

SPRING IN HIERON 23: THE HEAT WILL WARM YOUR BONES

Transcriber: Cole

Austin: Lem, Hella, and Adaire, the three of you are on the Boundless Fate. And you are moving northward on a river atop a mountain. And in the distance you can see below you, the Last University. Now, Hella, you've piloted this boat northward before, but that was against the current. Today it seems to be with the current. And also, something important, the river that you move through is dark, black-purple. It is the Heat and the Dark. And inside of it, spread like ice flows are small globules of the star stuff. What do you do?

Ali: Huh. Um, I don't know what I do. [laughing] What do you do when you see that?

Austin: I don't- you know. I don't know.

Ali (as Hella): That's bad. That's a- that looks bad.

Ali: -is what I say. [laughs]

Janine: I don't- What are we doing? I don't remember what we're doing here.

Ali: Yeah. I don't remember being on a boat.

Austin: No, you don't. You don't remember what you're doing here.

Janine: Ok. I wanted to make sure that was supposed to be the case and not me [laughs] not knowing something I should have.

Austin: No. No. No, this is confusing, for sure.

Jack: I'm gonna like, try and take a watch. Um, I'm going to like- Does the Boundless Fate have like a- What do you call the- the bit that sticks out of the front of a boat? Like the bowsprit?

Janine: Prow.

Jack: The prow?

Janine: Maybe- maybe a bowsprit. The prow might just be the front.

Jack: Does it have a bit that sticks out the front, **Ali**?

Ali: I guess. Wait.

Austin: You mean like where the masthead would be?

Jack: I guess. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Is that what those are called?

Jack: You know the bit in Sea of Thieves where you go and stand when you're looking?

Janine: That is a bowsprit.

Jack: A bowsprit.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Bowsprit. Yeah, masthead is different.

Janine: The b- the bowsprit is on the prow. When I was little, I thought they were sharp. That you could like, hurt-

Jack: And they're for ramming?

Austin: You could ram stuff, yeah. Uh huh.

Janine: I thought you could like, stab.

Jack: [overlapped] No, so I think I'm gonna-

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Like a boat sword.

Jack: I'm gonna like, scramble out onto this um- onto this bowsprit, which kind of puts me perilously close to the- the water below.

Austin: Yeah, and you feel the heat as you get closer to it-

Jack: But I think almost want to be-

Austin: -for sure.

Jack: -if- if I know that the dock of the- of the Last University is approaching, I-

Austin: Uh hm.

Jack: I want to get as close to it as I can, and if that means, you know, moving to the very front of the boat, that's- that's-

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: -what I'm doing.

Austin: Um, as you move there and you kind of climb up, you get a little bit more height, and you can- you can look out and see all of Hieron from here. All of it to the north, northwest, northeast, at least, because you're kind of deadcenter in the continent, and you're up on a mountain coming- coming downward. And you can see to the northwest, the seaside metropolis of Velas and to the northeast the vineyard-covered hills and valleys of Alcyon in the distance. And straight north, you can see more mountains where the Archives once were. And now behind them, the Isles of Flight. And all of them are kind of lapped at by ocean waves from the much higher ocean now that the moon has fallen. And all of these places are on fire. And from here, you can look down and see that so is the Last University. What do you do?

Ali: Rush towards [laughs] the university.

Austin: Sure. So, you like, you lower the sails and you move closer. You try to speed up. Soon you arrive, and it happens at- in a flash, like there is a- you've lost time, and you are docking the boat. And you are underneath this giant tree- kind of casting shade on you, except that the tree is also on fire. And maybe the strangest thing about this- this place right now is you can hear people going about their days. You can hear like, the chattering of people, but you can't quite make out individual words. Um, and also you can't see where those people are. [light laugh]

The thousands and thousands of refugees aren't anywhere. Their tents are, and their tents burn and so does the Outhouse and so does the first wing of the Last University and everything else. But you can't see anyone. Soon that chattering changes into a sort of chanting. And it takes you a second to I think, maybe to piece together what they're saying, but it is- it's almost like children singing a song, and what they're singing is, [sing-song] 'Play in the dark, and the heat will warm your bones' over and over. What do you do?

Jack (as Lem): Ok, I'm going to the meeting hall. We need to split up.

Austin: Lem is like, jumping into action here. This is interesting. [Janine laughs]

Jack: Uh, yeah, and I think I just take off running. I think I just take off running and like, calling the names of people- I think specifically looking for Corsica. Um-

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Or- or Red- Red Jack is- is with us right?

Austin: What do you mean- oh yeah. Yeah-

Jack: Red Jack is not-

Austin: -is home, you mean?

Jack: Yeah. Red Jack's at home.

Austin: Yes.. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Um, and so I think as you hear that you actually, as you do that, you hear someone call your name out. You hear someone say, 'Lem!' And when like, you whip around, the- the boat that you just tied up is now drifting further down river. And on it, it's actually Fero who calls to you. And on that boat is Fero and Hadrian and Throndir and Ephrim, and Red Jack and Corsica and Ephrim- uh, said Ephrim already- um, Emmanuel, and like, a number of other people. Rix and Rowe are there- are on that boat. And they are just sailing away. It is just the three of you here. The heat grows.

Ali: I think Hella's just like, standing.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Cause this is too weird, right?

Austin: Oh yeah. [Ali laughs]

Ali: And I think she's standing on the dock and just like, trying to piece what's happening together.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: Like, how did Hadrian get here? What's-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: What's going on? Where is everybody?

Austin: I think maybe you're the one who like, recognizes- something begins to pass over the sun, and like, cloud cover basically starts. And there's- you're like, 'Ah, boy. Hopefully this will cool things down a little bit.' Like there's something in you that's like, 'Oh, finally. I can feel the shade on your face.' But then the heat continues because it's like, coming from below as much as above. We just get this like, close-up shot of the- the shadow covering over Hella's face in this moment. Adaire, what are you doing?

Janine: I also don't know that Adaire is do- cause this is, you know... as- as Hella said, this is too weird.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: This is like- I think the- the way to frame it for Adaire is like, this situation is beyond what she recognizes as actionable.

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: Um, I probably, honestly, would have had her just stay on the boat if the boat hadn't-

Austin: Drifted away?

Janine: -also been wrapped up in some weird business.

Austin: If you want to have- if you want to be on the boat, you can be on that boat. Drifting away.

Janine: I think- I think if Hella and Lem had both disembarked, then she would have also disembarked. So, that's- it doesn't matter.

Austin: Sure.

Janine: Yeah, I think- I think Adaire's probably just like, standing on the dock like,

Janine (as Adaire): This...

Austin: Lem, you go into the meeting hall, and it is as it normally is. You know, there are- there are uh, placemats set out and you know, plates and forks and knives, and people- people seem to have left their books out and their notes. Like, again there is no one here. But it is as if everyone vanished at once in the middle of their day. And so there's just like, stuff. But like, the books are just on fire, but there is something about this weird dream state that you're in that makes you think that it's not actually even that dangerous to like- the fire isn't going to hurt you. There is- everything else here is already so much more dangerous and strange.

Jack: Does the fire- does the fire hurt?

Austin: You test it?

Jack: Yeah, I think cautiously, in the way that you- you know, check to see if an electric fence is on or something.

Austin: Yeah. Um, it- it hurts. So, like take a point of damage.

Jack: Oh.

Austin: But it isn't like- it doesn't hurt the way you would think it would. Um, it's not like, 'Ah! I have to get my hand out.' It... You are going to feel this later. But in the moment, you're like, 'Ah, yes. This is what heat is.' [light laugh] Um, I'm trying to think of like a good exam- It's like- it's like, if you like, ever have like, a leg go numb or an arm or you know, something- you've leaned on it wrong, and then like, you hit it. You're like, ' Oh, yes. There was an impact there, but I can't really differentiate sensation from pressure', you know?

Jack: Yeah. Yeah. What am I carrying?

Austin: I don't know. What are you carrying?

Jack: Oh, I'm- Am I- Am I surprised by- Am I carrying anything unusual? Or do I have with me what I anticipate?

Austin: You have with you everything you have- you anticipate. Um, you know what I think is you are as prepared as you could ever be. Like, clean boots. You know what I mean?

Jack: Like ready to go.

Austin: Um, extra water.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Ok, in that case, I think I'm gonna go back outside to- to see- cause like, Hella and Adaire kind of just like- were just sort of like, 'Well, this is very weird.'

Austin: Uh hm.

Jack: And Lem was like, 'Time to go make sure everyone's ok.' And now I'm realizing that like, 'Hang on. Where's Hella and Adaire?'

Austin: Yeah. And you go back out, and they're there. And you're here. And you- I think catch yourself in this moment which is like, 'Alright. I'm gonna wake up now. Any moment.' And then there's the three of you standing there still.

Jack (as Lem): Are we asleep?

Ali (as Hella): No.

Jack (as Lem): Can you hear me? No? [**Ali** and **Janine** laugh]

Ali (as Hella): I- I don't- I don't think so. I don't- I don't know what this is, but I don't- I don't think so.

Ali: Can I Discern Realities? That's what I was saying before without saying it.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Can I just roll this to get-

Austin: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Totally.

Ali: Fuck. [laughs] I have these two points and I don't know if I should do it right now, so this roll will be better.

Austin: You should- you should decide where those- those are going.

Ali: Yeah, I think I'm gonna- I've- I've discerned every game so far, so-

Austin: Yeah. It's a good one to put points into. And that bumped you from twelve to thirteen, giving you a wisdom of one.

Jack: Oh, Hella is wise now. [laughs]

Ali: A little bit.

Austin: Hella's wise.

Janine: Hella the Wise. It sounds good. [**Jack** and **Ali** laugh]

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: Ok. I'm rolling this with the plus one. And that's a six. Great.

Austin: Hey, that's a six. Uh hm.

Ali: Great. Love it.

Austin: Love it.

Ali: Congrats to me.

Austin: Um, so what's it look like when you're looking around. Is this you standing still and just kind of trying to take everything in?

Ali: Yeah, I think so cause it's like- it's like hearing Lem and looking at Lem from afar-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -in this scope, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And then like, trying to look past Lem to be like, how do I answer this question.

Austin: Uh hm. Well-

Ali: And it doesn't go well, I guess.

Austin: -we look past Lem, and your eyes drift upwards to the sky. And as you look up, your face gets hotter and hotter, and you see that the sun is being blocked out by two gigantic wings. The wings of a dragon that is drawing closer and closer. And you say something, but we don't hear what it is back to Lem. Or maybe Lem speaking to you. We don't hear it because it does that roar again that erases sound.

And as you get closer- or as it gets closer, you make out its body, and it is this... strange thing, translucent in places as if made by a sort of um, or composed of a sort of um, kind of semi-translucent flesh and in other places, filled with the black fire of the Heat and the Dark. Its jaw is snapping as it- as it kind of gets closer, like a wild beast, and its eyes are- are empty. And on its back, it carries a knight, or something greater. Clad in gold armor with a red cape.

[Jack de Quidt's "[Something](#)" begins playing in the background]

And behind his head, the- the golden ring of Samothos. I don't know that any of you would recognize it, but if this were the HBO original show, as he reaches his- his left hand out, the golden gauntlet he wears would come into view and would be very noticeable that this is Maelgwyn's gauntlet.

[Music plays out to end]

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical world-building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker. We are continuing our game of Dungeon World by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel. Our agenda is to make the world fantastic, to play- er to fill the character's lives with adventure, and to play to find out what happens. Joining me today, Alicia Acampora.

[0:15:00]

Ali: Um, hi. You can find me [@ali west](#) on Twitter.com, or you can also find the show over [@friends table](#).

Austin: Janine Hawkins.

Janine: Hey, you can find me [@bleatingheart](#) on Twitter.

Austin: And Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi, you can find me on Twitter [@notquitereale](#), and buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereale.bandcamp.com](#)

Austin: You can find me on Twitter [@austin_walker](https://twitter.com/austin_walker). You can support the show at friendsatthetable.cash. And I'm gonna quickly shoutout the incredible fan transcript team because I don't do that enough on the actual show. I do it on Twitter, you know, every now and then. But there- if you go to twitter.com/transcript_fatt, um or to tinyurl.com/fatttranscripts, you can learn about the ongoing fan transcription project. It is a paid gig. It is not paid a fortune. It's you know, it's coming out of pockets, so it's like, I- I pay what I can pay. So, it's not- if you were a professional transcriber, and you were like, 'And now this will be my main job', it probably won't be, unless you do a lot of transcription. It's like, \$0.60 a minute.

Um, but it is- they've done a fantastic job, and huge- a huge amount of the show is now available on transcriptions. There's still a lot to go. But it's like... god, I don't have the number onhand. But it's- it's some- it's like a hundred and eighty hours or something of content that's already been transcribed. Um, you know what? I can do the math real quick. This is an easy piece of math to do. I can hit equal and then like- there's a- there's a spreadsheet- [**Austin** and **Jack** laugh lightly] which is- makes this super easy to do. Yes, I'm- it's ok, you can show me that, and then it's- So, it's thirteen thousand minutes, or two hundred and sixteen hours of content has been transcribed.

Jack: Wow.

Austin: Including most of this current season. Which is pretty impressive. Shoutouts to everyone who's doing that work. And if you want to do it, again you can learn out- learn how to do that at twitter.com/transcript_fatt or at tinyurl.com/fatttranscripts. Um, so, you rolled a six on that, Hella.

Ali: Uh hm.

Austin: And so, you know, sometimes I make a move really hard, and sometimes I make a move that's kind of soft. This is like, in the middle because I think- I do think that seeing this thing gives you the um, the intelligence debility, stunned'. So, go ahead and mark that.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Um, because you've looked into the face of something- something that like, communicates its desire for the nothing to win. And then second, because when you do finally wake up and the three of you wake up together in the cemetery, and you do not remember going there, um, it is- this like, weird double-whammy. First, you are being licked by a dog. There is a dog licking you. It's kind of like a white mutt. Um, and it takes the three of you a moment to recognize it, but this is Barbelo, the dog that you last saw on Samol's weird island boat thing, moving island.

And Barbelo is here, and the three of you are like, around where the- the fight with the dragon happened, near where Samol's grave was. And as you wake up, Barbelo kind of goes to each of you and nudges you and then kind of runs over to where Samol was buried under that

tree and is like, pawing at the ground a little bit and like, whimpering. So, that's like, 'There's a dog. Aw. There's a dog.' [laughs] And the second thing you notice as you wake up with that six is that there is a second sun in the sky.

Jack: Uh oh.

Ali: Oops. [sighs]

Austin: But nothing's on fire yet, so.

Ali: Mmm... mm.

Austin: Uh hm.

Jack (as Lem): That's- that's from the ring, right? They- they did something with the ring.

Janine (Adaire): Nah, it's probably Barbelo. [**Austin** and **Jack** laugh]

Austin: [**Janine** laughs] The Blink Dog has summoned the second sun.

Janine: You heard of a sun dog?

Austin: Yep. Uh hm.

Janine: That's uh- that's him.

Austin: That's him. That's it.

Ali (as Hella): Uh, this blows. Um-

Jack (as Lem): Ok, are we dreaming now?

Janine (Adaire): No, cause this seems normal.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah, I fucking hope not.

Jack (as Lem): Except the sun.

Janine (Adaire): That is a kind of normal. We've seen that before.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah, that what the- that's literally what that ring does.

Jack (as Lem): Did we see the same thing? I saw like, everything was on fire. Everybody was on a boat.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah. Yeah.

Jack (as Lem): Ok, that's not normal.

Ali (as Hella): There was like, voices, the singing. Was that a thing that you all experienced?

Jack (as Lem): Yeah.

Janine (Adaire): Yeah, like child singing? Yeah.

Jack (as Lem): Hey, why are we in the cemetery?

Austin (as Barbelo): [barking foley] Rar.

Janine (Adaire): That's a- that's a very valid question.

Austin (as Barbelo): [barking foley] Rar.

Ali (as Hella): Did someone drag us here?

Austin (as Barbelo): [barking foley] Rar.

Ali (as Hella): Adaire, can you see what's up with that dog? [**Austin** makes a sad dog sound and **Janine** laughs]

Janine: I think I'm just gonna- I'm gonna pet that dog.

Austin: He like, plods over to you and is like, [comforted dog foley] 'raa' and then goes back over to-

Janine: Double ear scratch. [**Austin** laughs lightly and makes another pleasant dog noise]

Austin: And then he like, [dog walking foley] 'tuh-tuh-tuh-tuh' back over to Samol's grave and is like pawing and is like, [sad dog foley] 'rerrr'. Barbelo spent a long time with Samol and finally made it down here. Um, and.... Samol's not here. And he's a very sad dog.

Jack (as Lem): Hey, Pup. I'm sorry. Um...

Austin (as Barbelo): [barking foley] Rar!

Ali: Can I like reach into my pouch and like, pull out a piece of jerky or whatever? [laughs]

Austin: Sure.

Ali: I have adventuring gear. That counts as jerky.

Austin: That does count. It counts- Yeah, take a mark down and write- and write like- give yourself three Barbelo treats, or jerky, I guess. Food, right? Rations is what it is. Uh-

Ali: Five uses.

Austin: Yup, you got it.

Ali: There you go.

Jack: Both parties now have a dog. [light laugh]

Austin: That's true. And Barbelo like, pins it to the ground and pokes at it a bit with one of his hands- one of his paws, and he's like, [dog foley] rrrrr?' and then [bite foley] and like, doin' that thing where like a dog is eating it, but like the half of the jerky is out of his mouth in a weird angle and like, chewing on it.

Jack: Just goin', [dog chewing foley]

Austin: And like, 'I don't know, but it's looks- I bet I look real stupid right now, but that's ok. This is good.' And that's- that's what happenin' with Barbelo.

Jack: Can we look around for any signs of- of how we got here?

Austin: Sure.

Jack: Um- is this a Discern Realities?

Ali (?): [quietly in background] Yes.

Austin: You're- you don't see any dragging. I don't think there's- I don't think there- I don't need to give you a roll for this.

Jack: Oh ok.

Austin: Like, you don't find any like, marks of being dragged here or anything like that. There is no- there's no obvious physical evidence that would suggest that- that anyone brought you here.

Jack: Hm.

Janine: Where's the like, nearest group of people-

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: -right now?

Austin: Um, to the east at the temple or to the south. It's- it's like, early morning at this point. Like seven AM. Um, I think, you know, you can see people- there's probably some guards on

the wall. And there's probably- probably the closest people you can get to are either to the west to the Outhouse area or to the east to the cemetery temple. Either way. Um, and at this point, it's early in the morning, so people are like, setting up shops or are beginning their morning chores. And a lot of people are like- you keep seeing people pointing up at the second sun [Jack laughs lightly] and being like, [whispering] 'What the fuck is going on?' So, which way do you go?

Janine: I want to go to the nearest people who are not inside a building.

Austin: Then to the west probably. Towards the-

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: -the like, food, shopping, home district outside of the Outhouse and between the Outhouse and the walls. Uh... [a car alarm goes off in background] who do you find there? This car alarm. [Jack laughs lightly] There it goes. It stopped.

Janine: All the people have been replaced with cars. [Ali laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Yep. Which is really weird cause you've never seen a car before.

Janine: And then we look back, and Barbelo's a motorcycle.

Austin: Uh hm. Um, so yeah, you see there's, you know, a person who's putting out fruit for the- for the day- or not even fruit probably... Um, what are they selling? Let's just make it easy. This is the spoon seller. [Ali, Jack, and Austin laugh lightly] Do you- Is this someone who knows you, Adaire?

Janine: Uhhh [sighs] Mmmm. I- I don't- I honestly- I have no idea if Adaire would know the spoon seller.

Ali: You've bought a spoon. You've said good morning to the spoon guy, right?

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. This is-

Janine: I don't know that Adaire says good morning to that many people- [light laugh]

Austin: Alright, well then the spoon seller-

Janine: -if I'm being honest.

Austin: -doesn't know you and is like,

Austin (as spoon-seller): I'm still openin' up. Give me a second. Uh, what type of spoon you lookin' for?

Janine: Uh, [laughs] Mmm. I- [laughs and sighs] This is- mmm. Ok, the line that came to my head immediately was, 'I'm not looking for a spoon; I'm looking for some dish.' But that's-

Austin: Uh hm. [laughs]

Janine: Nah, it's not really... we're not looking for gossip, so it's-

Austin: No.

Janine: -unfortunately not useful. Um,

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah. I'm not really looking for- looking for a spoon. Did you um... did you like, see me and my friends over by the cemetery when you like showed up for work?

Austin (as spoon-seller): Fwoof. Uh...

Austin: They seem real confused.

Austin (as spoon-seller): No? I don't really go to the cemetery that often for- I didn't see anybody walk... No.

Janine (as Adaire): No, but like, you just- you didn't see anyone like laying in the grass or anything?

Austin (as spoon-seller): I was not looking for anyone laying in the grass. [light laugh]

Janine (as Adaire): [sighs] Ok.

Austin (as spoon-seller): Is this a... Is this- are you trying to get street cred? [**Ali** laughs]

Janine (as Adaire): Let me tell you something about street cred. You do not get it from laying in the grass and asking people if they saw you laying in grass. Have a good day. [**Ali** laughs again]

Austin: He has a great day. [**Janine** laughs lightly]

Janine: Good. I did that.

Austin: Uh huh. As far- you canvas the place. No one that you talk to saw you walk- if you came out here uh- you know, I guess- you know what? At some point, here's what ha- if you ask around enough, you'll find a guard who is like,

Austin (as **unname guard**): Yeah. Uh, the three of you walked out there in the middle of the night, and Hella waved you know, her hand, and we let y'all though because you're you three. And that was it. We didn't see you.

Austin: No one stopped you from leaving.

Janine: I don't like that at all.

Austin: Uh un.

Ali: Is- [laughs] I feel like I just want to walk to like, the closest authority. [laughs]

Austin: Sure.

Ali: Like- like a Sunder or Corsica or whatever, but then being like, 'I had a weird dream.' [laughs] is kind of like...

Jack: Also, like who can we- [laughs lightly] how do we know we're not just gonna go and tell a- a cultist?

Austin: Yep. Good question.

Janine: We're in a situation where we know that a magician of questionable intentions has influence in our place. I think it's totally reasonable to go to Corsica to be like, 'Hey, uh, we- we all like, sleep walked out and shared a dream, and that's a little upsetting. We're a little confused about what to do about this.'

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: Like, I think that's reasonable. [laughs]

Austin: So, you go to- so do you go to Corsica then?

Ali: Um-

Janine: I don't know who else we would go to.

Austin: I'm fine-

Ali: Yeah, maybe her and Sunder?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Sure, do you like, say like, 'Hey, we need to fuckin' talk', basically?

Ali: Yeah, cause this is-

Austin: Alright.

Ali: That's what's left of the war table at this point, right?

Austin: Uh, Red Jack's around.

Ali: Ok. Oh, Red Jack might know about weird dreams.

Janine: That's true.

Austin: Sure. Sure. Yeah, definitely.

Jack: He seems like someone who's both had and starred in several weird dreams. [**Austin** laughs quietly]

Ali: Uh hm. He was in our weird dream.

Janine: Also, he seems- he seems like if he was gonna be like, 'well, I guess we have to kill you now', he'd like, at least say it first, whereas I'm not sure that's true of Corsica.

Jack: Right. [laughs] Right.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Yeah, she'd just be like, 'Well, to the dungeon with you.'

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: 'Why don't you just walk over here for a second.' [**Austin** and **Jack** laugh]

Austin: So, yeah. So you call like an- an impromptu war council. And I think, like as soon as you get there, Corsica says,

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): Before anyone asks, I don't know what we do about a second sun appearing. [sighs]

Austin: And-

Ali (as **Hella**): Oh, that was just the ring. We just get that back.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): It was just the ring?

Ali (as **Hella**): Yeah.

Austin: Um, you can see her brow furrow, I mean you can't see her eyebrows because of like, the face-wrap, but you can see that she is furrowing her brow. [light laugh] Sunder- Does- who knows about the ring?

Ali: Oh, you're asking me. I, um-

Austin: Out of character, yeah.

Ali: [laughs] Um, oh. Oh, you're asking Ali, not Hella. Ok.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Who would know about it?

Austin: Adaire was there.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Uh... Hel- or sorry, Hadrian was there. Throndir was there.

Ali: Yes.

Austin: That might be it.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Anyone else you told. So, that's my question really.

Ali: We saw Sunder down there. We might have mentioned it. It was a tense subject, maybe we didn't. I don't know. I almost broke my hand. Um-

Austin: Hey, I'm giving you authority on this. Like, if you want Sunder to have known it, that's totally fine by me. I'm just curious who in this room, and in general, knows about this ring. We knew that the- that the Creed of Samoths, the Cult of the Dark Son-

Ali: Right.

Austin: -knows about it because they were trying to get it even then, but...

Ali: Yeah, I- um, I guess nobody here- like, it's been years and years and years. So, no one here has like, intimate knowledge of it, right? So-

Austin: Right. Outside of Adaire, right?

Ali: Right. Um... [sighs] so yeah, I guess uh, Hella just says,

Ali (as Hella): Yeah, when we were- when we were below in the dwarf place, uh there was- there was this couple running from Dark Son people, actually. Yeah. And um, I've had it since then. And the dragon stole it. Which is kind of a weird thing for a dragon to prioritize, but it happened.

Austin: I think Red Jack and Sunder look at each other. And Red Jack is like- Actually, I think maybe Sunder says like,

Austin (as Sunder): Well, that explains a lot. [sighs] A relic like that, who knows what they can do with it? If it is truly a sun from a lower lamina- or a lower strata, then... that is a- about as powerful as a single thing in this world gets.

[0:30:00]

Jack (as Lem): Is it dangerous right now up there? Or- or do they need to do something else with it to kind of use its power?

Austin (as Sunder): We have-

Austin: I think Corsica steps forward at this point and says,

Austin (as Corsica Neue): I don't care if it's a magic or not. We have tens of thousands outside who need more water than we can already provide. A second sun in the sky is going to have an effect no matter its source. We have enough difficulty raising crops as it is. We don't need an entirely new ecological system.

Jack (as Lem): Ok, Hella, correct me if I'm wrong. So, the sun appears when the ring is worn?

Ali (as Hella): Yeah.

Jack (as Lem): What happens when the ring is removed?

Ali (as Hella): Nothing.

Jack (as Lem): The sun stays?

Ali (as Hella): No. No, I mean, the sun goes away. Nothing happens if it's not being worn. I had it that whole time.

Jack (as Lem): [light laugh] You just were carrying it?

Ali (as Hella): Well, yeah. I just thought-

Austin (as Red Jack): Hella.

Ali (as Hella): -if we needed a sun one day.

Austin (as Red Jack): Hella.

Austin: [laughs] Says Red Jack again.

Austin (as Red Jack): I do not doubt your strength, [Ali laughs] but perhaps there would have been a... safer place to hold a thing of that power.

Ali (as Hella): I didn't think it through. [Ali laughs]

Austin (as Red Jack): Hm, I see. And now-

Janine (as Adaire): I'm gonna be honest-

Austin: Oh, go ahead.

Janine (as Adaire): -I'm also skeptical that there's a safer place, [Ali laughs] but frankly.

Ali (as Hella): Aww, thank you.

Janine (as Adaire): I mean, compared to 24/7 guard.

Ali (as Hella): See?

Austin (as Red Jack): A twenty-four, seven- [laughs] a 24/7 guard that they know the name of. A place that they did not know where it was would be more secure.

Jack (as Lem): So, we just- we just track the ring, and we get it off the finger and we take it back, right?

Austin: Also, wait. What was the- did you talk to all these people about the cult before this?

Jack: No, no. This is our opener.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. Yeah, good. I thought so. I was like, wait a second. I don't think anyone here has been in- has been in that conversation yet. Um, so yeah, I think again, Corsica, who is like, the most practical military person here is like,

Austin (as Corsica Neue): Slow down. What you're telling me is that you, Hella Varal, have been carrying something you knew some cult wanted to get ahold of, and that is why a dragon attacked us last week?

Ali (as Hella): Wel- we don't... That's- we don't know all of that. [Ali laughs] There's lots of reasons why a cult would want to attack this place.

Austin (as **Sunder**): Not just any cult.

Austin: Says Sunder.

Austin (as **Sunder**): The cult of the Dark Son. Yes?

Ali (as **Hella**): Uh hm. [**Jack** blows in the microphone a light laugh]

Austin (as **Sunder**): The Creed of Samothres. Good. Yes, good. [sighs]

Jack: Who is in the room? [**Ali** laughs]

Austin: The three of you, Red Jack, Sunder, and Corsica. That's what I think you've all said, right?

Jack: So, I think Lem just gets up and stands by one of the- closes one of the doors, and just stands like, with his back to the door, facing into the room.

Jack (as **Lem**): This is an extremely delicate matter. If the cult was able to get a- a... [sighs] They have people here. And we don't know who any of them are.... Hm. Well, I know it's not Hella. And I know it's not Adaire. And really I'm just a little... you know, we don't know who it could be.

Austin: Out of character, I do want you to remember that Adaire has a list of some people's names.

Jack: Yeah, 100%.

Austin: It's not a complete list. It's a list of transactions done with the Creed.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, totally.

Austin: But I do want to make sure that we all- that listeners and also we, as players, are all onboard on that, which included- I'm just gonna say some of the names I said last week, so that we have them in our heads again. Uh, The Lardwulf. [light laugh] Esparnarde the Great and Eclectic. I think it had um, the other- Elan Showman was on there. And Uklan Tel was someone who had um, some- had a relationship with the Cult of the Dark Son.

Jack: The reason Lem isn't saying these names is because then Corsica would-

Austin: Totally.

Jack: -go and kill them, which would be-

Austin: Yep.

Jack: -really effective proof that Corsica isn't with the cult. Um- [**Austin** and **Ali** laugh]

Austin: Yep!

Jack: Well, actually-

Austin: Question them first, maybe, but-

Jack: -what if we give a name? [laughs lightly]

Austin: [laughs] Wow. Neutral. Truly neutral. [**Janine** sighs] I think Corsica is actually more like,

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): Tell me more about this cult. I've heard the name in passing. They don't have a force. They aren't something I've dealt with personally, outside of a few odd encounters.

Austin: Corsica Neue did not join the Dark Brotherhood. That's the one Bethesda thing she didn't do. [**Ali** and **Jack** laugh]

Jack: She thought about it, and was like, next play through.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali (as **Hella**): I'm not really an expert, but they- they seem to have a force now. Or are building one. Um, they have some connection to Arrell. Though that seems recent. Um... Lem, you want to go a little bit more the uh, history of the uh...?

Jack (as **Lem**): They want to hasten the end.

Ali (as **Hella**): That. That's the one. That's the thing to keep in mind.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): The end. The end the end.

Jack (as **Lem**): The end. I don't know why they want to hasten the end. They believe that- they believe that there is some value in um, expediting the destruction. They have existed for a long time. We have records uh, showing that they appeared in old Marielda during the war. But it seems like they have found a foothold in the Last University among us. Their techniques are espionage and um, social manipulation. And they have a fascination with light and darkness. Um, they made a gigantic dragon out of the bones of Samol.

Austin (as **Red Jack**): My friend.

Austin: Says Red Jack.

Jack (as Lem): So, it's- it's- I really can't understate the- the power that these people- If they made a dragon to act as their courier, what else are they capable of?

Austin (as Red Jack): I have heard my children speaking their names. Talking about an advocate. A rumor spreading through the camps. Someone who-

Austin: And I think he kind of like, looks away from Corsica a little bit.

Austin (as Red Jack): -will attend to their needs in a more direct way than the current leadership.

Jack: Janine, didn't Rix and- didn't Rix and Rowe like, have some kind of connection with them?

Janine: Kind of- they were doing jobs for them, mostly to get in good with the Moonlighters who also do jobs for them.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Hm.

Jack (as Lem): What is the Advocate? **[Ali sighs]**

Ali (as Hella): I mean, we knew they were doing this, right? This is the- the thing that they're doing. They're trying to make people trust them. Or at least, rely on them so when they can strike, they will.

Jack (as Lem): And they did. Perhaps we waited too long.

Austin: Um, I think Corsica says,

Austin (as Corsica Neue): It sounds like you put a period at the end of that sentence. Perhaps we waited too long, the end? Perhaps we waited too long, what? There is still time to take action. We will root out this cult. Any leads we have, we need to put on the table now.

Austin: And Sunder sighs.

Austin (as Sunder): Tel may have had some dealings with the cult.

Jack (as Lem): Yeah?

Austin (as Sunder): I warned him against it. And then he showed results. The gel- the- the alloy. [exhales] I don't know who he was speaking with, but they seemed distant. And

the work we do is... it always borders some ethical dilemmas. It is not my place and hasn't been to warn other academics off of their research path. But you would have to ask him about more. That is all I know. And if I'd known that they were a threat here and not just some group of mad zealots, six lamina down, I would have said otherwise. And next time you know that there is an active cult gunning for us-

Ali: Wait-

Austin (as Sunder): -please let the room know.

Ali: -doesn't Sunder know all of this because of the- vis a vis the Ben stuff?

Austin: The Ben stuff? The Ben stuff's about Arrell.

Ali: Oh, oh, but Arrell- Ok.

Austin: Yeah, that's about-

Ali: I guess I've just weirdly connected this in my head cause it's like, 'oh, he wants to have a foothold here to-' ok.

Austin: Yeah. he's-

Janine: I mean, Arrell was trading with Dark Son, right?

Austin: Yes. He-

Janine: And that was the whole shipment thing?

Austin: He sold them the spell that let them reanimate those bones and transport them. Yes. In exchange for supplies, which is part of what um, you discovered, Janine- or Adaire-

Janine: Uh hm.

Austin: -with that- with that stuff. But that's- I kind of made sure to underline that as a transactional arrangement, not a- You know, he sold them this stuff. He was not building it for- he was not like, 'and I- You and I agree at the end.'

Ali: Oh, I thought-

Austin: It was one more example of him getting what he needs and being willing to work with bad people.

Ali: I think the bridge I was making was that he was opening a portal to let people in. And I was assuming that like, the members who would show up would be Dark Son. Um-

Austin: Oh, he didn't- he didn't open any portals for them.

Ali: Right.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Well, I mean, that's the plan, right?

Austin: I don't think so. No. The- all he did was give them the spell that let them create the dragon.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Or unearth the dragon.

Ali: And none of that was in Jerod's [Ali says Jerard's] stuff, which is like, 'one day, they're gonna invade.' I guess they would all already be here. Ok. I'm just- then I was- [inaudible]

Austin: [overlapping] Right, no. Yeah. They're plan is to like, spread- Based on Jerard- ah, Jerod's journal is to like, spread their- it's to support people, right? It's to like, win with bread. And convince people that they can do what the current leadership is failing to do. And to convert them, basically. Um, but does not have anything about an advocate or about this dragon bone stuff. That could be new. That could be stuff that has changed Jerod was first-

Ali: Right. Yeah.

Austin: -investigating stuff. So, yeah. So, yeah. So, Sunder- you know, Sunder knows that the Creed exists, but thought it was a thing that was at the Buoy, you know?

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Sunder's bullshit expla- I don't fuckin'- [Jack and **Ali** laugh] Sunder's out here like, 'Yeah, we were doing unethical stuff, but I never get in the way of another academic'. But Lem doesn't really care about that. Um- [laughs]

Austin: Mmm, uh hm.

Ali (as Hella): Sunder, in your opinion, this thing with Uklan, is this... [sighs] Can we- can we lean on Uklan to lead us to this other person? Or should we... start with Uklan in terms of solutions?

Austin (as Sunder): [sighs] If... We need to move quickly.

Austin: She says.

Austin (as **Sunder**): I believed that he was buying a small amount of raw material from them, was learning a handful of things from them because I- I thought that they were distant. If they are this close, then their demands may have been higher than I expected. I don't know what his half of this deal was.

Ali (as **Hella**): [whispers] Oh my god.

Austin (as **Sunder**): We should speak with him immediately.

Jack (as **Lem**): I think we need to- Let me speak to him. I think if we all go, we'll scare him. I'm a-

Ali: [light laugh] Hella giggles. She doesn't giggle. She just smirks and does not look at them- Sunder anymore.

Austin: [laughs] Corsica interrupts and is like,

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): No, I'm not going to let you speak with him alone. We are going with you or I am sending guards.

Jack (as **Lem**): Why not?

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): Because who knows what he could do if he is working with this cult? He could kill you, on the spot. Or flee the moment that he thinks that you're suspicious of him.

Jack (as **Lem**): Ok. Ok.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): I'm not sending a bard to interrogate a cultist.

Jack (as **Lem**): Wow. Um-

Ali (as **Hella**): Well, it would be a magician. Me, too. So, relax. I- I didn't mean it like- Oh my god. Um- [**Ali**, **Jack**, and **Janine** laugh]

Jack (as **Lem**): Ok, what if we use Tel? What if we- what if we set a trap? Rather- well, cause we can go in there, and we can grab Tel. We can pull him for questioning. Or we can give him just a- a little bit of rope and hope that he leads us to his contact. And then we pull in as many people as we need to. But I'm just saying that if we- and I'm happy to go with a guard, but I'm just saying that if we go out and we just pull Tel in, then his contact knows that- that he's gone dark, suspects that something's happened, escalates in some way, thinks that we're on to them.

Austin: Corsica nods.

Jack (as Lem): I'm not saying we give Tel anything valuable. We- we- we just set something up that- that possibly gives us a link of some kind.

Austin (as Red Jack): What do you have in mind?

Jack (as Lem): [sighs] We ask for something. We ask for an item that we cannot get. And- and we make the... We appeal to Tel's ego. He's always been [sighs] desperate to be liked. Desperate to be correct. Am I- am I right here, Sunder? You knew him better than I did.

Austin (as Sunder): You're describing my friend very accurately.

[0:45:00]

Jack (as Lem): And so we ask for something that- that we cannot possibly get. But that we suspect he can.

Ali (as Hella): But that seems more risky than just asking him what he promised them.

Jack (as Lem): What, just being like, 'What did you get from the- from those people'?

Ali (as Hella): Yeah. What did you-

Jack (as Lem): But then- what if he's under surveillance? What if-?

Austin (as Corsica Neue): Who all can we be sure we trust?

Austin: Asks Corsica.

Jack (as Lem): The gnoll Callowkeen.

Austin (as Corsica Neue): He seems good. Who else? Is that it? [sharp inhale and exhale]

Ali (as Hella): Everyone in this room, as far as I know.

Austin (as Corsica Neue): And those away? Hadrian? Rosana?

Jack (as Lem): Unlikely. Unlikely.

Ali (as Hella): Yes.

Austin (as Corsica Neue): Yes- yes? Or unlikely?

Ali (as Hella): Yes, that we can trust them.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): Despite the connec- [sighs] Ephrim?

Jack (as **Lem**): I'm afraid of Lord Ephrim's retinue.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): Of course.

Ali (as **Hella**): But why would they- if they're here contributing to- to making this real, to- to having this survive, why would they...? [sighs] I don't know. I don't know.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): They could be assassins. They could be-

Ali (as **Hella**): We already know they're assassins.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): No, I mean [Jack laughs] Ephrim's retinue, waiting for the right opportunity.

Janine (as **Adaire**): They could also just be trying to make the best of a situation until their better solution manifests.

Austin: Sunder says, um,

Austin (as **Sunder**): We need to make a decision on Tel, and I need to immediately begin to research what they could be doing with a second sun. Do you have any other information?

Ali (as **Hella**): Sunder, do you still have that body?

Austin (as **Sunder**): Excuse me? [Austin and Jack laugh]

Ali (as **Hella**): The one from the dragon fight. You took her. Or I heard something from someone that you did.

Austin (as **Sunder**): Uh, yes. We have not-

Austin: -or is like,

Austin (as **Sunder**): We buried her-

Ali (as **Hella**): Oh.

Austin (as **Sunder**): -in the- a week- er three days ago. But I know where it is. Why? Are there more clues you wish to uncover?

Janine (as **Adaire**): Do you wanna like, check the pockets or something?

Ali (as Hella): Well, no I could like- uh, I- I have this whole- I have a friend [laughs] who can get me in touch with her. I just need to have access to the body. Um-

Austin: Corsica nods and says like,

Austin (as Corsica Neue): Of course. [Ali laughs] Yeah. Mm. You should do this at once. I can send you some- some people to help dig up the body.

Jack (as Lem): From my conversations with Callowkeen, we have some idea of their heading.

Jack: Um, and I describe the location of the like- What did Callowkeen- did he call it a camp?

Austin: Southwest and-

Jack: He called it like, a- a point- a location, right? Like a-

Austin: Yeah, he said southwest into the woods. There was a- there was a tree type that he gave you. It was like, 'what I wouldn't tell you is- it wouldn't be- it would be near an old tree' or something, you know?

Jack: [laughs] Yeah. And then it turned out it was- it was exactly true. Um, so I think I- I think um, you know, I sketch on a map that location.

Austin: Uh hm.

Jack: And say, you know,

Jack (as Lem): Callowkeen scouted from above. This point seems to be of interest to him. I think we need to make a decision as to how quiet we want to keep this in general conversation around the university. How aware should citizens be, if at all?

Janine (as Adaire): If people in general hear about a group that is promising to do better for them, and they haven't heard about that group before, that doesn't help us particularly.

Austin (as Red Jack): Nor would it be wise to begin propagandizing against them because that is how it will be spun if we step out and say that this group, which has apparently done material good, is somehow not to be trusted. These people need homes and food. And we are providing all we can, but that may not be enough.

Ali (as Hella): [sighs] Well, what are we empowered to give right now? Som- something that's at least visible. Some sort of direct effort.

Austin: Corsica says,

Austin (as Corsica Neue): I normally leave- [sighs] I normally leave this sort of stewardship to Ephrim, but we could dig deeper- go deeper into the- into the coffers. It would mean taking a real risk, but hold a festival. Pass out more food. Make sure everyone eats well today in the hopes that tomorrow provides. But if they learn that when tomorrow comes, we don't have enough for them, that will cause its own problems.

Austin: What I'm basically saying in terms of mechanics is, right now the- the- what do you call it? The stronghold does not have any needs anymore- um, or I guess it still needs [thinking sounds] 'tchu-tchu-tchu', let's see. You took care of the- the medicine problem, if you recall.

Ali: Yep.

Austin: And it has- I believe it has plus prosperity. But basically you could take a need for food um, that would basically be like you're cashing in some of that food to get an immediate like, loyalty boost basically, in order to uh, to counteract that part of the Dark Son. But it would mean that long term, you would- you would kind of have dipped so deep into your coffers- or into your- your stores that you would be at a bit of a disadvantage if, for instance, there was a food crisis coming.

Janine: Or possibly some kind of drought caused by multiple suns.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: For- for instance. Yeah.

Ali: Can I suggest the thing that I wanted to anyway? This is probably a fine time for it. Um-

Austin: Sure.

Ali: Cause I think Hella is like, shaking her head and is like,

Ali (as Hella): No, we- we don't have to waste anything. We just have to show them that we care. That we- we want their lives to- to feel normal here, long term. Who do we have who can start building houses?

Austin (as Corsica Neue): Our guards, perhaps? Uh, I-

Ali (as Hella): Yeah.

Austin (as Corsica Neue): There is... So, there is a cult that has infested our ranks. And what you want me to do is to pull people off the walls and put them into house-building mode?

Ali (as Hella): The people here are scared. And if they're sitting in the grass watching a bunch of people look over the walls, they're gonna keep being scared. If it looks like we're competent enough to let them do that, we can at least keep up appearances until-until-

Austin (as Corsica Neue): Who decides who gets a house first? Do you want to be on that one, Hella?

Ali (as Hella): Sure.

Austin (as Corsica Neue): Do you want to start walking the groups and decide which families get which houses first?

Ali (as Hella): Sure. Sure.

Austin (as Corsica Neue): Alright, then that is your job this week. We can build a hundred by week's end. We have enough men for that.

Ali (as Hella): Ok.

Austin (as Corsica Neue): Alright.

Jack (as Lem): Ok, so let's recap. A conversation with Tel with a guard. Sunder begins researching the sun. We send somebody out perhaps to the- the point that the gnoll mentioned. And we start building houses.

Austin: Red Jack nods and says,

Austin (as Red Jack): As far as to-do lists go, this one is not so bad.

Jack (as Lem): Ok.

Ali (as Hella): Um, before we all split off, I just need to ask um, has anyone ha- been having any weird visions? [**Ali** and **Jack** laugh] Waking up in different places? Uh-

Jack: Lem just like, looks at Hella and Adaire, just like- [laughs]

Jack (as Lem): [overlapped] Yeah.

Ali (as Hella): Maybe finding items moved?

Austin: Sunder stares at you.

Austin (as Sunder): Strange dreams.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah.

Austin (as **Sunder**): Are- are you having strange dreams?

Ali: [laughs] I think she like, looks cautiously to Lem and Adaire. Um, and then is like,

Ali (as **Hella**): Yeah. And we all just woke up outside.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): Oh.

Austin: Says Corsica.

Ali (as **Hella**): Which is-

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): So you may be compromised already. [**Ali** exhales]

Jack (as **Lem**): Yes.

Janine (as **Adaire**): No. That makes no fucking sense. [laughs] That's not- this is a different... thing, for sure.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): For sure... For sure.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I mean, we're talking about- we're tal- we're talking about-

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): Tell me about your dream.

Janine (as **Adaire**): -the cult that's like... that's like, actively recruiting people. I feel like if we'd been actively recruited into a cult, we wouldn't be here all like, 'Hey, let's- let's do something about this cult and also our weird dreams.' We probably just go fish.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): Cults can do multiple things at once, Adaire.

Ali (as **Hella**): Wha- we're merely valuable targets. And we were the closest to whatever that fucking dragon spell was.

Austin: Sunder nods and says,

Austin (as **Sunder**): It is likely that. An effect of that.

Austin: I think Red Jack says, um- I think it's like, Red Jack shakes his head at that and says,

Austin (as **Red Jack**): It is unlikely to be a mere after-effect. There are dreams, and then there are dreams. And with Samol gone, I do not know who is in charge of the latter.

Ali (as **Hella**): Wait. He did dreams, too?

Austin: Um, he told you he did dreams.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Because all of the Marielda intros, including the one where he said that he is the person who sends dreams to people um, are things he told you personally.

Jack: Hmm.

Ali: Hella would have forgotten that. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, totally. It was a decade ago. [Ali laughs] Totally. Yeah, absolutely. Like Marielda's long. [laughs]

Ali: Yeah.

Jack (as Lem): Do we want to consider keeping a watch at night on us? I don't like this as much as any of you. [Ali sighs]

Austin (as Sunder): What did you dream?

Austin: Asks Sunder.

Ali (as Hella): Jeez. Um...

Jack (as Lem): Fire and darkness. The University burned.

Ali (as Hella): The whole world burned. It was bullshit. It's fine.

Janine (as Adaire): Kids were singing.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah, that one, too.

Janine (as Adaire): Everyone was on a boat.

Jack (as Lem): They were singing a Dark Son slogan, so if there's any question that we might have at this point that this is independent of the Dark Son, I just- we should put that to paid straight away. Um, and then um... there was a dragon.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah.

Jack (as Lem): It was made of the- the stuff, and it was being ridden by a- by a golden knight. I think that about covers it. Everybody else was leaving on a boat.

Austin (as Sunder): A golden-

Austin: I think actually- probably actually Red Jack's-

Austin (as Red Jack): A golden knight. Describe him for me.

Ali (as Hella): Uh, he had like, a thing. He had like, a thing on his arm. Like a golden gauntlet.

Ali: I think [laughs] Hella's like, holding up her arm with her own like-

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Like a glove, but metal.

Ali: -thing. Yeah. Cause she wears those. She has like, arm cuffs.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: But they're not as fancy.

Austin: Yeah, this is like, fancy platemail with like, you know, the kind of like, multiple tiers so that you can like, close your fist around- you know.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Like, you know what I mean when I say a fancy fuckin' cool gauntlet, it's Maelgwyn's gauntlet. [Ali laughs] And I think Red Jack is like- You can feel- you can see Red Jack start to get shook.

Jack: That's got to be a super unpleasant thing to witness.

Austin: Uh huh. [sighs] He says,

Austin (as Red Jack): I will work with Sunder to research this... We may be dealing with the Solarch, himself.

Jack (as Lem): The what?

Austin (as Red Jack): The head of the creed. The Solarch.

Austin: S-O-L-A-R-C-H.

Austin (as Red Jack): Above the exarchs. Above the prelates. Everyone reports up to the Solarch.

Ali (as Hella): Well, yeah. We cut off the head. That doesn't change anything.

Austin (as **Red Jack**): I fear his head was cut off a long time ago. And it has not stopped him yet. We need to begin now.

Austin: And he stands up.

Jack: And then, I think Lem opens the door to the- to outside of the meeting hall and is just like- it's just a day outside, right? Like, there's a second sun in the sky, but like, the-

Austin: It's a very hot day out. It's like- like, it's only the first day of this, so it's probably not as hot as it will get.

Jack: Cool. [laughs]

Austin: But it is a very hot day. Um, and you know, for what it's worth, people are- like, in- throughout all of the tents and the kind of like, refugee quarters, people are handing out as much water as they can. People are staying hydrated. You know, there are- there are- shade is trying to- is being provided as much as possible. People are playing in the river a lot, I suspect, around the Outhouse. Like, I bet you there's a lot of people who are just like, 'Fwoof, I'm just gonna be in the water today.' And then lots of people just like, covering their bodies to make sure they don't burn. Because that is a real, real risk. Just from the way the sun works.

Ali: Fair.

Austin: Um, I think part of the effort is also clearing out more of the central university like, building so that people can move from the dormitories into the main like, towers. Um, tran- like, uh, clearing out old, broken classrooms to turn those into dormitories.

[1:00:00]

Just like, people are working on it as best as they can. And I think immediately, Hella, you know, you do see guards going out into the woods to cut down trees and produce wood so that they can bring them back and start to stockpile what they need to build houses. Though under the sun, that is hard work. Um, who wants to go first with their follow up investigation? Or are all of you going to the corpse?

Janine: No.

Ali: [quietly] Everyone is invited.

Jack: No, I'm gonna skip the corpse.

Austin: Ok.

Ali: Oh, bye guys.

Janine (as **Adaire**): You have a lot of fun with that corpse, Hella.

Ali (as **Hella**): You don't have one question for the corpse.

Janine (as **Adaire**): No.

Ali (as **Hella**): Neither of you.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I don't think either of us really saw the corpse in action as much as you did, so-

Ali (as **Hella**): Yeah, but it's just, you know, a Dark Son person. Just a fountain of knowledge. They're dead already. They're gonna talk.

Jack (as **Lem**): Yeah, actually, I will go. If I can have this conversation before I speak to Tel, um- But we need to do it now. Like, now.

Ali (as **Hella**): Yeah, I have to fuckin' make a list, or-

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali (as **Hella**): -do whatever Corsica thinks I can't do. [**Jack** laughs]

Austin: She thinks you can do it. She just thinks that like, deciding who gets a house is a really hard decision.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And it's just not the type of decision she likes to make. It's why she lets Ephrim do it. She likes to decide who dies.

Jack: It's nice that she has that luxury. [**Ali** laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh. Yeah, having two rulers, it turns out... Um-

Jack: Ok.

Ali: Convenient, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, has some- some ability to disclaim the things you don't want. So, yeah, the corpse. Um, you dig it up. I think Corsica sends people to help dig it with you still. And um, there is a corpse, and you know, it's been put- it's been put to rest in a respectful way. No one- it's not like, you know, tossed in here. It's a cheap casket, but it's a casket. And you pop it open, and there is the corpse. And I think we don't like- we don't linger on the corpse itself. We get lots of

shots up from the casket, up at you, and you know, oblong at it, so that you don't ever see a gross corpse in there. What do you do? What is this move?

Ali: I have to roll whatever this is. And I hope that this goes ok for me.

Austin: This is Dark Blade?

Ali: I think so.

Austin: Let's see. Um, or is it Road- Road- It's Road to Perdition, right?

Ali: Ok.

Austin: 'When you draw upon the unholy power in your dark blade, choose one of the following.'

Ali: Oh, this is that one. Ok.

Austin: And then it's the- it's 'plunge your blade into a corpse. Its spirit will answer any three questions you pose to the best of the knowledge it had in life and the knowledge it gained in death.' And that is rolling charisma.

Ali: Ok, let's go.

Austin: What is your charisma? A one. Plus one.

Ali: It is one. And I rolled a [inaudible]

Austin: That is a thirteen! Holy shit.

Ali: Oh, thirteen- god- oh my god. Ooo-wee.

Austin: So, what's this look like on the screen as you do this?

Janine: Um-

Austin: Or what Lem- what like- what's it look like to Lem who is next to you, please.

Jack: Ok, so-

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Jack (as Lem): So, how we doing this, Hella?

Ali (as Hella): I- [laughs] I-

Jack (as Lem): What does this like, involve?

Ali (as Hella): Um, well, I need the sword.

Jack (as Lem): Ok.

Ali (as Hella): Um, cause I think that'll help Adelaide.

Jack (as Lem): So, are we like, holding the sword up and-?

Ali (as Hella): I already stabbed her the one time. I think it has to be like, a direct-

Jack (as Lem): We have to stab her again?

Ali (as Hella): Well, just the once.

Jack (as Lem): Just the once!? **[Ali laughs]** Ok. You know- Ok. Alright. Fine. C- Can I turn my back?

Ali (as Hella): Yeah.

Jack (as Lem): Ok. Right. I'll be over here. Let me know when I can ask the question.
[Ali laughs]

Ali: I think- I think Hella like, very carefully looks between Lem and the body and like, her sword. And then like, we don't have to like- we're not gonna see the body, but I think very carefully like, does it through like, an arm or whatever cause that seems the nicest. Um-

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: So, like a little poke. **[Ali laughs]**

Ali: Yeah, just like a- just a nice-

Austin: I don't know. This says 'plunge your blade into a corpse'.

Ali: Yeah, it does say that.

Austin: I don't think like, poking it into the arm is 'plunging your blade into a corpse'.

Ali: Well, it's a plunge. It goes through.

Austin: Mmmm. That's a-

Jack (as Lem): Is it working? Has it happened yet?

Austin: No. It has to be a plunge into the corpse.

Ali: Your upper arm [laughs] is by- Ok, fine.

Austin: Uhhh.

Ali: Fine, fine, fine. We have this comedy gag of Hella just [laughs]

Austin: Just hitting a fuckin'-

Ali: Lem discussing it. We could just- it's just her face, and you just hear like, her sword hit wood and then-

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: -dirt of whatever, you know?

Austin: Yeah. Pokes through.

Ali: It's been plunged.

Austin: Yeah, uh hm. Um, so what's this look like? Is it- is this like, the thing that we saw with Hadrian and Jericho all those years ago? Where like, there is just a ghost in front of you momentarily that like, is summoned up in front of you in a kind of spectral form?

Ali: I-

Austin: Is it like-

Ali: -guess so. I don't know. It's weird because it was like, Adelaide being like, 'Well, you know, I'm holding onto her for you.'

Austin: Yeah, I think she meant like, she's gonna let you do this, basically.

Ali: Right. Yeah.

Austin: She's gonna make sure she doesn't- Because- because the- this person would have happily jumped into the Heat and the Dark. You know what I mean?

Ali: Right. No, no, no, no.

Austin: So that you could not do this. Um, this is Exarch Braeven again.

Ali: Right. Yeah, I guess the thing I don't- I'm saying is that, I don't know if it's like, this ghost just shows up or if it's like, sword goes in, Lem opens his eyes, and it's him and Hella and this person in like, a version of Adularia.

Austin: Yeah. Maybe.

Ali: [overlapped] Or Adularia?

Austin: Yeah, it could- I could go either way with that. Um, I- [thinking noise] I think it has to be here.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Um, it- or- I think it probably- it could go either way. It's a matter of like, I don't want- what we should- Hmm. There are abilities that people have in this game that take them other places, right?

Ali: Oh, ok. Fair, fair, fair.

Austin: That we- we- that we- Sorry, no, no, no. That's not what I'm saying. Uh, what I'm saying is like, we have used- we have shown people go other places sometimes in this way. Where it's like, [finger snap] Ephrim is suddenly talking to Alyosha. Hadrian is suddenly talking to Samothos or Samot in like- in a different place. And that stuff is- I want to keep doing that stuff, but what I want to make sure of is that we are also clear that if you did this in the middle of combat, you would not be whisked away to be safe.

Ali: Oh. No, no, no, no, no.

Austin: Do you know what I mean? I'm just wanting to- putting that on the table in terms of like- So, yeah. In this case, you can go to Adularia. Another time though, maybe it's just a ghost who appears, you know? Uh, so yeah.

Ali: Right. I feel like it's kind of like a gray space, right? Where it's like-

Austin: Yes. Yeah.

Ali: -they can probably still see the university itself around them, but it's like-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -as if there was like, a film over it, right?

Austin: Yeah, I like that a lot. Totally. So, then yeah. Lem, you are now in hell. [Ali laughs] But it's like, really sick, goth hell. And like, it's like, open hell.

Jack: Great.

Austin: And I- I think it's probably like, effectively off to the side of the, kind of like, wandering line of people who are walking into the nothingness or being brought into Adularia and kind of like, um, brought over. So- so you get three questions. The way this move works is- it says-

Jack: Oops. I always do that. Sorry.

Austin: That's ok.

Jack: I accidentally rolled Charming and Open.

Austin: You did. Uh, which isn't even a thing you roll. It's just a thing. Which I'll let you use cause you're here, actually. But let's start with Hella's stuff. Hella's thing says that 'you can ask three questions that it will answer to the best of its knowledge'. Uh, so what are they? I think she sees you, and she is like,

Austin (as Exarch Braeven): [exhales]

Austin: And like, you can hear that she- she is like- you can hear her trying to pull herself back into the line that will take her to the Heat and the Dark, basically. **[Ali laughs]** Which is this like- this like, um, almost like a- a gust of spirits, right? It's like this- as if you can see- you know the way that the wind is animated sometimes?

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: It's like those sorts of lines through the air. White lines through the- the dark sky of Adularia. And there are buildings around. And you can see- I mean, Adularia's slowly beginning to fill with more people as it turns into a real settlement and a real afterlife. But it isn't- it isn't a city yet, I'll say. Um, so what- what do you want to ask to Exarch Braeven?

Ali: Um, I didn't know I only had three questions, so I'm- **[laughs]** Um-

Austin: The move says- the move says 'will answer any three questions you pose'

Ali: Yeah. Um, so-

Austin: And I'm gonna give you a bonus because of the- the Charming and Open from Lem.

Ali: Ok, cool.

Austin: If- if Lem says something frankly, you know?

Ali: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I think the opening to this conversation is Hella being like,

Ali (as Hella): You are now gonna give me all the answers that you denied me in your life.

Austin: Uh huh. [light laugh]

Ali: And I-

Austin: And I think she says,

Austin (as Exarch Braeven): Only because I am required.

Ali (as Hella): Exactly.

Ali: But yeah, I feel like it's just high-level stuff, which is obviously like,

Ali (as Hella): How did you get access to the university?

Austin: Um, and she says,

Austin (as Exarch Braeven): We walked in. There are so many here, and so many of us around you. Entering the university is easy.

Ali (as Hella): Well, I wasted that one. Lem. [**Austin** and Ali laugh lightly]

Jack: I want like a code word or some- I want like... I want to know how they identify each other. But I- I want to make sure I ask it in such a way that I don't just get the bullshit like, mantra, which we've known they used in the past. But I assume, they have to have something more secretive than that here cause otherwise people would just be like, 'What are you saying?' Yeah, or like,

Jack (as Lem): How do you identify your kind? What is the code word? What is the- the method by which you identify your kind?

Austin: Uh, and I think it's... I think it's that she holds out her left arm where Hella has plunged a sword through it- No, uh- [light laugh] And there is a- a small- like, a ring that has been burned into- into her arm. That is like, a symbol. And then she pulls her hand back.

Ali: [quietly] Um-

Austin: Oh, and then I get to ask you a question, right? They may answer truthfully, then they- then they may ask you a question from the list which you must answer truthfully. Um, 'how can I get you to blank', I think. Um, [exhales]

Austin (as Exarch Braeven): How can I get you to devote yourself to the Darkness, Lem? [**Ali** laughs quietly]

Austin: Which you must answer truthfully.

Ali (as Hella): You're wasting your time, lady.

Austin: [repeats stronger] Which you must answer truthfully. [**Ali** and **Jack** laugh]

Jack: Ok, what does Lem really want? Um-

Austin: Small questions.

Jack: I think if they could show me how it all works. How it's all put together. And if in that knowledge- or if they could- if they could promise me that- If in that knowledge I would be able to- to work out what happens next in big and small scales, that would be incredibly enticing for Lem.

Austin: And you say it in those words? What do you say? What's Hella hear you say?

Jack: I think actually what- what Hella sees in this moment is a reflection of the Lem that she saw working in Aubade.

Austin: Hmm.

Jack: Um, just this deeply frustrated academic. Um, or semiotician. And I think- I think all Lem says is,

Jack (as Lem): If you would tell me how it all works.

Austin: And she smiles. Two more from Hella. [**Ali** laughs]

Ali (as Hella): Um, is there- is there any magic at work currently at the university that's being done?

Austin: [quietly in background] By the cult.

Ali (as Hella): And I don't mean like a spell here and there. [**Jack** laughs]

Austin: Right. Um-

Jack: 'None of your smart answers, corpse.' [**Ali** laughs]

Austin: Um, I mean, I think the answer is yes. Um, and I- I can tell you in like, plain language that it's like, a combination of things. It's uh, you know, people who are casting you know, glamour spells on themselves to make themselves more charismatic. It's people who are casting spells to produce additional- small amounts of additional food, right? Um, it's people using stuff that they've- that they- using spells, scrolls, and potions and stuff like that that they've bought or stolen over the years to produce the effect that they are a magical and powerful source of- of um- of safety and- and stability. And I think that's part of what- what she

underscores- or what- what comes out of her answer for you is, they are- [sighs] I think the way she says it is like,

Austin (as **Exarch Braeven**): And soon, once our Advocate arrives, we will do so much more.

Austin: With the- the implication being that like, those spells they're doing are the sorts of things that in like, in a- in Baldur's Gate or whatever are ti- or Elder Scrolls are tied to a scroll that they found or a magical ring or a potion. They can't cast spells by themselves anymore because their connection to Samoths doesn't exist. They used to, like Hadrian, be able to pull directly on a god, but now they don't have a god to pull on, which is why they're trying to create the Advocate. Someone whose strength they can pull on directly.

Jack: Do we want to ask a question about the Advocate? Or are we all out of questions? We're all out of questions.

Austin: You have one- You got one- Nah, you have one more.

Ali: No, we have one more. Um, yeah. I feel like that's part of it. But I feel like I- instead of asking like, 'who's the Advocate,' or like, 'when are they coming,' or like, stuff like that, it should be like, 'what do you need?'

Jack: Oh, to get this.

Ali: What are you getting?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That's good.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Um, [exhales and laughs] oh, fuck. Ok. Is that what you ask? What do you need to summon the Advocate, basically?

Ali: S- [laughs] I guess. [laughs more]

Austin: Nah, you tell me.

Jack: No, this question suddenly sounds less appealing.

Ali: [laughing] Yes. You couldn't- um-

Austin: No, it's just a matter or like, 'oh I'm gonna get to tell you this thing now instead of later today.'

Ali: Ok. Ok.

Austin: Basically. Um, she says,

Austin (as Exarch Braeven): We have nearly all we need already. We have a sun, disposable. We have raw body, shapeable into its perfect form.

[1:15:00]

Austin (as Exarch Braeven, cont.): We have our Solarch who will give it wisdom and direction. Now all we need is life, and thankfully, we have someone who has eagerly copied it down for us. Word by word from an old text he was given access to.

Jack: Fuckin' semoticians, man.

Ali: Well, damn.

Austin: And I think like, she's just like, even though those are the three questions she has to answer, she is like spiraling off into zealot- zealotry- or zealous ranting at this point. And she's like,

Austin (as Exarch Braeven): And when the Advocate arrives, all will see why the darkness is preferable to life.

Austin: And so on and so forth. [Ali laughs]

Ali: I- [laughs more]

Jack: Aw, Jesus.

Ali (as Hella): Lem, do you have any more here?

Jack (as Lem): I don't think so. I mean I- I...

Jack: There is stuff I am curious about, but I am worried about speaking frankly with her because I'm curious if she is- I'm curious if death is the end, in that sense. Is she able to communicate with the cult or is she done now? But I am scared that if I ask that question, um we'll be opening ourselves up to more trouble cause she'll then get to ask me a question and possibly, you know, pass that on in some way.

Austin: Uh hm.

Ali: Yeah, I mean we know that she was like, rushing to get into the Heat and the Dark. So, I don't know that she's like, playing a long game here. Um-

Jack: Yeah. She's-

Ali: But-

Austin: I will say she is done- she is no longer bound to answer any questions at this point.

Ali: Right.

Jack: Yes.

Ali: Um, yeah.

Jack: I feel like that was actually pretty useful. We- we got a lot from that. It was all really frightening, [Ali laughs] but like, we did get [laughs] a lot from it.

Austin: Listen, and you haven't even seen the Advocate's stats yet, so...

Ali: Oh boy howdy. But yeah, I guess if uh, there isn't an opening here for Lem, I think it's like, her ranting, and then Hella just like, pulling the sword out.

Austin: [laughs] Uh huh.

Jack: And she's just like, turning off.

Ali: As she's still talking.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And then it just like- it just disappears like a pop, and it's like-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -oh, you know, the birds are cheepin- chirping, and it's like, a ninety degree day again. Sick.

Austin: Yep, uh- it's a hun- it's definitely a hundred degree day. [Ali laughs] There's no way it's not a hundred plus degree day. Adaire, what have you been up to while these two have been talking to a corpse? [light laugh]

Janine: Uh... so I got two things I want to do. The first thing is just an errand. I want to buy some bells.

Austin: Ok. What type of bells? Like handbells or like, chim- like, bells you hang? Like-

Janine: Like bells you put on like a ribbon around your ankle at night.

Austin: Ohh. That's good. **[Ali laughs]** Yeah. Uh huh. Spend a gold, and you can get those. Yeah.

Janine: Dope. Uh-

Austin: Spend two gold, actually if you're getting- Are you getting these for just you or for everybody?

Janine: Like, I'm getting like, three bells and some ribbon, so-

Austin: Yeah, get- spend two.

Janine: Two gold seems- that seems reasonable to me.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Um, the other thing I want to do- Is The Lardwulf around here or is he like, another place?

Austin: He's around here. He's one of the refugees from uh- from Twinbrook.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: Which means he's actually probably in the dormitories. Like, he probably came in with- he probably went to- to Rosemerrow when Rosana was passing through from um, from Velas and joined up with Rosana's crew when she went from Velas to Rosemerrow, and then probably joined them in that initial push through. So, yeah. He's probably in the dorms. Or wherever he is in- during his- his daytime. I don't know what he's doing anymore. He's probably still trying to run a bar, but it's like- it's like a bad version of that bar Red **Jack** had, where it's like a pop-up bar. It's-

Janine: He doesn't have a horse.

Austin: He does not have a horse.

Janine: What does he have instead of a horse?

Austin: Oh, some sort of large bird, probably, right?

Janine: That's still good.

Austin: But not-

Janine: Bird bar? Come on, you can move that really easy.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Janine: Terrain indifferent.

Austin: Yeah. He has like, an emu [ee-moo]. An emu [ee-myoo]. Emu [ee-myoo]? Emu [ee-moo].

Janine: So, it's like a slightly dangerous bar.

Austin: Yeah, definitely.

Janine: Ok. It's very weird.

Austin: Yeah, so you find him. He's probably also in like, the food-shopping district.

Janine: Um, [exhales] I'm trying [laughing] to think of the best way to present- I just realized Adaire's probably super fuckin' hot.

Austin: [laughs] Damn. Humble.

Janine: No, because like, the th- [laughs] So like, the thing with her from the start, remember, is like, she's covered from the neck down.

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh. Yep.

Janine: All the time. One hundo-percent of the time. Like-

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: Boots, leggings, skirt-

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: -top, leather vest element, little cloak thing, gloves.

Austin: Yeah, it's a lot.

Janine: [laughing] That's a lot. Um, but I also don't know that she'd take any of it off. I think she's very uncomfortable. But still has to get shit done. Um, maybe she leaves the cloak behind- she leaves the cloak behind. That's a- that's a reasonable small thing to change.

Austin: Yeah, it's a small- Yep.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah, so I think uh, she goes to find The Lardwulf, but like goes... deliberating looking like uh- I think- I think being hot works in the favor of what she wants here.

Austin: Uh hm. Um, I think as you walk up, he says like, uh- He is like- He's doing his thing where he's like, calling out to people who are walking by. And he says,

Austin (as The Lardwulf): A beer and a water or a beer in a water for only- for only one gold more!

Janine (as Adaire): That doesn't seem like a good upsell, man.

Austin: He is- he is trying to upsell watering down liquor [light laugh] right now.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): It's all this heat.

Austin: He says, and he taps his head three times.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Do I know you from somewhere?

Austin: I don't remember what The Lardwulf sounds like, so I'm just gonna not.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah. You di- we go back, man.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): I go back with a lot of folks. A big group.

Janine (as Adaire): Oh, that's a little harsh.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): What's your name?

Janine (as Adaire): Adaire.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Adaire! I thought you died.

Janine (as Adaire): Uh... right. Well, I guess-

Austin (as The Lardwulf): I haven't seen you in a- in a- in a- a [exhales]

Janine (as Adaire): Decade?

Austin (as The Lardwulf): What- uh, yeah!

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah, tha- yeah. That makes sense. You know, it's a big world.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): So, what do you think? A beer and a water? Only two gold.

Janine (as Adaire): Can I just have the beer?

Austin (as The Lardwulf): That'll be three gold.

Janine (as Adaire): [laughing] What?

Austin (as The Lardwulf): It's an extra- That's a special order. We have to charge extra.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Wait, what's your pitch then? A beer and a water or a water in a beer for one?

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Well, you said you- You said- I said, 'do you want a beer-beer and a water', and you said, 'can I get it without the water', which makes it a special order which drops it down. Uh, raises it up to-

Janine (as **Adaire**): But I thought you were- I thought the special order was the- was the water in the beer. That was the extra.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): That's right. Right. That's only one more. So, if a beer is a one. And then if you want a beer and a water, that's two. But you got a beer and a water without the water, which is a special order, which makes it three gold.

Janine (as **Adaire**): [laughing] You're a son of a bitch.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): I'm just tellin' you how it is. That's the pricing scheme. [Janine/Adaire sighs] I could give you just the water for two gold. Fresh water, right from the river.

Austin: And he points at the river across the way. [light laugh]

Janine (as **Adaire**): People died in that river like a week ago.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): People die a lot of places. Hm?

Janine (as **Adaire**): And I don't drink those places.

Austin: Also, there are people swimming in that river right now. Like- [laughs]

Janine: Yeah, but they're swimming with their mouths closed presumably. I don't know- [laughs] I just-

Austin: Well, like, yeah. Well, no. I'm saying like, he points over to the river where there a bunch of human bodies bathing in it, and in fact, at that point, a- one of the- like, a kid-

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: -starts to come over with a bucket, as if the kid thinks that he's calling for a refill on river water. And he's like,

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): No, no, no. Not yet. Not yet. I-

Austin: He points down at like, [Janine makes disgusted noise] gross river water that's still available to him.

Janine (as Adaire): Ok, I- I... I don't want a beer and a water minus the beer. I would like to separately order another thing on your menu, which is a beer.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): One gold.

Janine (as Adaire): Thank you. That's still a bit much. I just got three bells for half that. Well, for twice that, but-

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Can't drink those, can you? On a hot day.

Janine (as Adaire): No. That's a fair point. They're refreshing in a different way. Um- [exhales] How- how's business?

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Have you heard about the specials I'm runnin'? Great.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah?

Janine: Adaire is looking around. Who else is here?

Austin: No one. [light laugh]

Janine: Uh huh.

Janine (as Adaire): People can get half of what you're offering just by going in that river with their mouth open.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Who wants to drink river water?

Janine (as Adaire): Um, ok. That's a good point. You really got me. You were always better at this stuff than me.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Don't knock yourself. You'll get there one day, Adaire.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah. I just don't think I could ever be a business owner. Um- [Austin laughs] Is there anywhere to sit down?

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Stuart?

Austin: And the emu walks over to you.

Janine (as Adaire): Oh. No, that's- I-

Austin: And pats it on the side.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): I got a saddle. You could saddle it up.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Then I'd be much higher than you.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Alright. Well, I got this stool, if you want to sit on the stool instead.

Austin: And he-

Janine (as **Adaire**): Uh, yeah. I would prefer the stool vastly.

Austin: He lifts a stool that is going to make you sit pretty low on the ground over the bar and places it on the ground. [light laugh]

Janine: Adaire sits on it.

Austin: [laughs] Ok.

Janine: With her beer.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Stuart.

Austin: And then, the emu comes back around behind the bar.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Uh, food? Do you- do you want any chips with that? Or uh-

Janine (as **Adaire**): What kind of chips?

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Fresh.

Janine (as **Adaire**): You shouldn't've lead with that because it immediately made me think they weren't fresh. You don't have an oven or like, a fry- You have an emu.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): [laughs] Who runs and gets me the chips.

Janine (as **Adaire**): From where?

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Well, that's a- that's an industry secret.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I could just follow your emu.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): That would be not sporting. That's bad for competition. We're tryin' to build a society here, Adaire.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Yeah. Is it- [sighs] Are we? Is this working?

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): What- what do you mean?

Janine (as **Adaire**): This- Is this working for you? Is this- cause I feel like this place isn't working for me very well.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): This is my passion, you know?

Janine (as **Adaire**): I don't mean your bar. I mean like, this whole place.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Oh. You're sayin' you wish things could be a little bit better.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Yeah.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): We'll get there. They'll get there. I have faith.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Yeah. Do you?

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Uh hm.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Well, I guess you would have faith if you had a magical, chip-seeking emu, but-

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): It's not magical. I just taught it where to go get the chips. I have a- you almo- I almost spilled the beans. The chips.

Janine (as **Adaire**): You have a distributor.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): See? I almost answered again. I'm not gonna do it. The point is things are gonna get better around here. You just gotta have uh- just gotta believe. You just gotta wait. Pay your dues, and things will - things will get better.

Janine (as **Adaire**): You're not tappin' your head.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Nope. I wouldn't- Why would I tap my head? Never. Not a thing I would do.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Cause that's a thing you do when you believe the thing you're saying is smart advice.

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Ok. Well, I'm just saying maybe it'll take a little bit more to get ahead than just- just paying your dues.

Austin: And he taps his head three times.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Like what?

Austin (as **The Lardwulf**): Making connections. Making sure you're on the right side of things, you know? Gettin' ready for the- for tomorrow. You know, if uh- if it's gonna be a

situation where you know, there's gonna be a little extra sun in the sky, maybe you know that ahead of time, so you can prepare with a nice beer special. This chalkboard didn't write itself, you know?

Janine: What? Wait, what?

Austin: He had like a chalkboard menu-

Janine: Ok.

Austin: -like, laid out, you know?

Janine: I thought that was a metaphor.

Austin: No.

Janine: A little baffling.

Janine (as Adaire): Well, I mean, how... how am I supposed to- to do any of that? I don't even know what side I'm on, nevermind if it's the right one.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Oh, you know the right one.

Janine (as Adaire): I'm just- I'm just doing the stuff that- [sighs] You know, I kind of just go with it.

Austin: Um, this is a move.

Janine: Oh yeah, it is.

Austin: Do you have one in mind? Is this... what is this? Is this just Parley? Is this Bam-

Janine: This could be Connections.

Austin: It could be. Yeah.

Janine: 'When you put out word on the crim- to the criminal underbelly-

Austin: Uh hm.

Janine: -about something you want or need-'

Austin: Yes. I think it's that. I think it's that more than Parley. Like, you don't-

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: He's- you're not offering him anything. You're just kind of saying like-

Janine: This is- I'm- I'm positioning this as something I want or need specifically, as far as he is concerned.

Austin: Yes. Yep. So, go ahead and give me a charisma.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: Charisma is eighteen, so plus three.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Should be- should be good. That's an eight, somehow.

Janine: What the fuck?

Austin: You rolled a- you rolled a three and a one is what happened there.

Janine: Plus the three. Ok.

Austin: Plus the three, yeah.

Janine: Well, it's still a success.

Austin: Uh hm. Uh hm. Where'd that other one co- oh, you have plus one forward from something. You should clear that.

Janine: Oh, oops. That's still a seven.

Austin: It doesn't make a difference. It would have been a seven.

Janine: Yeah. Uh hm.

Austin: It still would have been a partial success. So, on a seven to nine, you'll have to settle for something close or it comes with strings attached, your call. And I think what he says is like,

Austin (as The Lardwulf): I've been going to these meetings. And just good advice. Good life advice. Good, you know, tips for livin' a good life. You should come with me to one of those meetings. Every Wednesday night. You know, we rent a hall out, and uh, we just do a little- it's just like a self-help type thing.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah, that- that sounds- I could use something like that. I don't really do a lot of social stuff these days. So, that's- That might help.

Austin: Um, and then he goes to write out the information on the chalkboard for where you can go for it, and then he realizes that's his chalkboard, and he can't just give it to you. So, instead

he just tells you the name of the building, which is like, one of the buildings in the- in this kind of expanding shops neighborhood.

[1:30:00]

It's like a small, little like, rent- like, hall that you can rent out basically. Honestly, it might just be a room in the Outhouse, now that I think about it, in terms of what has the space for it.

Janine: And that place does have a very come-and-go as you please, no supervision attitude.

Austin: Totally. Yep.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): So, yeah. We meet in the Outhouse every Wednesday night.

Janine (as Adaire): God, that's a bad sentence. Um- **[Austin laughs]**

Austin: It is.

Janine (as Adaire): Cool. Alright. I think I'll- I'll try and make the next meeting.

Austin: He nods, and says,

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Look, I hope I see you there.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Good luck. I hope you don't uh, disappear for a decade again.

Janine (as Adaire): Um, me too. That- Yeah. Well, actually I don't know. It had ups and downs. You take c- Hey, maybe like, [sighs] could you like, get your hands on some lemons or something? I feel like lemons might help you out.

[Jack de Quidt's "[Something](#)" begins playing in the background]

Austin (as The Lardwulf): Oh, I mean, I'll see what I can do, but yuck.

Janine (as Adaire): Well, you don't have to like it. You just have to tell other people to like it.

Austin (as The Lardwulf): I would never lie to a client.

Austin: Taps his head three times. And then a fourth. [light laugh]

Janine: I think Adaire makes a face.

Austin: Uh huh. Alright.

Janine: Doesn't know what that one means. [laughs]

Austin: Mmm. I'm not sure he does.

[Music plays out to end]