

[Spring in Hieron 35: Unfinished Work](#)

Transcriber: Fesha (@oziads) until 1:40:41, Audrey (@audreyotherway) after 1:40:41

AUSTIN: How many days has it been since the defeat of the Advocate?

ART: How many days did it take us to get there?

AUSTIN: I don't know...

DRE (overlapping): That's a good question.

AUSTIN: A week? Less? A week. We've done so much bad travel math over the years.

[AUSTIN, ALI *laugh*] That I'm gonna say. One week.

JANINE: So then a week back?

AUSTIN: Yeah. And then I'm saying, is it, are we now just back? Or has it been—I know what we're doing next, but like, I don't know, I'm asking y'all like, was there downtime here? I guess—when we returned last time you saw, uh, uh, Carlay de la Carta there, uh, being like “And to whoever kills the Advocate!” And then you were that “whoever.” But then we didn't—I don't know if there was a breath there. So like, have you had downtime, have you had time to relax at all? Or is this just a rolling “Fuck it, let's go cash in our lottery ticket” moment?

ART: I mean, I think Hadrian is messed up to the point that he would at least want that day to recover all hit points, you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Sure. What do people do in that day? Does anyone have any like, a little moment worth highlighting? Hella and Adaire, is... [ALI, JANINE *laugh lightly*] What're y'all up to?

JANINE: Is this the boat trip? Should we do the boat trip?

ALI (enthused): Yeah!

AUSTIN: If you wanna do a boat—yeah, listen—

JANINE (quiet, overlapping): We should do a boat trip...

AUSTIN: —boat party! Let's go!

JANINE: I mean, if we're, if we're sailing to Marielda, or, for example, then maybe we'd wanna like, warm up the boat, make sure everything's all good...!

ALI: Mhm. Just give it a test run.

AUSTIN: Does it have an *engine*? What's the...?

ALI (overlapping): Well you just wanna, you know, take it out there, make sure the hulls are good...

JANINE: Make sure there's no leaks, make sure there's no rats...

ALI (overlapping): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, so wait, what's the boat trip?

ALI: Um... *[laughs lightly]*

JANINE: Um...

ALI: Me and Ad... *[dissolves into laughter]*

ART: *Rats? [ALI still laughing]*

JANINE: Is this...? *[JANINE and AUSTIN dissolve into laughter]* I'm wondering if, I'm trying to think of like, the way that Adaire would propose this? Because I don't know that it's a thing... that she would ever mention wanting to do unless she saw an opening. *[ALI giggles]* You know?

AUSTIN: I don't. I think this is... *[ALI, AUSTIN laugh]* Has Adaire just had this thing in her heart this whole season like "I really fuckin' wanna go out on a boat with Hella again but I don't know how to bring it up."

JANINE: *[laughs]* No, no, I think the thing, I think the thing that she like, wants to do but hasn't known how to bring up is that she's wanted to introduce Hella to Rix and Rowe.

AUSTIN: Mm.

ALI: Mm.

JANINE: But hasn't known how to like... how to *do* that. Um.

AUSTIN: Can I give you, uh, a real easy answer? Is that Rix and Rowe desperately wanna meet Hella. *[ALI, JANINE laugh]* Like, the second there's a story about fighting a dragon, it's like "I

need, we need to meet all your friends. We need to meet everybody. Can we meet Hadrian, can we meet Hella, can we meet Thrandir, can we meet Ephrim? I know Ephrim's like, in charge or whatever but I wanna see the throne. Can I sit on the throne?" It's like that. *[JANINE laughs]* So. Is this a moment where like, that happens and it sparks in your mind that there's a good—this is the opening, is that if they wanna do it, that is something easier to say to Hella, is like "Oh Rix and—these *kids* wanna meet you?" *[ALI laughs]* I take it back. This is still tough.

JANINE (amused): It's still—! This is literally what I mean, of like, if Adaire was like hanging out with the kids and then saw Hella like, workin' on the boat it would be way easier. Or something to that effect.

ALI: I—I, yeah, that could happen. *[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: That stuff is close enough. Yeah, like, it's not like, uh... I'm lookin' at the University here, like—

ALI (overlapping): I think they're right... like, their little...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: They live right where I do all of my—*[begins to laugh]* boat stuff, I guess? Where my boat is stored? *[DRE laughs in the background]*

AUSTIN: It's in the same, it's in the same neighborhood.

ALI (overlapping): They live on the river, like!

AUSTIN: They live on the river.

ALI: Or did.

AUSTIN: Exactly. They do, they do! Look, I just removed the X's over their house— *[ALI: Oooh...]* That house is rebuilt. *[JANINE: Yeah!]* That hovel is rebuilt. Um... I should make this tree bigger. Hm. It's fine, I'll leave the tree the size it is currently. But know that that tree is bigger than ever. *[ALI chuckles]* So wait, what's the boat trip? Is it just Rix and Rowe out on a boat with you two?

JANINE: Uh... I also bring Barbelo.

ALI: Ooh!

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Because I wanna include Barbelo in family activities. *[ALI wheezes a little]*

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: He's also a new member of the family and I want him to feel like a part of it.

ALI (amused): Mhm. It's important that he has team-building time with us. *[ALI, AUSTIN laugh]*

JANINE: Yeah!

[THEME MUSIC - "SOMETHING" - BEGINS]

AUSTIN: Does he go fishing? Does he—sorry, do you all go fishing? *[AUSTIN, ALI, JANINE dissolve into laughter]*

ALI (through laughter): Barbelo goes fishing!

AUSTIN: With a hat on!

JANINE: Maybe once I level him up and get that Beast skill *[ALI, AUSTIN laugh more]* then maybe he can fish, but at the moment he's just a dog.

DRE: Just puts his tail in the water, just kinda swirls it around...

AUSTIN: Like Goku!

[EVERYONE'S laughter fades out, SOMETHING plays til 0:06:43]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker, uh, joining me today, Janine Hawkins.

JANINE: Uh, hey, I'm Janine Hawkins, you can find me @bleatingheart on Twitter.

AUSTIN: Ali Acampora.

ALI: Um, hi, you can find me @ali_west on Twitter and you can find the show over @Friends_Table.

AUSTIN: Andrew Lee Swan.

DRE: Hey! You can find me on Twitter @Swandre3000.

AUSTIN: And Art Martinez-Tebbel.

ART: Hey, you can find me on Twitter @atebbel and we just got an @ for uh, One Song Pod today, glad the people are still listening. Um.

AUSTIN: Mmm—

ART: See ya in hell! *[ALI, AUSTIN, DRE laugh]*

ALI (laughing): Where the rest of that show is playing.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Uh huh. As always, as always you can support us by going to friendsatthetable.cash which will take you to our Patreon page. I was checking to see—Ali, do you know off the top of your head how, if this is it? Is this the two month—or two year, not two month. How close are we to our two year? Anniversary?

ALI: Oh, for Patreon?

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ALI: *[makes unsure thinking noises]* *[DRE, ALI laugh]*

AUSTIN: You don't need to know, I was just curi—I didn't know if you knew off-hand like that...

ALI: It's, it's June 26th isn't it? I don't have our anniversaries on our info page, and I will fix that, but I think it's June 26th.

AUSTIN: I think it is. The video that Sylvia¹ made was June 24th. Was uploaded June 24th. So that makes me think...

ALI: It was the same day...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah! Two days after that. Right?

ALI: Okay. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Um, nope, June 24th is actually the date. *[ALI: Okay.]* So it will have just been our second year anniversary of our Patreon, uh, thank you for all of your support so far. We're also coming up, this fall, on our *fifth year* show anniversary? And I just wanted to reiterate that if you've been really enjoying *Spring* it would be great if you went to friendsatthetable.cash and tossed us a buck or 5 bucks or—we have a billion different tiers with a bunch of different levels

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

of reward for the tiers. Um, and, uh, even for a single dollar you get a reward. You get a reward called the Clapcast, which is us goofin' off and kind of talking before we start recording. We don't have that much like, distracting mid-episode talk that gets cut out? But we do have distracting pre- and sometimes post-episode conversation that gets cut, and you can go listen to that for only a dollar. And there's like... a ton of Clapcasts now at this point, right? 22 of them? So, um, so that is a thing you can go do. So. Thank you again for those of you who have already supported us, and those of you who are considering it now is a good time to hop on board.

AUSTIN (CONT.): Um. Is there more about this boat trip? Like, I don't want this boat trip to have any rolls because I don't want anything bad to happen to Rix and Rowe. *[ALI laughs lightly]* Or... Hella and Adaire and Barbelo I guess. *[ALI, JANINE laugh]* But especially Rix and Rowe. Um. Is it just a good time? Like, is it—Hella, what do you think of Rix and Rowe?

ALI: Um... I...

JANINE: How are they behaving on the boat?

ALI: *[giggles]* That's a good question.

AUSTIN: They're loud and obnoxious, what? *[ALI snorts]* I thought about being like "They're very well-behaved" but that's not true to the fiction. *[DRE giggles in the background]*

JANINE (amused): They're wearing their lifejackets and...

AUSTIN: Um, at least one of them steals something. *[ALI gasps]* And then the other one tells them to put it back. So that's about as well behaved as you get.

[TIMESTAMP 0:10:04]

JANINE: Aww. *[ALI chuckles]* They're growing.

AUSTIN: They're growing. They're growing.

JANINE: They're growing up!

AUSTIN: Don't rob from Adaire's friends. That's the new rule. *[JANINE giggles]* Um. *[ALI: I—]* Anything else happen? Go ahead, Ali.

ALI: I think that there is some sort of, there's like, there's a bit of like:

ALI AS HELLA: Hey Adaire, what's up with these kids that you hang out with? *[JANINE, ALI laugh]* They live in a hut by Fero's place? What's goin' on with these kids?

ALI: But I think it's also like, a nice time.

AUSTIN: Adaire, how do you explain what's up with the kids that live in a hut near Fero's place?
[DRE laughs in the background]

JANINE: I just... [laughs lightly] Um. I think Adaire explains like:

JANINE AS ADAIRE: You know... when we first got here, and we were trying to like, figure out what was going on... with, you know, there was some thieving that had happened, and a lotta like, *things*. And so I kind of went to where I thought thieving might happen... uh. And I met them. And I think one of them pulled a knife on me, but it was fine?

HELLA: *What?*

ADAIRE: It was, it was a while ago. Um. They're just kids. Y'know. [ALI wheezes]

AUSTIN (amused): "Y'know!"

HELLA: A kid's never pulled a knife on me...

ADAIRE (overlapping): They were—

HELLA (rethinking her own statement): Well...

AUSTIN (amused, skeptical): Mmm...

HELLA: I didn't talk to them after. [JANINE laughs]

ADAIRE: Well I mean... [sighs] It's, you know, they were, they were like gettin' into some stuff that I thought they maybe shouldn't, and I... felt kinda bad... they sorta reminded me of *me* when I was little...

HELLA: [makes 'aww!' noise]

ADAIRE: And like... I just wanted to make sure they didn't get into too much trouble, and then... they conned some money off me and built a house, and then the house got ruined 'cause of the dragon, so I helped them build the new house, and they're nice to my dog... [ALI laughs] They're okay! They're good kids!

HELLA: We—

ADAIRE: They're not great kids, but they're good!

HELLA (amused, intrigued): How—how many knives did you pull on people as a kid?

ADAIRE: Oh... like. *[exhales]* I mean, it wasn't always knives.

HELLA: *Oh?*

ADAIRE: Knives are good 'cause they're handy, 'cause like, you can go to a restaurant or whatever, anywhere they have food they're probably gonna have knives. That's pretty useful.

HELLA: Mm.

ADAIRE: And you can like, make knives outta stuff, and that's useful too. Uh, but sometimes you need to use like, an awl? Awls are good 'cause they can puncture, but they don't slash super well. Um. Scissors, I don't love scissors... *[ALI wheezing quietly]* You can kinda get yourself tangled up in scissors. Um.

ALI (laughing): I feel like there can just be like a fade-out of this scene?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. *[ALI continues laughing]* Yeah. I think that that's a great, great moment right there. For fuckin' sure.

DRE: Fuckin'. You're just the Bubba Gump of stabbing people. *[EVERYONE laughs]*

JANINE: I mean this is—

ALI (overlapping): Just, Hella smiling and nodding and looking affectionately. *[laughs]*

JANINE: This is. This is the thing with the tattoos, right? Like, of course she pulled knives on people. Like, her arms are covered in tattoos that say "THIEF" in like, 16 different languages. *[ALI laughs]*

AUSTIN: Oh, okay. So that's what I need to be on the lookout for. Got it. *[JANINE giggles]* I, yeah. I think we can fade out there. Throndir, what are you up to before, before... goin' on this trip?

DRE: Uh, I think the biggest thing for Throndir is finally taking care of this conversation with Ephrim?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah! I think that's a fair conversation to have. So where um, Throndir, where do you find Ephrim to have this conversation?

DRE: Uh, ideally somewhere private? Like, I don't wanna be havin' this conversation like, in the middle of the grounds or something? *[DRE, AUSTIN laugh]*

AUSTIN: "Hey, about that time I vampired you!"

DRE: Right.

AUSTIN: I guess maybe it's an Ephrim question. Ephrim, where would Thrandir be able to find you for a moment to catch up?

SYLVIA: I think Ephrim's probably got like, a study of some sort. For like, doing whatever clerical, or administrative work, I guess, a lord needs to do? *[AUSTIN: Yeah.]* 'Cause that exists. I've gotta write letters.

AUSTIN: Gotta write letters! Yeah, a hundred percent. So then yeah, your office. I like that. What time of the day is this, Thrandir? Has this been something you've been like—*[DRE begins to speak, stops]* Go ahead.

DRE: Um, I'm gonna say like, afternoon?

AUSTIN: Okay. You got your morning work done, you're like "Alright, I'm gonna do it, I'm gonna go, I'm gonna go talk to Ephrim."

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, well then I guess I'm gonna get out of the way and let y'all just talk. Have fun.

DRE: Um, does Ephrim keep his door open or closed?

SYLVIA: Um... *[pause]* Closed.

DRE: Okay. Uh... then I'm gonna knock.

SYLVIA AS EPHRIM: Come in.

SYLVIA: Like, he just calls out. Like, he does not get up, he doesn't—he never answers the door for anybody, he just will call out.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Is there not, none of your retinue is like, on door duty, or like, reception? *[SYLVIA: Um...]* Or is this—I'm just trying to...

SYLVIA: No...

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: I think like, unless things are like, in high-alert they don't really need to have a guard outside Ephrim's study all the time? Like, he's in the tower, like he's in the center of the University. And I think it's like, yeah, yeah, he's safe.

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah. That makes sense.

DRE: Uh, I think Throndir does the like, open the door a bit and like, peek your head in? Like:

DRE AS THRONDIR: Hey! Um. Do you, do you have a minute? Are you—I mean, I can tell you're busy, but like. Is it something I can interrupt, or?

SYLVIA AS EPHRIM: Oh, god, *please* interrupt this. *[AUSTIN laughs]*

THRONDIR: Okay, cool.

SYLVIA: Ephrim's got like, this stack of like, papers next to him 'cause he's like, trying to write like—I think it's like with the Alcyon folks, he's trying to write, uh, uh just like, a message towards them, but he's struggling with it.

DRE: Just like, fifteen drafts stacked up somewhere... *[laughs]*

SYLVIA: Look, he made an ass out of himself when they went, he's doing damage control. *[laughs lightly]*

DRE: Yeah. Fair.

THRONDIR: Uh. How are you doing?

EPHRIM: Uh. Nothing out of the ordinary. Tired, but. That—*[short laugh]*

THRONDIR: Yeah.

EPHRIM: When are we not?

THRONDIR: How's your... arm?

EPHRIM: *[exhales, pauses]* You know. I don't think it's getting any worse. Um. At least not recently. But. I definitely can't say it's gotten better either.

THRONDIR: Yeah.

[pause]

EPHRIM: Are you alright?

THRONDIR: I—I'm getting there. I just wanted to apologize. Like, I don't... I haven't gotten the sense that you're really mad at me or anything? But. Kinda come to the realization that like, when I think people are upset with me they're usually not, or at least not as much as I think they are? But then I just don't talk about it? And that usually actually causes problems that gets people to be upset with me? Or at least frustrated? Or worried? And now I'm just talking in circles, but that's why I decided to come talk to you.

EPHRIM: I appreciate it. Um... but. *[soft laugh]* You know, it's funny. You're right. You do have a way of assuming the worst, um... because I... *[exhales]* Honestly, I'm just glad you said something? Because. You've been—weird lately. And I'd rather not have you avoid me.

THRONDIR: It's... It's not as much that I was trying to avoid *you*, as that I assumed you wanted me to... do the avoiding. Again, the whole like, not talking, assuming thing, I'm workin' on it.

EPHRIM: Throndir. How long have we known each other? At this point?

THRONDIR: *[laughs]* Ten years that felt like thirty, I guess?

EPHRIM: Yeah...

THRONDIR: Yeah.

EPHRIM: You should know by now whether or not I want you around.

THRONDIR: Yeah. No. Like... *[pause]* This is really weird? But like, the person who talked to me about this that made the most sense was *Hella*?

EPHRIM (deadpan): You're right, that is really weird. *[AUSTIN laughs]*

THRONDIR: Yeah! Like, when I fir—I remember when I first met Hella, I was like “Aw, man, she's gonna like, teach me some awesome stuff about like, tyin' knots or like, I guess, ways to murder people.” Really didn't expect like, uh, “Handling my emotions and improving communications skills.” But, you know, I guess we've all changed a lot.

EPHRIM: I mean... yeah. She's—full of surprises, huh? *[AUSTIN laughs lightly]*

THRONDIR: Yeah. [pause] No, I mean. I should've known that... *[sighs]* Listen, if you weren't gonna get mad at me and kick me out after I said "Oh, yeah, we don't need to fix the food storage room," and then the food storage room collapsed and ruined all our food, like. I don't think—*[dissolves into laughter]* there's much else than could happen where you tell me to go away.

EPHRIM: I don't think I *could* even tell you to go away without people getting mad about it. You do realize how much you do around here, right?

THRONDIR: ...eh. I told you, I'm working on it. But yes.

EPHRIM: Yeah... Well how about this. Let me know whenever you need a reminder, alright?

THRONDIR: Okay. And, um... now that I know about like, the music thing, and some other stuff, probably won't... y'know, accidentally eat your feelings anymore. *[EPHRIM laughs]* So I guess that's a deal? Maybe the worst deal ever made. But it's a deal. *[laughs]*

EPHRIM: I don't know. Sounds pretty good to me.

THRONDIR: Okay. Alright. I'm gonna go finish packing.

[TIMESTAMP 0:20:01]

EPHRIM: Come back safe, alright?

THRONDIR: Of course.

EPHRIM: Good. We need you around here.

AUSTIN: Perfect. Um... Hadrian.

ART: Hey.

AUSTIN: How are you feelin' after killin' a dragon?

ART: Um, I think it's like, I think it's, it's two main things.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: One is like an intense amount of like, pride?

AUSTIN: Mm.

ART: You know, like, it was a team effort and everyone helped but Hadrian killed a dragon. You know?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: No one else felt that dragon die.

AUSTIN: No one else was inside that dragon's mouth while it died.

ART: Yeah. Um. Which, you know, we've all read that book.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ART: "What It's Like to be in a Dragon's Mouth When It Dies."

ALI: [unintelligible]

ART (overlapping): Hieron bestseller. *[ALI, AUSTIN laugh]*

AUSTIN (amused): Devar's next book. Um, so, what are you doing around—other than resting. Like, are you just like, you spend the day resting, and now you're getting supplies ready to go? Like, what's the...?

ART: Yeah, I think the other thing Hadrian's feeling is like, y'know, um. You know that's, I think the closest Hadrian's been to dying since, um... since that time he died? Uh.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: And I think that like, that feels bad in a way, you know, the older, more seasoned Hadrian doesn't feel as like, cavalier about like, "Well. Almost died, but didn't!"

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: So I think there's a little bit of like, reckoning with that? And then there's like, yeah, just trying to squeeze as much rest out of this downtime as possible?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Um. Yeah, I think Hadrian's very much the like, "Well, we can always go tomorrow."

AUSTIN: *[laughs lightly]* Right. "I'll clear another debility if we can wait three more days!"
[laughs]

ART: Yeah, like. "What's the rush here?"

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: "I am Scarred and Confused." *[ART, AUSTIN laugh]*

AUSTIN: "I'm not hot again yet."

ART: Yeah, let's wait until this burns out, you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, I think one—

ART: We know that I'm still Confused, that's fine. Hadrian's always confused.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* A little bit, at least. I think one—at some point that day you are in the central tower.

ART: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Doing—you know, you're going upstairs to grab some grain or whatever. I don't know why the grain is upstairs. Probably not grain. Also, I don't know why you'd need grain for this trip. *[laughs lightly]* Um. Maybe it is actually a boat thing. Maybe it is like, you need like, a patch for a sail because the other one is gone, and like, oh, we need to get like, just in case, we got a sail patch. And that is upstairs in some storage. Um. And... for the first time in a minute, you walk past Samot's room. And he is like, just going in? And I think, like... *[exhales]* sees you. Um. And you can—you can see into his room—I actually, wait, what's your Wisdom score?

ART: Um, I just closed that window, hold on—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART: My Wisdom is a 12, but I am Confused.

AUSTIN: Oh. So maybe you don't no—there's some papers on the wall, don't worry about it. It's not a big deal.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: And he's like. *[laughs]* Um...

ART: 12 is okay...

AUSTIN: Yeah, but you're confused.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: So it's a -1 right now, right?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um. He's like, uh... *[sighs]* He sees your face, right? That's the thing that catches him. And he says:

AUSTIN AS SAMOT: The Advocate.

ART AS HADRIAN: Yeah. Um. He really got me.

SAMOT: Mm.

AUSTIN: Looks down, and then—it's like he's turning something over in his head.

SAMOT: ...You did a great thing.

HADRIAN: Thank you, thank you. Um. We're, we're getting ready to go down to, to the City of First Light, I don't know if you're... if you're interested in maybe coming with us, I mean you'll be able to go home so soon, and if you're down there with us you'll already *be* home.

SAMOT: Oh. Hm.

AUSTIN: Like, raises a hand to his mouth.

SAMOT: *[pause]* What're you going there for?

HADRIAN: Um. I mean... *[laughs softly]* I mean like, officially they've offered all of this, this big reward for killing the Advocate and we're gonna go and claim it. But like on the down-low between me and you, maybe we, maybe we liberate it.

AUSTIN: He smirks.

SAMOT: I'm sure that my...

AUSTIN: What would he, what would he refer to the citizens of the City of First Light as... um...

ART: Subjects?

AUSTIN: I—he wouldn't say "my subjects." Because that's the whole thing right, is he's kind of de-emphasized himself.

ART (overlapping): Oh, right, yeah.

AUSTIN: I think he would, what he would say is like:

SAMOT: I'm sure the Citizens of First Light would have... already put up quite a fight, but. Perhaps your presence could inspire them. Ah—

AUSTIN: It's *very* clear that he's like, holding something back.

SAMOT: And that's all, then. Just a small revolution.

HADRIAN: Yeah, um, nothin'—I'm, we're hopin' to be back in like a week. I don't know how long the travel time is, so I just made that number up. *[laughs, goes on jokingly]* Whatever we decide it takes, that times like, two and three days or whatever.

SAMOT: Mm. You destroy a dragon and a... an impressive civilization all in one month.

HADRIAN: Yeah, it—I think just as a group we're really clicking on all cylinders lately.

SAMOT: *[laughs softly, sighs]* And nothing else, then. Is drawing you there. To the city.

HADRIAN: I mean... it's important to me to, one, deal with the Ordennans, and two, to... to return you to your rightful place, it's not right that you should be stuck here.

SAMOT (quietly): My rightful place... *[pause]* Hadrian, will you come with me for a moment?

HADRIAN: S-sure.

SAMOT: It's a bit of a walk, are you wounded?

HADRIAN: I mean, I've been better, but I can walk. I mean, they sent me here to get sail supplies, I think they're gonna be heavy.

SAMOT (amused): They'll probably be heavy.

AUSTIN: Um. And he begins to lead you up the stairs. Like, very far *[laughs]* up the stairs. Do you remember how high you went when Samol showed up in this tower?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Higher than that.

ART: Oh.

AUSTIN: Um. And... he eventually reaches, um, what seems to be *[laughs]* the roof, with a ceiling. Um. And, uh, with a... kind of a wave of his hand, reveals that there is a secret passage to another level. And he looks back at you, he like, begins to climb this ladder up to this, what you assume is like a crawlspace or a secret attic. And he looks back and he goes:

SAMOT: Hadrian, I know you pretty well, but. You don't have a thing about heights, do you?

HADRIAN: No, not yet.

SAMOT: ...Okay.

AUSTIN: And he climbs the rest of the way up.

ART: Alright, and Hadrian follows and doesn't intentionally look down.

AUSTIN: Okay, but. Here's what I will say is. *[laughs lightly]* Even when you're not looking down from here, you are seeing... from a very high height. Um. At the top of the central tower of the Last University, is uh, a level floor where the ground is invisible. People who listened to the whole season might remember this from an early episode where Blue J. and Benjamin actually came up here? Um, to... like, hang out? And goof around? And run around and like, play tag in the clouds? Which is scary? Because you can't see where the floor stops? Um, or like the invisible floor stops, presumably? And you can just see everything from here. Like this is, this is—you can see the world-map, right? *[ART laughs]*

AUSTIN (CONT.): Like, you've looked at a little map of the world, but from here you can see in every direction to the end of Hieron. In fact I mentioned in that earlier episode like, we'd, in a previous season we'd joked about whether or not there was a horizon in, um, on Hieron? Whether or not like, if you were high enough up if you could see forever? You know, if there was a curvature to the world? And that from here you can see that like, yeah, there's curves in certain places, like bumps on a person's body. But that there isn't like, a natural spherical curve where your eye-line falls off. You know? It falls off in different places and pops back up like changes in elevation. Um. And I think from here you can like, look all around and see to the northwest the area that has been consumed by the Heat and the Dark. To the northeast the

spread of the spring, which also at this point, you know, is actually the bulk of the southwest also, the forest to the west has grown southward also. And the southeast, where there is one of three of the gigantic kind of trees that have sprouted up.

AUSTIN (CONT.): And to the east you can see the Shredded Steppe, which is like, uh... canyons that have been filled in by the stars. Um, the thing that I keep thinking about is, um, the... what is the name of the Japanese, um, kintsugi?

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AUSTIN (CONT.): The Japanese, uh, practice of repairing ceramic or broken pottery with like, gold powder lacquer? Where there's just like these, like, golden lines where the pottery had cracked, that's what the ground looks like there, except it's with the starstuff. And so in this way it's kind of like *[laughs lightly]* Samot also has that on his own face and body at this point. Um, and he looks at it all, um, and he says:

SAMOT: It is so beautiful. Do you fear for it?

HADRIAN: For the world?

SAMOT: For the world.

HADRIAN: Of course... We're—everything feels so precarious right now.

SAMOT: What should we do if... we save the world only to suffer in it?

HADRIAN: I don't think that that's... I don't think the world is to suffer in. I think the world is to, is to find what you can.

SAMOT: When I invaded Marielda. The City of First Light. For the last time. I had won... long before my boots hit the cobble. I had won because... Samoths had already been slain. Because there was in that city... corruption and rage. Because my forces were simply better. A fight occurred, there was struggle, but... it was over before it started.

HADRIAN: Mm.

SAMOT: Some losses are felt later. *[pause]* And you've killed the Advocate. And this is good. And I know that your friends Fero and Ephrim, they work and toil and are kept up over the conundrum of this Spring. And perhaps they will find a solution for it, too. But... it is hard for me not to consider the possibility that whatever comes next for Hieron... is not as beautiful as this. And... is a fight we've already lost.

HADRIAN: *No*. You *can't*. Beauty is not... beauty is not things, or, or people... beauty is... I mean, not specific individual people, beauty is everyone together. Beauty is what, is what we do with it.

SAMOT: Everyone together.

AUSTIN: He like. Smirks. And nods.

SAMOT: We could build a beautiful world together. We could. [*inhales, exhales*] I will not be joining you.

HADRIAN: I'm sorry to hear that.

AUSTIN: He points to the south.

SAMOT: I can barely stand to see it in this condition.

AUSTIN: And from here, midday, looking south, you can see the City of First Light. Pumping smoke into the sky. From the changes that Ordenna has wrought on it.

SAMOT: It was my home for a long time. I think I need to build a new one.

HADRIAN: O-okay, great, I—do you wanna, have you talked to, to Ephrim about it?

SAMOT: Ah—in time. In time he'll know.

HADRIAN: A-alright. I'm—I think, I think I still need to go, I think I still need to, to reckon with Ordenna one last time.

SAMOT: [*exhales*] Of course. [*pause*] The—[*another pause*] Be careful.

HADRIAN: Always, always. And, and you know, look, I'm—[*sighs*] I feel bad, I've been a little bit of a stranger lately, I've, I've been trying to give you space to heal up...

SAMOT (overlapping softly): Shh. Shh. I understand, perfectly.

HADRIAN: Alright—

SAMOT (overlapping): I still hear you when you pray.

HADRIAN: Great. Um. But look, if you wanna like, we can get you, we can have you over for dinner, when we get back... [*SAMOT/AUSTIN exhales in amusement*] I don't know. You're probably busy. I don't wanna be a bother.

SAMOT: No, Hadrian, it's... Come downstairs, I have something for you before you go.

HADRIAN: Um. Alright.

AUSTIN: And, like, gestures to the ladder and lets you lead. Um... and you get back to his room, uh... and I think he goes inside briefly. Um. And maybe this time you get a slightly different—you like, you have the second opportunity to see these things that are like the papers up on the wall. And they're sketches, they're maps, they're... you know, uh, they range from like "Here is a picture of a tower that looks like Samot's old tower," to like, um, pictures of different moons in the sky, or what you would read as moons in the sky. Um, sketches of cities. They're like, various places that he's drawn.

ART: Hmm.

AUSTIN: And, he comes back, and he's carrying, in his hands, a cloak. Made of white wolf's fur.

[pause]

ART: *[exhales]* I think Hadrian like... I'm having trouble like, describing this reac—I did it with my own body, but I'm having trouble with like—*[AUSTIN laughs]* You know when you like... you like, it's like a sigh that kind of like, curls your torso like, it's a sigh that like, slumps your shoulders?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Like one of those. Sorry fanartists, I know that sucked.

AUSTIN (laughing): Just like, Peter B. Parker Hadrian, just like, a deep, depressed chest cavity as you sigh. Great. Love it.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um. I think he just slides behind you and, like, not snaps it, but like attaches the chain. And like, hands on your shoulders for a moment. Um. I think you're taller than him probably by a bit?

ART: Sure, yeah, probably.

AUSTIN: And he says:

SAMOT: It was strange to see you without it.

HADRIAN: I won't give this one away.

SAMOT: *[exhales shortly]* Good. Be safe. And... if you need anything... you know how to reach me.

ART: I think Hadrian's trying to just like, kind of like, end on like a lighter note, so like:

HADRIAN: Hey, you know. Same. *[ALI, AUSTIN laugh]*

AUSTIN: He laughs, like, he like—does actually laugh. Um. *[laughs]* And heads back into his room and closes the door. Alright. Boats.

ALI: Oh, can we do my... new body move?

AUSTIN: Yeah we need to do your body move, totally.

ALI: Just 'cause I wanna... *[AUSTIN: Uh-huh.]* ...talk about it. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: So. Uh, did we write it down somewhere? I don't think we d—I think we just did it in chat, right? We should like, *add it* add it?

ALI: Yeah, you said it out loud but never like, added it to my sheet or anything.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I should've done that. My bad. Um. It is "You roll 2d6+CON."

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: So let's start with that. And it's, it's, on a 10+ you get to remove two debilities for this recording session. Uh, or, uh, one permanently? And then for a 7-9 you get to remove two debilities for this session. And then at an under 6, 6 or under, rather, you get to remove one for this session. So. Let's do it and talk about what that actually looks like.

ALI: I clicked it but it didn't... *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Did it not roll? Ope, there it goes!

ALI: There—ope! *Eeugh.*

AUSTIN: Well, that's a 4.

ALI: *[takes a breath] [groans quietly, laughs a little]*

AUSTIN: So, pick one.

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: And, and go ahead and uh...

ALI (overlapping): Great, yeah. Um.

AUSTIN: ...and remove the debility. And tell me why that's the one that has, but also why the rest of, you're struggling with the rest.

ALI: Um... It sucks, 'cause I don't know if I wanna be smart or honest. *[ALI, DRE AUSTIN laugh]* It's hard, it's hard to... um, it's hard to say 'cause I feel like my... I feel like my gut reaction is DEX, which is like, not a thing that I use, ever?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: Um. But I feel like especially in having to travel a far place, or like, being able to come home, and also just like, the experience of having to like, *[laughs lightly]* live in a body and have bones?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: Is like, I think that as Hella is healing and getting more used to the like, sort of shift that she's had, like, the feeling of like, being able to hold a book in your hand and like, knowing that that weight is recognizable, like not everything... *[AUSTIN: Mm-hm.]* that you're experiencing is like, this foreign feeling? Is like, so relieving. Um, that it's like, those kind of small moments of victory that kind of like, build up, that makes her feel better that like, "Oh, I can do this. I can... this is gonna be weird to start with, but like, I can be comfortable." You know?

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AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: The second half of that is *[laughs]* there was a—there was a joke. In the first episode of *Winter...* *[briefly dissolves into laughter]* Art said that Hadrian is built like someone who's like, really strong but doesn't know like, workout routines? *[AUSTIN laughs]* And literally since he had said that, I've been like "Oh, but Hella knows all of them and just doesn't teach him I guess?" *[ALI & AUSTIN laugh]*

AUSTIN: That's mean!

ALI (laughing): Or like, he's like "Oh, yeah, sure, Hella, you're just gonna lift up that thing ten times, see ya later!" *[ALI & AUSTIN laugh]* But I think that like, in being able to like, her re-practicing her basic sword stances, or even, um... even like, going on a boat trip and having

to hold a wire straight for like an hour *[AUSTIN: Yeah...]* is like, enough of a kind of discipline thing that like, I think that she's—that's kind of where her mind is at. Which is like, "Oh, this isn't as strange as I thought it would be, I just need to work towards... I just need to work on it." And I feel like the way that that makes sense the most is with DEX?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that makes perfect sense. Totally.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um. Cool. Um... so. *[exhales]* You've done that. You've done your morning like, stretches and workouts and like. *[laughs lightly]* You're trying still to get used to this. And who else is—everyone on this call is obviously going on this trip, is anybody else going on this trip? We don't have any NPCs joining us probably, right, no Rosana and no, uh, Blue J. no Benjamin?

ART: No, this seems kind of just, heinously dangerous.

ALI: Yeah, I—I think the area we're going into is all a little too hot, right? *[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And the feeling—is the feeling with the Advocate dead like... we fuckin'—the Last University feels a little safer than normal?

ART: Yeah, certainly.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Because like, the cult is gone, the Advocate is gone, we know that like—

JANINE: That sounds like a thing you ask us before next episode we find out there was some sort of giant... half-man half-viper just living in the library or something.

AUSTIN: (unintelligible)

ART (overlapping): Nah, that's not gonna happen because Jack is on the other game. *[AUSTIN, DRE laugh]*

JANINE: That's true, yeah.

AUSTIN: See, good call. *[laughs]*

JANINE: Yeah. Half-man, though.

AUSTIN: That—a half man. *[ALI giggles]* Yeah. Uh-huh.

ART (overlapping): Just half a man. It's creepier the more you think about it. *[ALI, JANINE laugh]*

AUSTIN: It's not like—it's also not contiguous. It's half in summation. It's not—it's like a toe, and then a finger, it just moves around.

ALI (quietly): *What?*

JANINE: I mean that's not, I don't—I think they could handle that, then. *[AUSTIN: Okay.]* 'Cause it seems like a pretty broken-down threat. Um.

AUSTIN: It's still weird. He just lives in there. *[JANINE laughs softly]* Gets breakfast, goes back in, does some work. Y'know? Um. Alright.

ART: It's a sinking feeling that's, really. *[DRE & AUSTIN laugh]*

AUSTIN: Yes. We're getting a little Blough City here, actually. *[laughs lightly]* Um. So you set off on the boat. Um, is—you're not going back with Carlay de la Carta, right?

ALI: Mm—

AUSTIN: Like—

JANINE: That's a good question!

AUSTIN: They—did they go back by themselves, or are they like, leading you... there? *[ALI: Well—]* Or not leading you—it's a river, but you know what I mean.

ART (overlapping): No, they're definitely not—well, wait, first, how many days did we wait? What are we actually clearing here?

ALI (overlapping): Yeah, would, would they have been chilling at the University with—*[dissolves into laughter]*

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah! Absolutely.

ART: 'Cause we probably took at least three days, I think the full-heal and one debility is a reasonable amount of time to have waited.

AUSTIN: Yes. I think that's fair. Also, you know what I'm gonna say, is I think—I've been thinking about this move, Ali, where it's like, I do want it to be significant here? But also it would be cool if you ever healed one of them. *[laughs]* So I think like, we should do the thing which is like, you get to roll to heal them like this every session, but also if you do get three straight days of rest you can pick one and heal them also. You know?

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: So go ahead and heal one more. You still have 4 debilities, it's not—*[laughs lightly]*

ALI: Okay, yeah. Um...

AUSTIN: The cards are still not in your favor.

ALI: God... So, okay, just to let the audience know, my debilities right now are Weak, Stunned, Confused, Scarred, and Sick? *[AUSTIN: Uh-huh.]* And then with my DEX I got Shaky off. Um...

AUSTIN: Right. And so you're picking one more.

ALI: I don't know if I should do Weak or Sick. 'Cause those are good, that's Strength and Constitution for me, which is like, before I go to Marielda...! *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yeah... You ain't wrong.

ALI: I think, um... *[exhales]* Oh, god, what am I doing this session? *[laughs]* Um, I think, what I'm, I'm taking Scarred for my thing.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: And I don't really know—it's tough because I think that like, I'd kind of made a, um, like a gesture to it last episode, but I think there was like. In part of Hella needing to have like, a physical death *[laughs lightly]* *[AUSTIN: Mm-hm.]* There was, um, physicality to that? *[AUSTIN: Yeah.]* And I also think that it's also just like—Hella's a scarred person, she's not gonna—I don't wanna do the like, Hella has a new body and all her scars go away, 'cause I don't know that... *[AUSTIN: Yeah...]* I think that that's too much of a departure, but I do think there's a way in like, in like if you're dealing with like, skin grafting, or like, stretch marks or things like that where it's like. You know. I feel at home in this body but I know that there are things that are out of place. Um.

AUSTIN: Yes. That is super how I feel about the Scarred debility is like, it's as much about your own, like, feelings about your body? *[ALI: Mm-hm.]* As it is about the body itself. You know? Um. It's, it's the only way that that really makes sense to me.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or—or else is like, ableist and like, really limiting in terms of what beauty— like, weird beauty standards, *[laughs lightly]* you know what I mean? *[ALI: Yeah.]* So. Um, it's, it's—even inside of the world of fantasy shit where like, scars look dope it doesn't make sense unless it's about how you carry yourself and how comfortable you are and how confident you're able to be, you know?

ALI: Yeah. I think confidence is definitely the thing to like, zoom in on there because it just—it sucks, you know. Hey. *[laughs lightly]* But, um. I—yeah. I do think that there's a part of Hella that's like, that's... that's probably the part of this that's least important to her at this point? I think it's weird to look at your hand and see a scar that you've had for like, twelve years is in a different place. I think that that takes a while to get over. Um. *[laughs]* But I think when there's like four others next to it you're just like “Okay. I'm good I think.” Um. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, cool. Uh... anything else here before we get on this boat? I guess we go over bonds as we get on this boat—actually a bond and alignment, let's start Hella, I have your sheet open so go ahead.

ALI: Oh, sure, um—

AUSTIN: Unless you need to write a third one still in which case I can come back around on you. *[laughs lightly]*

ALI: Oh, I might have to... who did I... Oh, I, I had, I did Throndir's and then I have all the other ones. This Hadrian one is way outdated but it's “I believe Hadrian and I are capable of anything and I don't fear my life in his hands. However, I won't let him take his life for mine.” Um.

AUSTIN: So, yeah. Need a rewrite on that one.

ALI: Yeah. Well it's still—I mean we're still gonna get to some shit.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah. Yeah, yeah, that's fair. That's fair.

ALI: Um. Adaire's definitely, um—“If I am in the last hours of my life I cannot close the distance Adaire's kept between us, but I do want her to know how much she means to me.” *[AUSTIN & JANINE laugh]* Um, and I've also gotten the okay to do that, so... *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

ALI: Let's see! And then I had a Throndir bond that I actually should re-write...

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, and you are Neutral, still?

ALI: I'm—yeah, I'm still neutral. Um, "Increase your reputation while working to fulfill Death's task to you."

AUSTIN: Okay. Um... Throndir.

DRE: Yeah! I've got all new bonds.

AUSTIN: Alignment and bonds.

DRE: So my alignment is still Good: "Put yourself at risk to help improve someone else's life." Um, my bonds are Hella: "Hella is right, every second spent wallowing and waffling is a second wasted for me and those who are counting on me. It's past time to trust my gut and trust my friends to respect me."

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: *[makes an 'aww!' noise]*

DRE: Uh, Hadrian: "I can only begin to understand Hadrian's emotions towards me, but I have to stop going out of my way to avoid him and figure out a way for us to work together again." Uh, Fero: "We are running out of options, it's time to put grudges and pettiness aside and stand with Fero against the end of the world." That one's still the same. Uh, and Ephrim: "Ephrim and I spent 10 years in hell trying to save the lives of hundreds. *[AUSTIN laughs softly]* I owe him an apology and need to trust that the bonds forged in that fire will see us through."

AUSTIN: Mm. Mm-hm! As we saw. Though, that's an important one to you. Um. Uh... cool! And then, let's go Adaire!

JANINE: Um, my alignment is Chaotic: "There's a line between self-interest and selfishness, some people just need my help finding it. Intervene when someone's making life worse for other survivors."

AUSTIN: Mm.

JANINE: Um. My bonds are a mess ri—I think I need to resolve my Hadrian bond this session, 'cause I have a new one that I want, but it—I don't think it's a changed situation, I think it's very much a resolved situation.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Um. So I don't... Should I just read the one it is now...?

AUSTIN: You can change bonds whenever you want. You just can't resolve them for XP whenever you want—you only resolve one—

JANINE (overlapping): I know, I'm already—I know, I—*[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: You want that XP, I gotcha.

JANINE: It's one of those situations where—it is resolved, it's just not resolved by Hadrian.

AUSTIN: Doesn't matter.

JANINE: Or like by, by Adaire...

AUSTIN (overlapping): You don't, you don't need approval to change another person's—my thing is like, what does Adaire believe—what is the—as you play, what is your motivating feeling towards Hadrian? That is the thing your bond should be.

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: So... I asked which.

JANINE: But I—

AUSTIN: *[laughs lightly]* Is it the one you've written down or is it the one you've written down as next session? Like a thing happens right now, which of those—

JANINE (overlapping): I mean, I think, the thing is that like, I think it is a thing that happens through the course of working with Hadrian.

AUSTIN: But you've already worked with Hadrian. My question is like, is a thing—

JANINE: Working with Hadrian post-having an understanding with Hella.

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AUSTIN: You shouldn't write a bond for a—you shouldn't write a bond for a game that hasn't happened yet. So. Like, if what you're saying—*[JANINE: Yeah...]* saying is "I hope this is how this goes—" Like, Hadrian could've just left that Samot shit being like, "Yeah, I'm on some other—I'm about to do some dark shit." So. Like, we—you can't just hope that—you should, if you think that the bond that you're interested in playing is the one that you *hope* this thing occurs in—happens after what happens in this session, I think you probably already have enough written here.

JANINE: Yeah, I guess that's—

AUSTIN (overlapping): You should just read them both and—what I'm saying is I think the one that you think should be next session is totally viable for this session.

JANINE: Yeah. Um, whatever, I'll just... do that. Uh... okay, so, new Hadrian bond: "Hadrian is important to Hella, Hella is important to me. Whatever I think of his previous mantle, I will support Hadrian unflinchingly for her sake."

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Um. I'm also getting rid of this Lem bond that I had and replacing it with a Throndir bond, just because... I never did anything with the Lem bond...

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's a good bond, *[JANINE: It was a bad bond.]* it just didn't come up.

JANINE: It wasn't, it wasn't a good bond for the game we play. Um...

AUSTIN: Eh. If you'd done cool—if there'd been moments for you and Lem to like, do one-on-one scenes that would've been fun, but it just wasn't what we did. *[JANINE: Yeah.]* So.

JANINE: Uh, Throndir. So: "Throndir will do what needs to be done no matter how unpleasant. That's a great skill to have, but if he ever takes aim at me or mine I'll make him regret it."
[AUSTIN & DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Great. Good.

JANINE: That's a supportive statement, too. Adaire approves of what Throndir did.

AUSTIN: I know. Yeah.

JANINE: Just don't fuckin' do it to her.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm!

JANINE: Um. Hella: "Hella has seen me at my best and at my worst. I will not let her doubt my devotion." I think that's an ongoing thing. Uh. And Ephrim: "Ephrim carries a heavy load and bears it better than most. I don't need to help him with that load, but I won't add to it either."

AUSTIN: *[laughs lightly]* Those are all good. Hella.

ALI: Oh, yeah, I wrote with—I finished mine for Throndir and it's: "If Throndir needs something to prove his worth, I will not hesitate to lean on him when I need to. And I expect I'll need to."

AUSTIN: Hmm. And then I guess Hadrian, you're last? Yes.

ART: Yeah. I have a new Hella bond. Um. "Hella's my closest friend and we are on our greatest adventure. I hope her new body can deal with the havoc."

AUSTIN: Mm...

ALI: Mm!

ART: This is a very transparent one, I'm just gonna—

AUSTIN (overlapping): What's the thing about you, though? What're you doing in this—

ART: I'm, I'm afraid for Hella.

AUSTIN: What, what does Hadrian do, given that fear? What is Hadrian telling himself "And I will do *blank* because of that fear."

ART: I think it's I'm gonna have to... I'm gonna have to be closer to, physically closer to Hella when shit goes down.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: I think, um, I don't think we can do the *Hobbs & Shaw* trailer for example, [ALI wheezes quietly] where they go into the different rooms and like, [AUSTIN: *Yeah.*] The Rock is in the room with nobody and like, [AUSTIN: *Uh-huh.*] Jason Statham's like, fighting all those people and the Rock is like, "Yawn!" and like, you know, if I'm The Rock in that scenario, I would have to go out and go into that room. Because—

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI (overlapping): Hella's clearly The Rock. [laughs] What—

JANINE: Yeah, I was gonna say, that's not... [laughs lightly]

ALI (laughing): Wait a minute!

ART: I'm not, this isn't, this isn't like—I'm not assigning you a ch—[ALI continues to laugh] I'm not assigning any characters permanently, I'm just using an analogy with two characters in it. [ALI still laughing]

AUSTIN: Great.

ALI: Your, your previous, um—

AUSTIN: But for the record!

ALI: No, I think Art's previous, um, uh, assignments were correct and to the right ones.

ART: Yeah I, I put it in our, in our Spring in Hi—it's probably too far back now, but I assigned everyone their *Fast & Furious* characters.

AUSTIN: I recall this now. Yeah. Alright. So. Uh, here's one of the reasons why I wanted to know if Carlay is on the boat with you or not. Um. If Carlay is on the boat with you then you don't need to make a Perilous Journey roll. If Carlay is not on the boat with you then you do.

ALI: *[sighs]* I mean, I—

ART (overlapping): How—oh. *[ALI giggles]* Go for it.

ALI: I don't wanna say this now for it to be a cop-out, but I do think that it's kind of funny if they stay. And then—

AUSTIN: I also think that it's funny if they stay. *[laughs lightly]*

ALI: Yeah. It's like—

JANINE: I mean we decided we're doing this under like, semi-official pretenses. *[AUSTIN: Mm-hm!]* So why not?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. Um... so, uh, on the day of the journey someone sends word, I'm guessing, to Carlay and is like "Alright, get on this fuckin' boat"?

JANINE: I feel like I... As soon as you were like "Oh, Carlay's hanging around" my thought was oh, Adaire definitely like, passes them on the way to lunch and is like "Hey, try the bread today!" And like, shit like that. *[AUSTIN & JANINE laugh]*

AUSTIN (amused): Is that an insult? What is—you said that like it w—

JANINE: It's, it's totally the kind of friendliness that's, that's like, not badgering but like—*[AUSTIN: Mm-hm.]* Um. It's the equivalent of when a gazelle jumps in the grass to tell the lions like, "Yo, I see you."

AUSTIN: Right. Yes.

JANINE: It's that shit, of just like, being very obvious to be like, "I'm fuckin', I'm here, you're here, what's up."

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah.

JANINE: Um. But is like, outwardly friendly. So I imagine, unless anyone has other ideas, that Adaire is just like "Hey, we're gonna head off tomorrow."

AUSTIN: Alright. Um. I, y'know, I kind of wanted to just kinda jump into it. There's this boat trip, this boat trip is probably awkward to some degree, because there is the Ordennan like, spy, who tried to kill Samot on this boat with you? But they are giving you, you know, guidance about turns in the river up ahead, um, and are otherwise keeping to themselves, pretty much. Um. Does anything happen on this boat, is there any boat conversations we need to get to? *[ALI sighs thoughtfully]* Because if not, we can get to Marielda.

ALI: I had one in-transit thing that I wanted to do?

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Which was roll, um... Road to Perdition to see if I could, um. *[laughs lightly]* "Cast visions through time"?

AUSTIN: S-sure. *[ALI & DRE laugh]* Can you read me that move...?

ALI (laughing): Sure! I'm gonna—let's just roll it and see what happens, then we can see—

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah. Let's do that. Uh-huh.

ALI: —what happens. Okay. Um.

AUSTIN: You got a seven!

ALI (overlapping): I got a seven. So. "Oh a 7-9 I spend one Peace or lose an HP equal to the amount of the, yada yada." Anyway. *[AUSTIN: Mm-hm.]* So. With my—*[laughs]* With my one Peace I am going to "cast visions through time" which is a Wizard spell *[AUSTIN: Ooh!]* where Death will show me where I'm needed most.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: And I specifically wanted to do it like, before we get to Marielda, because I think that there's some aspect of this conversation that's like... this has to be it. I can't fuck this up. [AUSTIN: Yeah.] I'm so *capable* of fucking this up? Um, that like...

AUSTIN: "Cast the spell and gaze into a reflective surface to see into the depths of time." This is, I'm just reading from the book now. "The GM will reveal the details of a Grim Portent to you. A bleak event that will come to pass without your intervention. They'll tell you something useful about you can interfere with a Grim Portent's dark outcomes. Rare is the portent that claims you'll live happily ever after. Sorry." Um. So my question here was like. In the writing for this move, it's Death showing this to you? So I'm asking is this Adelaide showing this to you?

ALI: Oh, yeah, absolu—I, well, I mean, yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): If so, how does *she* know? I know in the past we've talked about it with like, she can sense that there'll be lots of death in a place soon. Because of like. You know. Feel—like, seeing a spike comi—you know what I mean? [ALI giggles] Like, "Wow, there's more death in this moment than there is normally. I bet you some shit's about to pop off here," or something like that? But I'm curious—I'm like, giving you the pen here a little bit. Which is like, how do you think she knows?

ALI: Yeah, it's tough. I think that there's some—I, it, it's weird because Samot isn't the kind of god who could like. "I close my eyes and I think of this person and I know who they are," right?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: But I do always think of Adelaide as someone who like, has a view of the map.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Um.

AUSTIN: So because I know—the thing here is, I know the Grim Portent. I *know* what's coming. [ALI giggles] Super well. Um, here's actually what I wanna do. I think maybe this is the way to do it. Which is. Something interferes with this spell. But the way interferes is what gives you and Adelaide the knowledge to know that something bad is coming. Does that make sense?

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: So, um. It's like, it's like hearing the—it's like hearing someone breathing, like a third person breathing when you're on the phone with somebody. [ALI laughs] Like, "Oh, *shit*, we're tapped." You know? [ALI: Mm-hm.] So I think the thing that—the two things that happen. One is, you know, normally you look in the reflecting pool and Adelaide is able to show you an image of what's happening. And—[exhales] She... You remember that—hah. You remember that there

are deaths that she can not intervene on directly. [ALI: *Mm-hm.*] Um. *Easily*. That like, type of death should not be queueing up? Um. But there have been those sorts of deaths happening.

AUSTIN (CONT.): Um, and you see... You see people... lined up and walking into the light. Silhouettes of people being consumed by a bright, white light—which is *very* different than the souls of people being consumed by the maw of the Heat and the Dark. Um. And then you see a flash of... um, the Last University. And then you see a flash of the City of First Light, Malles Fist, Marielda. And they are perfect. They are *still*. You'll note that the picture that you see of the... the, um, Last University does not have a giant tree coming out of it?

[TIMESTAMP 1:00:05]

AUSTIN (CONT.): It is like, the Last University as it would have been, you know. Um. A decade ago? Maybe even older? A century ago? The City of First Light does not have smoke pouring out of smokestacks, it does not have Ordennan warships in port. Instead, it has... uh, just like, it's almost like looking at a model of a town.

AUSTIN (CONT.): Um. And... as that happens, as you like, get those kind of fly-throughs of those places, you sense that there is—or I think maybe part of what you, what you somehow see—and if someone has like, an idea for what this looks like I'm happy to see it, happy to have it—is that there is, the people in line to walk into the light, when they walk into the light they are *becoming* these places. People are being consumed and being turned into a more perfect world.

DRE: [*groans uneasily*]

ALI: *Oh*. Um.

AUSTIN: I think Adelaide puts this together, and—this isn't the Portent, this is her realizing what's been happening and she says:

AUSTIN AS ADELAIDE: It's the *stars*. The stars have been—people—[*exhales*] Hella, people have been *giving* themselves to the stars. They've been... *convinced*? They've been tricked? They're *raw material*. The stars are *using* them. To build something. And I think they need more.

AUSTIN: And then, in your vision, there is a flash of lightning and a clap of thunder, and you see the whole of Hieron's surface turned bright white. The Last University, the City of First Light, the crashed moon, even Alcyon, covered in the starstuff. It looks like a toy model. And then, in your vision, the camera zooms out more and we see it's not just the surface of Hieron, but *all* of it. From the side it looks like a, like an earthen iceberg floating in the Heat and the Dark, and it is also covered in the starstuff. It's like a, a still-life. It's made in stars. And there's another hit of thunder, and then all of that verticality? You know, this like, huge structure? It collapses inward,

and then a new world appears. And it looks like one of the moons. And then structures slowly build up on it. New kinds; buildings you've never seen before, sorts that have no connection to Hieron's history. And then Adelaide says:

ADELAIDE: *No. There's gotta be a way, there has to be.*

AUSTIN: And this is the way that you can prevent the portent from coming true. She closes her eyes and, I think she—I think you see her do—I think there's like, a mind link here? *[ALI laughs lightly]* And you see her pulling up the old memories of the dead. Like, by the thousand. And I don't think that you've ever done this before, and so it's moving at a speed that is probably really disorienting? *[ALI laughs again]* And I know you're already kind of disoriented? *[ALI: Mm-hm.]* And it's all just so fast, and there's this like, high-speed blast of images, and then *finally* in the middle of all these images, you see a place that you know the shape of, or at least a place that matches something you've heard of before?

AUSTIN (CONT.): It is the forge of Samoths. At the heart of the volcano, his old home, across the river from Marielda. And you see it from like, a low perspective? I think for a second you probably think it's a halfling's perspective? Before realizing it's probably a cobbin's perspective? And it turns and it sees two new arrivals. Um. And it's two people silhouetted in the doorway, and then there's that strike of lightning again, and you can see in the flash of the lightning, um, their shapes. You can see their faces. And one of them is a small cobbin. Aubrey. And the other is her new lord. The God-King Samot, cloaked in wolf's fur. And he is standing in this kind of just like, deeply powerful, uh, position? But it's, it's a posture. You know, he's in this polished white marble armor, his hair is like, short-ish for him? Kind of in like, a wavy bob. And his eyes are still red. From crying. This is immediately after they've seized Marielda.

AUSTIN (CONT.): And then, from that shot, the vision like, begins to move through a number of other ones. You see, uh, Samot and Aubrey in the forge, you see his hand gripping Samoths's hammer, then you hear his ring, his wedding ring, hit the metal of the anvil, as he runs his hand over it. And then you see him lift the hammer in his hand. And he goes to work. And then we just get like, a shot after shot after shot of the hammer hitting the anvil. It is like, y'know, um, uh—what do you call it when there's like a, like you go on vacation, you come home with like a, with a bunch of *slides*? It's like a sl—it's like a "Here's my summer vacation!" *[ALI snorts and laughs]* Except instead, it is Samot's year working in Samoths's forge. Building something.

AUSTIN (CONT.): Um, and—I think, you know, I don't—Hella doesn't really have a, isn't great with names? *[ALI snorts]* But probably understands that this is Aubrey, Samot, and Primo, is the perspective you're seeing from?

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: Um. And—maybe it's Aubrey and Primo together. They're both probably dead by now. *[laughs]* So. So Adelaide can pull from both of their memories here. Um. And it's just like,

y'know, Samot raises up the hammer and brings it down, but then, but then those shots are interspersed with like, Samot out and about in Marielda. Which at this point is like, it's like a republic? It's like a young republic after years of being, like, the domain of a god. Right? Like, when Samoths ruled it it was just... you remember how it was. Or, Ali does, Hella doesn't, maybe. *[ALI laughs lightly]* But now it's like, being able to run itself. With Samot still at a distance.

AUSTIN (CONT.): And so it's just like. Y'know. *Woosh, clink*—and then Samot, wearing a hood, smirking and watching people dance in a square. *Whoosh, clink*—and then Samot moving through a bookstore. And he's like, running his hand over the spines of the books. *Whoosh, clink*—and now it's Samot wearing like, a ridiculous moustache and a bandana, and he's like, now a little bit more in public and he's toasting to some victory or another of the Black Slacks and trying to like, work his way into local communities. And then again lifting the hammer, *whoosh, clink*. And finally, you see him drunk and stumbling down the beach of Emberboro, laughing with Aubrey and Primo, his new friends. And he stops. With a heartfelt sigh. Um, and then I think, y'know, from their perspective they see him look up at the stars. His unfinished work. And he realizes what Samol once did—and maybe he even says it.

AUSTIN AS SAMOT: The stars, cold and indifferent, will not save us. They will only ever replace us.

AUSTIN: And so finally, after months and months of building something, he finally knows what it is. It's something to turn away the stars if, when they arrive, they do so with violence. Something that will draw on the vibrance of the world that he has come to love, to convert their single, perfect vision of beauty into something messy and imperfect and better. *Whoosh, clink*. And there it is. The Blade of First Light. It looks a lot like Ephrim's sword? The Sword of Samoths, the one that Samoths made for Maelgwyn, but which he dropped as he was stabbed to death. It is built in the same design, it is, it is, uh, a process of mourning and a process of trying to inhabit Samoths's state in the moment he died.

AUSTIN (CONT.): But unlike Ephrim's sword, it, it radiates a gold, and unlike the starstuff, it lights up the world around it. It casts *everything* near it in kind of a warm, easy glow. And then, I think the last shot, Hella, the sort of like, what the fuck do you do with this thing? The lightning strikes. One more time, in the black void. And then... I don't know that you see it get slashed by the sword, or you see it penetrate, but—it, it *blooms*. The sword hits it somehow and this branch of lightning blooms. And then you're staring at the river again.

ALI: *[takes a breath]* ...Well, shucks. Uh. *[AUSTIN and ALI laugh]*

AUSTIN: Easy work! Y'know? Just, uh...

ALI: *[groans]* I'm glad Adelaide has a mind palace? *[laughs]*

ART (overlapping): What a nice vision you had!

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Yeah, Adelaide has a mind palace. Exc—well, Adelaide has like, a mind palace of other minds. You know?

ALI: Mm-hm. Yes, yes. yes.

AUSTIN: I think she's like, uh. *[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN AS ADELAIDE: I'm sorry if that was a little much. *[ALI laughs]*

AUSTIN: Um. For what it's worth, I—

ART: Was that, was that you talking to us, or was that...

AUSTIN: Wait, me—

ART: ...Adelaide talking to Hella?

AUSTIN (overlapping): That was Adelaide talking to Hella. *[laughs]*

ALI: Mm-hm.

ART: Mmm. *[ALI giggles]*

AUSTIN (amused): But also sorry for you if it was a little much. Sorry, this show gets sad sometimes!

[TIMESTAMP 1:10:01]

ALI: *[takes a breath]* Um.

AUSTIN: Um...

ALI: *Cool.*

AUSTIN: Mm-hm! Anything else on this boat?

ART: Um, are you gonna give us like a, like an introductory monologue or are we gonna get like, uh... like a, "This is what it looks like now"?

AUSTIN: Sure. Is that what you want?

ART: Well, here's what I really want. *[ALI snorts]* Can I talk to Jack for a second?

AUSTIN: ...Yeah, what?

ART: Hey, Jack. I know you're gonna be listening to this because you're gonna be scoring this later. *[ALI makes a skeptical noise]* I need you—

AUSTIN: We don't know that.

ART: Well, you don't know. No one knows. Look. *[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: 'Kay.

ART: This is my only—this is my only, my only chance in this.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART: So. I just think because like, the vibe we're going for with this, it's really important that when Austin is, uh, describing what this looks like, that I, I need you to cover the song from the *Fast Five* soundtrack, *Danza Kuduro*? Just like, an easy, simple, *[ALI: Um.]* just like, whatever moves you about that song. *[ALI: Mm-hm.]* Just start that right now. As Austin describes...

AUSTIN (overlapping): You have them on Discord. You could—

ALI: Clarinet cover. *[laughs]*

ART: Yeah, just a quick clarinet cover of this... *[ALI laughs harder]*

JANINE: Yeah. Quick, easy, simple. These are all words they love hearing.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Just knock it out. They love it when people are like "Just do this."

ART: Well it's not like, it's not like composing, this is just, this is just...

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're right, yeah, totally.

ART: Uh. I think covering a song—

ALI (overlapping): The song's already written.

ART: Yeah, the song's already written.

AUSTIN: That's the hard part, right?

ART: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: I'm sorry, Jack. I love you.

DRE: Oh, this song! Okay, yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

ART: See? That song's gonna be great here.

DRE (skeptical): It—mm...

ART: Yeah, 'cause we're just gonna go in and we're gonna, we're gonna party in Brazil, *[AUSTIN: This isn't—]* and then we're gonna drag a safe behind us in two cars.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: I really gotta know—here's a question.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What's the fuckin' *plan*?

ART: I just told you! *[DRE & ALI laugh]*

ALI: Um. I, I don't know. I have no idea.

JANINE: I mean...

ALI: I have to get a sword now, apparently? *[laughs lightly]*

JANINE: Uh, hey, I mean if we can find out where that sword is, I have this little move called Heist *[AUSTIN: Mm-hm.]* that I've never been able to break out, *[AUSTIN: Uh-huh.]* that I've been *dying* to break it out? *[DRE laughs quietly in the background]*

AUSTIN: So. *[sighs]* The thing is, I don't have a big intro written to this place, I just know what it looks like. There's a point on the map where the river that you're on, uh—*[laughs lightly]* Lem's River, as we call it—um, crosses the old imperial road, and that's on the, the continent side. Of the map. Not the Marielda side. Um. And when it crosses over there, there are docks. Um, you're not the only one who makes this river journey, uh, and you're able to pull up and kind of

get off of the boat here. Carlay assures you that your boat will be fine, Hella. Um, these are like, long-term docks. And that if we tried to, uh, ride the boat all the way to Malle's Fist, it would fail because of the type of water that surrounds the island. Um. And, uh, so I'm guessing you give up the boat, get all of your stuff. No, no protest here?

ALI: *[inhales, exhales]* No, I mean we're, y'know, we're uh. We're here for the contest. We don't wanna make any trouble. *[wheezes, laughs]* Uh.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JANINE: We've all heard about weird Marielda water, so.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Right, you know. You know what the fuck it is.

ALI: Yeah, we know what's up.

AUSTIN: Um. So, you get off the boat, um, you're given horses for this part of the ride, lent horses, and, y'know, within a day you're able to get to the gigantic bridge that Ordenna has built that connects the, uh, the body of Hieron to Malle's Fist. Um. It is a, uh, a bridge that is made of, kind of just like, traditional wood and iron? There is no Ordennan steel on this. And in fact, I think one of the first things that you see is the ways in which Ordennan steel has changed in, in its use over Spring? As—I mean, maybe some of you don't know this firsthand, but Throndir you certainly saw that direct contact potentially causes sickness, because of its close relationship to the Heat and the Dark.

AUSTIN (CONT.): Um, and the two ways you see this: one, there are still a lot of Anchor around? The kind of robotic metal pala-din. And many of them are still made out of, uh, Ordennan steel. Um. And they don't seem to be worse for it? Because there aren't people in there who are having that steel like, touch their bodies or not, breathing it in, etcetera. The second thing is that you see it deployed very, like, strategically? So you'll see maybe some Ordennan steel used, um, in, on the underbeams of the bridge, but not as, not like, on—nowhere you would touch. Um. You'll see it used, um, in, uh, y'know, in some tools? Maybe you see people using it, some stuff that has that like, particular black metal? But those people are wearing a lot of, uh, coverings. They're wearing more kind of, safety material than they normally would.

AUSTIN (CONT.): But you also see, as you cross this bridge, that there are a lot of people—I'm just gonna move us over to the old Marielda map, which I've not updated in any way—but if you look at the western half of Ma—of Quince Parish, here? Um, uh, which is north of the bridge that's here, that's not the bridge you're taking over, the bridge you're taking over is going to the north where the historical Violet Parish—but Quince Parish, and in fact the entire west and

south, everything outside of the walls, um, looks like a quarantine zone. Even from the bridge you can see that there are people walking around with like, what look like Ordennan gas masks on. People living in tents, um, lots of people laying on the ground, uh, in the sun. It's also very hot here, and humid, in a way that I don't think many of you have dealt with? Um... so there is something, y'know, there has been a cost to the use of all this Ordennan steel.

AUSTIN (CONT.): Um. The other big thing you notice as you get towards Marielda, towards Malle's Fist, is that there is a constant cloud in the air. Um, from all of the factories that Ordenna has built over the year. They have turned what was already a pretty successful industrial zone into, uh, an entire industrial quarter? The entire southern half of Malle's Fist has factories, and where there are not factories there are workshops, and where there are not workshops there are warehouses. People have been pushed out of their homes. Industry is just like, grueling? And constant.

AUSTIN (CONT.): And you see all this from the bridge from the north as you come in. You also see the colors of black and gold everywhere. Right? They've remade this, this whole city as a memorial to themselves. As a monument to the Ordennan state. To the Ordennan Impetus. It is very clear that like, as you walk past people, the ones who are allowed to move freely are those who were willing and quick to change allegiance? And you're walking into a city that is occupied. If assimilation would happen one day, it has not happened quite yet. Or not fully. Though those in Violet Parish, which had historically been kind of like the military base of operation, and is now like, military plus, plus, um... uh... what's the word I'm looking for.. People who work with an occupying force? Collaborators, yeah. Like. Which means like, it's a mix of military camps and then also places that have been converted into homes and housing for like, the rich and powerful?

AUSTIN (CONT.): Um... it is a super strange atmosphere. As you kind of are walked by Carlay, or as you ride on your horses into this city. Um, you're kind of coming down this one big, big—like, uh, boulevard? That's like, down going from the north to the southeast? And I think it's probably as you like, get to Malle's Fist proper, as you step foot off of the bridge and kind of get a clear view: to the east there is the volcano, which Samoths once made his home. And an entire side of it has been carved away. It's like you're looking at—it's like someone like, was trying to dissect it. You know? Or bisect it. And do like a, like a diorama. Except, there has been a new iron wall added to the, the kind of cleaved mountainside. Um, and, there are these entryways, these apertures that open and close as trains move in and out of this kind of volcanic home? And there are new kind of, vents on the sides of this mountain? That cough out smoke arhythmically?

AUSTIN (CONT.): Um. It's, it *sucks*. Like, I don't know that any of you were like, tight with Marielda as like a place, necessarily? I guess Hadrian, you saw it once? Maybe Thrandir, you did too, when you were in Samot's tower, there's that moment where you're like, cross over into, into—uh, at the time The City of First Light? Um.

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AUSTIN (CONT.) You'll see also that the, y'know, at the middle of Chrysanthemum Parish, or what was Chrysanthemum Parish, which was where Samot had his tower in The City of First Light, that tower has been destroyed. Like, you can see that it has been kind of, devastated by cannonfire. Um. The top third of it is just gone. And they've made no effort to repair it.

ART (overlapping): The forge... oh.

AUSTIN: Go ahead. The forge.

ART: The forge that I visited in *Winter* [AUSTIN: Yes.] is not this f—is this forge or is not this forge, I never really understood the metaphysics of it.

AUSTIN: Is... so. The metaphysics are weird. The forge moved. At the end of *Marielda*, the season. And then... seems to have been either moved again, or replicated, uh, in a different location, very, very far down on the strata. Um, so you don't know. You don't know if the original forge is in this volcano or not. Or if that was the forge you saw, all around. Like, was, was Maelgwyn's forge, was Samoths 2, was—was the Cool Ranch forge a new forge built in the first one's image, or was it the first one moved somehow? You don't know. Um, last time that we explicitly saw that like, space in *Marielda*, for sure, was it moved from the volcano to the tower that was erected in the middle of the city. And that was like, the place where Maelgwyn, um, is kind of locked into the tomb. It, that is the last time we saw... um, not locked into the tomb, but pinned, kind of locked into a lower tier of the—or a lower lamina of the world. Welcome to *Marielda*! Welcome to Malle's Fist. Um. I think Carlay says:

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: Are you tired from the journey, or do you wanna go directly to, um, to see our lord?

ART: What time of day is it?

AUSTIN: What time of day do you want it to be?

ART: I mean, if it's late I don't wanna do it and if it's early I will.

ALI: I feel like we should be tired so we can like, get up to some shit?

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Fair.

JANINE (overlapping): Let us talk about the plan?

ALI (overlapping): Yeah.

DRE (overlapping): Yeah, talking about whatever shit we wanna get up to. *[laughs]*

JANINE: Carlay hangin' out in the room.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. They say:

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: There are quarters we've set aside for you, of course.

AUSTIN: Um. As you walk through this area, like, people are already saluting you. Um. There are definitely people here who are like, "Queenslayer! Dragonslayer!" *[ALI giggles]* Like, as you walk through the streets. Maybe the vibe here is that you've already been co-opted. Right? Like. The way that Ordenna talks about "humanity" and about like, their cul—they act as if they speak for all cultures, y'know? They are humanity's defenders, and so any, any success by a person is a success for Ordenna. *[laughs lightly]* Um, so. They fuckin' suck.

AUSTIN (CONT.): And they take you to a little inn that I just kind of pinged on the map, to the southeast of what was once Violet Parish. Um, it is, it is, like a three-story like, bed and breakfast-style place? You just kind of get the top floor, which is four bedrooms. Um, and a balcony space. I kind of think of it as like, it's four bedrooms and then like, an outdoor terrace, like, that connects the four bedrooms. Do you know what I mean? You climb the stairs and its out—it's like, it's very like, ancient Greek in my mind? You kind of climb stairs inside that go to the roof, and the roof is like a beautiful terrace, and then there's four bedrooms that are like, the fourth floor basically. So that is, that is the area you're given. Meals will be—like, I think Carlay says:

CARLAY: Dinner will be served in an hour and a half. Only the finest cuisine of this minor continent, but I hope you enjoy it. We will be here in the morning. I suppose none of you have been on a train before, but it's an enjoyable experience, and perfectly safe. So don't worry your heads about it.

ALI AS HELLA (pleasantly): Thank you. *[AUSTIN snorts quietly]*

JANINE AS ADAIRE: I only worry after people say things like that. *[laughs lightly]* Never bef... *[trails off as she's interrupted by ART]*

ART AS HADRIAN (overlapping): Do you think I'm—oh. *[ART pauses for JANINE, ALI laughs lightly]*—Do you think I'm too stupid for *food*?

CARLAY: *[AUSTIN laughs lightly]* Of course not, Dragonslayer.

HADRIAN (a little doubtfully): Okay...

AUSTIN: Um, and they leave you. They leave you be. Oh, I think actually, they say straight-up, they say:

CARLAY: There will, of course, be guards for your own safety. On the first and third floors. If you need *anything*, simply let them know.

HELLA: Are we able to leave?

CARLAY: *[pauses, exhales]* There's not much to do here at night, I worry, um. What is it you'd like to—

HELLA (overlapping): It's a beautiful city! What're you—we could just walk...

CARLAY: It is beautiful, but, ah, without—guards, I would worry—I can see if we can assign...

HELLA: *[laughs dismissively]* We slayed a dragon.

CARLAY: Yes.

HELLA: We don't need to be guarded.

CARLAY: *[pauses]*

ADAIRE: They might worried we would like, slay a person, I—guarding can go both ways. I can understand. *[laughs lightly]*

HELLA: Oh. *[mutters under her breath]* Adaire... *[JANINE laughs lightly]*

CARLAY (speaking carefully): If someone... If, perhaps, someone who, uh, is not as civilized as we are were to umbrage at, ah, your staying here, and started a... a fight with you, we know how that would go. And frankly, I do not wish to be left to pick up the pieces. Hm?

HELLA: *[takes a breath]* I understand, I apologize. It's been a long time since I've been home... So I just thought—

CARLAY (interrupting): Yes, this is, of course, your home. Ms. Varal. And if you need *anything*, simply let us know.

HELLA: I will do that.

AUSTIN: And they take leave. *[ALI laughs lightly]*

HELLA: I don't think that went well.

HADRIAN (overlapping): I think that jabroni—I think that jabroni thinks I'm too stupid for food! *[ALI laughs, ART continues jokingly in the same tone]* I don't know that "jabroni" exists in Hieron as a *word!* *[JANINE & AUSTIN laugh]*

AUSTIN (laughing): As a *word!* No!

ALI: It does now!

AUSTIN: The Rock was quoting Hadrian when the Rock *[ALI: Yeah.]* called people "jabroni."

ALI AS HELLA: *Jabroni.* That's an amazing word, Hadrian, good job!

ART AS HADRIAN: Thanks, I read it in a book once, it was—the Bible. *[ALI & AUSTIN crack up]* Samoths says it *all* the time!

HELLA: Oh! Y'don't say. *[pause, ALI laughs]*

AUSTIN: Y'all wanted to talk. Go ahead.

JANINE (overlapping): So I don't—I don't, I don't think that when—first of all, the first thing I wanna do is, uh, some kinda Discern Realities whatever-the-fuck to make sure this room is cool to talk in. Is my thing.

ALI: Ooh! Okay!

DRE (overlapping): Oh, good call.

AUSTIN: That's fair. That's fair, that's fair.

ALI: Good call.

JANINE: I totally—I don't actively *mistrust* Carlay's words—

DRE: *Why?*

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

DRE (laughing a little): Why don't you? *[AUSTIN laughs]*

JANINE: Uh *[laughs lightly]*—I'm just saying there's a middle ground between trust and mistrust. Which is "see for myself."

DRE: Hey—

AUSTIN (overlapping): Which is "Discern Realities!"

DRE: Janine?

JANINE: Yeah. Yeah?

DRE: How would you feel about me potentially doing that roll?

JANINE: Oh, tot—I would feel good. What's your Wisdom? *[AUSTIN laughs quietly]*

DRE: Uh, well, it's 16 *[JANINE: Fantastic.]* so I have a +2.

JANINE: Yeah, you should do that then, for sure.

DRE: And I also have something that's like, probably pretty good for this.

AUSTIN: Alright, let's see it.

DRE: Uh... buh-buh... 14!

ALI: Ooh!

AUSTIN: Hell yeah! Jesus Christ!

DRE: Yep.

AUSTIN: That's a good roll! That's a, that's a perfect roll!

DRE (overlapping, laughing): That's the best roll I could do!

AUSTIN: Yeah! Alright, so tell me what do you, what do you got? What're your questions here?

DRE: Uh, my first one is, which is one of my special questions, "What is my best escape route?"

ALI: *[makes an intrigued noise]*

ART: Oh, good one. Good question.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Good question! Clap, clap, clap! *[DRE & ALI laugh]* For that team-based Jeopardy. What if Family Feud but Jeopardy? “Good question!” Um. You, you like, get a pathway that is about jumping from this roof to another roof, and then down to a third roof, and then also into some alleyways that could get you back to the bridge. Or to a small dock that has the sort of boats you need to cross the kind of um, the golden like, lava-river that surrounds this island. So you kind of have a bunch of different things here. You will take a +1 forward from escaping both this building or the island, whatever. You’re able to like, give this whole place a scan and anything at a kind of north or east side of Malle’s Fist you’ll be able to escape easily. Or more easily.

DRE: Um. “What should I be on the lookout for?”

AUSTIN: Um. *[sighs]* So I think... you do notice... that, um. The Anchor walk in pairs, normally? Um, they walk two a person, basically? And you see that through most of the, most of the parish, and also most, you look past the wall to the south and like, that’s the same in what was Chrysanthemum Parish. I don’t know if—I’m just gonna call them what they are, what they were then, even though those aren’t probably the names at this point, many, many, many years later.

AUSTIN (CONT.): But maybe they are! I don’t know, does Athens still have the district names it did, y’know, a few thousand years ago? Maybe it does. Y’know, this place has not had—this place has been a city that whole time. So. Um, so yeah, let’s just call them Violet and Chrysanthemum Parish. In both Violet and Chrysanthemum Parish, which you can see from this rooftop, most of the Anchor and pala-din walk, like, two at a time? But around this building, every now and then, you see like, three walk by. Four walk by. So there is some additional attention being paid here?

[TIMESTAMP 1:30:01]

AUSTIN (CONT.): Um, you don’t know, you can’t read the minds of those pala-din and Anchor. So you don’t know for sure what the deal is with that? Um. But that is, there is, there are extra guards here, for sure. And I think that’s the big thing? Um, but you don’t—there are not—the room isn’t bugged. *[laughs lightly]* You know, you look through all the pillows, and you look through—there’s no like, secret vent that like, someone below could be listening to. You know what I mean? As far as you can tell, and you succeeded, there are not.

DRE: Okay. Um... Any thoughts on this last question?

ART: Um...

ALI: What’re your special questions? You have special questions, right?

DRE: Yeah, I don't think these other two are very helpful. *[ALI: Okay.]* It's "What is my best cover?" and *[ALI: Oh, okay.]* "Which of my allies is the most vulnerable?"

ALI (intrigued at the second one): Ooh! Um...

AUSTIN (amused): A classic Thrandir question!

DRE: Yeah. Also, the answer is like, me? Probably?

AUSTIN: Maybe. I don't know.

DRE: I—me and Ordennan steel, not so great.

AUSTIN: Oh right, that's true, you gotta be careful. *[laughs lightly]* Very true.

DRE: I was thinking either "What here is useful or valuable?" or "What here is not what it appears to be?"

ART: That last one's good, but it might be nothing? Based on what we just got?

DRE: Right.

JANINE: Useful or valuable seems a little more like...

DRE: Actionable?

JANINE: Imminently helpful? Yeah.

DRE: Okay, so what here is useful or valuable to me?

AUSTIN: *[exhales thoughtfully]* Um. Trying to think if there's anything just like, straight-up in the place you are that is useful or valuable. Um. I think—

DRE (overlapping): Got any like, room service vouchers...? Or?

AUSTIN: Yeah, definitely, I mean listen, the food is g—you got, you find like, all—you got the special sauce for later, like it's great, everything is gonna be good food-wise. Uh... you got like—

JANINE: If he was able to see an escape to the north, then I...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Well like, that's—the thing there for me is that well that is one of the things I would have given for this other thing, y'know? Um. Useful or valuable, besides that.

Um... *[clicks tongue thoughtfully]* You... are able to... I'm trying to think what direction to roll this in. Um. Alright. There's like, a degree of like, is this showing the, my hand too much, but it isn't, I don't think. Um. You... actually, I think this a thing you overhear? You overhear this either from people walking thr—actually, you know what, I think you, while you're looking for the place *[laughs lightly]* that—you're like, "Is this place bugged? Are there any vents that people can hear me through?" Y'know? You actually find a vent that you can hear someone on a lower floor talking in. And, uh... you hear people talking about a very large cargo ship that just came in? That has been treated for, um, for use in the kind of rivers that surround the island. It's the first of the, it's the first cargo ship that has been able to arrive directly here from upriver. It's the first one that's blended the right mix of materials to survive the weird lava-water? But also be buoyant enough and built in such a way that it successfully can navigate the rivers above?

AUSTIN (CONT.): And it's a bigger ship than Hella's. It's like, a big cargo ship. And so like, you know that there is a big ship—I'll get the name for you in a second—um, that is able to, if you needed to, like move a lot of shit. Basically. Um. It's, it's a weird sort of use-case? But. You know where it is, you know where it's docked. It is docked not that far away, it's docked about like, 300 yards from here? You know? And you know that it's empty right now. And that—I think like, one of the things that the two people were saying is like, "Yeah, it doesn't have a crew assigned yet, um, kinda like a shoestring guard budget right now, but um, it's a, proof of concept. It worked." So. If you were like, if you wanted to steal a bunch of shit and get it out of here by, by water? *[DRE: Hmm.]* You could steal a *lot* of shit and get it out of here over the water. Y'know?

DRE: Like that bank vault.

ALI: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Right. *[laughs]* If you wanted to steal the bank vault from *The Fast and Furious 5*, from *Fast 5*, you could do it. Um. This ship is called... *The Gleam of Glory*.

ALI: Not bad.

DRE: Probably rename it when we steal it, but.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Uh... Cool. And then you're able to cover up that vent so no one can hear you. Like, that's the thing, like okay, we can't be near that one vent. And also you put some pillows over it and it'll probably be fine.

ALI: Hella leans by it and just loudly says:

ALI AS HELLA: Yeah, I don't know, I think Malle's a really nice guy! I met him once!
[AUSTIN, DRE, ART laugh]

JANINE: Okay. So... Before this dragon thing. My thought re: Marielda was: Carlay showed up, Carlay was like, "Hey. We could use folks like you." So my idea would have been to be like, "Cool! Where do you need me?" Um. And see where that took things. Uh... we're still in a position where a similar approach would be... viable? Um. It depends. If we wanna be covert or if we wanna be direct. Like, we're—we're killing this Malle guy, right? Like—*[laughs]* How's—what's our—are we on the same page there? Or a similar page? Or... like a... like we kill him, and then, like...

DRE: I mean, how... Like, how much does that actually do? Is it like, we kill him and then just like, the next person slots in?

JANINE: Why would we leave after that? Or like, why would we just be like "Well, we killed him! Bye!" We could like...

ALI: Well, it's just, it could kinda turn into a situation if we... kill someone. In front of... *[laughs lightly]* all of his, uh...

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: Y'know, he's not actually a dragon. That breathes fire. He's just a guy, and there's a lot of guys here. And they all wanna be that guy. *[laughs]* So! *[JANINE: That's true...]* I'm losing it a little but you get me! *[DRE laughs]*

JANINE: Then we have to replace him with someone who everyone else is very scared of. No?

DRE: Isn't that just what we have already...?

JANINE: Um. No I meant like, Hella. Or Hadrian. Or.

DRE: Oh. Okay.

ALI: *[sucks in a breath]*

JANINE: I'll hear out anything. This is just—*[laughs]*

ART: No, no, you're not—these are good ideas, but we can't—we can't *stay*.

JANINE: Well, no, but like—

DRE: Do we wanna try and connect like, with—there has to be some kind of like, local group that's already trying to push back against all this stuff?

ALI: Yeah, that's what I was thinking.

ART (at the same time): Yeah, I would hope.

JANINE: Yeah. I mean, we could always... we could always build up a lil' insurrection and put *them* on that boat. Ship *them* across. To the volcano. To be specific.

ALI: *Ohh*, take the people who wanna kill him and put them on that boat. [JANINE: *Yeah.*] Instead of us going on—well, you know.

JANINE: But then we don't have like, a super fun moment where like, Hadrian gets like... Ordenna-knighted.

DRE: I just wanna have a cool boat.

ART: We can still do that part.

ALI: [*gasps*] Oh! I'm a dumbass. Fucking... can I sprout lore to find out if there are any spies in this town.

AUSTIN: Sure. We can totally spout lore about that.

ALI (overlapping, laughing): I should've done that an hour and a half ago!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Go ahead and give me a Spout Lore. What's—what's your score, what's your Spout Lore score?

ALI: I—well, I, it's a weird thing because I have that book from...

AUSTIN: Oh, right, right, right! Yes.

ALI: Um. Jerod Shiraz's journal?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Jerod Shiraz. Yeah, you have Jerod Shiraz's journal. *Right. Yes.* [ALI: *Um.*] You *sure* do! [ALI: *Yeah.*] Give me a Spout Lore. Roll Intelligence, uh, get a +1 on it because of that journal.

ALI: I'm gonna take away the Stunned 'cause it—it'd even out, and then I'm just gonna roll it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, then re-Stun it, yeah.

ALI: Okay, that was a 9.

AUSTIN: Um... uh... *[makes a thinking noise]* I will only tell you something interesting, it's on you to make it useful. The good news there is like... that's easy for me, right, I could tell you a name and it's up to you to like, *make it useful*. Right?

ALI: Yeah. *[laughs lightly]*

AUSTIN: The name is. Carlay de la Carta.

ALI: *[takes a breath]* Excuse me?

JANINE (in a resigned tone): Yeah, of course.

ALI: *[laughing]* I think Hella's just like—she's like, flipping through pages and then she sees Carlay and then she's like—*[AUSTIN: Well it's like—]* “W-w-wait, this—I have to go to a different chapter, this has to be the wrong list.” *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* It must be a, it must be a, a coded name, right? Like, they must have like, a dope, y'know... y'know, Red Swan or something. Some sort of, some sort of nickname.

ART: Do you pick a real name when you do that?

AUSTIN: *What?*

ART: Oh—*[stammers]* I thought you meant that someone was using that name as a—

AUSTIN: *No*, I'm saying *in the book* there must be a nickname, there must be like a secret agent name, like a codename. And then that codename is like... y'know. The one that, that you then decode as being Carlay? *[ALI: Mm-hm.]* So we still get that moment where you go “Car—wait a second!” *[ALI giggles]*

JANINE: So wait, did we just learn that the spy that we've been talking to is a spy?

[TIMESTAMP 1:40:00]

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

JANINE: Okay...

ALI: A double agent.

AUSTIN: Was working with Jerod Shiraz. When Jerod was alive.

JANINE: Oh, right, right, right, okay.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes. It is not like, uh, right, 'cause that book is not gonna have like, "Who are the modern Marieldan resistance movements?" 'Cause Jerod's been dead for six years or something.

ALI: Right. And also just wasn't there.

AUSTIN: But. But, people who were loyal to Jerod, and who had infiltrated Malle's, y'know, the, the Ordennan, um... Impetus, and who were secretly loyal to the Ordennan, um, uh... Dissent, uh, Carlay. Is the person who is.

ALI AS HELLA: ...Well, this has been eye-opening. Um—

[END OF @OZIADS' TRANSCRIPTION: 1:40:41]

[BEGINNING OF AUDREY'S TRANSCRIPTION: 1:40:42]

ART: This is gonna be a rough— we're gonna—

[JANINE *laughs*]

ALI AS HELLA: And I— I feel like we really wasted a lot of time on that boat. I wish that I had [*laughing*] looked at this book earlier, I apologize to that, for, to everybody. Um—

JANINE AS ADAIRE: I mean, we can still, we can still salvage this.

HELLA: Do we just wanna call them in here?

ADAIRE: Um—

ART: Are they still here? Are they, like, outside?

AUSTIN: No, they, like, *left* left. You could call for them though. They would show up.

ADAIRE: I, I feel like calling them into the room is, like, really, I don't know. That just doesn't feel particularly subtle.

HELLA: Well, maybe— Adaire, you know them. You knew them. You saw them once.

ADAIRE: [*overlapping*] What? Oh, well, yeah, I saw them—

[*AUSTIN laughs*]

HELLA: You had a conversation.

ADAIRE: I saw them. I saw them and they told me to come here, and then I flipped them off. Um—

[*HELLA makes a noise like, "Aiyee."*]

ADAIRE: I forget what else I said. [*laughs*]

ART AS HADRIAN: So, best friends? You're best friends.

ADAIRE: [*overlapping*] It was in good, it was in good fun, it was in good—

HELLA: [*laughs*] Well, I was gonna suggest we could be like, "Hey, join us for dinner, or, y'know, show us a good, y'know, uh, y'know, lounge in town."

ADAIRE: I mean— I have been badgering them around meal times for the past few days. Or was. At the university.

HELLA: [*overlapping, amused*] Have you?

ADAIRE: I was just saying hi.

HELLA: Hm.

[Everyone laughs]

ADAIRE: What's that?

AUSTIN: Trouble in paradise, everybody.

[ALI continues laughing hysterically]

JANINE: Wow. Wow.

ART: It's honestly a lot of nerve, for Hella to be this jealous.

JANINE: That's why I said—

AUSTIN: No! *[laughs very hard]*

JANINE: Hella gets all the ice cream, and everyone else gets one ice cream.

ALI AS HELLA: They look exactly like me. And, um—

JANINE: Do they?

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: They have dark skin and red hair, yeah.

ALI: Yeah! They're like a—

JANINE: Oh, ok. All I remembered was their original description was Austin saying that they were super attractive. *[laughs]*

ALI: Mmhm. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Did I say that? Did I use those words?

JANINE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: They're—

JANINE: You said something to that effect of like, they're very hot.

AUSTIN: That's a— I'm allowed! What?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm allowed to make— yeah.

JANINE: I'm just saying.

ART: No one's mad at you.

JANINE: Um—

[*ALI laughs*]

AUSTIN: Why are you all mad at me? I'm right!

JANINE: [*laughs*] Ok. What—

[*AUSTIN laughs suddenly*]

JANINE: What— [*laughs*]

AUSTIN: Sorry, I'm still tickled.

JANINE: Ok. What's— Ok, before we do anything, let's figure out what direction we wanna go with this Carlay information. Do we think that Carlay could still be valuable? Uh, do we think that Carlay should be seen as more of a foothold toward something valuable? Um—

ART: If they look that much like Hella, could we just install them and say it's Hella?

AUSTIN: They don't— no, they don't look that much like Hella.

ALI: No, they're hotter than me.

AUSTIN: I didn't say that.

[*Everyone laughs*]

DRE: Jesus Christ!

JANINE: No one said that.

[Everyone continues laughing]

AUSTIN: This is— I'm— *[makes a sound like, "Ahhuhhiuhh"]*

[Everyone still laughing]

AUSTIN: I'm checking the record, by the way.

[ALI laughing hysterically]

JANINE: I don't think I would've just inferred they were very attractive all on my own.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: Um—

ART: Yeah, I have the transcript right here, it's weird. *[pretending to read from the transcript]*
"AUSTIN: They're like Hella, but hotter." Who'd've thought?

[JANINE, ALI, and AUSTIN laugh]

ART: I don't, I don't have it. Yeah.

DRE: *[overlapping, also pretending to be reading from the transcript]* "Like four times, at least."

AUSTIN: Oh, my god.

ALI: Anyway. Um, I think what Hella—

AUSTIN: How is this not transcribed? How is— It must be!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Shoutouts to the FATT Transcript, uh, project. You can find out more about that, twitter.com/transcripts_fatt, nope, I'm wrong, [fatt_transcripts](https://twitter.com/fatt_transcripts). Nope, not that either. What is it? [pauses] It's transcript_fatt. So—

JANINE: Well, we got there eventually, that's all that matters.

AUSTIN: That is all that matters, right?

ALI: Yeah. Anyway, I think [laughing] what Hella actually says, while Austin's doing research is, um—

ALI AS HELLA: I think we, we would have to talk to them to kind of test temperature there. But, you know, if, if Ordenna is in need of a spiritual leader, and this person was working with Ordenna's spiritual leader, there's, uh, that's at least a foothold.

JANINE AS ADAIRE: So, what if we ask one of the guards to, like, send word to Carlay that maybe we wanna, like, have drinks, have a chat.

HELLA: Mhm.

ART AS HADRIAN: Sure! Great.

JANINE: Is there a bar in this hotel?

AUSTIN: They'll serve you liquor here.

JANINE: Ok. Is it like—

DRE: Yeah.

JANINE: What's this room like? I don't have a good sense of room—

AUSTIN: [*overlapping*] It's like, so again, it's four—

JANINE: I'm just picturing a con hotel, which I know it's not.

AUSTIN: It's, it's not that. There are four bedrooms, there's like, imagine— imagine a rectangle. Uh, on each of the corners of the rectangle, there is a room. In the area that is not then touched— like, uh, and each room touches each other. Not each room. The two rooms on the left, and the two rooms on the right touch each other. There's middle space that is not room. That is outdoor terrace, that you're, like, able to look around the city, and, like, have a nice drink on the, on the terrace, and like, y'know. It's like an outdoor, like, living room situation. Um, but there's, y'know, you're gonna be served food out here, when it's ready.

JANINE: Ok. Is it more or less— Mm, I'm trying to think of what the most plausible presentation here is, to let us be as flexible as it seems like Carlay is going to be. Like, [*sighs*] if the— if Carlay shows up and the read we get is that they are like, fiercely loyal, is it immediately fucking suspicious if all of us are there like, "We would like to join Ordenna, please." Um, or—

AUSTIN: I don't— you'd have to— this is a roll. This is a—

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I can't tell you what I think the most effective strategy is.

JANINE: [*overlapping*] I mean, I'm—

[*ALI sighs*]

JANINE: I'm asking like, team-wise what we think the best—

AUSTIN: What I will also say is like, Hella succeeded on the roll. It wasn't a fail, and I didn't give her bad information. Do you know what I mean? This wasn't like, "A-ha! I will tell you, but it's gonna bite you in the ass," so, don't feel like you need the perfect plan to get off the boat here.

JANINE: Ok. Interesting can mean a lot of things, that's all.

AUSTIN: It can! It can, and so there will be rolls— like, you will have to make it useful, but I am not— the truth of her question was, like, who is part of a resistance, or who, who here is a spy, is already a spy, right? And like, I'm not gonna betray, that's not who I am.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Also, they're like— [*reading from transcript*] "They could be like Hella's little cousin."

[*Everyone laughs*]

AUSTIN: [*continues from the transcript*] "They're like— red hair like Hella, dark skin like Hella— brown skin, brown skin like Hella, very pretty, very fine features, but resolved—"

JANINE: [*overlapping*] Ok. Very pretty—

AUSTIN: [*still reading*] "—square chin, and dressed more like a courtier than, you know, a soldier." And that is what I said. And they do a little bow.

ALI: A hot person.

AUSTIN: A hot— what I said is, "They're a hot person, and then they do a backflip."

[ALI, DRE, and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: I do say, [*again from the transcript*] “Like an anime ninja-ass way.” So—

ALI: They a hot person.

AUSTIN: A hot person.

JANINE: Mmhm. Let’s invite ‘em back for drinks.

AUSTIN: All right.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Unless anyone else, speak up.

AUSTIN: Um, they arrive with dinner. Like, they arrive when dinner arrives, by the time that they, uh, get here, it is time for dinner, um, and the chef in this place has smartly, uh, prepared another, an extra plate. Um, I think it is some sort of like, um— I don’t know why I’m deep in Mediterranean vibes, like Greek food, but I feel like this is like, you’re getting, like, um, uh, what is the word I’m looking for? What is the—

JANINE: You’re getting those vibes ‘cause that’s how you described all the, like, architecture and stuff is, and, and you mentioned Athens’s districts, and—

AUSTIN: [*overlapping*] No, I’m saying, no, that’s the thing that I’m talking about. I’m saying why am I there already.

JANINE: Oh, ok.

AUSTIN: Um—

ALI: I think that there's, like, there's a sort of seaside feel of like—

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: —cheeses wrapped in, y'know—

AUSTIN: Yeah. And so I think you're getting kind of like, gyro, or shawarma-style, like, rotisserie meat, uh, dish, served with like, um, like—

JANINE: Served on swords, very Ordennan.

AUSTIN: Very Ordennan. Um, served on swords, but like, with Marieldan spices, um, and then like, a light salad. Y'know, cucumber, maybe some tomatoes, um, and then like, some pita bread, and some, like, um, like a hummus, or like a, a, pea, like a chickpea-based, um, like dip, basically. It's good, it smells nice, um— *[pauses]* And they arrive, and they tell the chef that they're, that they can leave, and the chef leaves, um, the chef also provides a couple of bottles of wine.

ALI: *[impressed]* Ooh!

AUSTIN: Uh, to pair.

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: Thank you for the invitation. *[pauses]* I'll tell the truth, I'm surprised. Most of you didn't so much as say a word to me on the boat. I thought you couldn't wait to get rid of me.

ALI AS HELLA: *[sighs]* We just have this kind of journey policy, where we kinda *[laughs]* um, on the first night is when we get all of the talking that we want out.

DRE: *[laughs]* What was that sentence?

[Everyone laughs]

ART: Hella lies like someone who's never talked to a person before.

[Pause while everyone continues laughing]

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: *[slowly]* I see.

ART: I think, "We're still kinda shaken up from the dragon," was the, was the way to go.

AUSTIN: Mm. That's a good lie, that's a better lie.

ALI AS HELLA: That too.

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: Mm, the dragon thing too, yeah. Um, well, I hope you're finding—

JANINE AS ADAIRE: I was fine, I just don't like crowding people.

CARLAY: Mm. I understand that quite well.

HELLA: Wha— how are you liking this wine pairing?

CARLAY: It's fine?

HELLA: Mm.

CARLAY: It's good, the chef here makes good choices.

HELLA: Does—

JANINE: I don't know where I thought that question was going.

AUSTIN: They like, sniff the wine.

[*ALI laughs*]

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: I would know if you poisoned the wine. That's my business.

ALI AS HELLA: [*overlapping*] Oh my god, no. No, no, no, no, no. No. Oh, Carlay, no.
[*laughs*]

JANINE AS ADAIRE: You would absolutely know if we poisoned the wine. My poison is very bad.

HELLA: That. Well, it's fanta— it's fantastic poison. Um—

[*AUSTIN laughs*]

ADAIRE: I also tend to get a little like, gleeful when I poison, so it's really obvious. You would know.

[*CARLAY sighs*]

AUSTIN: They nod, again.

[*ALI laughs*]

AUSTIN: It's going great.

ALI AS HELLA: [*clears her throat*] Do you think—

JANINE AS ADAIRE: [*overlapping*] I—

ALI: [*laughing*] I was gonna say, “Do you think everyone here makes good choices?”, which is the worst lead-in, but I did get that. I did get that pathway.

[*Everyone laughs*]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: I'm taking it.

AUSTIN: [*overlapping*] Let's do it, let's— uh huh!

JANINE: [*quietly stressed*] Aaaaauuuuhhhhhh.

ALI AS HELLA: I just, you know, I feel— y'know, it occurred to me, when I wasn't able to leave here, that I might end up feeling kind of out of place among [*sighs*] people I've grown up with my entire life, so having you here to talk to, um, would help us all feel more comfortable.

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: I see. Well, it is good to be in your company. You are [*pauses, sighs*] a celebrity here, after all. It is my honor to share a meal with you all.

ART AS HADRIAN: Hey, don't mention it.

ART: Says Hadrian, kind of not understanding what a wine pairing is, like, sort of like taking a bite, and then like, immediately putting wine in his mouth.

[*Everyone laughs*]

JANINE: Oh, gross.

ART: I'm like, "That can't be—"

ALI: This is why Hadrian/Samot doesn't make sense.

AUSTIN: Hmmmmmm.

JANINE: No, he needs to be taught. That's how it works.

ALI: [*laughing*] That's how it works.

ART: It's like *Ghost*, but with wine pairings.

AUSTIN: Fucking.

ALI: Oh boy.

[*Everyone is still laughing a bit*]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Samot is *furious*. [*pauses*] *If* a Samot heel turn shows up, this is why.

ALI: Hm.

ART: The "What here is evil?" is just pinging on Hadrian right now.

AUSTIN: *[laughing]* Yes.

ART: It's like, "You! You! Stop!"

AUSTIN: "You're the one!"

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Um. God. Uh, Carlay is a professional.

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: What is this really about?

ALI: I think that Hella probably takes Jerod's book and puts it on the table, 'cause I think that that's just really easy leverage.

AUSTIN: Mmmm. Mhm.

ALI: Not leverage, but as a way to be like, "Hey." Um—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

ALI: And I think she kind of puts her hand over it, um, not in like a court vibe, but in a way—y'know, you know what I mean. *[laughs]* Um, and kind of leans forward and is like:

ALI AS HELLA: Having someone that I could trust in this city would be a tremendous help.

AUSTIN: They reach over to take the book, slowly. They make direct eye contact with you, and they say:

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: The lion dies in the field.

AUSTIN: And they're like, waiting to hear you respond.

[*ALI laughs*]

DRE: Uh oh!

ALI: [*laughing*] Am I allowed to do a roll? To just—

AUSTIN: I don't— I think we've established in Friends at the Table that when you— this is— Jack rolled this in the first session of Winter.

ALI: Mmmmm.

AUSTIN: I don't think you get to roll to know a code phrase. I— sorry, you already did roll. You got a 9.

[*ALI groans*]

ART: Just guess—

AUSTIN: [*overlapping*] That was the Spout Lore.

ART: —just something about, um, the lion— “The lion dies in the field,” was the, was the offer phrase?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Um, I know all about, I know lions.

AUSTIN: All right, here's— I will refresh this thing that I got that from, and then if you get it right, then I'm— then it's amazing, and you did it.

[*ALI snorts*]

JANINE: Man, I should've fucking done Connections before this.

AUSTIN: What's Connections do? Connections—

JANINE: [*reading from her playbook*] "Connections: when I put a word— when I put word out to the criminal underbelly about something that I want or need—"

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that would've got you in a different direction than this.

JANINE: Yeah, but still.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: Um, I think Hella looks immediately dejected, and is just like:

ALI AS HELLA: Listen, you're the first name from this book that I've even spoken to. I had to read your name! I had to read the code to know your name.

AUSTIN: Give me a Parley.

ALI: [*laughs*] Great. Honesty is the best policy in my opinion.

AUSTIN: [*overlapping*] Uh huh.

ALI: And that's a 9!

AUSTIN: That's a 9! Um, um, I think what they say is:

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: I'm keeping the book.

AUSTIN: That is the leverage they're asking you, to— the concrete assurance.

[ALI sighs]

AUSTIN: Because if you have a book that says they're a spy, that is a thing that they do not feel comfortable with you having until they trust you.

ALI: Fair. Um.

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: Jerod Shiraz was as honorable a leader as any house in Ordenna has ever had. Living Blood of Sea and Smoke, and her loss— I did hold it against you all, for years. For the last few years, I guess. It hasn't been years and years yet, but. Um, but I am who you think.

JANINE AS ADAIRE: So you really played that part with gusto, huh?

CARLAY: I am loyal to Ordenna, but that does not mean I am loyal to Malle.

ALI AS HELLA: I didn't have the opportunity to know Jerod the way that you do, and the only reason I know your name is 'cause I read that to try to, um— If I can be straight with you, um, part of my hope here is to fill that absence.

AUSTIN: [sighs] I, I almost just said, "You're cashing in the money at the bank."

[*ALI laughs*]

AUSTIN: Um, 'cause that's where my brain was.

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: You wish to replace Malle? He'll pay— he'll pay well, for the slaying of the Advocate, but that is, I think, a bit much, don't you think? Don't you agree?

JANINE AS ADAIRE: I don't think anyone was gonna ask him.

ALI AS HELLA: "Replacement" is a strong word. Um, there's three other people here, they have plans of their own. [*laughs*] But I, I— I'm not— [*sighs*] I'm not loyal to Ordenna because I haven't been, because I can't be, because of the things that it's done. But I— [*sighs*] I guess I've been learning more and more that you can't just turn your back on something and hope it fixes itself.

CARLAY: You're sure you haven't met Shiraz? It sounds like something she'd say. [*sighs*] Well, there are ways to go about this. How many, how many months do you plan to stay?

ART AS HADRIAN: Like, five days.

CARLAY: Five days. That's—

HELLA: Mm.

HADRIAN: So like, one-fifth— no, that's not right. Mm, one-sixth of a month? One-sixth of a month.

AUSTIN: Hadrian struggles to remember what a month is. Um—

[*JANINE groans and ALI laughs*]

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: It— Dragonslayer, if your party's plan is to overthrow Fela Malle, you're going to need more than a week. By force, anyway.

ART AS HADRIAN: This is nothing to me. Difficult takes a day, impossible takes a week.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: You can't also be quoting Jay-Z in this podcast! You already did it in Bluff, not all of your characters can be the source of Jay-Z's lyrics!

ALI: This is allowed.

ART: [overlapping] All of my characters are Jay-Z.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Ohhhh.

ART: I saw a very good fancast of Hadrian as Jeffrey Wright today.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ART: And that's great. But it's just— they're all Jay— every— they're all Jay-Z.

AUSTIN: See, I— mmm, Had— Jeffrey Wright is actually my Orth fancasting, but, anyway. Um, I guess, I guess we could be like, an anthology show where we use the same actors, you know what I mean?

ALI: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: Anyway.

ART: Mmhm.

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: [*sighs*] There are ways for you to take power without a full-on revolution. You're each going to be allowed to make a request of Lord Malle. This is on top of the money, or the estate, if that's what you choose. Hella, Queenslayer—

ALI AS HELLA: Oh, I don't really go by that any more.

CARLAY: Oh. I'll need to tell the— [*sighs*] make a note. Ok. Perhaps you could petition for something remarkable: the reinstatement of your family line—

[*HELLA sighs*]

CARLAY: —with you at its head. It is a different age, and Malle is confident that he is the sole leader of Ordenna, where once there were three Living Bloods, or once there were *four*, before that. There is now only one. But if you were to become Hella Varal Aviz, perhaps you could make claim as Living Blood of Smoke.

HELLA: [*sighs*] Are there— are there any other people in Malle's court or inner circle that we could find similar— [*pauses*] y'know, whatever it is we're doing right now?

CARLAY: [*sighs*] Unlikely. He keeps me around because of my skill set. He keeps, he keeps them around because they're sycophants, because [*sighs*] he likes to surround himself with those who best recognize his strength oh so loudly. Without the Anchor, he would be nothing.

HELLA: And the Anchor, they're still being controlled by the plates?

CARLAY: Yes, of course. Same as ever.

ALI: Um, I think she's like, looking to Hadrian and Throndir to kind of see— I think she knows enough to know they went to Alcyon—

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: —and maybe knows a better question to ask, but doesn't know what it is.

DRE: What sort of thing are you looking for here?

ALI: I mean I think the, the, the bridge she wouldn't be able to gap is, y'know, has there been, have you seen the same sort of life bloom out of the old units, or are there— y'know, what's the Anchor deal? *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: What's up with the Anchor, right. We the listeners know that after 10 years, Pala-din and Anchor become sapient, but Hella probably doesn't know that specific year count, you just know there's a culture of Pala-din and Anchor, right?

ALI: Mm, yeah.

DRE: I mean, I don't, I don't— did any of us get that specific year count, from—

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: Yeah, didn't we?

DRE: Ok.

AUSTIN: Yeah, absolutely. Because that's— the Anchor, the Anchor that were at the door of Alcyon had been a decade. Um, so like, that's your, your ruler. Y'know, your meter.

ART: But do we have like— we don't have like a manufacture date on these Anchor.

AUSTIN: I mean, you— not— I mean, which ones are *these*? So like, the answer is no, but also you know how old— you know how long Ordenna has had Anchor for. And it's just over a decade.

DRE: Yeah, like any of 'em left over from Old Man's Chin at this point would've hit that 10-year mark.

AUSTIN: [*overlapping*] Right. Any of them from all of Winter—

ALI: [*overlapping*] Right.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —would now be past that.

ART: And those weren't— they're, they're not all— they weren't all at Alcyon?

AUSTIN: No. They were not. I mean, you don't know that. I— that's the question. That's the question here, right? Like, did you do a— how, how many there were at Alcyon does not add up to how many there were in Ordenna's employ in Winter. So yes, I guess you could make that leap.

ART: Hmm.

ALI: Yeah. I, I feel like the thing that I'm curious about is like, is that an avenue to be like, "Ok, when we do this, also we know about this." Like, can we make use the Anchor?"

AUSTIN: [*overlapping*] Totally, I think— I think this is I think that this is like, you're putting together pieces, and I wanna just give this to you, which is, like—

DRE: Is this why some of them are walking in bigger groups?

AUSTIN: Could be!

DRE: Hmm.

ALI: Oohh.

ART: Oh! Those weren't like, fake spies?

AUSTIN: [*makes noise like, "Mmhm-mm" to mean "I don't know"*] I think like— I'm at, I'm waiting for someone to ask, like, a sideways question here so that Carlay can give you information without knowing that they're giving you information.

JANINE: [*sighs*] I don't think this is the right question, but:

JANINE AS ADAIRE: at this point, the— does the plates controlling them mean something different than it used to? Like, is it not just that the plates move them, it's that the plates also—

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: [*overlapping*] No, they, they work as— they— the plates are the same as, as the ones that we, we figured—

ADAIRE: [*overlapping*] Ok.

CARLAY: There are some who, um, have required some additional tuning. Um, we have engineers who— it's beyond me, of course, but, um, when— we've had some of the Anchor, recently, in the last few months, acting strangely, um, but then the engineers bring them back into place.

DRE AS THRONDIR: Older models kinda falling apart, need fix-ups or whatever?

CARLAY: Exactly, exactly that. Refusing orders. Um, making us reconfigure the plates. Um, some of them have disappeared entirely, if I'm honest, but—

ART AS HADRIAN: How many?

CARLAY: Oh, a small handful. A few dozen. The bulk of the army is still here. It's been in place— *[pauses]* it's been the heart of our army now, for nearly a decade.

ALI AS HELLA: *[sighs]* When you say engineer—

CARLAY: Like I said, it's beyond me. I don't know the particulars, but all I know is, an Anchor acts a way it shouldn't, an engineer brings them back into place.

HADRIAN: Ok, ok.

[AUSTIN laughs]

HELLA: And are they brought back to an engineering room, or are they—

CARLAY: Dealt with on the spot.

HELLA: Oh!

CARLAY: The engineers are deployed around town—

THRONDIR: Hm.

CARLAY: —whenever there's one. We haul it away and we lock it up, and then they attend. And then they go on their way.

HADRIAN: They could be faking it.

CARLAY: [*incredulous*] Excuse me??

HADRIAN: Nothing.

CARLAY: The Anchor could be faking it? They're statues, man.

THRONDIR: Jeez. Yeah, how do you haul away and lock up a— that's, that's heavy lifting.

CARLAY: I would never.

ADAIRE: Do the engineers have any stuff they bring with them, if they're going out in the field versus having them brought to them?

CARLAY: [*overlapping*] A tool kit.

ADAIRE: A tool kit. Ok.

AUSTIN: Uh, here's what I'm going to say. Austin. They're gonna explain what they've seen done, um, and it's like, it's, it's torture. But they don't— but, Carlay doesn't know that it's torture.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, that's what's happening, is like— they're being—

JANINE: [*overlapping*] So there isn't a— there isn't like, a mechanical answer to this, it is entirely—

AUSTIN: *[overlapping]* No. They're being coerced.

JANINE: Ok. Right.

AUSTIN: They're being coerced into staying under threat of violence and under violence. Via violence.

DRE AS THRONDIR: Do they keep a log? Like, is there like a, like a maintenance log or whatever?

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: Almost certainly, yes. Yes. We're very careful with information here. *[pause]* Why this obsession with the Anchor? I thought we were going somewhere with the plan of declaring Hella our new lord?

THRONDIR: Well, it's like a back-up plan. I mean, you said yourself, right, the Anchor are the main strength of the Ordennan army, and there's something, a potential glitch or something, right?

CARLAY: *[overlapping]* Hmm. I guess.

THRONDIR: If that's something we can exploit, or even just, uh, y'know, delay these repairs being done.

AUSTIN: *[laughs quietly]* Fuckin' Throndir with the big brain.

ART AS HADRIAN: I don't think it hurts to— I don't think it hurts to just tell them.

JANINE AS ADAIRE: Yeah, I— I think we're looking at a situation where there's a lot of *[sighs]* populations here that are not happy with current leadership, uh, one of those would probably, definitely, for sure be considered the Anchor.

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: [*sighs*] The Anchor are, again, autonomous beings— not even beings. They're swords what move.

ART AS HADRIAN: No, after 10 years they, they stop being that and they start being people.

AUSTIN: [*laughing*] They like, squint at you.

[*JANINE laughs*]

ART AS HADRIAN: Or, I don't know. It's hard to say something like "starts being"— "starts being people" is too inflammatory.

JANINE AS ADAIRE: He's had *multiple* cloaks owned by gods, so he probably knows what he's talking about.

HADRIAN: This one!

ADAIRE: Yeah!

ALI AS HELLA: At this point, I'm comfortable with considering all of them people.

ADAIRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Carlay is like— you just gave them a lot at once. Which is, like, one is the fact that you're wearing a god's cloak, is, is like, a lot for someone who does truly wish there were no gods.

[*JANINE laughs*]

AUSTIN: Um, two, I mean— it's just all over their face. They're like, "You've hit me with a lot right now." But also, I think that they know that you're right. Right? It's like one of those things.

JANINE: [*overlapping*] I mean—

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: [*slowly*] That explains a lot. That explains— that explains why we're here. Malle wanted to refine, refine the Anchor. Malle said that this was the place where we could do that.

DRE AS THRONDIR: Mm.

CARLAY: That this is where they originally were built.

ART AS HADRIAN: Hmm.

CARLAY: That perhaps there was an improved design, I thought— I thought it was just [*sighs*] a benefit.

JANINE AS ADAIRE: I'm sure he used literally those same words to himself.

CARLAY: This is good. This is good. I mean, I— [*exhales*] I don't know what happens after, I don't know how we keep them loyal to Ordenna, but—

THRONDIR: Uh—

CARLAY: — if we can support some sort of uprising... Yes, Ranger? What were you saying?

THRONDIR: I don't know how— I don't know if that's really in your cards right now.

AUSTIN: Takes a big bite of meat.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Just wanna make sure people are eating during all of this. Big sip of wine, big gulp of wine.

AUSTIN AS CARLAY: We are a nation of survivors, Ranger. We've been through— from our origin— attacks, exile, trauma. We find a way forward, and we remain Ordennans.

DRE AS THRONDIR: Sure. And you make sure that you don't really give a shit about whoever you're stepping on when you take those steps forward.

CARLAY: The continent stepped on us. We returned, and we brought so much with us. I don't agree with the actions of Impetor Malle, I don't agree with the late actions of the Justiciar-Captain. Both overreached in ambition, and in tact. But even Jerod Shiraz knew that the world as it stood was broken. The roads we have rebuilt, the, the shipping lanes—

THRONDIR: Yeah, Jerod Shiraz also left and went to help other people and gave her life to do it.

CARLAY: And, and I was her aide in that. When you were prepared to fight the Ordennan Impetus outside of the Last University, who do you think delivered the news that they were on their way? I'm loyal to Ordenna and to a vision of Ordenna that brings its knowledge and its power to everyone. I will not apologize for that.

ART AS HADRIAN: *[clears his throat]* Do you know about the West?

CARLAY: We left. We left. We knew— we could feel our home was already shattered before the Advocate. Hella, I'm sorry. The steel has been a curse.

ALI AS HELLA: It started before the steel.

CARLAY: *[sighs]* We are getting off point.

HADRIAN: Yes, we are.

CARLAY: Tomorrow, a train will take us all to the court of Fela Malle.

["Something" by Jack de Quidt begins playing again as AUSTIN continues speaking as CARLAY.]

CARLAY: Within reason, you will all have whatever you wish. And if we do it right, it could be a moment of great change for Ordenna. There are ways I can make sure that those assigned to us tomorrow are those who have been active for quite some time.

["Something" continues playing for another 1:49, then the episode ends.]