

Spring in Hieron 27: A Place and a Time

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AUSTIN: I think you probably like, in your walking around, see Callowkeen like, leap up into the sky, and you probably see Red Jack calling for— *[light laugh]* Everyone hears Red Jack call for Ace in the entire university.

AUSTIN (CONT): And I think outside, Hella, *[light laugh]* um, everyone I think reacts to this, not all at once, but there is this like, murmur that rises into yelling as people are pointing up at the sun and *[light laugh]* you see also that the second sun is filling with blood. And that's weird.

[THEME MUSIC - "SOMETHING" - BEGINS]

AUSTIN (CONT): You ride a horse up a hill.

JANINE: Yay. *[ALI laughs]*

AUSTIN: Um, and you get to the part where Callowkeen explains where it is, and you see that like, the- the hill is flat actually. It *is* the ground. It's like someone chopped the top of this hill off. And from this distance, we can hear people chanting below- from below this canvas, uh, tarp.

JANINE: Fantastic. I'm gonna go back, *[laughs]* I think.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah? You're not like, try to peek? You're not gonna try to-

JANINE: No, I figure this is some kind of weird, fake tarp ceiling so they can pray to their blood sun or whatever.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you got it. Uh huh.

AUSTIN (CONT): Samot calls in one of Ephrim's other retainers to help put on real-ass plate armor and like, he says,

AUSTIN AS SAMOT: I should be ready soon. Would you prefer to attend to things here or come with me?

ALI: *[laughs]* I—I think Hella like, looks at Severeia.

AUSTIN: She looks at you and like, is restraining an eye roll.

JACK: A book is not giving Lem what he wants. And documents are not giving Lem what he wants. And the specific frustration that he felt on recognizing that some kind of lived experience was what was missing, um, Lem is looking for something that will be a shortcut for him.

AUSTIN: I think the first thing you see is an attic. Into one of the attics of one of the grand residences in the northeast of the City of Light. And you are a gangly burglar. And you're hungry. And you know you're here to make money.

[THEME MUSIC - "SOMETHING" - ENDS, RECAP ENDS]

AUSTIN: You are an actor, but you're also caught in these individual moments, like you're going—you're slipping from vignette to vignette. So maybe you even had some earlier vignettes, of you like, sneaking aboard a ship—or not even a ship, right? Sneaking into a, um—when you're even younger, sneaking into a group of people, like a, a, a line, a long convoy of people where you don't have any direct connections because you're hoping to find some food here. You like, ran away from home, or you were, you know, were someone who was orphaned in the war. You, Lem King, don't really know, you just know that there's this deep feeling of like, frustration at the world?

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: And you slipped in there. There's a shot of—or not a shot, you see as the continent is pulled away from you—*[stammers]* or as you are pulled the island is created. The island that we eventually know as Marielda is created. And then we get this vignette of you creeping into this attic as a thief. And at that moment you start to feel there's like, agency? Or like, "Oh wow," you're like, "Oh, I'm in a dream, I'm here, I'm in the dream, it's me, Lem King, this is not my body, this is the body of an ugly human—" *[laughs]* "What the fuck am I doing?"

JACK: So there is absolutely this sensation of, of... embodiment? It's not like, um...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Like this is a lucid dream in that sense, right?

AUSTIN (overlapping): You're not—yes. Yeah, it's pretty—the dream essence is pretty clear that it is about—that it is a lucid dream. And when we think back to the way that that played out in Marielda it was a lucid dream. Like, Aubrey had control of her, of her...

JACK: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Of her senses and stuff. Um. So it's taken you a little bit to get there, but you're there now. *[JACK inhales, exhales]* Um. Let's wrap back around. Let's go back to Adaire because I want to respect the timing here and see what Adaire is getting up to before anyone from the, the University arrives there. Uh... What's goin' on? You get back, you let them know about the tarp.

JANINE (overlapping): Yeah... *[exhales]* Yeah, I think we're going—I think we're going in, right? I think that's—

AUSTIN: Alright. *[exhales]* I think Red Jack says, um:

AUSTIN AS RED JACK: The extra intelligence is always appreciated.

AUSTIN: To make sure that you don't feel bad. *[laughs]* Y'know?

JANINE: I don't feel bad. Should I—

AUSTIN: Alright, good.

JANINE: Why would I feel bad?

AUSTIN: That like, you didn't—there was not like a secret other entrance or something, you know?

JANINE: I... I think that information was valuable. *[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: It is! He's saying it is, that's all.

JANINE AS ADAIRE: I—you don't need to assure—I'm, I'm a tactician! I know how to do tactics and fight! *[ALL giggles]*

AUSTIN: Yeah, but when Red Jack says like, y'know—yeah. So you, you go to this cave entrance, I'm guessing. Or do you—what's the play?

JANINE: Um, so, I think the play is... Red Jack leads.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: 'Cause he big.

AUSTIN: He's big!

JANINE: And Adaire invisible with Barbello behind Red Jack so that when we enter Adaire can like, slip around the side and get in behind. And like, sort of figure out who's doin' what and who should be taken out first. Um.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: With Callowkeen cleanin' up outside.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Cool. Um, so. That means that... let's, let's get a good Red Jack here. Let's see if this works or if it's gonna be a pain in my ass. There we go!

JANINE: That's just an emoji.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! What's wrong?

JANINE: I thought you were gonna put in a cool Twitter Red Jack. Like a fanart one—

AUSTIN: Yeah, right here, this is the Twitter emoji for Red Jack! *[ALI laughs, JANINE makes skeptical noise]*

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: I was on Emojipedia, and...

JANINE: Uh-huh...

AUSTIN: There it is! That's—there he is! 'S the boy! Um, and then you are there. Being invisible.

JANINE (overlapping): Damn right! That's a good Twitter Adaire, right there.

AUSTIN: That's the one that you have attached to your thing, so you can just drag that one—

JANINE: It's the best, it's my *favorite*.

AUSTIN: It's very good. It's Adaire drinking tea...

JANINE: I'm not—technically I have no favorite fanart—*[ALI snorts]*

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: All fanart I love and appreciate truly.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Mhm.

JANINE: But I was really happy that I was able to tell her in person in Vancouver like, "Oh man, those Adaires were so fucking good." *[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah. Yeah. True. True enough. Um. So. You walk through this cave that, uh, slowly goes from being, um, just kind of bashed into the side of this hillside, to being smoothed out, the stone becomes a little more polished. And then it opens up into a, uh—I guess there's probably like a, a grate, or a, uh... a metal gate that Red Jack easily pushes open. Um, without making too much noise. And inside is a big room. Um, it's probably, it's like a big... uh... it's kind of like—trying to think of how I would describe it without—it feels like it's a garage, it feels like the way a big garage would feel for us. Like, there's the scent of like, uh, industry in here. The smell of like, oils. There's like, grates on the ground where there's runoff. Um, everything is this kind of brick, the wall is made of all these bricks, but not like, small little bricks, big cinder block -size bricks. And there are two doors here, and both of those are sealed. That's in front of you. Let me reveal that, also. Is this reveal thing working?

JANINE: That's a room.

AUSTIN: That's a room. Okay. And so Red Jack steps inside, and I guess you're there also, but invisible. Uh, you tell me, do you wanna go into that room, do you wanna hang back?

JANINE: Um... I'm gonna go into the room but like, maybe stay close to the wall? For the moment?

AUSTIN: Sounds good. Um, the... the door to the—there's a door to the north, there's a door to the east, basically. It's a big room that smells kinda weird. And there's a sound of dripping. Um, from above. And you're not sure what, uh, what that is at first? But then you look up and there is like, something slimy and ooze on the ceiling? Um. That you're trying to get a better look at, but I don't know. It's just a big weird goo. There's something gooey on the ceiling, which is gross. And Red Jack draws his sword and kind of steps away from where the gooey thing is, and is like:

AUSTIN AS RED JACK: There is a creature. *[laughs lightly]* It seems... disgusting.
[JANINE laughs]

JANINE: Uh... Does this count as a trap?

AUSTIN: Um, yeah!

JANINE: 'Cause I have a move about traps.

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AUSTIN: What's your move say?

JANINE: Uh, when I spend a moment to survey a dangerous area... questions.

AUSTIN: Mhm! Go ahead.

JANINE: Maybe I should do that! *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yeah!

JANINE: Great! *[pause as she rolls]*

AUSTIN: There you go, that's an 11! Trap expert!

JANINE: Damn right! That means I get to hold 3.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: That's a lot—

AUSTIN: And you can spend that hold as you walk through the area to ask these questions—and I'm gonna say that that's gonna go forward for the rest of this whole little micro-dungeon? Which is, uh—so those questions are “Is there a trap here, and if so what activates it?” “What does the trap do when activated?” and “What else is hidden here?” Those are your three things that you can spend hold for for the rest of this sequence.

JANINE: In this room, or in the whole place?

AUSTIN: This whole place.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: If you wanna reroll after that you can reroll it, but I'm saying it's gonna—I'll let it roll forward, you know?

JANINE: Okay. For the moment, uh, I'm gonna go with “Is there a trap here and if so what activates it?”

AUSTIN: Um, trying to open either of these doors in the wrong way? You have to twist—there's a door handle on each and you have to twist them counterclockwise. Um, and if you don't do that the thing on the ceiling will drop down.

JANINE: Mmkay.

AUSTIN: And the thing on the ceiling is—gross. It's gross.

JANINE: Yeah—no, I gathered that. You made that super, super clear.

AUSTIN: Um, and I think actually at some point, uh—either you or Red Jack can identify that part of what's dripping off is the, like, alloy that Uklan Tel made. It's like, the gross flesh alloy.

JANINE (quietly): *[sighs]* Tel...

AUSTIN: But like, a little more liquid-y than what—the version that you normally see.

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: A little more gelatinous, let's say?

JANINE: Um... do I know which direction this entrance was in relation to that hill?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yes. Totally. The east would take you towards the hill.

JANINE: Okay. Um...

AUSTIN: So you spent one of those hold, you still have two hold left.

JANINE: Man, I hate leaving a door unopened but we're in a hurry. *[laughs lightly]* Okay, I'm gonna—well, I'm obviously gonna convey to Red Jack like, "Okay, so we have to turn the knobs counterclockwise." I imagine Adaire notices that by looking at the—you know how paint gets worn away on doors?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

JANINE: When they get used a lot?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So yeah, we can—yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): So he says, like—yeah, he nods, he nods and yeah.

RED JACK: Should we split up or stick together? Tactician.

JANINE (chagrined): I said the tactician line out loud, didn't I? Um... *[AUSTIN, JANINE laugh]*

AUSTIN: There are worse fates in the world than someone like Red Jack calling you the Tactician.

JANINE: If he means it sarcastically it's a bad fate...

AUSTIN: Nah, you know.

JANINE: Um. What are my other questions? Oh, I h—What else is hidden here?

AUSTIN: Um... *[sighs]* Oh, uh, I would—mm, god. I'm trying to think as broadly as I can here, because the answer might be nothing? Um. Uh, I'll give you one thing. Which is, so. You know the east will take you back to that big opened-out hill, presumably where the cultists are chanting and doing their ritual. You do hear activity to the north, like you put your ear up against the northern door, and you do hear—you hear the sound of something hitting metal. Like. It sounds almost like something slapping up against metal bars. Um. Or someone—you know when you're a kid and you run your hand alongside a fence? Or like a metal gate?

JANINE: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: It's that, is happening. It's someone doing that.

JANINE: Okay. I don't have... right. Well I have those, I totally forgot I had those. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Mmhm!

JANINE: Okay. I think for the moment we should go east.

AUSTIN: Okay. You open the door carefully from the east, and you find... Alright! So, uh, there's another hallway east that has a hallway breaking off to the north again, and then straight ahead is a door that you're pretty sure will go into a—into the big, like, hilltop room where the ritual is happening. And there's another door to the—there's kind of two doors to the north, and then there's the door to the east. The first door is a hallway. And that's actually just open. And there's

a hallway that goes north up to another east-west hallway. So it's almost like you can imagine the general structure of this place at this point—I'll give you a little bit more of it—is like, an "F." Um, and you are at the lower part of the "F" if that makes sense.

JANINE: Oh, fuck. This is a whole thing!

AUSTIN: Mm—yeah!

JANINE: When did they build this? I guess they've had ten years to build this.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. I mean, wait. They've had a *long* time to build this!

JANINE (overlapping): Sure, sure. They've had—yeah, that's also fair.

AUSTIN: It's an ancient cult at this point, right?

JANINE: *[sighs]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um. So. Yeah. Totally up to you what you wanna do. Let's briefly, as you like, consider these options, check in with Hella back at the University. Hella.

ALI: Yeah, hi.

AUSTIN: How you doin'? What're you up to?

ALI: *[laughs]* Um. No clue. I don't—I still don't even know if I wanna go with Samot at this point.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Are there any other conversations you wanna be having, or things you wanna be checking on? Like, there's a degree to which it's kind of hard for me to capture the sort of work that Hella is doing here, that isn't just—I mean, I'm happy to have you narrate some stuff that you do. You know what I mean? But like, I'm—or to give you some opportunities for that, but I want it to work. The thing I don't wanna do is for you to be like "I'm trying to calm people down!" and then us roll, and it be like "Hella scares people."

ALI: *[laughs]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: But, I am curious—I guess here's one question I am curious about. Is... When people are scared at this point, do you... have you started at all talking about... uh, Adularia? Or about Adelaide in any sort of calming sense when people are afraid of dying, or when people have lost people? Has that come up in your recent turn towards like, helping people.

ALI: Um, I mean, I—it has to, right? Where I think that's like, I mean that's a genuine like, belief that Hella has at this point.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Which is like... there are a lot of people who are dying, but death isn't something that you have to be afraid of. Um...

AUSTIN: Right. God, maybe there is someone that actually brings this up to you. Who is still here that is an interesting... You know who I think you actually run into? Is Blue J.

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: Who is, who is—they are, um... god, where do run in—you run into them and their little fox, their like grass fox companion near the 3 o'clock tower? Which is the tower that like, is your favorite tower? Um, you're like, passing through to return from the refugees out there. And you see Blue J. walking, also having arrived there coming back from the range where they've been hanging out. And I think you get the—you kind of get the moment that's like, "Oh, they are alone right now." Um. Red Jack is gone, Thrandir and Benjamin are not here. They are, like, sitting at this tower. And maybe are they sitting at this tower because they knew you liked this tower a lot? Who could say. *[ALI giggles]* And they like, look up to you when you come through and are like... I literally almost said "Aunt Hella." *[ALI, AUSTIN laugh]*

AUSTIN AS BLUE J: Oh, hi... Hella. Everything's good at the range, um. Everyone's been practicing their marksmanship. Like Thrandir said they should do.

ALI AS HELLA: O-okay, yeah. Are they okay, are you okay? Do you need anything?

BLUE J: Everything is great. *[laughs]*

HELLA: Oh.

BLUE J: Except for the blood sun. *[HELLA laughs nervously]* Egg. Thing.

HELLA: It's an egg now, right. Yeah, that's right. It's an egg. Right. Um... um... *[clears throat]*

ALI: *[laughs]* I think Hella's frazzled in a way that doesn't seem possible for someone of her stature—

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah. Yeah.

ALI: *[laughs]* And like her usual coolness?

AUSTIN: I think they probably pick up on that and are like:

BLUE J: Are *you* okay?

HELLA: Yeah. Just, um... there's just a lot to be done... um. *[sighs]*

BLUE J: I keep thinking of leaving. Just for a while, because I'm afraid... I can, I can live in the woods and it isn't like, a big deal for me at this point, you know? One less mouth to feed here, and, I'm... If things go bad and I can't help, it's gonna suck.

HELLA: Yeah. I mean, but—you would want the opportunity to help... right?

BLUE J: Yeah. Of course, but like, what if people blame me if I don't help them? Or if I make a mistake, or what if they think that like, you know. I'm weird? Because of my pet? Whose name I still don't have, 'cause I haven't figured it out yet? Green J? That's not a good name. *[laughs lightly]*

HELLA (amused): The two of you will figure it out.

AUSTIN: This is why we have to name this university town, you have to model good behavior for young people. *[ALI laughs]* You made them think that names aren't that important, it's a whole thing.

ALI: I think Hella like, walks over and sits down with them, right?

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AUSTIN: Mhm.

HELLA: *[exhales]* Listen. No one's—you're talented in a way that if somebody thinks you're weird... they're not gonna... it's gonna be fine, right? *[laughs nervously]*

BLUE J: Will it?

HELLA: Sure! Just, you know. Keep, keep doing good things and helping people and being capable. Um.

BLUE J: But people've been capable in the past. People've done good things, right? Like—

HELLA: Yeah, and they were all weirdos!

BLUE J: *We're all weirdos.*

HELLA (laughing): That's the point I'm making!

BLUE J: But I'm saying we got here... that—my dad's been alive a long time. And I don't know that everything he says is true. But, he has lots of stories about like... being a hero or knowing heroes, people who've sacrificed a lot to save people. But we're still here. The sun is a big weird blood egg. And everyone's scared. *[sighs]* Maybe it's not enough. And then... you die. And go into Nothing. And it was all for nothing.

HELLA: Well, okay—*[laughs]* Let's back it up. 'Cause there's some options there, first of all. Um... you're not just gonna die and it's not gonna be for nothing. Your dad has lived for what, a billion years?

BLUE J: A billion years. Yeah, basically.

HELLA: *[laughs]* Just roughly a billion years and, you know. People are still gonna remember him and be thankful he was there when he was. That doesn't turn off—it's not a light switch.

AUSTIN: That... try that one again. *[ALI, JANINE laugh]*

HELLA: It's not a candle! *[ALI laughs out of character]*

JANINE: —switch! *[ALI, AUSTIN laughing]*

ALI (through laughter): You know those switches that you have in the wall that like, drop a little lid on your candle?

AUSTIN (laughing): Oh yeah, of course! Those are cool, those probably exist in this world!

JACK (overlapping): Give it a little hat! *[ALI giggles]*

AUSTIN: Yeah, a little can—a hat switch, candle hat switch.

[EVERYONE laughing]

JACK: “No more candles!” I say and I flick the switch!

AUSTIN: Candlehat is definitely a last name in Marielda, so... *[JANINE, ALI laugh]*

JACK: Yeah, and she *sucks!* She's like a—

AUSTIN (laughing): Uh-huh!

JACK: —like a parish council member.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Exactly. Um... They say like:

BLUE J: Alright, that makes sense. I'm just worried about everything. *[laughs]* I'm just worried about everything, Hella. I don't know... I'm supposed to be the Ranger, and... all

I wanna do is... fuck off, honestly. And like, go in the woods, and like, wait until everything's better. It's really scary.

HELLA: *[sighs]* You've been... you've been working with Thrandir, right? That's why you're doing all the like, ranger-y stuff?

BLUE J: Yeah, he's been like, training me some.

HELLA: Um. When I first met Thrandir I thought that he was fucking useless. *[laughs]* Um... and that isn't true! Is the point that I'm making here!

BLUE J: Oh, okay, I was... I was a little... concerned.

HELLA: That's the point I am making. I also don't have a ton of time. Um. As much as I wanna talk to you! *[ALI laughs out of character]* But. *[sighs]* We'd do better here with you—with you here than without you here. The fact that you wanna help and the fact that you're worried means something. I don't know, I... I spent a lot of time just fucking off. *[laughs lightly]* Um. And I have to make up for that now. So. *[sighs]* If you wanna focus and really help people I guess you should do it while you're young? *[laughs]* I think? In my opinion, at least. Um... This is why I'm not a mentor yet. I'm sorry. *[laughs again]*

BLUE J: It's fine. I... Thrandir does a good job. It was weird at first, but. He seems alright. *[sighs]*

HELLA: *[sighs]* Also, you don't just go into the Nothing, there's like a whole other option. Nobody told—oh, well I guess, um. *Fuck. [AUSTIN, ALI laugh]*

BLUE J: What's the option? What do you mean there's another option, you get a choice?

HELLA: Yeah, there's like a whole line!

BLUE J: It's like a choose your own adventure?

HELLA: Yeah! Yeah, have you heard of Adelaide? Your dad knows people.

BLUE J: Adelaide... um...

HELLA: From Nacre...?

AUSTIN: Would they know Adelaide... Nacre, they're like:

BLUE J: Yeah, I've heard of Nacre. I mean, I was—

AUSTIN: They were alive at the time, but they don't know about it like that. They know undead people because that was the whole thing with like, the Ordennans and like—

ALI (quietly): Oh my god...

AUSTIN: They know Nacre refugees, like they know, they know Nacre. They probably don't know Adelaide specific—wait, you were the Queenkiller, right?

ALI (laughing): I was!

AUSTIN: So. They're like, actually that's what they know, they go:

BLUE J: The *queen* that you killed? Yeah.

HELLA: Yeah! Yeah, I'm working for her now. Um. *[laughs]*

BLUE J: What? *[laughs]* What—*how*?

HELLA: We met in the sword, and we got to talking... um...

BLUE J: You all live really weird lives! You really are all weirdos! *[ALI laughs]*

ALI: Yeah, I think Hella's doing the thing that I'm probably doing, which is like trying to overplay it and like, blushing it. And being like "Yeah, we were just talking." But um.

HELLA: I don't know. She has a good thing going. And I... it seems weird for us to live our entire lives and hear these stories that there's... There would be something better after we die, or after all of this, when the egg hatches or whatever the fuck.

BLUE J: When the egg hatches, yeah. *[laughs]*

HELLA: *[laughs a little]* Eugh... do you think it's gonna hatch?

BLUE J: Eggs hatch!

HELLA (on an exhale): *Fuck...*

BLUE J: I know nature, and eggs hatch.

HELLA: *[laughs]* Well you're the expert!

AUSTIN: They laugh. *[ALI laughs]*

BLUE J: What's it like? The—the place that your boss is in charge of? *[ALI laughs]*

HELLA: My boss. Yeah.

AUSTIN: They don't know! *[ALI giggles]*

HELLA: Um, it's—*[exhales]* It's peaceful. In a way that I... I don't know how I'd describe it, because I think the point is that you don't... that we wouldn't know what it's like yet. Right? Definitely not today.

BLUE J: Yeah. I bet it wouldn't be like this. I bet there's no... egg.

HELLA: No. I hope not.

BLUE J: You should check in and make sure there isn't an egg.

HELLA: I—

BLUE J: But I bet your boss would've told you if there was an egg though, probably. Is that a thing? How do you work for someone who—you know what, don't even worry about it. It's fine. *[sighs]* I'm sure I'll understand one day. *[laughs lightly]*

HELLA: Well you know, she's like a god now. I mean she always was. And they... figure it out.

BLUE J: You know, like, a year ago, I didn't know any gods?

HELLA: Yeah.

BLUE J: And now there's one who lives here? And one who died here. And now you're saying you work for one. And that's weird. *[sighs]*

HELLA: I know it is. I know. Um... But there's an egg in the sky. So. If they were gonna come around it would be now.

BLUE J: Yeah. Thank you. For chattin' with me.

HELLA: Yeah, anytime.

BLUE J: Do you need anything, do you need like, someone to run something anywhere? Or like a, a scout, or um... a messenger, or—I'm thinking of all the things I'm kind of good at.

HELLA: Yeah. Um...

ALI: What is my most useful messenger need right now... we already have like, a search party going out for...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

ALI: ...Adaire and everyone. I guess just asking Blue J if they'd be willing to... to like, be the runner between the different guard units?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: They'd be happy to do that. Cool.

ALI: Actually, I think before they leave Hella says like:

HELLA: Do you remember when we met? I know you were just a kid, but...

BLUE J: Yeah. In Old Man's Chin.

HELLA: Yeah. And how... it's nothing compared to an egg in the sky, but what we were dealing with was pretty scary then.

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BLUE J: I mean, the sun disappeared, that was like, the opposite of a second sun that becomes an egg, so...

HELLA (quietly): Was that the night that...

BLUE J: This keeps happening.

HELLA: That was the same night the sun disappeared.

BLUE J: It was the same night!

HELLA: *[sighs]*

BLUE J: *[sighs]* That was the night that I like, started really. Growin' up a little bit. The way all that stuff happened. When the Ordennans came.

HELLA: *[sighs]* That's the night I decided to stop fucking off. *[laughs lightly]* And you saw me, I tried a really long time to stay out of it.

BLUE J: Yeah.

HELLA: And it was worth nothing.

BLUE J: Why didn't you wanna get involved?

HELLA: I thought I had a loyalty to something. And I didn't. Or I shouldn't have.

BLUE J: How do you know what to be loyal to?

HELLA: I think you... You know when someone needs you. I think that you can tell that.

AUSTIN: They kind of like, find themselves looking off, a little bit, and like, deep in thought. And they nod.

BLUE J: Yeah. I get that.

AUSTIN: Um. And then they pull out a hair tie from inside a pocket and like, tie their hair back and get ready to take off running. And they say:

BLUE J: I'm gonna go check in, um, with the guards and everything. Thanks so much!

AUSTIN: And almost says "Aunt Hella" again. *[ALI laughs]*

BLUE J: —Hella!

AUSTIN: And then does take off running.

HELLA: Thank you!

BLUE J (shouting): Thank you!

AUSTIN: "Yip! Yip!" says the little fox. *[ALI laughs]* So you're in this attic. And you're a weird burglar. What do you do, Lem?

JACK: Is it one of those attics that has like—is there an attic window?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you've climbed in through an attic window.

JACK: I've come in through the window.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JACK: Um. So I think in the same way that sometimes when you start a platformer game and immediately turn around and go in the other direction—

AUSTIN: Mm. Mhm.

JACK: Lem just cannot resist the temptation to turn and look out at Marielda.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Which is a place that he... *[exhales]* Remember earlier when I was like "Lem thinks that he knows Aubrey"?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

JACK: Uh, because he had the story told to him. I think there's a bit of Lem that's just like "Ah, yes, Marielda, I know that place."

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: But there's a very deep, um... It is a strange cocktail of emotions. Embodying this figure, and knowing that I am here to steal, knowing that I am here to like, you know. I have a job to do, and it's burglary?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And also the knowledge that I am placed in a, in a place and a time... where the world is not being torn apart by the Heat and the Dark.

AUSTIN: Well—

JACK: It might be being torn apart by other things—

AUSTIN: I actually think in this dream, it is being torn apart by the Heat and the Dark.

JACK (overlapping): Oh, Jesus, okay, so actually so—

AUSTIN: I think you're getting that exact—it's similar to the dream—one, it's similar to the dream that Hitchcock had when knocked out in, uh, in *Memoriam*. Two, it's similar to the dream you had today. *[laughs lightly]* This morning.

JACK (overlapping): Yeah, when we saw the Solarch.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Um...

AUSTIN: But you can see where you are. Which is, you're in Chrysanthemum Parish. You're in what would become Chrysanthemum Parish, in the northeast, where there's lots of like, schools—or it's like, one of the schools that's allowed to exist during this kind of Quiet Year era of, um, the Divine Province, the City of First Light?

JACK (overlapping): Mmhm. When knowledge is still being... uh, kind of throttled.

AUSTIN (overlapping): *Very* carefully... I mean, it's throttled all the way through that game, right, but like, especially so now.

JACK: Right, right, right.

AUSTIN: Um, so. So yeah. And so yeah, you can see it, and I think you get like, the—it's the weird dream thing of like, it is on fire with the Heat and the Dark. But also, there are people walking around the streets, and shopping, and running errands.

JACK (overlapping): Unconcerned.

AUSTIN: Unconcerned, it's—it's nighttime, but it's like, yeah. That's what's happening outside.

JACK: So I turn back into the attic and I check my pockets—

AUSTIN: And the attic is smaller, because it's a dream.

JACK: Oh. Amazing.

AUSTIN: And it's like, you're in a different room in the attic when you turn back around.

JACK: Yeah. God. Do I have anything in my—

AUSTIN (overlapping): It's like, a smaller room. Go ahead.

JACK: Do I have anything in my pockets?

AUSTIN: Yes. And I can tell you what you might have in there. Um. You have... some tools, like some like, lockpick-type stuff? You have, uh... like, some sort of like, a grappling hook, or like, claws to climb the wall, basically? You have a little vial with some sort of like, purple potion in it? You have a strange pair of glasses in your pockets? Um, and you have like, a little charm. Ali would know what this looks like. What's a spiritbane charm looks like?

ALI: *[laughs]* Um. Anything, I don't know.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I think the one Castille had was like a gem, like, either in... like, wrapped with string around it, or in like a—you know how sometimes you see those like, pendants where it's like a rock that's like inside a metal cage?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: You know? Something like that.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. So yeah. Which you intuitively know is something to do with ghosts, or the supernatural. You have some sort of ghost gem. Anti-ghost gem, presumably.

JACK: Okay. *[laughs]* Great. Hate ghosts. Hate ghosts in any situation.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Yeah.

JACK: I think Lem goes to look at the glasses—

AUSTIN: Have you ever fought a ghost, is that a thing, have you done that?

JACK (overlapping): Have I ever fought a ghost? Have I ever fought a ghost in a dre—Lem has *definitely* dreamt about fighting a ghost at some point.

AUSTIN: Oh, definitely. *[ALI laughs]*

JACK: A hundred percent. Just like, a regular non-magically induced dream. Um. Yeah. I think Lem, uh, you know, sort of stumbles forward through the, through the, uh, attic, still kind of getting a sense of the shape of his body?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And while doing so kind of like, takes the strange glasses out of his pocket and looks at them and tries them on.

AUSTIN: As you put them on, everything kind of comes into, uh, focus as the dark lights up. They are, uh, a pair of glasses that have been magically enchanted—you know, this is an era in which there are a lot more enchantments of this type—to allow you to see in the dark. Important tools for someone like you.

JACK: Wow. Uh, I've encountered something similar to this probably in the archives, but maybe one of those objects that's like, "Oh, you have to book six months in advance to get to see this unless it's really important."

AUSTIN (overlapping): *[laugh]* Uh-huh. You can't remove it from the archive, like you can study it there, or you can use it in a pattern if you've cleared all the particulars of the pattern, but, blah blah blah.

JACK: Yeah, exactly. So I'm kind of gonna like, gradually feeling more comfortable inside my, inside my gangly human frame, um—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I'm gonna like, creep forward through this attic. There's a weird kind of sense of performance that Lem feels.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: It's partly the performance of being like, "Oh, I don't know what the rules are." Like, I don't know if I could get spotted here, so I'm going to try and be quiet.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Mhm.

JACK: But it's also like, I'm a burglar, so I'm going to act like a burglar.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. The, um... give me a Prowl. I've sent you a character sheet.

JACK: *[laughs]* Okay, cool!

AUSTIN: I can also link you to the Blades in the Dark rules if you need.

JACK: Yeah, so. What am I rolling for Prowl?

AUSTIN: So you are a Lurk, and you have 3 in Prowl. So that would be 3d6, you can always push yourself to get an extra die. *[JACK exhales]* We're gonna play fast and loose with these rules, like...

JACK: Yeah. Yeah, no, I don't think I'm going to push myself yet, in part because I seem to be pretty good at this. Um... roll 3d6...

AUSTIN (overlapping): This is, this is Risky Standard.

JACK: Okay, cool. *[pause as they roll]*

AUSTIN: Wow, you critted! *[JACK laughs]* Fuck!

JACK: Oh, man! Okay—

AUSTIN: Sometimes—sometimes it goes like that!

JACK: So is there actually a bit here where it's like—there's an extent to which Lem's body moves in ways in which he is not doing?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes! You're not a prowler! We—one, we know no one in this table would take a point in Prowl in a game of Blades in the Dark! *[JACK, AUSTIN laugh]* But also—

JACK (overlapping): It's a coward's move, Austin! *[AUSTIN laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yeah, so just to be clear you rolled three successes.

JACK: Yep.

AUSTIN: You rolled a 6, a 5, and a 6. So, uh, uh, that's two successes. You get more than one 6 it's a critical success, you gain additional advantage. I—like, and this is the moment for this person. This is like, the... things line up sometimes. You know?

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Sometimes you are just a burglar, and... you wander into a home like this. Um. You gain—it's so funny, I was gonna offer you a devil's bargain because I was worried about how this roll was gonna go—I was gonna be like, oh, maybe you leave some evidence—but no. No one—there's no, this is like, it's—you've so perfectly done this. *[laughs]* So I think the thing is like, you don't just find valuables here. You find valuables, right? You don't get caught. But you find something more important than valuables.

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AUSTIN (CONT): You pocket, you know, some old scrolls, you pocket some gems and jewelry that is being stored in this attic, you pocket a book that seems like it's particularly valuable—and I think it's when you're lifting, putting the book into your satchel that you realize actually the most valuable thing you can find in a city like this is information. Um, and so... you, like, put your ear to the ground and hear that there is, um... someone talking? But they're not talking in the room

below you, you can see through the slats. Which makes you realize—and also the room below you stops earlier than it should, based on the general shape of the attic. And you find a secret compartment that goes into another hidden attic. And in that room you can place your, your head to the ground and there's like a hole in the floor slat in this attic that shows you a private room where someone who has dark skin and blonde hair and robes on is wearing a mask, a mask that you, Lem King, recognize as the face of Samot.

JACK: *[inhales]* I have a fuckin' history with this mask. *[exhales]*

AUSTIN: You do, you know *that* mask, or at least a mask in that design. And you overhear the person speaking. Who is Maelgwyn. Talking to his father... about his fear. I mean, I'll lay out what you hear, basically. I think you get Maelgwyn's side of a conversation in which he says:

AUSTIN AS MAELGWYN: Everything's going fine... I hate this. No, I know it—I know this is gonna cause less harm... in the long run, but... *[pause]* Yeah, of *course* I love him, I love you *both*.

AUSTIN: And it is Maelgwyn discussing with Samot the plan. Which is that he would be sent here to rise to prominence, and when Samot's attack comes, betray Samoth's and lead a bloodless coup. Become a hero to the people here, in such a way that he will... be able to turn them against Samoth's. Um, and end the war in one fell swoop.

JACK: *[exhales]* This is like a crit roll for this burglar, it's just like "Holy Lord!"

AUSTIN: It is, it literally is that! Right? This is it, right? Like. *[laughs]* Again, it's a dream, who knows if this is exactly how it happened, certainly the world outside wasn't on fire, certainly the attic didn't change shape—though actually, with reconfiguration, it's possible! *[laughs]*

JACK: Oh, yeah, I'd forgotten that like, buildings just move—and moved more at this time, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. So like, who the fuck knows, but. Um. But, yeah. This is Maelgwyn talking to Samot about the plan. Which was move to Mariel—or move to the City of Light, gain Samoth's trust, gain the trust of the civilians here, and the—you know, the military eventually, build up a military, and then turn that military on Samoth's so that no one innocent would have to die in a war. And there is something in you that thinks: "I bet that's worth something. I bet you that's worth a lot."

JACK: Is any of this information new to Lem?

AUSTIN: Yes, a hundred percent. All of it. *[laughs]*

JACK: So none of this is included in the histories of, of—

AUSTIN: No. You knew Maelgwyn was here, you knew Maelgwyn was gaining prominence, you knew eventually there was a group called Maelgwyn's Faithful, people who do trust in Maelgwyn—you know that Maelgwyn disappears eventually and then shows back up. But there's *lots* of gaps there. So this is new.

JACK: Yes. This is also specifically the terms of the betrayal, right? Of, of Maelgwyn's betrayal of his father.

AUSTIN: Sort of, right? Yeah.

JACK: That we're hearing about—

AUSTIN (overlapping): Though you're hearing him talk about it as a bloodless coup, which does not even mean "And then I kill Samoths." Right?

JACK (overlapping): No. Right.

AUSTIN: So you should even already be like "Hey, this didn't go as intended."

JACK: Something weird has gone here, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. How do you move to the next part of this dream? Is this like... Is there a vignette here, is it just the room shifts around you? How do we think dream essence works?

JACK: Um... I—

AUSTIN: Like is it as simple as—you go ahead.

JACK: I think I fall. Um.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: I think it's just like, uh—you know when you're falling asleep and you get that sensation that you've been like, dropped onto your bed from about a foot above the bed?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I think it's that, except it's like, played out far more visually and viscerally?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I think that Lem feels the, the boards beneath his feet kind of begin to crack or splinter, and has this like, moment of like “Oh, god, I'm gonna fall into this room! I'm gonna be discovered!”

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: But instead of falling into the room, he just, like, drops seamlessly into another place.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think it's like you dropping vertically, and then you realize you are facing a different floor—like as you're falling vertically in front of you, a wall appears except that wall is actually the floor of a ship. And you are on one of the obsidian-bottomed boats that can cross the, um, the Marielda Sea—

JACK (overlapping): The Mariel.

AUSTIN: —yeah, the Mariel—on your way to Samoth's forge.

JACK (overlapping, laughing): Oh, jeez.

AUSTIN: And I think you like, turn to the volcano, and you turn around and then you're there in the room, in the throne room. Where Samoth's sits next to four other empty thrones. As you recall, there used to be five—there's like the five throne room in Samoth's tower-volcano-place. Um, and Samoth's is there in the throne and you find yourself like,

pushing yourself up onto a knee from having fallen, but then being like, kneeling in front of Samoths all at once.

JACK: Yeah. This is like, very spooky to Lem. Because the Samoths he knew was one who specifically had had a long time to think and...

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: And there is something about the figure of this man who is like, actively preparing for war...

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Is there combat on the front lines at this point, or are they assembling their armies?

AUSTIN: There had already been a lot of combat, right? We started this Quiet Year game as Samoths's force retreats to Marielda.

JACK: Okay, so—the war is, this is almost like he's gathering himself.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. He basically retreats for something like fifteen years to try to recover and rebuild as Samol says in the intro to that series. *[JACK laughs]* To try to be like "Alright, hey, I'm gonna make it so that you literally cannot fuck with my people for fifteen years—for as long as it's gonna take you to figure out how to fuckin' cross this fire-water, this fire, like—whatever this is, river, that surrounds my place. This lava that is gonna protect us. For as long as that's gonna be, it's gonna give me a chance to like, build the pala-din and put together more defenses and prepare. While you figure out weird ice-magic to try to get across."

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Something else I should point out about that last scene, I just remembered this, it's an important detail. Is Maelgwyn explicitly talks about the Disciples. The Disciples of Samot. Which Lem underst—you understand from that sequence that there is an allegiance that—he's like, there's a point at which he says, like "*[sighs]* I know this plan is good, I know the Disciples helped you come up with it," like, blah blah blah blah blah. So there's like, clarity on that part of

the plan. That like, it's the Disciples and Samot, the Disciples of Samot and Samot, the mages and Samot, working together to convince Maelgwyn to do this thing. You know.

JACK: I mean, it can even happen in this order. Like, this is a dream, right?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yes. You're right. Totally.

JACK: Like, I can be in the throne room and then, like—just see it in the way that you do in a dream as though you're seeing it out of one eye, *[laughs]* or like it's happening over there.

AUSTIN (overlapping): You could say it. Right? You could be the one who says it, and then it's true, in a sense, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, you look up at Samothēs and say “Well, he was wearing a mask made by the Disciples.” *[laughs lightly]*

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: And it's like, “Oh, I guess that that's—yeah, okay. Yeah. That's how dreams work sometimes.”

JACK (overlapping): Yeah, exactly. Um... yeah.

AUSTIN: But what do—I guess you say that, and that's not a thing that you've controlled, but after that—uh, I think Samothēs, in all of his *fury*, right? In all of his like, indignation says, like:

AUSTIN AS SAMOTHESES: Why should I trust anything you say, *thief?*

JACK AS THE BURGLAR: *[pause]* Well, I've been thinking.

JACK: Um, Lem says. And it's just like, a really—it's really strange for Lem to just like, the voice that comes out of Lem's mouth is not the one he's used to in any way?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: He's probably even speaking a language or a dialect that he's like, one hundred percent not used to.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Oh, definitely.

THE BURGLAR: Well, I've been thinking. And I've been thinking—*[exhales]* Y'know. It's a difficult time, isn't it?

SAMOTHES: Say what you will say.

THE BURGLAR: It's a—it's a difficult time, and it's a difficult time for you, I know, and it's a difficult time for the people who live here. And I think at a time like this, it is important that we are all clear.

JACK: And Lem kind of just gestures to the pala-din in the room as well?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah.

JACK: Just like, bringing everyone in the room...

THE BURGLAR: That we are all clear. *[AUSTIN laughs]* You know, you and me and them. What side our bread is buttered on, as it were. Do you catch my drift?

AUSTIN: This motherfucker. *[ALI laughs distantly]*

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SAMOTHES: You've come to a *god* to ask for a *bribe*?

THE BURGLAR: Well, you know I've always said gods eat bread too.

SAMOTHES: What would you have?

THE BURGLAR: Well, so—*[exhales]* I reckon. I've been thinking. That a lot of people are, a lot of people are very fond of this man. And that's, that's dangerous. You know, to

care about something that much, and were something to happen, you know—were something to happen to a figure like *that*... [*inhales, exhales*] You know, someone might come knocking on my door, someone might show up in the middle of the night. Um—we can't be having that, really. So I think it would be good if... [*sighs*] Maybe I took a little time, maybe I took a little time off? Um, you know, I spend a little time somewhere that I was, was safe until things blew over. And then, you know, I like my job. I like what I *do*. Um. Maybe I'm a little hungrier than I'd like—

SAMOTHES: *Stealing*.

THE BURGLAR: [*scoffs*] *Stealing*? That's just—you know, stealing is the, stealing is the, the... oh, what would I call it? [*snaps fingers*] It's like, uh, stealing is the day-to-day. It's the other stuff that I'm most interested in. You know, the, um—

SAMOTHES: [*hums unhappily*]

THE BURGLAR: I'd never say this aloud, of course, had I not come to you with such valuable—[*laughs, then continues very seriously*] I mean, it is valuable, isn't it.

SAMOTHES: It *will* be when you clarify who it is you speak of. You wish protection, and... a license of the sort I give my Lance Nobles.

THE BURGLAR: No, no, no, not a license. A license is so, um—it's so *drawn-up*, you know? The word I keep thinking of is dispensation.

SAMOTHES: That's a big word for someone like you. Are you sure you know what it means?

THE BURGLAR: Very sure, yes.

SAMOTHES: A curtain. Something you can hide behind.

THE BURGLAR: A veil.

SAMOTHES: Tell me who it was. Who *dares* to *conspire* against the man who put the *sun* in the *sky*?

THE BURGLAR: *[inhales, pauses]*

SAMOTHES: What is their name?

THE BURGLAR: Well... *[exhales]* How's your son been?

SAMOTHES: Excuse me?

THE BURGLAR: How's your son doing? Have you spoken to him lately?

AUSTIN: And his face falls.

THE BURGLAR: *Yeah*, I thought so.

SAMOTHES (overlapping): Pala-din, see him out. *[takes a breath]* I will keep my bargain, thief. You simply will not enjoy it for years.

THE BURGLAR: Right. Right, well, yeah. Okay. Well, uh, we can just sit and think, can't we?

AUSTIN: And then I think we get you sitting and thinking, inside of a jail cell. There's bits we don't see here, but... I'm guessing Lem King can fill in the blanks.

JACK: It's miserable, right? Um...

AUSTIN: Well, I mean the specific bit is like, how did you get in a jail cell, and why?

JACK: *[exhales]*

AUSTIN: Does Lem remember?

JACK: I mean, I think that there's—are there trials in Marielda at this point?

AUSTIN: There are. For things that—there's two murders. During the Quiet Year. I don't know if

you remember this. And other people admit to them, or at least to one of them. But this guy, this fuckin'... schmuck, says he did 'em. And goes to jail.

JACK: What, like I actually seek out the authorities and say like, "Oh, it was me."

AUSTIN: I think the pala-din come, and we get the—have you—have you read The Trial?

JACK: Uh, long time ago. Oh—*[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: There's the great scene in Kafka's The Trial in which the, K. gets arrested? Joseph K. gets arrested, and it's just, like, he's on his way to, um... I think he's like, at his apartment, and then the guys just show up. And they just like... he basically leads them through town, effectively? He like, I'm trying to remember how it goes.

JACK: Is this at the very end?

AUSTIN: It's the very end. So, spoiling The Trial by Kafka. *[JACK laughs]* Go read The Trial by Kafka. But like... he's just so fuckin' ready for it to be over, do you know—I think there's probably some of that here, too.

JACK: And these are like, these are like, I mean—we don't necessarily get this because they're pala-din, but maybe they're accompanied by a human, or by someone else.

AUSTIN: They're accompanied by Maelgwyn! Maelgwyn is the prosecutor! That's the best bit of this *[JACK laughs]*—is he shows up at your door, and for a moment it's dreadful, right? It's like, "Oh, fuck." Like, did he sell me out? What happened? But no, you get hauled in on these charges that have nothing to do with you, and put it together. "Yeah, it was me, of course. I did it."

JACK: And I'm just like—like, there is a weird sense of like, being deeply in control of this situation. Lem—you know when you have a dream that a bad thing happens in, that you haven't delivered a paper, or you owe money, or something terrible happens. And there's two ways it can go, right, either you're like "Ah, shit, I'm gonna have to write that paper." Or, you're like, there's this wash of relief where you're like "This is a dream—*[stammers]* there will be no consequences for this, this is fine." And I think Lem feels this weird cocktail of the two, right?

Like, the knowledge that the jail sentence is not something to be feared because he's not gonna experience it?

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: But also this, this body memory of like, the panic at the thought of being sold out, or the, the trepidation at what's about to happen... um. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And then, yeah, you're in the cell. For a decade.

JACK: Oh, jeez. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: I mean, I don't think Lem experiences it as such.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Right?

JACK: But Samoths was not kidding when he, when he made it a poisoned chalice.

AUSTIN: Right, yeah. I mean, it's—we know the length, and I'm just—I don't—how long is it between The Quiet Year and... and episode, and The Crosstown Job Part 1? Fifteen. *Fifteen years*. This man spends in jail. Maybe less than that, maybe it is ten, and then, y'know, he's out and about in ten. And beginning to build his criminal empire, so to speak.

JACK: Does Samoths make good on the veil? On the, on the curtain?

AUSTIN: ...Yeah. He's done worse, right? I think it's an easy thing to agree to when you're the person who flings fish-rocks at people. Y'know?

JACK: And when you're like, deeply, deeply, um... shocked by—like, Samoths has had ten or whatever years to think about the information that I gave, right?

AUSTIN: Right, and when you come out Maelgwyn's gone. We, the audience know that somehow Maelgwyn gets put into a weird gauntlet. *[laughs lightly]* I don't think this guy knows.

But you know that he's gone when you come out, you know that there's a park named after him, and people—*[JACK laughs]* That part of the plan still fuckin' worked, somehow.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But the part where he's like, around and doing shit? No. He hasn't become Tuxedo Mask yet. *[laughs lightly]*

JACK: Right, yeah. Yeah, exactly. He's still, unbeknownst to me, at the very bottom of, um...

AUSTIN (laughing, overlapping): Of a library. Yeah.

JACK: Of a library, yeah. *[AUSTIN laughs]* God. What parish is Memoriam in? I'm trying to find it on the map.

AUSTIN: It's in Chrysanthemum. It's that, it's that big—it's, we're looking at, it's right above—

JACK: Oh, it's this?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's Memoriam.

JACK: Oh, damn!

AUSTIN: On this map, yeah. Um, on this incredible map that Janine drew. Drew—built, *[stammers]* What do you wanna say, Janine? Made. *[laughs lightly]*

JANINE: I drew it.

AUSTIN: Mokay. Um... let's, let's move back to Adaire while you're stuck in this dream. Adaire, you're movin' down this, uh, hallway?

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Have you decided which direction to go in?

JANINE: Um... I think we need to just get this done.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Eggs hatch, as was said, like, I—

AUSTIN: Eggs hatch.

JANINE: It's one of those things of like, I know we're missing stuff, and I-slash-Adaire am making a calculated gamble that perhaps will kill everyone *[laughs lightly]* and we can just take our time on our way out.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: It is a—*[laughs]* It is a gamble, certainly, there is definitely a person imprisoned somewhere in here that, okay, that's—that's a thing that hopefully we will get to, but like, as far as consequences go the biggest consequence is the bloody sky-egg hatches, so.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally, totally. So, you go to the door. Do you open it? What's the—I think Red Jack looks at you and says, like:

AUSTIN AS RED JACK: Do you wish to slip in, unnoticed? Or should I simply kick down the door?

JANINE: Uhhhhhhh... um... *[laughs]* One second, I'm checking my hold questions.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: Just on the off-chance there's a good one there. Are we good, can I ask my question...?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Go ahead.

JANINE: This might not be a thing, but I'm gonna ask it anyway 'cause I have one hold left. Is there a trap here, and if so what activates it?

AUSTIN: There's no trap, but there are people on the other side who will see you if you open

this door.

JANINE: I know that...

AUSTIN: So opening the door will be the thing that, y'know, activates it in that sense.

JANINE: Uh... okay. That is. Great. Um... okay, invisibility time, then.

[TIMESTAMP 1:00:03]

AUSTIN: Alright. You are invisible. Uh, and Red Jack like, takes a step back to make sure his giant frame doesn't show through the door. Barbello's like, tail wags.

JANINE: Is Barbello visible or invisible?

AUSTIN: Invisible, invisible.

JANINE: Okay, good.

AUSTIN: Um... okay. So you're invisible. And... what I'm gonna give you is, um. Because you're invisible and because you have the—what, like, “Is there a trap that activates?” question, you can slip into this room and quietly, like, close the door and just be in the room? The scale of this map is going to be off. Imagine this room is much bigger, but I didn't have enough time to do it.

JANINE (nervously, overlapping): Uh-huh...

AUSTIN: You know how this goes, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um. So. Boop!

JANINE: Cool... oh god.

AUSTIN: There's another door to the north. This is definitely—so it's a big, circular room, this is definitely the giant room you were looking down on behind the canvas, uh, illusion-thing. There

are ten people [*JANINE sighs*] in hoods, surrounding the, um. The, uh... bone dragon? That you fought before? That is like, resting? And it has been, like, the Uklan Tel Gel, the Uklan Gel [*JANINE laughs*] has been slathered all over it?

JANINE: God damn it, Uklan Tel!

AUSTIN: I mean, he's not in this room.

JANINE: I don't care.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JANINE: That's his gel.

AUSTIN: Um, the—and there are, so there are ten people around it. There are, besides those ten people immediately around it who are the cultists wearing, like, hoods, there are four other people in this room. Three of them are familiar to the camera, at least? Um, they are Prelate Springa, who is the prelate from the underground school of, or, uh, Church of Memoriam that we went to in the Buoy where you had that dinner. That is the person literally right in front of you, Adaire. You're like, right behind him.

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Then, there is, uh—and he is chanting and leading this thing. There is, uh... across from him, on the eastern side of this big room is, uh, Kall Ferr—sorry, no, that's Zhan Kurr, who is the illusionist, um, orc? Who you might recall, Lem?

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Who was there during 22 Brown Birds and all that shit.

JACK: Fuckin' knew it.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. To the south is Kall Ferr, the Collector-Curator, Morbash's old boss, the one who was willing to start using the undead people in illus—or in, in—

JACK: Yep.

AUSTIN: Um, in, patterns?

JACK (overlapping): Real rogue's gallery, here.

JANINE (overlapping): *[inaudible]* understand why Uklan Tel got roped into this, like, a hundred percent now. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. A hundred—it's so easy, right? *[JANINE groans]* It's so easy to see someone who's just like, an academic get roped into this shit by people who know exactly what to do. Um, and then there's a new person to the north, who is... like, if I just break it down to you, it looks like a gargoyle-person? It look—mm. Do you remember when Hadrian's arm was turning into a rock?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So this looks like that, but like, twisted or, twisted in weird—or like, the body changed into a more draconic form? It's like a living statue of a dragon-person, um, and the icon I'm using has like, a sword and shield but that's not what this person has. They in fact have chains wrapped around their wrists, um, and those chains have the, at the edge hooks that like, seem to be dripping with Heat and Dark. And they're, like, standing in attention and scanning the room, effectively? They're the one who maybe you most have to worry about, they have big wings, big stone wings, but those wings are moving. Uh, they have, um, like, glowing red eyes... um, this is the Paladin, now. This is the Paladin? They have a Paladin. And their Paladin looks like *this*. Uh. So. Y'know. What might've been, Hadrian, if maybe you'd chosen to stay with this church long-term.

JANINE: Yeah, wow, really missed—really missed out, really missed out.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. And then yes, the red of the blood-sun is, is, y'know, slowly filling the room, right? I haven't done this, but if I could slowly tint this room red as the sun fills up, that is what is happening in this room, right? So like, imagine that three-fourths of this room is now filled with that red color from above. Um. What do you do? *[laughs lightly]*

JANINE: Uh, is Red Jack gonna bust in like, when stuff happens?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that was the agreement, right? Yeah. Totally.

JANINE: Okay. *Okay*. Um. I'm really lookin' for like the most bang for my buck in terms of this first move, and I don't know that like, making a dent in a Paladin is actually that.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Uh-huh.

JANINE: Um. However, stabbing a prelate in the back, a prelate who's leading a horrible ritual...

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JANINE: Prelates are usually kinda soft in the back area.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, totally. This is true.

JANINE: Uh, I think that's my play here, is I'm going to... really get in there. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Just *really* get in there and backstab that motherfucker.

JANINE: Mm-hm!

AUSTIN: You have a move for that, right?

JANINE: I have two moves for that!

AUSTIN: Okay. What are they?

JANINE: I have "Backstab" itself.

AUSTIN: Which says...?

JANINE: Um... which says... that when I attack a surprised or defenseless enemy with a melee weapon, I can choose to deal my damage or roll DEX.

AUSTIN: Okay. And rolling DEX gives you extra damage or whatever?

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or keeps you safe or whatever.

JANINE: And—yeah. I also have “Cheap Shot” which means that my backstab deals an extra 1d6 damage.

AUSTIN: *[laughs lightly]* So by default you can do, uh, your base damage which is d8+1d6 without rolling any dice. Or you can roll—

JANINE (overlapping): Mm-hm. Also my DEX is 3, full on.

AUSTIN: Right. So. Yeah, that’s good. So, or you can roll DEX, do your base damage if you hit, *plus* 1d6, *plus* get to choose from a list of other bonuses that also includes potentially more damage. But also things like reducing armor, or creating advantage, or keeping yourself out of melee.

JANINE: Yeah. Um, I think I’m gonna do the DEX roll here?

AUSTIN: Alright, let’s do the DEX roll. Here we go!

JANINE: How do—do I need to roll Backstab and then Cheap Shot, or do I roll Cheap Shot and it’s like...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Just roll Backstab, just roll Backstab—

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Cheap Shot is just, like, gonna change your damage roll.

JANINE: Yeah. Okay.

AUSTIN: And we can just do this in separate rolls, so—

JANINE (laughing a little): I'm so nervous.

AUSTIN: Fair! This is a big room! That's a twelve! Hell yeah!

JANINE: Alright! So—

AUSTIN: So, d8 damage by default, plus d6. You can do that outright, but also you can choose two of the following: You don't get into a melee with them, you deal your damage—and in fact I'm gonna say you don't get into a melee in this scenario means your invisibility doesn't drop if you choose that one—you deal your damage plus another 1d6, you create an advantage +1 forward to you or an ally acting on it, you reduce their armor by 1 til they repair it. What two are you choosing?

JANINE: Uh... *[exhales]* Okay. Um. Ca—I can't choose the same one twice, can I?

AUSTIN: ... Uh, sure you can.

JANINE: I wanted to give myself and Red Jack a +1 forward advantage. Okay.

AUSTIN: Uh—yeah. Yeah. And I'll just play that with Red Jack as like, being in a good position, basically. Y'know? And doing good stuff? 'Cause I'm not gonna roll for Red Jack here, 'cause that's not what I do.

JANINE: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: You know. He's got a big sword.

JANINE: Okay. *[sighs]*

AUSTIN: But you're not choosing—I wanna be, I wanna just re-state what those options were. Which were: you don't get into melee, which means in this case you would get to remain invisible; you do extra damage on top of the damage you do—

JANINE (overlapping): *Oh*. Right. Right.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I was...

JANINE: Okay. Here's the—okay. Okay, okay. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: I'm gonna give Red Jack the advantage and I'm going to keep invisibility for me.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Okay. Good. Yes. Good. Alright. So then 1d8+1d6 on damage.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Alright. 7 damage, that's not bad!

JANINE (overlapping): That's... that's... fine.

AUSTIN: And it ignores armor because you've stabbed this person in the fuckin' back.

JANINE: Also I have, also I have the precise, uh...

AUSTIN: Oh, right.

JANINE: The Hitchcock rapier.

AUSTIN: True. Which also pierces some amount of armor, right?

JANINE: It has some... yeah, it's... pre... cise...

AUSTIN: Precise means you get to roll DEX.

JANINE: "Close, precise, 1 piercing."

AUSTIN: 1 piercing, okay, yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because you're hitting someone who doesn't know you're there, you're also just able to pierce their armor cleanly. Um, he drops to a knee and says, um:

AUSTIN AS PRELATE SPRING: *Frigate!*

AUSTIN: Which is—and the Paladin, the gargoyle Paladin lift-jumps into the air and hovers there with this like, big, loud flap. Actually, you know what, I think, I think they're, Frigate's wings also do the thing that the roar of the bone-dragon did, which is like, remove sound for a moment? And they hover in the air and then come and land next to the prelate? And are like, scanning for someone nearby but have not found you yet?

JANINE (nervously): Rad!

AUSTIN: And in that moment, y'know, Red Jack just fuckin' rolls in and just immediately aces two of these cultists with a giant sword.

JANINE (wearily): Dope...

AUSTIN: Yeah. So. So far so good! Um. Hella. Let's talk about you again real quick.

[TIMESTAMP: 1:10:00]

AUSTIN (CONT): Um. The... uh, I think the group is getting ready to go. Um, to where they found—they, they found the tracks to chase down where Red Jack, Adaire, and Callowkeen went to. Um, and the group is together, but also in this moment Sunder shows up. Carrying a box filled with dandelions, with dandelion clocks. And says:

AUSTIN AS SUNDER: I can take us there instantly.

AUSTIN: And Samot has like, comes out of the front hall at this point and joins up with you and then like, some members of Severe's guard and says, like, um. Looks at you directly actually, and says:

AUSTIN AS SAMOT: Can this mage be trusted?

ALI (laughing): Oh ho! Huh!

AUSTIN: This is a big question right now.

ALI: It is. It is a very big question in this... second. Um... it's weird, 'cause I feel like I just wanna look at Sunder for a second, right?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm! Yeah.

ALI: Um... and I, there's not like, a roll for... I was like, can I Discern Realities on Sunder but not what this is, but...

AUSTIN: You can! There is a roll for that if you wanna roll that! *[ALI laughs]*

ALI: Um. 'Cause I think that like, I mean at least as far as like, Hella's understanding of this situation is is that like, the last time there was a meeting she was like, we should talk to Sunder about it because Sunder is the best... kind of, influence on what, where Uklan's at?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And like, if it was Hadrian I would want someone to come to me.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Right.

ALI: I would want someone to trust me in that way. Um. *[laughs nervously]* So I think that she does trust Sunder unless there was something that would immediately tip her off... when she...

AUSTIN: *[exhales]* You'd have to roll.

ALI: Yeah. *[laughs]* She—

AUSTIN: You really would.

ALI: "Closely studies a situation *or* person." Person is just in there!

AUSTIN: Or person! Yeah!

ALI (overlapping): I didn't know that!

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's right in there! Yeah, that's not even twisting the move, that's the move, Discern Realities works on people. *[ALI laughs]* Mm-hm.

ALI: Okay. Um, yeah. Okay, let me just see.

AUSTIN: Alright, 8. So you get one question.

ALI: Um, what here is not what it appears to be?

AUSTIN: Um... not Sunder. Sunder is, Sunder is who she appears to be. She's afraid for her friend, she's here to help, et cetera. Uh, I think Samot is... nervous, because... there is someone he doesn't know if he'll have to confront? There's something like—he wants to rip a bandaid off, it's clear. Even though it looks like he's prepping for surgery. Do you know what I mean? What he really wants is to amputate, but—uh, amputation is a surgery so it doesn't really follow. But you get what I'm saying.

ALI (overlapping): *[laughs]* Right. I get it. Hella understands the impulse, right? *[laughs]* That's—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah! Totally. Of course she does. Of course she does!

ALI: Um... but I think she says "Yes."

AUSTIN: Okay. And then he's—so then Samot says like:

AUSTIN AS SAMOT: Very well. Are your guards ready?

AUSTIN: And Severea's like:

AUSTIN AS SEVEREA (exasperated): Yes. *[laughs lightly]* Not everything has to be a thing.

AUSTIN: Um, and Sunder places the, the box of, um, flowers on the ground. Um, and takes a step to the side, and says:

AUSTIN AS SUNDER: We just need to wait a moment. For a breeze.

AUSTIN: And... Samot is like, "Uh..." and Severeas like:

SEVEREA: [*scoffs lightly*] Yeah, of course. [*ALI laughs in delight*]

AUSTIN: And she just like, moves her hand a little bit. And a breeze starts. [*laughs lightly*] And it blows the, all the seeds off of the dandelion paws, the lion's paws, and in a moment you hear the sound of glass shattering, and you and a group of—you, Samot, Severeas, Sunder Havelton, and three of Severeas's guards arrive in... a storage room, in the northwest of this facility. [*laughs lightly*] With a broken mirror behind you. Um. Samot I think goes:

SAMOT: Of course. The archivist used this trick once.

AUSTIN: And you're in a room filled with crates and boxes and a bunch of other shit. Um, what do you do?

ALI: Can I hear voices...? Or anything?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you hear the clanging of the cell that Adaire did a mom—you know, a little while ago.

ALI: Okay. Um... yeah, I leave this hallway and like, head towards...

AUSTIN: As *soon* as you open that door...

ALI: Oh—? [*laughs*]

AUSTIN: You see—uh, I'm just gonna start opening more of this stuff—a cell.

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: So right next to this storage room there is a cell, a jail cell, and as soon as you come out you hear someone say, you hear a halfling say:

AUSTIN AS ISAAC ADLETON: Hella Varal! *[ALI laughs]* You're gonna get me out of this jail cell!

ALI (laughing): I super don't have time for this right now.

ADLETON: I knew you couldn't go on without me. How did you come in from the *storage* room?

ALI AS HELLA (overlapping quietly): Oh, I so don't have time for this, oh my god, no, no, no, no...

SAMOT(?): Who is this?

HELLA: No, no, no, no, everybody we're just walking by, we're just walking by—[whispering to Isaac] I'm here with a fucking—I'm here with *two gods*.

AUSTIN: You hear someone moaning from deeper inside the jail cell. Groaning.

ALI: *Moaning?*

AUSTIN: Groaning, not moaning. *[laughs]*

ALI: Oh. *[JANINE laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: They're similar things, but I'm gonna lean to "groan."

ALI (overlapping): They're—yeah, the same thing, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Inside the same cell?

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's a fairly large cell, all said.

ALI: Okay.

ALI AS HELLA: Who's—who's back there? *[laughs out of character]*

ADELTON: Doesn't really matter, what *matters* is you open the gate for me—I'm close, I'm tryin' to pick the lock, the thing is I don't have a lockpick, so if you could get me a lockpick *or* do the thing you do *[HELLA sighs]* where you just go *BOP!* And then the gate's open, that would be—

HELLA (indignant): *No!*

ADELTON: —choice.

HELLA: *No.* What's in there?

ADELTON: *Me!*

HELLA: Is that person okay?

ADELTON (overlapping): Your old friend, adventurer king! Who—

HELLA: What's that noise?

ADELTON: There's another guy in here, he's—whatever! But your old friend—

HELLA: *Who's the guy?* *[JACK laughs distantly]*

ADELTON: Some orc!

AUSTIN: And Sunder like, fl—literally *slides* across the ground, like *floats*, and her hand reaches around Adelton's throat. And like, her hair like, catches fire. *[ALI, AUSTIN laugh]* Y'know? Um, uh, and... she says:

AUSTIN AS SUNDER: *Stand. Back.*

ADELTON: Alright. Alright. Okay, you can—*[muffled]* You can let go! It's okay—*[wheezes]* I'm here to help! I'm here to help! 'S your old friend!

AUSTIN: And slides backwards. Do you wanna—she's just gonna fuckin'—she says some words and makes some gestures and the, the entire like... the entire structure of this cell door like, falls, begins to fall, and then like, lifts it with some magic and slides it back into the storage room, basically. And inside on the ground slowly bleeding to death is Uklan Tel.

ALI (quietly): Oh.

HELLA: Sunder, I have some bandages, if you wanna stay while we...

AUSTIN: She turns to you and like, the fire is there and it's like, oh no, what she wants to go do is kill people. *[AUSTIN, ALI laugh]* Uh... *[exhales]* But then she like, takes a breath and takes the bandages from you and says:

SUNDER: Alright. *Ruin* them. *Hurt* them. They *used him*. *[sighs]* He's a fool...

AUSTIN: And walks over, speeds over to him and kneels and begins to try to address his wounds. Um, Samot, Severea, and the other guards are already now moving down this long hallway and kicking down doors? Um, those doors are for rooms. So, I'm just gonna reveal this shit now. Uh, *bup-bup-bup-buh*... here we go. So there's like a long hallway that has four bedrooms, for four of the—for the four people who are in that room, right? Kall Ferr, Frigate, Zhan Kurr, and Prelate Springa. Along with a chapel, is on this hallway. And they are like, running through these things, trying to like, look through until they get to the halfway point and then they hear fighting happening. *[laughs lightly]* And then everyone kind of makes a run into that room.

JANINE: Thank *god*. *[ALI laughs]*

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! Yeah, you've got some backup here. You've got some backup. Um. Finally. Uh, let's see. Let's get one more round of that combat, uh, as these people come in before we jump back to Lem. So. Adaire, what's up? What's up with you?

JANINE: Just to clarify...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: The prelate took a knee in the direction they were facing, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, still facing that direction.

JANINE: Cool. That's good.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

JANINE: Um, I'm just gonna go for it again. *[laughs]* Frankly.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: I'm right here, I got this sword that's like, it's a real nice sword that I very much enjoy using and don't get to whip it out often enough.

AUSTIN: Fair enough.

JANINE: Yeah, I said it. *[AUSTIN laughs]* Uh, okay, so—*[laughs]*

AUSTIN: No one's judgin', no one's here, y'know, everyone's, everyone agrees.

JANINE: And I'm still invisible, so why not fuckin' just...

AUSTIN: That's another Backstab! Yeah.

JANINE: Fuckin' do it!

ALI (quietly): Get it done...

JANINE: Get an 11!

AUSTIN: Alright, well. That's an 11, yeah! So you gonna make the same choice as before?

JANINE: Um... Does Red Jack need another +1—I guess another +1 forward wouldn't hurt.

AUSTIN: Uh, you could also give it to somebody else who rolls dice.

[TIMESTAMP 1:20:01]

JANINE: Does it count—I don't know that Hella's here yet, though.

AUSTIN: Hella's close enough to where she will get one based on the—

JANINE: That Adaire's Hella sense started tingling?

ALI (quietly): Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: I think it's more just like, the chaos you're causing makes it such that someone like Hella can take advantage of it well.

JANINE: Sure. That's—I'll—

AUSTIN: D'you know what I mean?

JANINE: Yeah. Chef kiss, that's good, yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): I'll make that—uh-huh! Yeah.

JANINE: So I'll do that, and I'll also keep my invisibility again.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: 'Cause I'm right—I'm right fuckin' next to that *thing*? *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! You don't wanna—you *don't* wanna appear in this moment.

JANINE: No... I don't... uh. Yeah. I'm gonna—I'll roll my damage again.

AUSTIN: Go ahead! That's 6. Uh, and this time he dies.

JANINE: Good.

AUSTIN: And his blood like, spills into the ground. Um, and the, the—uh, gargoyle-paladin, the Paladin Frigate, begins to just like, whip those chains around? You're—you're able not to get hit here because of the way this works, but like—you do not—you see one of them catch a bit of Springa's leg as, um, as Frigate is like, whipping them around, and the leg just begins to become Nothing.

JANINE: Cool...!

AUSTIN: Because that's what the Heat and the Dark does. Uh, at this point, um, the cultists are trying to like, maintain this circle circle formation—I just started moving the bone-dragon around, whoops! Uh—*[laughs]* Not what I meant to do. They're trying to like, maintain a circle formation to keep people from the big bone-dragon in the middle, and, uh, the illusionist Zhan Kurr is kind of like sliding up to the furthest corner that he can get to, and Red Jack has taken out one more cultist and is now in melee with uh, Kall Ferr, the Collector-Curator. Who is—seems to be protected—Kall Ferr is wearing, um, I should describe her because she hasn't been around in a long time.

AUSTIN (CONT): She has like, baggy purple pants on that roll up at the bottom, she has like, um, a vest on, and like a white shirt, and that vest is covered in baubles and pins and stuff? It is like, it is a... it's enchanted by pattern magic, but it also is a specific type of pattern magic that is made by its weird baubles that project, uh, a sort of mage-armor protective field around her? And so she is like, very protected right now from, even from Red Jack? Like, she is able to kind of stand toe-to-toe here. And she is shouting—she's actually shouting to Red Jack, she calls him "Corsica's Dog." She has a bit of a chip on her shoulder about Corsica Neue. Um... as Hella and Samot and Severeas run down this hallway, let's jump back to Lem. Hella, remember you have a +1 forward once you get into this room.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Um. Lem.

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: You've made it out of jail. What's your, what's your criminal headquarters look like?

JACK: *[inhales, exhales]* It is a, um... *[laughs]* It is, uh, an office. I have bought an office. Um, it has a, uh, it has a... glass door with a fake name on the front of it. Um, and, uh, y'know, I feel fairly secure, I think. I get this sense of security, kind of permeates through Lem. This knowledge that sometimes people will come to me and ask for things that I need to get done—

AUSTIN (overlapping): Mm. Mm-hm.

JACK: Obviously I won't see them in the office, I might receive them in the office, and we can have a little chat. And then they'll be in—there's another office— further back

AUSTIN (overlapping): Ah.

JACK: —or maybe below it. Or maybe above it, up a little tight set of stairs. And, uh, y'know, um. Money can change hands, and then things can get done! *[AUSTIN laughs]* Y'know, sometimes these things that get done are... uh, very funny. And I think Lem sees them happen sometimes. And as is the way of these things in dreams you can never quite be sure whether or not what you're, what it is you're laughing at is actually funny, or...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Or isn't. But like, I think some of these are like, you know, there are some scrapes, there are some escapades. And then sometimes people come in and um, just ask for like, really unpleasant stuff. I think. Because they know that, that this person is gonna be able to get away with it. Because of the curtain.

AUSTIN: Right. Right.

JACK: Just like, murders.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Like, people who need to disappear. And not even like, anti-hero murders. Y'know. Just like—

AUSTIN: No, no. This isn't even The Godfather. Right? This isn't even like, "Hey there's someone causing trouble and the official police aren't helping us, can you help?"

JACK: Right, absolutely. This is just like—

AUSTIN: Like—my—

JACK: "I don't like them."

AUSTIN: "The rival in my rubber shop business is undercutting my prices."

JACK: Yeah. Or the—there's like, um... *[exhales]* "The people who work on my factory floor are getting above themselves."

AUSTIN: *Right.* Right. The worst of the worst. The truly despicable. Like, you work with—there is the character we came up with that time in the Marielda special, um, that time. Uh, not the, not the...

JACK: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I mean, I think they ended up being related, didn't they? The family that was, that came up in the...

JACK: Yeah, the like, awful child.

AUSTIN: Well, so, no, the one I'm thinking of is the, there's like the character who is like, the industrialist, the guy who's like, was basically just us doing, um... what's his face, from There Will Be Blood.

JACK: Uh, Daniel Plainview.

AUSTIN: Daniel Plainview. Exactly. And also that same family was connected to those shitty teens who showed up and hurt people at the market, in the market game?

JACK: That's what I was thinking of, was the child. *[AUSTIN, JACK laugh]*

AUSTIN: Yeah. Was teens!

JACK (overlapping): Those awful teens!

AUSTIN: And I think it's like, that relation.

JACK (overlapping): I think it's a montage that Lem sees.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And it's nauseating. Because in the midst of these like, deeply unpleasant criminal acts, there is also just the kind of like, "And then there'll be a fun scrape!"

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: And there's something just nightmarish about it. About this kind of like, lurching, um, montage. From one to the other, with no consistent arc towards villainy or towards like, comedy crimes?

AUSTIN: Right...

JACK: Just this chaotic, horrible soup that, that, uh, Lem is experiencing.

AUSTIN: Right. Um. And—do you get the sense that he's working towards anything?

JACK: Um...

AUSTIN: Like—or is it just... like, unbound, like... id, you know what I mean?

JACK: I think that there are... I think there is very little more impressive and frightening than someone who sets impressive plans, completes them, and then begins another one.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: Sometimes when I finish a thing I kind of just sit around for weeks and go "Oh god, what do I do now?" *[AUSTIN laughs]* And I think there is, something deeply kind of concerning in this

context of someone who's like "Yeah, okay, I achieved that. Let's uh, let's move onto—there's stuff to be done! There's stuff to be done."

AUSTIN: I think one of the things we get in this montage, too, is a few more instances of you informing on people to the powers that be.

JACK: Because I know how sweet that fruit is.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Exactly. Exactly, especially when you know you're gonna do something soon that is an even bigger ask in terms of the veil, or the curtain, right? Where you're like "Oh, I'm gonna do a big one next. We're gonna, we're gonna do a train heist, we're gonna blow something up. We're gonna do something truly horrendous. So lemme just re-up, lemme make sure they know I'm on their side in the long run."

JACK: Yeah, like, "We need to kill an alderman." *[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: Right. *[laughs]* Right, exactly. Right. What a monster. Uh... where are you when you find out that Maelgwyn is back?

JACK: I am, uh, at home. I have a nice house.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: This is very strange for Lem. Um, and he has to kind of like, uh, kind of choke down the envy that he feels at this house, even though he knows how it is being gained. Lem has never really been in a house of his own, ever.

AUSTIN: Right. You had a room here or there. Right?

JACK: Yeah, and I had the—we've, we know about the hell living situation in the Archives, just like, the complete chaos of living in the New Archives where your bed can get requisitioned.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: So just a, just a nice... a nice house. Um, it's secure, how do I, how do I hear about the fact that Maelgwyn is back?

AUSTIN: *[inhales, exhales]* I think you... I don't know, I don't know. I think—do you just—oh! Does an acquaintance tell you?

JACK: Oh, is someone just like—

AUSTIN: I, I mean we—*[sighs, laughs]* Do you meet the Hitchcocks?

JACK: *[laughs]* And they, they arrive, and they're just like "Oh, well, um, got some news. *[laughs]* Got some news!" Do they—

AUSTIN: Well—does it just come up, right? Like, you're in the middle of, you know, there's the time you go to see the Tea Witches with them.

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JACK: And, uh...

AUSTIN: And maybe it comes up, then. "We had this *wild*, you know, thing happen to us in this place!" Um, or, do you think the Hitchcocks wouldn't slip that out, wouldn't mention?

JACK: Well the Hitchcocks, I believe, don't reveal that they are, a, a pair, to outsiders.

AUSTIN: Right, sorry, yeah, yeah, yes. But would—yeah.

JACK: I think they'd probably be like, "Word on the grapevine..."

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: And then I think it's like, three snap sequences of a montage.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Of Lem finding himself going "Hah! Interesting! Oh, thanks! Interesting. Interesting." And then just like, tight on, uh, the thief's face as he walks rapidly back to his house—

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And then just like, in the house, deadbolt closed, bolted door closed, *[AUSTIN, JACK laugh]* blinds down, all the doors locked. Um, sitting in a—you know, like in, like in No Country for Old Men when, uh, when Woody Harrelson's character is waiting for the attack he knows is going to come. Just like, sitting in a chair, armed.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Just like, sweating.

AUSTIN: I think we get that thing where like, there's the window next to you—and also, just to be clear, Marielda's on fire this whole time. You're walking through the streets, you're doing killings, it's always on fire, but it's never—no one ever responds to that fire, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Samol is constantly dying and in pain. And it is not remarked on. The Heat and the Dark is right there. Um. You—we get that shot of like, you in the chair and the window next to you, Marielda on fire, and time passes, right? We get the like, sun and the stars and the moon, you know, it flips through that stuff. And sometimes it's like, the sun goes up and it comes down but it doesn't go all the way down, right? It comes back the other way, like—it is a strange—time is weird here, still. And then in that same window, in that shot, the room you're in, like the view from the window changes as your room, like, moves and pivots basically? And it like, pivots all the way around, 360 degrees, you can see all of the city, and then when it comes to stop, you can see—you see the volcano in the distance. And you see a hole blasted out from it. And the end of Marielda is happening.

AUSTIN (CONT): The train comes across the city, it goes to where Maelgwyn's, uh, the weird mall is and becomes a tower again. Um. And. Something in you—there is relief for a moment? Because... you know that Maelgwyn is gone. Or you learn it. Or he disappears. Again. And Samot arrives. And, y'know, the... maybe this is also in that montage, or again, this is something that comes out of—you can tell me how your character, how the burglar knows this, the killer knows this. You know that there was a split between Samot and the Disciples of Samot over Maelgwyn disappearing. In fact, maybe that's one of the things you've heard, maybe that

was one of the things that you were like, you have even started to try to like, build new connections based on that and try to like, get in with Samot.

JACK: Yeah. I think it's—

AUSTIN: God, is that even it? Is there even a scene with you...

JACK (overlapping): I think it's absolutely that.

AUSTIN: You talking to Samot?

JACK: Yeah. And, and I think it's that, and it's also the, the feel of the occupying presence in the city communicates something about—you know, it might not necessarily to the average citizen, but with the level of access that I have, and the perspicacity to have unpicked bits of this, um, I think it is clear that a split is visible in the way the occupation moves in the city.

AUSTIN: Right. Mages are no longer welcome in the way that they once were.

JACK: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: But also, here's the question: What do you do once the curtain is drawn back? Because... the thing that has happened is Samothos has died. Your deal was with Samothos, not with Samot.

JACK: I think the danger of affording a curtain to someone for a prolonged period of time is that they acquire skills such that when the, when the veil is lifted it matters less.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: So I think that, uh... I think Lem feels in that way you do when you feel a bad thing is about to happen in a dream, I think Lem feels another one of these sequences of acts coming.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: And you know, we sort of just get like, Lem's face being "Oh, god, no here we go again."

AUSTIN: But then it *stops*. There is a knock on the door. And it all stop—you see, you can feel the potentiality, everything terrible that he was going to do in this city. But there was a knock at the door, a heavy knock. The knock of someone with stone hands. Though actually, wait, at this point I guess—she may not have stone hands anymore. Ali? [ALI laughs] Post-Marielda, does Castille continue as Castille, or as Charter? Charter, right?

ALI: Um... she didn't, she didn't get her body back. It burned off—

AUSTIN: No, but did she—right, but did she continue like, with the illusion stuff?

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: Or did she commit to being a pala—having a pala-din body.

ALI: Yeah, I think she commits to her old body. Um. Yeah—

AUSTIN: Which way, which one are we saying is her old body at this point?

ALI: [*laughs*] Sorry. I think she commits to having a, like a stone body.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: She doesn't like, switch back.

AUSTIN: Okay. Then yeah. You hear the sound of stone knocking, on your wall. Or, on your door. On the wall is even better, honestly. From the walls. [*ALI giggles quietly*] And then the door opens and a woman made of stone comes in. Holding a gauntlet. And we'll come back to that in a moment. Um. Cult team. Anti-cult team.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Uh, Hella. You get to a door, you can hear fighting on the other side. What's, what's goin' on? What do you do?

ALI: Opening that door? [*laughs, says something inaudible*] The fight's happening, right?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Hell yeah, you open the—yeah, but I don't know what's the degree to which you're like, yeah, how you rollin' in, what's goin'?

ALI (overlapping): No, no, no, no, no, I'm just going in.

AUSTIN: Alright. Uh, you see what's in front of you. Bodies everywhere—

JANINE: Not entirely, right?

AUSTIN: Doesn't see, doesn't see Adaire [*JANINE laughs lightly*] and Barbello.

ALI: No Adaire, no Barbello. Dead body... chainslinger...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Dead body, uh, weird gargoyle, chains spinning around. A bunch of, um, cultists protecting this big dragon—which is still alive, by the way.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: It's covered in the flesh goo...

ALI: Eugh... god...

AUSTIN: Red Jack is fighting Kall Ferr, uh, and... up in the northeast, um, the... the illusionist-slash-archivist Zhan Kurr is casting some sort of spell.

ALI: Um, well it seems as though my closest target is this, this chain-swinger. [*laughs*] Right?

AUSTIN: True. True enough.

ALI (laughing): These chains.

AUSTIN: That is true. [*JANINE laughs softly*]

ALI: So I would like to focus it—oh—

AUSTIN (laughing): Sorry for dropping *[JANINE, ALI start laughing]* the most *giant* Samot I've ever seen on the screen.

JANINE: "I'm here too!"

AUSTIN: "Me! I'm here!" *[laughs]* Oh, he's so big. *[ALI chuckles]*

ALI (quietly): Great. Um...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Um, anyway. So you're gonna hit the gargoyle?

ALI: Yeah, would love to. Um...

AUSTIN: You give me a Hack and Slash.

ALI: Would love to. Yeah, sure. And then we'll decide what this looks like, see how successful it is... that's a 12! Okay, wait—

AUSTIN: That is a 12. You get a bonus, you get a super good...

ALI: "On a 12+ deal your damage and choose something physical your target has (a weapon, their position, a limb) and they lose it."

AUSTIN: Hell yeah.

ALI: Great!

JANINE (laughing): Oh my god! Again!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

ALI: I think that—*[laughs]* I think that Hella comes into this room like, as—oh my god.

AUSTIN: I have to add them! Listen! *[ALI, JANINE dying of laughter]* I'm sorry! Severe is big!

JANINE: "Also me! I was in the bedrooms!" *[AUSTIN laughs]* "Checking stuff out! I'm here now!"

AUSTIN (overlapping): "I was checking out some stuff! I was looking through the drawers! Nothin' in there, though, don't worry about it!"

ALI (still laughing): It's very distracting! It's very distracting. Um. *[talking through laughter]* I love that I said "oh my god" both times a giant god appeared on our map. Um. *[AUSTIN laughs]* Regardless. I think Hella is walking into this room and like, in the middle of this action, right?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: So she like, kind of... the first thing she immediately does is like take out her sword and like, slash it down in such a way that it gets that chain to like, circle around it? Y'know?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: 'Cause of how physics?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: And then just like, in a swift motion down, like—I don't know if the, the um, the chains break or whatever or just get like, broken in one place?

AUSTIN: I mean, do you use that move on them?

ALI: Um... *[laughs]* Are you kidding me? Yeah! Hell yeah!

AUSTIN: I didn't know if you were gonna do somethin' else, you could do a lot of stuff with that move.

ALI: I could do a lotta stuff. Um... I think I wanna break the, the—I guess I could break like, an arm? *[laughs]* I think that works too!

AUSTIN: It's up to you. Yeah.

ALI: Like a wrist? That's what I could do. I could use the force from the chain to like, do a yank... sort of situation.

AUSTIN: Totally. I will not give you two for one here. *[ALI giggles]* Do you know what I mean?

ALI: No, I know. Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: If you take the wrist, then you're making good progress 'cause you've broken this thing's wrist, but it will still have its weird chain-weapon.

JANINE: That makes limbs disappear? The thing that makes limbs disappear.

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AUSTIN (overlapping): Uh-huh? Yeah.

JANINE: Just so we're clear on what it does.

ALI: I, I didn't see any limb situations—*[laughs]* And it's just one long chain?

AUSTIN: It's like a pair of chains—so this is the thing, it has two long—both of its arms are wrapped with these chains.

ALI: Oh...

AUSTIN: And it like, is wielding them one in each arm, swinging them around wildly. Um. And it can like, let more out when it wants to go further or bring them in closer and eventually like, hold them like daggers, or go in like the middle. Y'know. Y'know, like weird chain weapons. Like in movies or anime or martial arts.

ALI: *[giggles]* Yeah. Mm-hm. Um. All the genres. And media types. Yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, the three genres.

ALI: Uh. *[laughs a little nervously]* I think I probably—I—*[sighs]* I have enough confidence that I can kill this person that I think that I'm just gonna break their weapon and—I think Hella's like—

AUSTIN (overlapping): Okay. So then like, do you—go ahead, you tell me what that fuckin' looks like then.

ALI: *[laughs]* I was gonna say Hella has a priority of de-arming now. But I think it's the thing that I just described, where it's like she's able to wrap it around and twist her sword in such a way that it's like...

AUSTIN: It just fuckin' snaps.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Hell yeah, that's sick. *[ALI laughs]* That is sick. Then you should also do your damage, by the way.

ALI: Oh, would love to. Uh... oh, I—that's also a 13 by the way, 'cause I had a +1 forward. Um, damage is just—oh, damage is damage.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh, do you want to—you can—so, you can do that. You can also expose yourself to being hit back to do an additional 1d6. It's up to you, though.

ALI: Where did the—did I roll? 'Cause I heard the beep but it didn't appear...

AUSTIN: Yes, you rolled.

ALI: Oh, I rolled an 8. Um...

AUSTIN: Yes. You should decide before that in the future but I'll let you decide still here.

ALI: No, I know, yeah. Um. The choice is that I can open myself up to damage and then roll again?

AUSTIN: And do another 1d6.

ALI: Uh, yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: Alright. So do your extra 1d6!

ALI: 1d6... that's a 4.

AUSTIN: Alright, so that's 12. Which is not bad. This thing has some armor, so it's not gonna take all 12, uh, but... still do pretty good. Um. So yeah, you like, grab both of them, you snap it, and then you like just, stab in basically?

ALI: I think so, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. Um. That did good work. Uh, and like, catch it in the side and it's like, bleeding black blood from inside? Then, it, it like—you've broken the weapons from it, but it still has big dragon claws, 'cause it's this gargoyle? And it does manage to slash in at you and do... uh, 4 damage, which ignores armor.

ALI: Ooh, oh! I have all this armor.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

ALI: Okay, that's—I'm down to 22.

AUSTIN (overlapping): 4 isn't too bad though.

ALI: Yeah. 22, 26, so.

AUSTIN: Totally. Uh-huh. And so you're like, fighting here, you're kind of pushing in a little bit—Adaire, I wanna know what you're doing before we get to the gods. *[laughs lightly]*

JANINE: I wanna try and invisibly snake my way through this mass to get behind the illusion...ist who's—is that Zhan Kurr?

AUSTIN: That's Zhan Kurr, yeah, in the top right. Give me a Defy Danger DEX, take a +1 forward on that because of being invisible.

JANINE: Cool. Uh...

AUSTIN: But you still are moving are like, moving through a bunch of people, like you said, snaking through, so.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna have to make you roll for it.

JANINE: Where's my—okay. Gonna have to add a 1 to this manually...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Your DEX 3, right? Yeah, that's fine. 2d6+4 is a pretty good roll. Yeah, you aced it. 12! Alright.

JANINE: Yeah, it's a—plus one, so that'd be 13.

AUSTIN: Plus one, right. 13. So yeah, you sneak through all this stuff. Um, as you do, uh, the room is filling further and further with this red.

JANINE: Cool.

AUSTIN: Things are—things—*[exhales]* You gotta move.

JANINE: I'm workin' on it!

AUSTIN: I know! So what're you gonna do here?

JANINE: It's what I'm doin'!

AUSTIN: You gonna stab this motherfucker in the back too?

JANINE (laughing): Yeah! I'm gonna do the thing I do good!

AUSTIN: Do the thing!

JANINE: I'm *gonna*.

AUSTIN: Oh, shit, okay, yeah I just remembered a cool thing.

JANINE: What?

AUSTIN: That's alright, no, go ahead, do your shit, um—

JANINE: I did, I got an 11?

AUSTIN: So. Totally. You're gonna do this damage, you are not able to get—you're not able to continue your invisibility after this. One of Zhan Kurr's specific things is "See the truth behind the veil of illusion." Because of being an illusion mage.

JANINE (overlapping dryly): Oh, cool.

AUSTIN: So you can continue to do—you can—I'm just telling you not to pick that one, basically. *[All giggles]* You still can pick two of these with an 11, but I would rather just—

JANINE (overlapping): Okay. That's, yeah. Okay. Yeah, and this has to get done either way, so. *[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: Right. I just wanna tell you up front, that way you're not just like "I do this!" and I go "I've activated my trap card" because that's not that fun.

JANINE: No. Does melee—does "You don't get into a melee" count if they're a magic user?

AUSTIN: Uh, yeah, totally. It just means that you're like, still safe and they're not gonna like Hack and Slash you back, basically. They're not gonna—you're gonna be able to determine where you wanna be on this map a little bit. You know? Within the realm of the safety—the safe areas, you know?

JANINE: Yeah... um. Okay. So the thing that I—

AUSTIN (overlapping): But you won't be able to Backstab again in this case, because you've lost this invisibility at this point. You know what I mean?

JANINE: Yeah. Um, okay, so the thing I think I'm gonna do is I'm going to do my damage plus my 1d6, plus another 1d6?

AUSTIN: Okay. Wait, and you still get another one.

JANINE: Yes. The other one I want is a +1 forward.

AUSTIN: Okay. For yourself.

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool.

JANINE: I like +1 forwards because they are versatile.

AUSTIN: They're good! They really are! Go ahead and do your damage.

JANINE: Okay... that's a 15!

AUSTIN (overlapping): Zhan Kurr, punk, you just aced this dude. Are you kiddin' me? God damn! *[ALI giggles in the background]* Uh, I think at some point Red Jack just looks over you and goes:

AUSTIN AS RED JACK (triumphantly): Hah-hah! The *Tactician!* *[JANINE snorts, AUSTIN laughs, ALI giggles distantly]*

JANINE: Great! Great! Never gonna live that down! Never gonna live it down.

AUSTIN (overlapping): And yeah—uh, how're you—how do you, uh, how do you kill Zhan Kurr? *[laughs]*

JANINE: Uh... Does my invisibility still—I guess it still does fall.

AUSTIN: It does still fall, yeah. I think he counter-spells it, basically. You know?

JANINE: Um... Can—okay, this is bending the fiction a little bit but I think it's cool, if uh, if Adaire sort of manages to cross the room and like, gets behind Zhan Kurr and Zhan Kurr like, has that mom—that anime moment of like, looking up and there's like the little background sizzly thing?

AUSTIN (amused): Uh-huh.

JANINE: You know what I mean, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. I do.

JANINE: Uh, and Adaire's invisibility falls, and then it's just like, there's that moment where, where Zhan Kurr's about to turn but no. Too late.

AUSTIN: But no. Too late. Yeah. Done.

JANINE: Done.

AUSTIN: Just falls off, falls down through the frame, done. Cool. Um. Red Jack kills another two of these regular cultists, but is having some trouble with, uh, with the Collector-Curator who is nothing to, who is no-one to shake a stick at. That's a saying. Right?

JANINE: That is.

AUSTIN: Okay. Good. Uh, at this point—um, god. *[sighs]* How do I want this to unfold? So. *[inhales, exhales, pauses]* Samot and Severeia enter the room. And Severeia begins to like, lift her hand to do some cool divine magic shit, Samot's eyes begin to light up; before either of them can act, the Solarch arrives from behind them, having stepped out of the chapel that the group didn't check. Um. And it's the Solarch. It's the one you saw in that dream, um, and I think as he comes through there is just this blast of light and heat, everyone just take 2 damage. Piercing armor. Um, and the gel on the dragon lights on fire. Um. It is, like, the black and purple fire of the Heat and the Dark. Um, and you see him there, and he is as I described before: All gold, all, all, uh, you know. A sense of power that even being in the face of a god—the gods have kind of, had to confront the fact that they are not what they once were? The Solarch is in a moment where he believes he's about to become greater than anything else. And has the, holds that stature proudly. Um, and I think he like, reaches out with the glove that again, the gauntlet that you recognize as Maelgwyn's, and we cut back to Lem.

AUSTIN (CONT): Um. Castille is there. And wants you to put this glove on. *[JACK exhales]* Castille, how do you make that—how, how do you make this case? I'm curious. *[ALI laughing almost silently]* I mean, it's a favor for a friend. *[laughs lightly]* For someone you care about very deeply, insofar as, insofar as he is that person at all anymore.

ALI: It's tough because I think that Castille was getting sort of a coldness...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: At the end of her life, that she didn't shake through the, the... actions of the end of Marielda. Right? Um.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: She kind of stayed near Aubrey and Samot for like, some emotional support, but like, didn't get it.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Nothing against them, but like. You know. She was... *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: *Yeah.* She's in a different place, she was in a, a *meaningfully* different place by the end there.

ALI (overlapping): Yeah, she's, yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah. Um... so I think that it's more of like... I think there's something that comes across in the request, and there's also like, there's the sort of like...

ALI AS CASTILLE: You can finally do something for good in your life, for once.

ALI: Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah...

ALI: Like:

CASTILLE: You can really be someone instead of this, sniveling... whatever you are.

ALI: You know?

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AUSTIN: How do you respond to that?

JACK AS THE KILLER: Well, I mean... *[exhales]* *[ALI giggles]* Sniveling is maybe a little far. I'm—ah, no. No. I think I'm f—I think I'm *fine*? And I think that, uh, I think I'm fine. I'm very excited. Very excited about the next couple of weeks. Got some great irons in the fire, got some great fingers in pies. And I think that, uh, probably *[takes a breath]* probably you should just go.

CASTILLE: You would prioritize the next couple of weeks over... *[laughs lightly]* the sum of your entire life?

THE KILLER: *[pause]* What is that glove?

CASTILLE: *[laughs lightly]* Yeah, it's beautiful, isn't it?

THE KILLER: What is it?

ALI: *[laughs]* I don't know how she'd describe it...

AUSTIN: Yeah. But it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter how she would describe it, what matters is how the dream would—the dream, which is the dream of someone who has seen it already, would backfill it. You know?

ALI: Right.

JACK: *[laughs a little]* Right.

AUSTIN: And we don't need her to do it. Right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We don't even need it. What we can go is like, "What is that glove?" And then it's on his hand, and he is on his knees in front of Samoths the second, in front of Maeloths, in front of Maelgwyn as Samoths. And it is on his hand, and behind him is the armor of the Solarch. And Samoths, like, pinned to the bottom layer of existence, where somehow he has brought you, *[THEME MUSIC - "SOMETHING" - BEGINS]* explains to you that...

AUSTIN AS SAMOTHES: It is a strange thing to become someone new. Because you learn *so much*, Snitch Nightly. You learn so much that you could have *never* anticipated.

[THEME MUSIC - "SOMETHING" - PLAYS TO 1:54:17]