liked the direction Ali started in, in the last turn, which is that this place is growing in- uh, in stability and is looking more and more attractive. Which is a blessing and a curse. And I'd like to keep that blessing and a curse factor going.

Dre: You know what else helped this harvest just be so good?

Austin: What's that?

Dre: This great farmer's almanac.

Austin: [resigned] Okay.

Ali: Mm. Mhm.

Austin: Did it? Is that what it was? Well, so harvest is really broad. I could choose a completely new abundance. I don't have to move something. It doesn't have to be the population becomes abundant or that food and water does. Though we do have those big- we do have the almanac, and we also have those big praying mantis um... tractors now- er not tractors. [Dre laughs] What- what would they be?

Keith: Plows?

Austin: I guess they'd- I don't think they're plows. Right?

Keith: Well, they would be harrows.

Art: Threshers?

Austin: They're- It's a harvest.

Jack: Yeah, like a combined harvester or something?

Austin: Yeah, like combine [laughs] harvester.

Jack: It's a combination between a harvester and a bug. [Keith laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: I love Half-Life 2. [Jack laughs]

Austin: I think it's actually... I think it's something completely new. And it is tied to the return of Benjamin and Blue J. And it is an abundance of magic. They went out looking for magic, in Blue J's mind, hopefully maybe something that could reconnect Red **Jack** to his past selves. In Benjamin's mind, it was just 'Hey, the old magic is still fading. Is there some new- is there some new string, some new, you know, in the worlds- in the- in the kind of... in the pattern magic sense, is there a new pattern to draw on? Is there a new source? Is there a new school of magic that we can find?'

And I think fairly early on Benjamin found it... partially through looking at- looking at materials that they brought- that the two of them brought with them, looking at old books. But also, just through like, experimenting out in the woods, out on the trails. Through talking to like, hedge wizards and traveling tricksters and people who did other types of magic. And Benjamin put together a new type of magic. But one, it is a new type of magic, which means it is not the silver bullet that Blue J in their heart of hearts, you know, probably knew they would not find, but still wish they would find. And two, Benjamin kept this from them. Benjamin sat on this knowledge for longer because he was not ready to go home yet.

And so, part of that fight was, 'I can't believe that you've had- that this isn't just a thing you're like, still trying to figure out. That you actually figured it out pretty early on, and that we didn't go back and tell people immediately.' And I think as a way of beginning to try to repair the trust between the two of them, Benjamin starts to try to teach other people. And like, his- his mom before him, becomes a mentor and teacher to young students and begins to kind of take on the mantle of magic teacher working with Sunder, working with you know, a handful of other mages still here, and introduces a new type of magic.

And I don't know if I have a good name for it yet, but it is something that- that is... I want it to feel distinct in the doing. He is not the wizard anymore. He is not doing like, the sort of component-style magic that Fantasma did. He is not doing divine magic, the way a cleric would. He is not like, drawing on a divine source. I think it's- And he's not doing like, druidic magic, the way you do, Fero, either. Nor pattern magic. [sighs] Does anyone have good ideas for types of

magic that coincide with this kind of- the rhizome, with what the world is now? This idea of just like, the ever-growing Spring that doesn't just come back to nature magic. I know it's a big ask.

Jack: Object-oriented in a kind of-?

Austin: I think so.

Jack: -in a kind of way, in that it's like- not object-oriented in the way that the pattern is, but more like um... The pattern, right, is about like, 'Oh, how do we as living as [stammers; sighs] God, as like, orc entities within the world intersect with objects.'

Austin: Right.

Jack: And I wonder if this is a kind of magic that is about the objects themselves... I'm trying to think of the rhizome as this- as this remarkable object that exists.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: And- and is it like, a way of interacting or taking care of that the processes by which that is cultivated?

Austin: Is it- is it about-

Jack: But as soon as we step towards like, cultivation, we step away from the object-oriented vibe of it.

Austin: Right. Because you end up going back towards what is effectively manipulating the natural or like... whatever there, right? Maybe it's... Um, I'm thinking about something like- still in that realm of like, object-oriented um... [sighs] Things have... Is it about pulling on already extant properties of the world somehow? You know, um, fire's impulse is to consume. You know-

Jack: Gravity, things fall.

Austin: Gravity, things fall, right?

Jack: Sometimes.

Austin: Right. Right. Well, they-they... Gravity respond- You know, physics happens. [laughs lightly] Right? Like, if you drop something in a place where there is gravity, it's going to fall. So-

Jack: Water soaks things.

Austin: Right.

Keith: Is this drawing on like, the language of the original Spring that we encountered that was just like, 'Grow.' Like the...

Austin: Right, right, right. That's- Yeah, yeah. The same way that had that impulse.

Keith: But it- but applying that to a- [overlapped] thing that was-

Austin: [finishing **Keith's** sentence] -much more broadly. Right. And about-

Janine: There's-

Austin: Is that- Go ahead.

Janine: Sorry, I was gonna say there's um- there's a principle in [half-beat; sighs] homeopathic medicine-

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: -but it's- it's the principle that like, a lot of medieval medicine was based off of. Which is the idea of 'like curing like,' so a plant that causes a rash-

Austin: Right, right, right.

Janine: -can be used to treat rashes, if you use it in a smaller amount. Or like, a plant that looks like a... [sighs] I- I can't remember the exact- A plant that like, looks like a liver- That doesn't make sense. It wouldn't be a plant that looks like a liver. But a plant that looks like a thing-

Austin: A heart or a-

Janine: -can be used to treat- Yeah. Like, a plant that looks like a heart can be used to treat like, a heart problem or a tumor or things like that. There might be something to that idea?

Austin: [not sold; exhales] Yeah. I don't want it to be Alchemy. I don't want it to be...

Janine: Hm.

Austin: I don't want to be, 'He went out in the world and found the right leaves because it's a leaf world now.' I want it to hit on this feeling of like- Okay. You know what I think it actually is? Here's- here's where it is. It is like, the opposite of pattern magic. Pattern magic is, 'We can get anything we want, if only we arrange things the right way.' I think this is a world in which you can literally never arrange things the right- the right way. This is a thing we didn't come back to talk about, but do you remember?

We've talked about this with pattern magic before that the reason pattern magic started failing and getting weirder was Samol was dying, and so the pattern became unpredictable. Because it used to be that it was locked. It was locked to Samol as its core. Well, now the world

literally changes constantly. There is a new offshoot, a new branch, new sprout constantly in such a way that there is no locked pattern anymore.

And so, Benjamin's new school of magic is like, Adaire reaching into the bag of holding. What's in there? Okay. I- [stammers] He can open up a moment of possibility and cause an effect, but he doesn't get to pick what the pool of effects are. It's almost like a- it's almost like a card building game -er a deck building game or a card game where you- you know, something in Hearthstone where you play the card that's like, 'Alright. You're gonna get a random card added to your hand.'

Jack: It's um, Roguelike scrolls and- and potions in Roguelike, right?

Austin: Yes, yes, yes.

Jack: Where it's like, red potion.

Austin: Red po- I got this red potion.

Jack: Oh, okay.

Austin: I don't- I have an idea, and you can start to build- You know, you can build towards um... not proficiency, but like, probability maybe? Where it's like. 'Okay. I'm pretty sure that with this incantation or drawing from this part of the rhizome, I can affect- I can produce some effect.'

Janine: Is it-

Austin: 'I can pull the light from from this part of the rhizome that is normally- you know, there's thirty suns there, and so it's always light.' But maybe it's not always light. You know, maybe, for whatever reason, this day it is not. What were you going to say?

Janine: To go was the bag of holding metaphor, is it then like- is learning to use this magic like learning that when you reach into that bag, you don't just pull out the first thing that your hand lands on?

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Janine: Like, you need to take a minute to be like, 'Is this- Does this feel kind of like a thing that would be good?'

Austin: 'I'm looking for a candlestick.'

Janine: Or like, is this squishy? Is this biting me?

Austin: Right.

Janine: What is this?

Austin: Yes, I think that's totally it.

Keith: That Halloween game where you're reaching in, and it's brain- They say it's brains, but it's actually spaghetti. [**Janine** laughs]

Austin: It's just- it's totally that, right?

Jack: It's grapes and eyeballs.

Keith: [simultaneously with **Jack**] Grape-eyeballs.

Austin: And also, how do you make sure it is not a jaw? How do you make sure it's not a spike?

Jack: Well, see this is the thing, right? Where it's like, I wonder if an argument that Benjamin made to Blue J was, 'Look. I just wanted to make sure I had time to get it right before-'

Austin: Right.

Jack: -'before we got home.' And Blue J just doesn't buy it for whatever reason.

Austin: Right.

Jack: In part because they're like, 'Oh, you- you just want this- you want to spend time with this yourself.'

Austin: Right. Yeah. No, I like this a lot. And- and-

Art: Look, I don't do magic, but it does sound like developing this would be terrible. [**Austin**, **Janine**, and **Jack** laugh]

Austin: Yeah, no doubt! But I think Blue J's part- Blue J's point it's like, 'Right. So, we go to where it's safe, where we're surrounded by people-'

Jack: 'We tell Sunder.'

Austin: Right. 'We tell Sunder Havelton about this.' I think Sunder hates this. Or like, doesn't hate it, but doesn't take to it. It's the opposite of old magic.

[0:30:00]

Jack: Well, she's a semiotician, right?

Austin: She's a semiotician and a wizard. Or not a wizard, but a mage. And both of those things are so much about organization and about study and about data and about like, repetition-

Sylvia: Preparation.

Austin: -and preparation.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: And this is literally like- Yes, there is a degree.. This is like Affective magic, right? Like, this is like, 'Okay. What is the- what does this feel like in this moment?'

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: Wine box magic.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Ri- [laughs] Yes. Like, what do you- Ahh. I love it. It's really good. But Sunder doesn't know what to do with it, you know? And of course, at the same time, Sunder has always done it. It's just that she can't recognize that when she casts fireball two different times, it takes on two different characters based on things like, where her heart is at and who she's firing it at. Because that is- like, the skill set is to ignore the biases and emotional content of a spell. It's to shave all that off so that it's controlled.

Whereas this is about like, leaning into it and recognizing what is at stake, what the potentials are, what you feel like. All of that mix of stuff and kind of mastering it not as in like, controlling it and limiting it, but in recognizing it and kind of leaning into it. And I think I do like the idea of like, Affective magic. Meaning partially the 'affect' and the kind of like, pre... pre-literal, pre-language mood and tone and emotional state, like, very broadly of the person doing it. But also the 'affect' of the world because what you're pulling on is the attitudes and preferences of Spring, or of the Second Spring- of the rhizome. You're pulling from the- the local gravity. You're pulling from the fact that like, the pollen wants to be spread on the wind. You're pulling on all of these kind of innate or historical like- like preferences of the world and playing with them a little bit.

I think also that- that sense of... You're playing. You're never mastering. You're always playing because tomorrow you could wake up and the techniques you believed, the thing that was like, 'I always know how to separate spaghetti from brains' is like, 'Oh, wait. Like, there's a new type of brain in the world tomorrow that actually feels even more like spaghetti.' So... I like this a lot. And so, the abundance is magic. And the reason it's abundant isn't cause there's a ton of it. It's because there's any of it. It's because old magic is dying. And so, to have a new type is... like, a very big thing. So, I've added magic to the board.

Janine: I just want to underline that a thing you said is, 'There is a new type of brain in the world that feels more like spaghetti.' [Ali laughs]

Austin: Uh huh. Why wouldn't there be? [Dre laughs]

Janine: Uh, yeah, I know. I just- I'm just put- I just wanted to make sure that didn't get lost.

Austin: Let people know, yeah. No, I get you. Alright.

Art: This Eight Mile sequel is a lot. [Austin laughs]

Austin: Uh, new church- church advances. Throndir and- Throndir looking for Red Jack advances. Census 2.0 advances. Lem and Galenica advances. Velas trip completes. And Galenica completes. Let's start with Velas trip.

Sylvia: Yeah. So, I think... this looks pretty simple once we've got like, the bugs taking care of- [Austin laughs] Like, now that we've got bugs, it's kind of a lot easier to get there.

Austin: Mhm.

Sylvia: And I actually kind of think that part of this clock was like, getting a little acclimated to the new Velas because it's different. Like-

Austin: Interesting. Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, you recognize some things, and then it's like, other things are completely foreign to you, right? So, there's that, and then there's also like, getting in touch with people who are ostensibly the leaders there. And trying to be like, 'Hey, we should- we've got this- You might not be as receptive to bugs as us, but we have this cool gondola technology. Have we told you about that?' And like, just hoping to set up a thing where people from Velas can come to the university and vice versa.

Austin: Cool. So, you think that there is like, an additional... Is there a- Do you all start to build a big gon- I mean that be a different project, right?

Sylvia: That would be a different project. Yeah.

Austin: That would be a different project. But you've opened the door at the very least to that possibility.

Sylvia: Exactly.

Austin: That makes sense. Cool. And we'll see where it goes from there. Galenica's visit comes to an end. They... [sighs] I think- So, the thing that's interesting here is, Lem, you're in the middle of this visit with them, or this- this set of conversations. What is it exactly?

Jack: Like a summit.

Austin: Yeah. Do you- Is Lem aware enough to know that it's coming to an end? Or is it just like, one day, they finish their summit, and they say like- They tell you like- Do they ask like, 'Will you be joining me on my-?'

Jack: Yes, I think that's absolutely what it is. I think it's- I think it's the vibe of- of um, signing up for one thing, but not realizing you've actually sign- It's like when you think you've signed up for a week's trial of something, and you've actually signed up for six months.

Austin: [exhales a laugh] Yeah.

Jack: Except this is like, going with Galenica.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I think- I think that they're like, 'I'm excited to continue this tomorrow.' And Lem's like, 'You're leaving tomorrow?' And Galenica is like, 'Indeed.' [Ali laughs]

Austin: 'Yeah. Of course. And there's still more to discuss.' I think for those two weeks what you saw were like, in the morning Galenica would stand out in the quad and would speak to people as they passed by, or people would come to them. They would take lunch outside of the university, and then every day would travel to a different community nearby using- within walking distance, where they would set up like, a sort of like, temporary-

[simultaneously]

Keith: Diplomacy stand?

Jack: Democracy stand?

Austin: -a democracy stand. Yeah. Where people can come up and speak to them. And then like, the meals were yours, basically, right? The meals became moments- and then maybe like, in the evening a conversation-

Jack: Hm.

Austin: -that was like, a long- like, partially a debrief of the day. They've done a lot of asking you what you thought [Jack laughs] when the farmer said that like, 'If- if we could remake the world, we should do it where there's more soil.' You know? And be like,

Austin (as Galenica): Well, what do you think Lem? If- if I remake the world, how much soil should there be?

Austin: And it is that sort of question. It is not- It is always this very particular material concrete type of question that is like, absurd- almost like, to the point that it's a koan. 'How much soil should be in the world?' 'Like, I don't- Enough?' [laughs] You know?

Jack: Like, how deep should the sea be? It's just like-

Austin: Right. How deep should the sea be? How many feet? Right. Right. How often should it rain? How much pollen should be in the rain?

Jack: [laughs] Just everyone sneezing, wiping tears from their eyes.

Jack (as Random Citizen): None!

Austin (as Galenica): Ah, none. I see. So, the pollen shouldn't be able to be spread through- through water or rain then?

Austin: Right. That is the degree to which they are- they are-

Jack: Do they keep notes? Are they- Is this going in their head? Or are they carrying a document with them?

Austin: This is- No, this is going in their head.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: They are not- they are not an archivist, right? They are a god. And so, I think that there is something very- There should be something that feels very alien about this. And then, every now and then, the turn, which is all of the weird material questions turn and reveal to you, as you're- as you're going through this process, that they make some incredible insight as to what people actually are asking for. Even though they've told them- They- you know, they've been told by the people that they- You know, they've been told by the people, 'We want it so that there's no pollen in the rain,' right? And then, between that and how much soil should there be, and how deep should the oceans be, and blah-blah-blah, they say something like, you know, 'What they really need is soil that lasts more than one season.' Or you know, that- that- Uh, 'or crops that don't, you know, drain all of the nutrients in the soil as quickly as they do in this world.' Or something like that, right?

Jack: Right.

Austin: And it's hard to tell the difference between when this is analysis and when this is taking an idea from someone who has prayed to them, and being like, 'Ah, yes. This matches up.' It's a- I think it's a very strange thing. Also, I think they leave without giving anyone any goodbyes. This is not- There's no farewell to this. And without being like, 'Alright. I've made a decision.' This is not-

Jack: There's a debrief.

Austin: No. No. There's a debrief with you because you have decided to attend to them. I'm also curious about this Lem. Do you tell Emmanuel you're leaving? Like, what's that- what's that look like?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: They are only going to Alcyon. That is where they are going next. So, it is not like you're leaving map quite yet.

Jack: Yeah. And this is- I think this is- I think that there's two stages of debrief, right?

Austin: [lightly laughs] Yeah.

Jack: Which is that Lem immediately goes home. and Lem has been keeping notes.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: And just- just sits down with Emmanuel and talks about what happened that day or on that meeting or whatever.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And I think, in part, this is useful because it gives some outlet to the community.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: -if it goes through the cook. It goes through the camp cook.

Austin: Right.

Jack: -what has happened, and that- that filters out. But from Lem's perspective, it lets Lem work over in his head the stuff he's been told-

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: -as he finds himself retelling it to Emmanuel.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And it also gives him an outlet to... I think Lem is afraid of Galenica. Not actively, but in the sense that this is a very powerful person who is carrying a very dangerous key.

Austin: Right.

Jack: But I think, in speaking to Emmanuel, it lets Lem just be like,

Jack (as Lem): Oh my god! And then they said this? They just asked me how deep the sea should be?!

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: And so, I think- I think Lem leaves for Alcyon with the... with a kind of two handed promise. The first hand being, it's over there. It's- it's a gondola ride away. Um, and the second thing being that Lem is acting as an advocate for Lem and Emmanuel to Galenica.

Austin: Right. Their worldview.

Jack: Uh, not just their worldview, but their continued existence and proximity.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: You know, Lem is not prepared to let Galenica reconfigure Lem and Emmanuel

Austin: Right. And that... What do those conversations look like? Is that- Like, how do you insist on that?

Jack: To- to whom? To Galenica?

Austin: To Galenica. Or is this just about raising certain like, topics? Is this about directing conversation? Is this about providing counterexample? What- what's it look like to advocate for yourself to a god in a way- in the way that Lem would do that? I mean I think- you know, off-mic, you and I briefly talked about the fact that like, this is not Fourteen Fifteen.

Jack: No, the way I've been thinking about it is, you know when they said, 'They should have sent a poet'?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: What if instead they said, 'Fuck! We sent a poet.'

Austin: Right. [laughs] Yes. **[Keith laughs]** 'We needed scientists!'

Jack: That is, I think, Lem talking to Galenica.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: But I think that the ways in which it is practical, come from a sort of experiential approach, right? Which has always been the archivists whole vibe, right?

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: Like, the Archive- the majority of Archive isn't- [self-corrects] wasn't being used, but the bits that were being used were being used very actively. And so, I think the questions Lem asks are like stuff that we- we haven't really talked about with reconfiguration. Which is like, 'How do you do it?'

Austin: Right.

Jack: What does it feel like to do? Does your perspective shift... like, in a very practical sense when you reconfigure?'

Austin: Right.

Jack: How much control do you have on the macro and on the micro scale? Just like, these specific- like, over and over again, the concerns that Lem is hearing from people speaking to Galenica are like, 'My daughter was killed by the verdant.'

Austin: Right.

Jack: Or like, 'My entire farm fell three hundred feet into what I think is a lake. I can't see it.'
[Austin laughs quietly] And so, I think that the concerns that Lem is bringing to Galenica from his perspective are like, 'Alright. So, how much control are you going to have over what you make, if you make it?'

Austin: Right. Do you- What do you think those- those answers look like?

Jack: You can't just Galenica this to me, Austin.

Austin: I could.

Jack: You can't just- [laughs]

Austin: I think-

Jack: [still amused] You don't have to say, 'Well, how deep is the ocean?'

Austin: Uh, I think part of the thing is- the frustration is that I think that there might be a limit on communicability of this, right? Because I think their response to you of like, 'What does this feel like?' is nothing that you've ever felt. There is no way for me to describe it to you. Like, the experience of Galenica... Galenica isn't a poet either, right? Or isn't a poet in the sense. Galenica is very particular- Of the gods... Samot would have been able to- to just really paint you a good word picture.

Jack: [laughs] Sure. Sure.

Austin: You know, would have- would have just lavished- just- 'Ah, my god. I'd love to give you the details of what reconfiguration feels like.' Even Samoths would have been able to like, give you a cold, but effective analogy.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Galenica is like, very much, 'Let me show you.' You know? Galenica is like, 'Oh, yeah. Here. Let me- I can do some-'

Jack: Do they- do they promptly reconfigure something?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, I think that they- that they like reach out a hand for you to like touch, and then with their other, they gesture at a candle in the room and turn it slowly to stone, but leave the flame lit. And they've made, in this candle, a thing that will burn rock, stone, ore, mineral.

[0:45:00]

Jack: And to be clear Lem is terrified. This is like-

Austin: Oh! Totally!

Jack: This is like, the most, you know, medieval person sees a miracle experience.

Austin: Yes. Yeah.

Jack: Like, this is Lem watching magic performed on a scale that- I mean the last time he saw magic performed on this scale was when his home was destroyed by lightning.

Austin: Right. I think they do it slowly. So, like, they- I think they do it quickly. They showed you.

Jack: Still scary.

Austin: And then- Well, no. So, they do it, and it's like, 'Oh, wow. That's really scary.' And then they... um, they turn it. They just like slow it down. They begin to undo it. And I think that they- the thing that they try to communicate there is the scale at which macro reconfiguration happens. The time, the length, the fact that you do feel each little bit as a pin prick that runs down your spine. And that's not how they feel it. They don't necessarily feel it that way. They've- they're giving you how you would feel it if you were doing it. You know what I mean? They don't have a spinal cord- [laughs]

Jack: [amused] Sure.

Austin: -that communicates, that connects to their nerves in that same way.

Jack: Oh god.

Janine notes that-

Jack: Is it a conscious-

Austin: Go ahead.

Jack: Oh, is it a conscious experience for them?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely.

right?

Austin: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: But when I sleep, I am not. Like-

Austin: This is intellectual.

Jack: As far as Galenica is concerned, they are conscious during an entire reconfigure-

Austin: Absolutely. Yes.

Jack: If they were to reconfigure everything, they would be.. aware as they were doing it.

Austin: Um, there are things...

reflexive [overlapped] feeling.

Jack: [overlapped] Oh, but also, it would be a-

Like-

Jack: Sure.

attentive until he didn't need to be. Until they had the momentum to become a culture of

alchemists and engineers. But he had to make sure that they had the right materials nearby. He had to make sure that- that they were insulated from nearby warring cultures. He had to perform literal miracles that would prevent them from themselves becoming a culture of- of kind of like warlike folks. And so, that's for culture, and it's the same, they tell you, for um-

Austin (as **Galenica**): I would do the same if I wanted to make a world of rock on fire. There is attentiveness where there needs be attentiveness. And there is a looseness... My kin, in fact, have different... [exhales] affections for the degree of looseness. Severea always took great joy in seeing how things turned out. Samoths held tightly.

Jack (as **Lem**): What about you?

Austin (as **Galenica**): It depends on the work at hand. And... my mood. And the shape and style of the strata or lamina I build. Some deserve... to grow on their own with minimal interference and others require a close touch. Like... a bird with a broken wing.

Jack: And we get just like a camera shot of Lem's face listening-

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: -and then Lem says,

Jack (as **Lem**): [excitedly] They said some stuff deserves other stuff! Like a broken wing!

Jack: And we're in the room with Emmanuel. [**Austin** laughs] And Emmanuel is just like, sitting on the bed just going like, what?

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): I don't even know what that means.

Austin: Yeah. [laughs]

Jack (as **Lem**): It depends on their mood! They said it depends on their mood! [**Austin** laughs] Like, there's not some kind of a plan here?

Austin: I think Emmanuel is very... Emmanuel is happy to support you through this, but feel- [**Jack** laughs] I think there's a night where he's like,

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): You know, you will not change the mind of a god. I appreciate that... I do not want to see the world changed again. But if they will this...

Jack (as **Lem**): [sighs] Yeah. Mhm.

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): I only say this because if they do, we should focus on living through it and not... I will not see you beat yourself up over another thing.

Jack (as Lem): There are so many things to beat myself up over.

Austin (as Emmanuel): And this one would not be your fault. It would be the fault of the God who said some things deserve a broken wing.

Jack (as Lem): I mean that's not exactly what they said, but I mean I- the sentiment is- the sentiment is there.

Austin: Alright. Still my turn, right? Time to introduce a project, hold a discussion, or discover something new. I actually think that we discover something new. And it is on the way, actually, Lem, that you discover it. On the way to Alcyon. There is, as you kind of begin down- Are you going by gondola? What are you- How are you travelling?

Jack: How is Galenica travelling?

Austin: I think gondola. I think they're curious about it.

Jack: Yeah, I can't picture them on a bug.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I mean I can picture them on a bug, but I don't know if they would deign to like, engage in that way at this time.

Austin: Yeah. As you go down the gondola, you can look off into that canyon. And there is a... [sighs] There is... something filling it. I think that it's like- A strange like, blue-black water begins to fill it from like- A spring somewhere inside has opened and is filling it pretty rapidly. It's not just a river. It is like a sea spilling out into it. And at first, I'm sure that's like, 'Uh-oh, did the Stoneworks-? What happ- How am I being chased by open water?'

Jack: Or even it's just like, every time we see blue-black stuff, it's just like, 'Fuck! The Heat and the Dark.'

Austin: Well, yeah. So, it is different than that. It is- it is more blue-black like- like the Atlantic Ocean than it is blue-black like-

Jack: Sure. Like, than the awful nothingness.

Austin: -the Heat and the Dark. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. But I think Galenica does say to you... Um, I think there's a moment where they just go,

Austin (as Galenica): Hm... Interesting.... I did not expect... Of course. It is called The Desolate Sea.

Austin: Do you ask about it, or do you just sit with, 'Ah, The Desolate Sea'?

Jack: I think that um... I think Lem is exhausted.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: And I think he just says,

Jack (as Lem): [meekly] What's that?

Austin (as Galenica): Something very old.. that was a once contained... on a strata far below... from when I warred... with the others.

Jack (as Lem): Oh.

Austin (as Galenica): It is the absence of life.

Jack (as Lem): Oh! Sh- ...Okay. [**Austin** and **Keith** laugh]

Austin: And it is what it sounds like. There was some time there where Galenica, Severea, Samot, Samoths, and even Samol warred. And I've mentioned this before, but there are- were whole lamina, whole strata-

Jack: Just battlegrounds, right?

Austin: Battlegrounds and eventually just com- desolate, right? Like, they were-

Jack: Like no-man's land.

Austin: -completely annihilated. Obliterated in a way that is about a scale of destruction, but man-made destruction, where the ground still exists. It is not the Heat and the Dark, but it is the eradication of life. It is the eradication of oxygen. It is the eradication of food, right?

Jack: Jesus.

Austin: And so, this is like a toxic sea, a radioactive sea. Something deeper than that, right? Because we know that- Well, we don't- I don't know what the smallest- Er, I guess it was for a long time, Samol, right? The smallest living- There was the Heat and the Dark, but compressed or whatever is the very smallest thing that exists. And so, it is like something that erases things back down to... you know, boils you away. An acid that breaks the world down. This blue-black sea. Um, history, it turns out, is not buried anymore. And while we've seen a lot of things from the surface return, the- the Grey Duke is not the only thing from down there to contend with. And so, that is what I've discovered this turn. Keith, it is your turn.

Keith: Ugh, cool. [sighs] Alright. Um, boy, I bet there's a lot of other really bad stuff out there.

Austin: And probably some good stuff. You know? There was a centaur that one time.

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Austin: Remember you all saw a centaur. The people who went below. That's cool.

Keith: Yeah. Well, but like, what's- What outweighs what? All of the really cool stuff that's buried under lamina, [**Austin** laughs quietly] or all of the like, horrific warring periods, gigantic dangerous mistakes?

Austin: And this is the argument that many people make for, 'We should get back to the surface. We should put a big like, orb around this shit and climb to the top again.' Um, alright.

Keith, do you wanna draw-. Oh, you did your card.

Keith: Yeah. I just drew. Yeah.

Austin: Oh! Wow!

Sylvia: Oh wow.

Austin: The ti- [blows a loud 'chef' kiss]

Keith: [reading] 'Disease spreads through the community. Choose one. You spend the week quarantining and treating the disease. Project dice are not reduced this week.' 'Nobody knows what to do about it. Add health and fertility as a scarcity.'

Austin: And so, you're choosing one of those, to be clear, right? It's not both. It is not-

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Austin: [sighs] We're not even in winter yet.

Keith: I mean autumn is bad on its own. It just- I mean-

Austin: Yeah, no. I get you.

Keith: You know the last card- the last card, it might have... One of the options was, you know, drive away your enemies. But the thing that was driving away your enemies was the bitter cold.

Austin: [laughs] Right. Yes. Even the good thing was tinged, for sure.

Keith: Yeah. [sighs] I- I think that- I think that we've- I think that we have- As a community, we have found a certain rhythm.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: I don't think that we're in a position to not know what to do about a disease.

Austin: What is the disease?

Keith: I mean we mastered a bug riding in a week.

Austin: That's true. We did do that. Okay, wait. It was a month.

Keith: We- we thought-

Austin: It was three weeks.

Keith: -it would take eight weeks. Was it three? I thought it was only one.

Austin: Maybe it was one. I don't remember. It's been a couple of days. People shouting bug disease. **Sylvia** says, 'It felt like a week. Time flies.' [**Ali** laughs quietly] Fuck off.

Keith: Um, bug disease...

Austin: Bug disease isn't bad.

Keith: I don't know.

Austin: I mean it's terrible.

Keith: I don't know. That-

Austin: It's terrible.

Dre: It's- it's like how when, you know, certain animals carry diseases that don't bother them, but bother other species.

Austin: Oh, I was reading this the other way. I thought you were saying-

Janine: I was also reading it the other way. That the bugs got dis-

Austin: -the bugs get sick.

Keith: That bugs were getting the disease.

Janine: Like- like, when you have to quarantine a sheep that has like, an infection or something.

Dre: No. No. These bugs are strong and perfect. [**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Art: Yeah. Nothing- nothing hurts the bugs.

Austin: [incredulous] What?!

Ali: This is a bug's world.

Austin: There's a big spider right there! The big spider used to eat the bugs!

Dre: Well, there's a difference between bugs eating each other because of the circle of life and something hurting the bugs, Austin.

Austin: Bug diseases.

Keith: Do you think that's why the bugs were so easily tamed just because we- we got rid of their number one predator?

Dre: It's like the... uh, what's the thing where it's like uh... It's like, cat poop can like, do something to people. Isn't it?

Janine: Like a paars- It's like a parasite-

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: -that can make you love cats more.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: I forget the name for it.

Keith: Is that real?

Austin: Yeah, that's real. A hundred percent.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Well, isn't that- Okay, wait, wait, wait.

Janine: Is it just called toxo- toxoplasmosis? Is that the-

Austin: Toxoplasmosis.

Janine: Yeah.

Keith: No, that'll kill you. Toxoplasmosis kills you.

Janine: Oh no.

Austin: Well, the one that we're talking about is- No, toxo- toxoplasmosis causes no obvious symptoms in adults, but it's like, children and older folks, I think, are more um- are more-

Janine: Susceptible to it? Vulnerable?

Austin: -susceptible to it. And also, I think children before they're born. Children during pregnancy- later months of pregnancy. The- the thing that happens in animals is... it- The thing- Okay. Isn't it that- Are we confusing the thing- this thing with- the thing that makes cats do wild shit? The thing that makes cats take a bunch of chances? Because it-

[1:00:00]

Keith: [overlapped] Wait, is this something that cats-

Janine: Boldness?

Austin: Um, yeah. Cat parasite... brain control. Yeah. Toxoplasma. This is it. This is- It's like, it's a parasite that goes in- Yes, cat poop parasite controls minds early and permanently. [Dre laughs] This is toxo- [reading] 'A parasite that changes the brains of rats.' Sorry. Here it is. It changes them of rats.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: It makes rats do more- It makes them attracted to cats and cat urine and makes them like, just be- just be on one, in such a way that they become easier for cats to kill and eat.

[crosstalking]

Jack: The rat is just like-

Austin: So that then, the parasite-

Jack: Basically, the rat is like-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: -can get into the cat.

Jack: -'I'm gonna fuckin' kill that cat!'

Austin: That's exactly it.

Keith: Okay, this is it. We already have this. That's why we love the bugs. [everyone laughs hard]

Dre: [still laughing] Oh god!

Keith: We all already have bug toxoplasmosis, and we're all like, 'Yeah. This is it. This is why we were able to do eight weeks worth of work in one week' is because there is a parasite that is saying like, 'Get. Get eaten by bugs.'

Jack: This is fuckin' grim.

Keith: But we're- but we're too smart. Like, we're just slightly not- uh, it's slightly not effective enough to get us to get eaten. So, instead we just thought that we loved bugs, and we- we tamed them. But I think that we figured out that something is off. I mean... things weren't getting done. [**Austin** begins gasping laughs] Everybody was spending all day at the bug tracks.

Austin: This is-

Keith: The only people that were getting any work done were the people that like-

Austin: [excitedly shouting] This really recasts it! Ohhh.

Dre: Oh, this is so fucking good. [laughs]

Austin: And also- So, for the last like, two or three days I'm like, 'Oh, I hope people- I hope people are alright with this whole situation where everyone decided to turn the bugs into their Flintstones dinosaur servants.' But it's like, 'Okay, they're bugs. We already have horses. It's not- it's not a big deal.' But this really recasts it as something magical.

Jack: It's also like very- It's- it's that, you know- You know, like a lot of symbiotic stuff is actually really grim, if you think about it for like a second?

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: This is like, 'Wow, our community has been doing really well. We've- we've gained a degree of confidence. We've gained a degree of ability with these bugs.' And the bugs are just like, 'Fucking hell. This is great!'

Austin: Yeah, right. It makes- Right! Well, it's like, Blue J and Benjamin get back, and there are these bugs everywhere. And Blue J is like,

Austin (as Blue J.): Hey, what? Everyone's super cool with this giant bug being in the kitchen! The giant bug shouldn't be-

Jack: But shouldn't like-

Austin (as Blue J.): There's tiny bugs on the big bug!

Keith: Just sitting at the table. [laughs]

Jack: But it's not like-

Keith: It's sitting at the table eating oatmeal.

Jack: We're all lucid. Like, this is all like-

Austin: Right. No. No. Yeah, totally.

Jack: You know it's not like the community has completely fallen apart. Everyone's still doing all the stuff. It's just like, 'Eh, the bugs are helping.'

Janine: So, that's also the question is like, cat toxoplasmosis doesn't like- it's just like, a thing that you get, and like, if you're an adult, you're you're fine. But like, so is- That's really the question here is like, do we all just acknowledge we have this? And it's like, 'Well, we can't do anything about it. We're mostly fine.' But it's- but for a week, it's very stressful and yucky. Or is it actually a problem?

Austin: It stops dice for- it stops projects for a week. The book, or the card says, 'quarantining and treating the disease.'

Keith: So, I think that treating- I think that there's got to be like, an impulse clinic.

Janine: For bug impulses? [amused] For people's impulses with bugs?

Keith: Yeah. I- Yeah, I think that it's about- I think that it's- I think that it's about like, cause it's- I mean the article said that it is permanent.

Austin: I mean that's this version of it. We can do whatever we want.

Keith: That- Yeah, we can do whatever we want. I don't know. I- I think that- I think that it's really just like, 'Yeah, you know, you've got to recognize when your relationship with these bugs is not healthy.' And it's just about teaching people about healthy-

Ali: Boundaries?

Dre: I'm gonna set up my new private practice here in Bugville. [**Janine** laughs]

Keith: [laughing] Healthy boundaries. Healthy boundaries with bugs. Bug- Yeah, boundaries. Unless we want to cure it. I'm- I'm up to that. But-

Janine: I kind of love the idea that it's not curable. That's it's just like, a thing we all have to live with now.

Austin: Oh my god.

Janine: This idea that we feel too strongly about bugs because of a bug parasite. [Keith laughs]

Dre: But does- but does quote-unquote “curing” it make it more like a true symbiotic relationship and not this like, weird impulse?

Keith: Right. I think that- I think of this- this parasite is not as effective as maybe it would be on other creatures in the new Spring.

Austin: Oh my god.

Keith: And so, for- So, we have created a symbiotic relationship out of a parasitic one.

Austin: I can't wait for the Grey Duke to get this report of like, ‘Oh, yeah. They are all brain controlled by bugs now. They started doing bug impulse training, our spies report.’

Jack: Also, have we thought about bringing some bugs to the Grey Duke headquarters?
[Austin laughs]

Janine: What- Yes. Oh my god. What if that report arrives a week after someone brought back a bug to be like, ‘Maybe we can train the bugs’?

Austin: Maybe we could train the bugs. Yeah.

Janine: And like, a few- a few recruits are super excited.

Keith: That was like, four turns ago that-

Austin: God.

Keith: That was like, four turns ago where we were talking about the Grey Duke renewing their interest in us because of the bugs.

Austin: Yep.

Janine: God, I love it.

Austin: It's really good. Listen, the bugs will inherit the earth. We are tiny.

Jack: But it's like, again, just so I'm sure, we're not like bugs zombies, right? We're still just hangin' out and doing every-

Austin: How could you tell? How could you tell, Jack? How could you tell if you're- if you're a bug zombie? There's no way outside of culture.

Keith: How do you know-

Austin: [laughs] There's no outside of ideology. [**Jack** laughs]

Keith: I- Well, I think- I think that the valuable thing about the bug parasite is it puts into stark relief the inherent question of existence. Which is, 'How much of this is really under my control?' [**Jack** laughs] Is it- Usually, is it the whole world, or is it me? Like, is it the bugs, or is it me?

Austin: And the answer is... it's probably a little of both.

Keith: [simultaneously] It's probably a little bit of both.

Austin: Bugs are cool. Love it.

Keith: It's not dangerous.

Jack: We got to harvesting so fast with those fucking praying mantises.

Keith: It's only potentially dangerous.

Janine: It's worth it, honestly. It's worth it. I'll say it.

Austin: I'll say what no one else will.

Janine: We get a lot out of this parasite.

Art: I wonder how many people are just turning the episode off and being like, 'Well, Hieron's done for me now.' [laughter]

Austin: [amused] Dig up.

Keith: I don't know. I don't think anybody. I think maybe a couple of people are hitting you know, forward thirty a few times.

Austin: Hi, to those people. Sorry. We should advance.

Keith: Sorry.

Austin: I've advanced all the clocks. None them complete this turn.

Ali: Uh-

Austin: What's up?

Ali: I thought they- I thought none of them advance.

Austin: Oh, right. Fuck. None of them advance. My bad. Fuck.

Keith: Yeah, none of them advance. Good catch.

Sylvia: Got too excited about bugs!

Austin: You know what? The bugs. I felt like maybe there wasn't a disease at all. Maybe they were just bug friends.

Dre: All the bug projects advance.

Austin: Yeah, that's it. Alright. I've deleted everything. Everything. It's all gone now. Bugs forever. So, no advancements on that. Fero, what are you doing this turn?

Keith: I'm going to spend a contempt token, and I'm gonna hang out with the bugs. **[Austin laughs]** No, I'm just-

Dre: There is no contempt against the bugs.

Art: Have a conversation with the bugs, and we can all only respond as bugs. **[long laughter]**

Keith: **[finished laughing]** Okay... Let me sort out. I have to- I have to think about my priorities.

Austin: Real quick. I've decided the- Do you know how we do like... Um, it is called- it is called both colloquially pattern magic, but like, officially... uh... um... Why am I blanking on a term I'm-?

Jack: Semiotics.

Austin: Semiotics.

Jack: They insist it's called semiotics.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think the same thing here where it is colloquially- it is officially called Affective magic, but people call it Augury because of both-

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: -this idea of like- There is a degree to which this is a sort of divination of what is out there, what is happening, what you can pull from, what is- what is, you know, trying to read- read the world and the impulses of the world. But also, 'to augur' is to dig through something. Is to- is to drill and is to like, reach in, and that is also what's happening. Also, I know we don't have Latin or Greek or anything else in this world, but- 'Though ancient authors thought the word augur contained the words 'avi' and 'gero,' Latin for 'directing the birds,' historical linguistic evidence actually points that the root of 'aug' is to increase or to prosper.' So, it goes back to

that Spring impulse of growing, which I like. So, yeah. It's colloquially Augury, and Benjamin is the Augur.

Keith: Just real quick. It's so funny how pattern magicians insist that it's semiotics, but then they also are constantly talking about the pattern and referring to the pattern.

Austin: Oh yeah. Mhm.

Keith: [exhales] They're funny.

Jack: Words are meaningless. [**Janine** and **Austin** laugh quietly]

Keith: Yeah. I want to discover something new.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: You know how we're on branches?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I think that um- You know how branches- Like, wood is not the strongest material in the whole world.

Austin: No.

Keith: I think that's- that there's like, a small community that's been fairly successful and has been thriving for a while now, and their branch got too heavy.

Austin: Oh no.

Keith: And it just sort of- it just sort of falls into view.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: It's just sort of bends into view.

Jack: Oh, that's great.

Austin: That's so good. Like, it just like, dips.

Keith: It dips, right.

Austin: And suddenly-

Keith: Like- like-

Jack: There's just like, a town?

Keith: Yeah, like a- like a tire swing where the- where the- the rope is tied too far out on the branch.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: That has to be the scariest shit when it happens.

Austin and Keith: Oh yeah.

Austin: Y'all happen to be in the crook of a- Sorry, the crotch of- [laughs lightly] the groin- whatever it was-

Keith: Right, the groin. [laughs]

Austin: Of this- this tree- or of this particular like V-shaped intersection between two major shoots. But the- that's not everybody. It's not even Alcyon. Look where Alcyon is. Alcyon is just out there on the tip of this thing. Where you gonna draw this in?

Keith: [sighs] I think it's gotta be like, up here. Like, coming down.

Austin: Sure, that makes sense.

Keith: Just so that I'm not blocking like, a lot of stuff.

Austin: Uh huh. We could also do it in the far right because there's nothing over there.

Keith: That's true. Yeah.

Austin: So, you want like, east of the canyon?

Keith: Well, I didn't- I didn't want to block um... It has to come down from above. And I didn't want to block the Weaver King.

Austin: Oh, true. That's true. That's true.

Keith: I guess I could block part of the Weaver King-

Austin: Yeah. That makes sense then.

Keith: The Weaver King is huge. The Weaver King will live.

Austin: The Weaver King is gigantic. Yes. Alright. Uh, Janine, as Keith draws, you should draw the final card of autumn. [Janine exhales 'fwoo'] No big deal.

Keith: What if it's a really good one?

Janine: This will be great. I hope it is.

Austin: I can't remember- I can't remember. [groans] Ughhh.

Janine: [reading] 'A project just isn't working out as expected. Radically change the nature of this project. Don't modi-'

Austin: Fuck.

Janine: 'Don't modify the project die. When it resolves, you'll be responsible for telling the community how it went.' Or 'Something goes foul and supplies are ruined. Add a new scarcity.' Boring.

Keith: That first one's super cool. I love that.

Janine: The first one is super cool.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: The second one is -is... [**Austin** exhales a laugh] not as cool. Um... Ohhhh.

Austin: As a reminder to listener- [**Janine** gasps quietly] listeners, our current projects are Census 2.0, Thrandir looking for Red Jack, Lem and Galenica, and new church.

Janine: So, mmm. So, I partially hate this card, as a person who has played The Quiet Year maybe too many times at this point because projects are personal to a degree, but also shared to a degree that- that can make it feel uncomfortable. Especially certain projects where it's like, this is- this is really... Mmm... [sighs]

Dre: Janine, if this is a prelude for you saying that you want to mess with Thrandir looking for Red Jack, but you feel bad, [**Austin** laughs quietly] like, don't.

Janine: [laughs] It is. Especially cause we already had the conversation of, 'Should we?' 'No, we don't want to touch this project cause- cause it's good and important for Dre.' But I- [Dre makes an 'ok' noise] Radically changing it. It's just- It was the first thing came to mind. It's one of those things where your first idea is the idea sometimes you love the most.

Austin: Mhm.

Dre: Well, but like, what's the idea?

Janine: Thrandir isn't looking for Red Jack. Red Jack's looking for Thrandir.

Dre: [intrigued] Ooo.

Keith: Oh, that's fun.

Janine: Thrandir's fucking off the- Something happened. Thrandir is off the map. Red Jack-

Dre: Well, yeah. He's not The Ranger anymore. He doesn't know what the fuck he's doin'.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah. It's a new world, too. And Red Jack- Maybe Red Jack is like, on his way back or something and sees like, traces of Thrandir, but there's just fuckin like- Maybe it's Ace.

Austin: [exhales; overlapped] He just finds Ace?

Janine: Maybe Red Jack finds Ace, and Ace is like-

Dre: Aww.

Janine: 'No. No, dude. We can't- Thrandir.'

Austin: 'We should go.' Yeah. I love that.

Dre: Yeah. No, I do, too.

Austin: Great. I've re- I've changed the name of that project.

Janine: It's also fun that that clock is very close to the chasm with the bad thing at the bottom of it.

Austin: It sure is.

Janine: It's all great! [overlapped] Lookin' forward to winter.

Austin: That chasm is filling up, as a reminder.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: So. Alright. Well, I'm gonna advance these clocks, including Red Jack looking for Thrandir. [Janine laughs] Alright, they are advanced. Janine, you can- Wait. Did new church not advance?

Art: The dot appeared on the disappeared.

Austin: It did seem like that happened. I'll re-do it. There we go.

[crosstalking]

Keith: I was- I'm having a little bit of drawing problems.

Janine: It's like, flickering.

Ali: Oh, wiped again.

Art: Again. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. There's a lot of drawing happening right now at the same time. And I think that might be... confusing it. Do you want me move-

Art: Alright, when it's over, it's at five.

Austin: Keith, do you want me to move the- Wait. Undo what you just did.

Keith: Undo what I did?

Austin: Cause I need to move the- You just covered up a base. Actually, you can cover it up.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: I'm just gonna make another one so that we know that it's there.

Keith: Yeah. I uh-

Austin: I can do that. It's fine.

Keith: I mean- Yeah. [amused] There was never gonna be anywhere where I wasn't gonna cover something.

Austin: No. no, no. Totally, totally, totally. It's fine. So then, yeah. Janine?

Janine: So-

[1:15:00]

Austin: What is your action this turn?

Janine: I want to start a project.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Adaire is currently occupied. I'm not starting this project as Adaire.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I'm starting this project as the sapkin

Austin: Ooo, okay.

Janine: And the sapkin are starting to build something in the middle of the sap pool. [pause]

Austin: They're build- What... are they building?

Janine: They're building something.

Austin: Okay. How-

Janine: It's- it's like a- It's when- It's-

Austin: Here's a quick note.

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: Just as a- Um. You shouldn't tease anything that might not come- You shouldn't- I understand your teasing a big, weird thing.

Janine: I'm not- I wasn't done.

Austin: Oh, okay. [**Janine** laughs] I just want to make sure- There's a chance the next card ends this game.

Janine: Yes.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Yeah. So, they're building it basically where the Weaver King's digit comes out of the pool.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: And it is basically- At the early stages, it's- They're building kind of like a- like a central point.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Like, for them, they- they want sort of a nerve center of their own. And what they have learned of nerve centers from the university is you need a big tower.

Austin: [laughs] That is what we taught them.

Janine: Yes. So they- Um... So, they're- Yeah, they're basically- They are building a construction that sort of mirrors what they see in the university. But it's sort of within what they

can do. Like, it is a big tower made of sap, also. It's... kind of weird cause they're also made of sap, but.

Austin: They're also- That's also them.

Janine: But it's with the thing- It's what they have on hand. [breathes a laugh] You know?

Austin: God. Okay. Uh, how many steps is this?

Janine: I mean there's a lot of sap.

Austin: There is. [overlapped] Is it a four step?

Janine: I'm actually kind of imagining it's like- it's like they cut-

Austin: Three step?

Janine: -sheets of bark and then used the bark kind of-

Austin: Okay.

Janine: -as like a-

Austin: [interjecting] It's like a shape-

Janine: -reinforcing-

Austin: [interjecting] Like a splint?

Janine: Like a- like a shingle.

Austin: Yeah. Sure.

Janine: And then they use the sap around that to give it structure and stuff.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: So. They have a lot of materials on hand. I don't know. I could see it being... I could see it being a four or a six, in terms of like, I don't think a sap tower would be the tallest.

Austin: No. And also, it is just a tower, right? There's no secret... There's no-

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: It is a tower that people- they will be in.

Janine: I don't even know that you can go inside of it. It might just-

Austin: Okay, so it's just obelisk.

Janine: Kind of. Yeah.

Austin: I'm gonna write sap tower.

Janine: There might be like, a couple rooms at the base but-

Austin: Sure. [overlapped] Easy enough to make.

Janine: -it's not gonna be a strong material. Yeah.

Austin: Okay. Done. Added. Wait, we've lost- Oh, wait. No. I see what I did. It's fine. [typing; **Janine** laughs] Okay. There we go. So, how many times should I shuffle this deck?

Keith: None.

Janine: Three.

Austin: None.

Art: Wait, no. At least once. What if it's just-

Dre: Uh, twice.

Austin: Twice. I'm hearing twice.

Art: What if it's in order?

Austin: I'm hearing three times.

Ali: You should do it five times for every year that we've done Hieron. [**Ali** and **Jack** laugh]

Janine: Ooo.

Austin: Good call. Like it. One, two-

Janine: It'd be amazing if the-

Austin: Three.

Janine: -if the fucking king was the first card after after all this. [**Ali** laughs] Truly-

Austin: Four.

Dre: Don't do this. Don't put that evil on me.

Austin: Five. So.

Janine: I almost want it to happen.

Austin: I've shuffled this five times. The state of the board. It is winter. The state of the board is such: a big tree fell into view- a big limb fell into view with- with some sort of community on it. The Grey Duke forces still surround the Last University. Bugs fly here and there and perform small tasks as a community [amused] who has a literal chemical attraction to them rebuild society around this new symbiotic relationship. In the distance, a canyon fills with water- with liquid that erodes life itself. In Alcyon, Galenica and Lem begin to talk to civilians there- citizens there, while also continuing to discuss the nature of reconfiguration.

Um, Velas in the distance is now in communication with you and a pending a- at least, a friend, if not an ally. What else is big? The sapkin are building a tower. You've begun working with a new type of alloy to create better tools. Augury, or Affective magic, has begun to be taught inside of the Last University. What else? It's still rainin' pollen. Is there anything else important in life? The bugs are our friends. The moon lingers in the distance. The anchor have arrived and are also friends... and are helping to solidify this notion of faith- of a new faith.

Art: Do they get along with the bugs? How does that work?

Austin: We'll find out, I guess, right? We'll ask that question. Dre... can- Okay. So, if- people who don't know, who have not somehow- have somehow not listened to us play The Quiet Year before, when- Just like every other season, the winter has a full deck of thirteen cards. When the King of Winter is drawn, the Frost Shepherds will arrive. What are the Frost Shepherds? We can talk about that after. [lightly laughs] But we don't know yet. And when they do, the game will end. Dre, draw a card.

Art: No pressure or anything. It just may be the end of our five years of work.

Austin: It is not the king.

Dre: Fwoo. Okay.

Austin: Oh my god. [louder] Oh my god!

Dre: Jesus!

Austin: [clapping on beats/chants] Welcome to winter. Welcome to winter. [Ali laughs]

Keith: I haven't read it. Oh, no.

Dre: Ughhh, okay. [reading] 'All the animals and young children are crying and won't stop. Hold a discussion about this in addition to your regular action for this week.' 'A great atrocity is revealed. What is it? Who uncovers it?'

Art: There's an 'or' there. I just want to-

Austin: Mhm.

Dre: Oh, yeah. Sorry. That's- So, yeah. It's either the great atrocity or everyone is crying.

Austin: Only the kids and animals.

Dre: Uh, yeah. In a bug society?

Austin: Yeah, no. That's scary.

Dre: That's a lot of crying, Austin.

Keith: That's a lot of chittering. It's a lot of unhappy chitters.

Dre: Oh god.

Austin: 'Are they laughing?' 'No. Crying.'

Keith: We knew right away that they were crying. We're very attuned to them. [**Austin** laughs]

Dre: I'm gonna go with a great atrocity is revealed.

Austin: What is it? Who uncovers it? Whoops, I didn't mean to flip that card over.

Dre: So... How much- Did- did Ephrim's project to go to that other Velas- or to Velas- like, it completed, right?

Austin: It completed. Y'all went there.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: You are now able to go there, is what- is what I will say-

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: -if that's connected. Yeah.

Dre: I think the atrocity that was uncovered is that before coming to... kind of this area, where our community is and Galenica started holding- 'Their,' right? Galenica is they-them?

Austin: They-them. Yeah.

Keith: Mhm.

Dre: Okay. Before Galenica started holding their kind of like, open forum sessions about the idea of reconfiguration, they had already reconfigured something, as like a-

Austin: Ooo.

Dre: -as like a test case.

Austin: Mm.

Dre: And I think maybe that's where this- Because that new Velas kind of just like, appeared one day, right? It wasn't like we looked over and saw like, 'Oh, yeah. There's this. We just had never looked this far before.' It like, kind of rose up out of something, didn't it?

Austin: I'm not remembering right, but I'm happy for that to be the case.

Jack: The first time we encountered it was Lem heard someone calling up-

Austin: Mm, mhm.

Dre: Mhm.

Jack: -with a bullhorn from the top of a tower.

Austin: Mhm.

Dre: Um, but yeah. I think- and you all tell me if- Like, to me, that feels like an atrocity because it feels like a very big betrayal of like, trust, in the way that Galenica has presented themselves.

Austin: What is the- What was the reconfiguration? And who discovers it? Like what-?

Dre: Hm.

Austin: You know, what did they- what did- What was actually reconfigured?

Dre: I think that this like, Velasian community already existed, but was more isolated and more cut off.

Austin: Mm.

Dre: And so, Galenica maybe several times had reconfigured this community over and over as a way to... like, get more comfortable, or feel more like, 'Okay. Yes. This is how this works.' Like, 'These are- You know, if I reconfigure in this way, this is more effective than the other way.'

Austin: Right, like, 'I have to figure out how this works in this new world.'

Dre: Yeah. And I-

Austin: 'Can I still do it effectively?'

Dre: Right.

Keith: I think there's something-

Dre: You know, magic- magic and everything works differently, so yeah. There's some- There's some bugs to figure out there.

Keith: I think there's something that has to have gone wrong. [pause]

Dre: Sure. And I-

Austin: For- Well... Yeah, go ahead, Dre.

Dre: Oh, I think how they discover it is... um, it's like, one of the- It's- it's kind of like, you know whenever media has like, a time loop or something? And it's people within the time loops like, start to have like, um- Alright, who played the new Mortal Kombat game?

Keith: The one from...

Austin: I did not.

Keith: -this year? Last year? Yeah. I did not. No.

Dre: Like, this year. Yeah. There is a point in that game- and I guess like, spoilers for new Mortal Kombat- there is a point in that game- cause like, the whole point of that game is that like, Raiden has done so much like, messing with the old Mortal Kombat timeline that the Goddess of Time is like, 'Okay, I gotta kill Raiden to stop him from messing up time so much.' And what you discover is that actually this battle and this fight has been done thousands upon thousands of times. And Raiden has a moment where he remembers like, this breaking point where him and Liu Kang turn on each other and try to kill each other.

And it's this really cool cut scene where it's him and Liu Kang like, fighting each other over and over in a bunch of different places through a bunch of different timelines. And him like, realizing, 'No, this is like, the turning point. This has happened hundreds of times, and this is where we have to like, make something change if this timeline is going to be different.' And I think it's people having flashes of like, really, really intense and painful deja vu sort of. Where it's like, 'Wait. I've done this before, but in a slightly different way. Like, this place was different. I was different. These people around me were different.'

Austin: Right.

Dre: And it's just these series of coincidences over and over. And I think it breaks one day because it's probably a lot of people having these thoughts of like, 'This is just- this is just me being weird. Like, you know, I didn't sleep well last night.'

Austin: 'Maybe the world- Maybe there's some sort of weird plant like, toxin-'

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: '-that's making me have bad dreams.'

Dre: 'Everything is weird. I'm probably just going through something.' But it's like, someone finally confides in someone else that they've been having these- these feelings and these thoughts, and the other person like- goes like, 'Oh god. It's not just me.' And then that conversation just spreads throughout the whole city.

Austin: Is it a situation- [exhales] I mean there is like a... Depending on how bad we want this to go, it's like, is there a world in which this one small part of the rhizome had been reconfigured already many times, and they are remembering being part of some sort of action that implicates them, that makes them complicit- or that, in which now they would never do this thing, but that they like, were soldiers for Galenica. That Galenica actually revived the um, the Grand Tour briefly. That there was like- it's actually a mass scale action took place that, in the path, Galenica ends by going like, 'Ah, yeah. This is why I can't do it this way. I've tried it- I've tried to force people to do this. This isn't what they want. Okay. I'll now start wandering the world and hearing what they really do want.'

That like, their initial response was... not- was to just start tinkering, was to just start, 'Okay. I'll take one society and build it out and see where we go from there.' And- and that response is something that was like, 'Oh, wow. This is not- They all have now done things.' And it's not just remembering that they have past lives or that they were- that they've been through stuff multiple times, and time has been rewound for them, but that the things that they did were not things that they wished they did.

Keith: And it was like- like three weeks ago.

Austin: Right. Or I don't know. I... Was it? Was this-? Well, it couldn't have been three weeks ago because-

Keith: Okay three months ago?

Austin: -Galenica's been here.

Keith: Uh, no- longer. Yeah.

Austin: Right. Whenever that was.

Keith: But like, recently.

Austin: Right? Like- like- Yeah. Or this year.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: It was this year.

Dre: Yeah. Whatever season it was when they- Yeah, this-

Austin: Before Galenica arrived.

Keith: I'm a florist, and four months ago, I was a warrior. And a couple months before that, I was like, some different job and-or person.

Austin: Right. And months before that, I lived in some past Velas presumably?

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Austin: Like, I was just a-

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I was just living my life. And then this god came and played around to see how their powers worked. Does that get- does that news get to the Last University?

Dre: I mean I think so. If- if we have now- Like, we can go there-

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: And they can go to us. You know, there's probably like, um- You know, it- Maybe it's like a person who normally comes to Velas every Thursday to train.

Austin: Right.

Dre: Like, shows up to the market, and like, it's- nobody's there.

Austin: Right.

Dre: And they kind of are looking around, and then they find like, a meeting hall where it's just all these people.

[1:30:00]

Austin: There's something I really like about this that is deeply tragic and is tied to or recalls for me, a sort of communal- communal suffering like, as an action. And what I- Really what I want to paint is the picture of like, a community coming to terms with a tragic and terrible past together in a way of healing. Which is like... When you- when you- You know, if you read about the ways in which cultures that have been impacted negatively through huge- you know, through huge atrocities, it is not like they only grieve alone. They eventually develop a sort of... um... And this is not- There's not one answer for this, but there are ways in which there is a communal grieving process that can literally be wailing together in an arena somewhere. Or it can be about creating, you know, small personal rituals at the family scale. Or it can be about creating, you know, history curriculums that make students and have students sit with the pain that's been caused and blah-blah-blah.

And I kind of like the idea of whoever this- this early trader is- Or, you know, maybe it's, um, just to keep characters that we know on screen, it could be someone like Devar, right? Who arrives as like, 'Hey, like, I'm the person who writes about this stuff. I'm the person who like, understands what all- all of our stock is. I still have that skill set from being an archivist' arrives and like, has this moment of deep connection. I don't know what this ritual is or if it's even well-developed yet, but like, the early bits of it... and is just like, 'What is happening?' I mean the other- the other thing of this is like, they could have already been dealing with this. This might not be a new realization for them so much as it's a new realization for us. Do you know what I mean here?

Dre: Sure. Well, and I really- I mean I love how you- like, what you were connecting that with because I feel like, in a way that kind of also extends out on what I was initially trying to touch upon when I talked about, you know, the two people having the conversation-

Austin: Right.

Dre: -and the person like, saying like, 'Oh gosh. It's not just you.' I mean a lot of times in my like, work-work-

Austin: Right.

Dre: -if I'm working with like, a family or a couple or something, one of the most like, breakthrough moments is when a person... Like, cause I think, a lot of times, we all have these thoughts where it's like, 'Something somebody said or did really hurt me.' But then, our kind of initial pushback against that is like, 'But should I take this so personally?' Like, 'This is really- Like, this is me overreacting. This is me being petty. This is me being irrational. Whatever.' But then, that doesn't like, address the hurt or make that hurt go away.

Austin: Right.

Dre: And so, there's something powerful when people can like, stop putting labels on their hurt as to whether they're hurt is justified or irrational-

Austin: Right.

Dre: -or whatever, and just like, speak about it and come together and speak about it with other people.

Austin: What if it's a thing where it's like, Devar arrives, and everyone is wearing one color, or is wearing a, you know, a badge or a shawl or something and is like, 'What's up? What's goin' on?' And what he finds out is that they are in like, the twelve days of mourning or something. And it's like, 'Well, wait. What are we-?' It's like, 'Well, for twelve weeks, Galenica did this to us. Every week was a new reconfiguration. And so, once a year-' Or maybe not once a year- maybe it's like- maybe it's- maybe it's not twelve days. Maybe it's five days. Maybe it's like, one work week, you know? And it's like, 'For five weeks this happened right after- right after the Second Spring arrived, and so, we, you know, once a month, we take five days to work through this.' Who even knows how they experience time, right?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: And Devar is like, 'Word?' [**Austin** and **Dre** laugh lightly]

Dre: But no. I do love that cause I think it is both the atrocity, but then, it is that- that essence of a community grieving through that together.

Austin: Yeah. They don't want reconfiguration to happen. Meanwhile, clocks tick. Census is at three. Thrandir and Red Jack only needs one more after this one. Sap tower continues to grow. Did we miss sap tower last time, or was there no sap tower? Was there no uh-

Art: Sap tower started last time.

[crosstalking]

Janine: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, it was-

Austin: Okay. Right, right, right.

Dre: Yeah, that was Janine's turn last time. Yeah.

Austin: And well-timed, Lem and Galenica come to a close. What's this look like?

Dre: Oh boy. I didn't even realize that-

Austin: Oh, yeah. [Dre laughs] And let- Presume- I guess I don't know if Lem knows this news. Or do you find out- Do you find this out? Like, what's this...?

Jack: Which is most interesting?

Austin: It's your scene. I'm interested in both.

Jack: Mm.

Austin: I can do- I can do either.

Jack: Yeah. There. I could- I could- I could do either. Um... Hmm. I like- Is this a picture of Galenica- Galenica at a democracy stand?

Austin: Sure. Right? [overlapped] In an open-

Jack: Down- down here? No, no, no.

Austin: Where?

Jack: This is actual picture.

Austin: Oh, no. That's just Galenica standing there. That thing behind them is the gondola.

Jack: [amused] Oh, okay.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Um... hmm.

Austin: Like, is it a confrontation about this? Is it a... Is it Lem finding out after?

Jack: Oh! I wonder if it's like a- kind of like a- You know how they say when you're interviewing people, don't ask questions you don't know the answer to?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I wonder if Lem says,

Jack (as Lem): When we the last time you reconfigured something large?

Austin (as Galenica): How large?

Jack (as Lem): You know, at a town, a city.

Austin: I think that they just say plainly- Yeah. They are just like,

Austin (as Galenica): Weeks before I arrived.

Jack (as Lem): Yes?

Austin (as Galenica): What would you like to know?

Jack (as Lem): Did you ask them?

Austin (as Galenica): I asked them many things. I asked them how they felt. I asked them what they'd wished they were. And I reconfigured.

Jack (as Lem): Do you think their answers would have changed if you'd told them that you were going to reconfigure them?

Austin (as Galenica): I... did, after the first and the third and the fifth. And their answers did change. This was part of... my early experience... trying to work out what was possible.

Jack: Lem just like, nods. I think- I think we're sitting in like- like a- [sighs] What's Alcyon culture like now? Are we- are we in like a-

Austin: I think- I think one of the-

Jack: -bar? Or a-

Austin: One of the big real things for them is it's very standing, as a culture.

Jack: [laughs] Sure.

Austin: They don't have a lot of rocks anymore to build like, big heavy furniture for their very heavy bodies to sit on. There's a lot of walking. There's a lot of standing. Um-

Jack: Oh, is the vibe when you've arrived late to a party, or at a bar that's full, and you find a spot. But it's just like, leaning against a-

Austin: Yeah, Uh huh.

Jack: [lightly laughs] -a thing.

Austin: Mhm. Mhm.

Jack: I think like, Lem writes something in his notebook and looks up and says

Jack (as Lem): What did you learn?

Austin (as Galenica): About reconfiguration, I learned that a great deal is possible. I have... as far as I can tell... great flexibility in how... the gifts... the gifts I was given by people can be applied....

Jack (as Lem): That is not necessarily a mandate.

Austin (as Galenica): I have never worked on mandate. I have worked on... influence. Preference. I have extended the will of those who pray to me when their prayers seem... reasonable or correct.

Jack (as Lem): What is correct?

Austin (as Galenica): What is correct? It is... what you arrive at after judgment and experience. After input. After study. After.... Travel. And after time.

Jack (as Lem): What do you think the citizens of Velas, Under the Tree, have arrived at?

Austin (as Galenica): Their own vision of what is correct.... As all do... Rarely the same.

Jack (as Lem): Have you spoken to them recently?

Austin (as Galenica): No. The world is large, and there are many to speak with.

Jack (as Lem): I'm sure.

Austin (as Galenica): I've spent my time at Velas, for now... Velas, Under the Tree.

Jack (as Lem): If you put it back... to how it was... what does that do to the Heat and the Dark?

Austin (as Galenica): This is one of the many things I continue to study. I believe- I believe that if I do it well, it will tie the world to me, as it did once to good Samol. Unlike Samol, I was not conjured by nothing. I am, as I said, an extension of will. Perhaps as long as there is a will, there will be the world. The new world.

Jack (as Lem): Let's say you do it. And we wake up in the morning together, the day you're going to do it. And you've made your decision. What does that look like for me? Or for Hella Varal? Or for Devar?

Austin (as Galenica): It depends on where I start.

Austin: They wouldn't have that emotion in their voice. They say,

Austin (as Galenica): [less emotion] It depends on where I start.

Jack (as Lem): Go on.

Austin (as Galenica): If I begin far away you will see it... over one of the horizons... like clouds. Like clouds of stuff. Of... rock. Of soil. Of root. Of sky. And... soon... it will blend with what is here. And space will reorganize. I do not think I can...remove these roots. But I can incorporate them. I can fill in gaps. I can... slide them... from a clump, a tumorous collection of nerves into a skeleton, into a body. And around it, a surface. Not the... not the strange ice pick shape of Samol. Something.... round. Where travel is... simpler. This is one of the wills I've heard. I believe I will have space for those who wish to remain here. And above, there will be plenty... One sun. But enough. If I begin it above you... it will be as if you were at the foot... of Samoth's throne during eruption. A blossom. A... An explosion of creativity. Of... stuff... thrown into the sky. You will see the world new... above, aside, and below. The ground will rise... And seas... will fill in the gaps.

Jack (as Lem): Why would you have us... experience this trauma again?

Austin (as Galenica): You would have me wait for a new generation? One who has not already felt it? One who would be surprised?

Jack (as Lem): I don't want you to wait... I don't want you to do it at all.

Austin (as Galenica): Why is this?

Jack (as Lem): Because... this is the world. This is the world that we have. We- we have found ourselves in it, and we have... struggled against it... Why would you have us do that again?!

Austin (as Galenica): Lem King, do you dream of a world without struggle?

Jack (as Lem): [animated] We are talking about different things. I am talking about the struggle of making sure there is... food on my table or my friends are well or... or my... my boyfriend and I can spend an evening together. The struggle you are talking about is whether the sky is remade above our heads!

Austin (as Galenica): You are talking as a man who makes tables... to someone who has built houses.

Jack (as Lem): Yes! We all make tables! You're the last one of you, and you come down here and say you're going to build a new house for us.

Austin (as Galenica): Because so many ask for one... I have noted your preference Lem King. As I have noted the many... who beg me for something else... Perhaps it is luck... that the university landed in the crook... of a tree. But the sea we passed, The Desolate Sea... some landed there. Some landed caught between roots... Knotted and

choking. Some underwater.... Some... in the rare rock. Their whole lives... frozen in place. Do not think... that all have been as prosperous as your university.

[1:45:00]

Jack (as Lem): When do you decide to change it? Why do you decide to change it now, when the world isn't quite the shape you were used to?

Austin (as Galenica): I haven't-

Jack (as Lem): Why not go back and talk to the... to the anchor, to the people who couldn't get food on their tables, to Velas in its destruction? Why not change it then?!

Austin (as Galenica): I was-

Jack (as Lem): [increasingly animated] But now you look at this world, and it's not the way you remember it being?

Austin (as Galenica): Lem.

Austin (as Emmanuel): And you think-

Austin (as Galenica): Lem. I did not have the ability to turn it back then. We did not know we could until Samot tried. Do you not understand? That we would have done this a thousand years ago if we could have... All of us. It was the way of life for more years than you know- than more years than you can count... This has been a blip.

Austin: They don't know the word, 'blip.' [false-starting as Galenica] This has been- [lightly laughs]

Austin (as Galenica): This is a tributary.... In the shape of history... And it opens... into an ocean. And I am the only one left to help shape what that ocean looks like.

Jack (as Lem): Are you relieved?

Austin (as Galenica): No.... No.

Jack (as Lem): So, we will all be fed... We will not get sick... Armies will not march on our homes?

Austin (as Galenica): I have made no such promises with what you do with your army's... Your kind fight for things other than food... You kill each other over spices.

Jack (as Lem): [becoming harsher] So, you'd let those stay. I'm just- I'm just- I'm just trying to write it down. I'm just trying to- I have a column here, and on the left, I have

'Things that they would alter,' and on the right, I have... 'These may stay the same.' Spice wars? That may stay the same. Earth is swallowed by branches? Alteration. Am I right?

Austin (as **Galenica**): In this reconfiguration. There is no end to time, Lem. There is no ever after... You will dream another of me into being... who has preferences different to mine. And they will take action, too.

Jack: I think like, Lem just finishes his drink and closes his notebook and leaves.

Austin: [lightly laughs; pauses] Samot was not playing.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah, he was not.

Austin: When- when he said this is what would happen.

Jack: Jesus. Yeah, he also marched an army of stars on a small town.

Austin: No, totally! Absolutely. Absolutely.

Keith: Look-

Jack: Every town, right?

Keith: Kotor 2 wouldn't be Kotor 2 if Kreia didn't have a little bit of a point. [**Austin** laughs] A little bit of a point.

Austin: [amused] Just a little bit.

Jack: It's- Samot sent stars to a bunch of places, right?

Austin: Oh yeah.

Keith: Oh yeah. They were going to like, destroy a whole-

Austin: They- they- Yeah. Everything was getting-

Keith: -the whole world.

Jack: The whole thing.

Austin: Everything was getting turned into raw material. That is one of the differences between [**Jack** sighs] Samot's plan and this plan was- and this is the big one- Samot was going to destroy everything that already existed so that there would be no original notion of the divine impulse.

Jack: Right, right, right. Whereas Galenica is just gonna fix the world with facts and logic.

Austin: [amused] Totally. Exactly. [lightly laughs]

Keith: Yeah. And when things get a little bit off track, you just restart.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: It's like when you've got like a- like a photoshop file that gets too big, and it just doesn't work right, so you just like-

Austin: Yep. Yeah.

Keith: 'Eh, I'll just- I'll just mix everything down and open it in a new- in a new file.'

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Gotta flatten all these layers.

Austin: Flattened those layers. Uh... Dre, you still have an action to do.

Dre: Oh god. Right. Yeah. Shit. Okay. **[Sylvia laughs]** Should've been thinking about that instead of paying attention to your scene. [laughs] Okay. Well, I guess I'm going to hold a discussion.

Austin: [laughs] Ha ha ha!

Dre: And I'm not sure how my voice is gonna be here, since Throndir is gone.

Austin: Yeah. You could- you could talk as somebody else. You could talk as the community, right? Like, this is the... By default, in The Quiet Year, no one is playing a single character ever. So.

Dre: True. Yeah.

Austin: But if you want to say, 'Hey, someone brings a thing to the community.' Sylvia says, 'Talk for the bugs.' **[Keith and Dre laugh]**

Sylvia: They needed it. They need help. They can just chitter.

Dre: 'I speak for the bugs.' Um...

Austin: Is it Blue J? Is it... Devar coming back with this knowledge? Is it-

Dre: I'm trying to find- It's- Is it that you ask the question, and then you say a statement at the end?

Austin: You ask a ques- if you ask a question, you get to speak again at the end. If you make a statement, you do not.

Dre: Okay. I'm going to ask a question. And I think this probably is just like, the- the talk of the community.

Dre (as The Community): What should we do about Galenica?

Austin: Sylvia, Ephrim.

Sylvia: Oh, man. I gotta go first? [clears throat]

Dre: Heavy is the head.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): We've had to combat the whims of a destructive god before. And while I can hope Galenica sees to reason, it does sometimes feel like I am just talking to a statue. We need to figure out what we're willing to do and... to square that away with what we're... actually able to do.

Austin: Hadrian.

Art (as Hadrian): [resolved] I told Samot that I was done with his whole family, and I meant it.

Austin: Lem.

Jack (as Lem): What can we do? There is nothing we can do. They'll... If they decide to reconfigure us, they'll reconfigure us.

Austin: Hella.

Ali (as Hella): The last time we spoke about this, I thought that if it was something that the people wanted, then it's something that should happen. And if that isn't true, then... we should protect the concerns of the people better than Galenica ever could.

Austin: Um, I will speak for Devar who says,

Austin (as Devar): Man, fuck this. Someone has to deal with them! This is not- **[Jack laughs]** This isn't- We're not playing. People died when Samot did this shit. I'm not- Mm... Y'all- Y'all have any swords left?

Ali (as Hella): Yeah. **[Austin and Ali breath a laugh]**

Austin: Fero

Keith (as **Fero**): After I killed Samot, Severe asked if I would kill her too, and I said no because I didn't have to... But it seems like we might have to.

Austin: Adaire.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I mean we've killed scarier shit... **[Dre laughs]** It'd be rough, but I think we could probably pull it off, if we went in with a plan.

Austin: Throndir. Or not Throndir. Sorry. Throndir is not here. So, **Dre**.

Dre: Yeah, since Throndir's not here, I'll speak for the Grey Duke who from the start has said he has come here-

Austin: Yep.

Dre: -to benefit the people. And as so, if the people require the death of a god, then that's what the Grey Duke will do.

Austin: Love it. Love it.

Keith: That makes sense, too, cause the Grey Duke um... the Grey Duke wants to be the like-

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: -center culture again.

[**Jack** de Quidt's "[Under the Boughs](#)" begins playing]

Keith (continued): And that's not gonna happen if they're stuck under a lamina.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Like, a hundred down or whatever.

Austin: [sighs deeply] Love to- love to turn enemies into part time allies.

Dre: That was a fun card.

Austin: Good card. **[Sylvia exhales a laugh]**

Keith: Good card.

Austin: Good card. Good card.

[Music plays to finish]