

[Live at the Table Audio - Dialect Pt. 2](#)

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(T/N: Most quotes from the *Dialect* rulebook were copied and pasted directly from my copy of it.)

AUSTIN: “With the world and characters set, you’re ready to dive in. The turn sequence is the heart of the game and the engine for language creation. Each turn you will advance the story of the Isolation and root that change in the language. In this way, the language and story will be bound together.

A turn revolves around playing cards from the Language Deck. This deck is divided into cards for each Age by the number on the back of the card.

Begin Age 1 by dealing three cards for Age 1 to each player.”

So let’s start with that. This should be fun! Alright... [pause] Oh, good ones... Okay... Um... [clicking] Three more... Oooh. ‘s good ones here. Okay. So.

I’ve drawn three cards for each of us, so. Here is the way that this turns go. One of us—and I’ll start since I’m facilitating—will pick a card from our hand and tie it to one of the current Aspects in the Age. “Describe why this Aspect has led to a new word for the concept on the card. Use the connection to build new detail into the world.”

Then as a group we construct a new word or phrase for the concept based on the connection we’ve just made. It’s communally, suggestions can come from anyone, but the person whose turn it is makes the final decision. The you write the word on an index card and you place it over there... I think for us we’ll just drag the card up to the respective trait and then write the word on the card itself... since we’re not using real cards. [laughs]

And then we hold a conversation. We set a scene and hold a conversation in character, inspired by the prompt at the bottom of each of this cards. “Play out the conversation until all characters in the scene make their relationship to the new word clear. Certain cards, designated as Action cards”—and so we have one of these here, Dre, you have one called CREATE A WORD—”bend the normal flow of play. These may result in words changing, being generated through alternate means, or even leaving the language.

When you’ve finished your turn, draw a card for the upcoming Age.” So, I’ll get this next set of cards ready also. I’ll shuffle that, shuffle those cards up, there we go. “In other words, draw an Age 2 card during Age 1 and an Age 3 card during Age 2. Do *not* draw a card in Age 3.

After each player has taken a turn, you will move to the next Age.”One thing... Let’s do my opening turn and I’ll talk about one more thing that we’re allowed to do.

AUSTIN: So. I have three cards to choose from. I have

GOOD LUCK, which is “How we affirm our hope in happy outcomes. A spoken wish for victory that bonds us together. A particular kind of luck or

fortune for the Isolation.” And then the prompt is “When good luck is needed most.”;

WONDERFUL, “A vision of hope. Milk and honey and all that is good. May we fill our days with it.” Shared— And the prompts is “A shared moment of wonder.”

or BAD OMEN. “A symbol for our dread. We’ve always had worries about the future, but this thing anchors it to reality. When we say this word, we feel how fragile the Isolation really is.”

“A bad omen only some acknowledge” is the prompt.

I'm gonna start with... WONDERFUL, I think is the one that I'm gonna go with. And I think I'm gonna start it with where I should start it, which is—for me at least—which is The Strand.

I think that we begin at the beginning of a new Strand, like, I've... You know, it's a shot looking up from a planet as the Strand blossoms, and I think those who are Chorus Bound can literally physically see this, this like amazing, like, paint almost, like running through the sky and into space, shaping the direction that all the Hypha, the Hypha fleet will go down in the next, you know, in the next months and years, or whatever, right? Like, that's going to be our next home, I'll note right now too that we get to play with time here as we want—each Age is not an age in history in that big picture sense, you know, we're not jumping 500 years or something... unless we live that long, 'cause we're staying with these same characters throughout each Age. But we are able to jump weeks, months years as appropriate, you know.

But yeah, so I think... I think the connection I wanna make here is like... there's a special word that started for describing when a new Strand was... whenever there was new Stranding, a new, like, the Strand's launched or whatever, a new age of a new Strand, and that word became a kind of stand-in for the word "wonderful", right? Or for like "this is good". Like a positive thing. Um, does anyone have any good ideas for what that might be? [Pause. Dre hums.] You know, I like playing with the flower imagery that we had before or the colorful, the color imagery we had before, um... [typing] You know, this could be as simple in the words as like... "blossom", right? We could be like "That's blossom", you know, or like "That's bloss." "Bloss" could be our word for "wonderful". Or like, um, I'm trying to think of other things... Like "flowe" or "flow", things that take longer words like "flowering" and cut it down to something smaller than that. Or it can be, um, "Strandfall" or, like, is there like a special year that we're calling it, like "the Strand year", or "Newstrand", "New Strand", like is there something like that has generalized to be just a positive thing? Does anyone have any ideas here? Any words that stick out?

JANINE: Um, there's a kind of plant called a heliconia, and I really like "heli-", something about that with something else on the end feels like it has like a brightness that might work here.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah... So, a thing I wanna say really quick that I should have said before that is in the book but... We work for, in default, we work like in our own language by default. There are cards that are about inventing new words completely, so like Dre has the CREATE A WORD card, right?

JANINE: Hmmm.

AUSTIN: But. So I'm gonna read from the book really quick... Because I think it's an important way to— it is an important thing to... say... where the hell is it? Um, searching for the word "language" in this book is not gonna do it. [laughs] [typing, clicking] Oops, almost had it, where did it go? [clicking] Ugh, I cannot find this section. But there is a thing in here that effectively says like—we should be—not that the name of the flower isn't that already, but like we should be playing with stuff that we intuitively know because the characters intuitively know them, right?

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: There are special circumstances when it *is* about doing the like let's sound out good interesting sounds, but for this it should be like... we should be speaking as if we're people who understand the language, you know?

JANINE: Right.

AUSTIN: I'm just frustrated I can't find this specific thing, but that's OKAY. [laughs] Any other suggestions on this? [pause] I kind of like "flow", I kind of like... I'm looking at like the various word-building techniques here... Oh, this is the wrong thing... Get over here. What about like "brightsky"? [Dre hums thoughtfully] Like, does it just— 'cause it's just something that LOOKS so dramatic— That's kind of where I wanna start—what do we call it when the Strand happens? Because THAT's the term that I think eventually becomes the stand-in for the word "wonderful". [pause, some clicking] I wanna just say it's "brightsky", I kind of like that, I kind of like that notion.

DRE: I do too.

AUSTIN: And let's roll with that, I'm allowed to make that call, it is my turn. [Dre chuckles] So, I'm gonna write "brightsky" here, and then I'm gonna... So. That is the part that we put the words together, where we create the word.

But now we have a conversation. So. Made the connection, explained why the Aspect's given rise to the new word, made the new word, "Be deliberate about making connections", did that, uh, we've added it to the Language Tableau, um, and now we have a conversation, so. Looking for those rules... here we go.

"Read the prompt at the bottom of the card played this turn. This will act as a prompt for a conversation where you'll use the language you just made."

"A shared moment of wonder" is our prompt.

"Choose at least two characters to have a conversation. This is done by the player whose turn it is. You may choose yourself to be in the conversation, but it's not required. Feel free to discuss who it

makes sense to include in the scene.

Conversation participants set the scene. Players who will be in the conversation should first answer two questions:

Where are we? Establish where the conversation will take place."

And two, "What are we doing? Say what the participants are doing as the conversation starts."

"Participants then have a conversation that demonstrates their relationship to the new word defined. All participants in the conversation should either use the word, conspicuously avoid using it, or explore a shade in between. Once all characters in the conversation have shown their relationship to the word and the prompt is resolved, anyone at the table may end the scene."

So we can go "Cut!" whenever. So.

I think the scene that I want here is— Sabil, do we... do you do like— I know that you use your own abilities to like, like you said, top yourself off and give yourself some extra psychic

juice—do you also do that with others or is it like— is there a sort of check-in or check-up model for this?

JANINE: No. That's... for me that's like the thing, the Magician's thing that's like the secret you have, so I want it to be kind of...

AUSTIN: [crosstalking] Okay, so it's a one and done? But like... Sorry, I guess what I mean is like—Do you do check-ups? Or do you just do the initial thing?

JANINE: Umm...

AUSTIN: Like if antlers get damaged, or if you're feeling a little... I'm just trying to see if there's a scene in which Timea could show up to your office to be like—

AUSTIN (as Timea): I just did a Strand run, I—or the Thread run—could you just make sure that my antlers are all still good? That my Bond is still tight?

AUSTIN: Or is this too close to the thing that you wanna do as a private separate thing?

JANINE: I think it makes sense to do check-ups, but I also don't know, um, in terms of a physical thing, I don't know where the fault would be, like where the fault... what the thing to check would be.

AUSTIN: Maybe it's not physical? Maybe it's like a— maybe it's actually a Bonded thing, you know?

JANINE: But like then there's a thing where I wonder if it verges on Dre's character? What they do.

AUSTIN: But their whole thing is all about processing death, not about actually healing, right?

DRE: Hm.

JANINE: [crosstalking] Yeah, but like I mean the, um—

AUSTIN: I'm asking Asper.

DRE: Yeah, I mean, in a way that IS healing, but it's not the sort of healing.

AUSTIN: [crosstalking] It is, it is, but I mean... yeah. That's what I mean, it's not—

JANINE: [crosstalking] It seemed like a psychological health kind of... strain of things.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, so, I guess the question—

JANINE: I don't wanna step too much on that.

AUSTIN: —for Asper then: is that a— is there a broader therapeutic role that you play? Or is it really focused on being death... like, around death?

DRE: I think it is focused.

AUSTIN: Okay. Then yeah, I don't think it does make a— I think... 'cause what I'm thinking is like almost more—

JANINE: It just seems weird to have two characters that have a sort of psychological care role.

AUSTIN: I don't even think this is psychological care, that's not what I'm propositioning. I'm saying there's a difference, I'm saying like—You're right, you don't have to like take a wrench to my antlers, but like what is the equivalent of— You know how cars used to have like... you get under there with a wrench, and now there's a lot of stuff that you like bring up a touchpad for?

JANINE: Hm.

AUSTIN: You know what I mean? Like—

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —it is distant, it is technological still, but it's not... you don't have to actually.... But maybe you're doing it via Bond versus... Like, I don't think this is like talking therapy, I don't think this is like, you know?..

JANINE: Uh-huh. Yeah, I just didn't know if you meant like... if it would be like how are you processing the information or anything?

AUSTIN: No.

JANINE: Versus like clarity check.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think it's like All Systems Nominal like, right?.. You know... It's like an eye doctor more than a... You know what I mean?

JANINE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah, that's the scene I would like. What is your?.. so, that the scene I would like, it could be me after doing the... after doing my run, my first full run maybe... Or maybe not the first one, early though. I come to your ship because I got a recommendation. I hear

you're the best, and now that I'm a Thread-Runner, like—Hey, I can afford the best, you know? [Janine laughs] Or I can... I have the social cash to access the best whatever it is. So that is the where we are and what we're doing. What is your office like?

JANINE: Um... I think it's like sort of a half-globe suspended from a sort of ceiling structure, so instead of being what we'd recognize as a building or instead of being like a partition of the space within the sort of ship that I'm base in, I picture it as sort of like a half-orb kind of mounted to a...

AUSTIN: Cool.

JANINE: So the straight view would be if you're walking past it you'd really be walking underneath it.

AUSTIN: Do you climb up, do you hover up? What is the— how do our ships work?

JANINE: That's a good question.

AUSTIN: I kind of like the idea of there being certain spots inside the ship that don't have gravity.

JANINE: I like the idea of entry points not being horizontal, being vertical because you have giant antlers.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JANINE: So if you have... you know, your choice is either have a giant doorway that's a big waste of space but can still accommodate everyone's antlers OR just have like a hole and everyone just has to go through the hole.

AUSTIN: Yeah, either up or down.

JANINE: Yeah. We use the space.

AUSTIN: I like the idea of me, this like young doe popping up from the bottom of... like into your like, entry hole, or your reception room or whatever, right?

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Just in general, people popping up through the floor to reveal these antlers is really good. Um. So, I do and... How is it decorated, what's this room like? When I'm shown into your office or wherever your operation space is.

JANINE: Um, I think a lot about that like, the enamel I mentioned as the exterior, I'm thinking a lot about enameled like clocks and collectibles, like [Austin hums] little mini enameled architectural things, there is everything that's... everything is probably very shiny, and there

are like windows, and openings, and things like that, but everything has this kind of smoothness to it, like there's no real right angles—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: —even the things that are supposed to be or that like maybe structurally at some point it was a right angle but then you put enamel coating over it and it all gets kind of rounded out like a Disney *Little Mermaid* castle kind of thing?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: It gets kind of softened. Um.

AUSTIN: Cool. So then I think we... I like... come in, and I sit down, I'm just like—

AUSTIN (as Timea): Hey, Doc. Uh, thanks for taking me today. You know I just finished the run, and so, you know, the Council was like "Make sure you get your Bond checked out just in case." Uh. How are you doing? Nice to meet you?

JANINE (as Sabil): Nice to meet you too.

JANINE: Um, I didn't describe her before, I think Sabil is probably pale in a way that doesn't look healthy?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Like I imagine her as being... when I initially thought like—Oh cool, like fleshy deer people—I was thinking like very specifically of, um... There are some artists who I've seen every now and then that would draw like pink or like lavender deer people that look all soft and nice. Um. But I think with her, she's probably more like blue-ish? Like kind of a very pale-pale-pale blue-ish, purple-ish kind of... Not like a bright pink, or tan, or any other, you know, orange-brown-whatever color.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: And I think she has points kind of like a lavender point Siamese, so kind of like gray, darker sort of gray, gradients on the extremities—

AUSTIN: Cool.

JANINE: —like the hands, feet, nose, ears. Which really looks kind of gross, but. You know.

AUSTIN: You know. I think, yeah. I suspect that I'm doing my best to hide that I think that, you know.

JANINE: [laughs] Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um.

AUSTIN (as Timea): So I just take a seat? What's the... I obviously had the Bonding. but I have never done this part of it...

JANINE (as Sabil): Uh-huh. Well, it's usually a little better if you sit down. Headaches aren't uncommon, so it's just easier to— to have people sitting down than to risk any swooning.

AUSTIN (as Timea): Yeah, I... I'm not much of a swooner, Doc, but, you know..

JANINE (as Sabil): [laughs a bit] Yeah, that's what everyone says. No one admits to being a swooner.

AUSTIN: Takes a seat.

JANINE (as Sabil): Except for the people who actually aren't. [Austin laughs] It's actually really funny. We joke about it at the conventions.

AUSTIN (as Timea): There's conventions!

JANINE (as Sabil): Get-togethers.

AUSTIN (as Timea): Oh. Okay. Um.

JANINE (as Sabil): Do you not have get-togethers? It's fine, but...

AUSTIN (as Timea): There's not many people who do what I do, you know?

JANINE (as Sabil): You've got to trade information, you have to keep up to date on everyone's methods...

AUSTIN (as Timea): Honestly, that does sound brightsky but... It is me and myself out there. And some books, and notes from the last guy who did this, and the one who did it before him, and so on but...

JANINE (as Sabil): That's a kind of conference.

AUSTIN (as Timea): [exhales, something between a sigh and a laugh]

JANINE (as Sabil): You're... conferring.

AUSTIN (as Timea): Alright, well, I guess...

AUSTIN: She sits down, she's like...

AUSTIN (as Timea): Take a peek. Or whatever it is you do, I don't really... I do ships, you know?

JANINE: I'm still really stuck on the idea of her using tuning forks.

AUSTIN: Sure, love it.

JANINE: Probably like much daintier tuning forks that are like sharp on all ends...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So they're kind of unsettling.

AUSTIN: So the thing to know here is—our prompt is “a shared moment of wonder”, and I'm curious, how does that happen here?

JANINE: This is also why I like tuning forks, because tuning forks are really cool.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah, they're really cool.

JANINE: You ever played with tuning forks? Where you're like [unintelligible] at people and stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

[Dre chuckling.]

JANINE: It's really neat to like hit a tuning fork, and then like touch it to your head, or like bring it to your ear, or you put it against something that amplifies vibration—like the antlers, I imagine...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: So I imagine this like... It seems very manual considering what this actually all is. But I like the idea of like... Maybe she doesn't hit the tuning fork, maybe she has to like trigger it herself.

AUSTIN: Ooh, yeah.

JANINE: But it is just the thing, like... She touches it to the exposed, like, metallic part, and then it starts vibrating, and it just, like, fills your head with very-very simple music.

AUSTIN: Hmm.

JANINE: But it just feels like it's everywhere.

AUSTIN: Cool. Um. I think it relaxes all of my nerves and all of my, like, muscles, and I swoon. [Laughs. Janine laughs.]

AUSTIN: Um. So the thing we need still is for your relationship to wonder and brightsky. What... Is there... Do we get Sabil, I keep saying Sabíl, Sabil... like, enjoying this work? Is there something about this work that is brightsky for her?

JANINE: I feel like there's a point in where the wonderfulness becomes more routine, like, I think...

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: Probably when she got her Chorus Binding done, it was that wonderful feeling. But now I think the wonder for her is when she enhances?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: Like when she intensifies things, then she feels the wonder again.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: But there is a baseline that kind of doesn't register for her anymore.

[Loud car noises.]

AUSTIN: Uh, super loud car. [Dre laughs] Uh. Here's a question that's... dark. One. Are there different quality antlers for the boosting of your own Bond? Are there like—Oh... Can you be like—Oh, when this person dies I will add these antlers to mine? Or I will add, I will use them to enhance my own abilities, and this will be very good? Or is it just like—Eh, antlers are antlers?

JANINE: I don't know, I've been thinking of it as sort of... it's just material.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Like you know, it's not like Harry Potter wands.

AUSTIN: No, no.

JANINE: It's not like—the phoenix feather interior, it's not one of those.

AUSTIN: It's, you're getting all the copper out of the house...

JANINE: [laughing] Kind of.

AUSTIN: Yeah, cool. Alright. So, yeah, I think that scene doesn't need to be much then, right? It's like this amazing music fills the room and we get Timea taking it all in for a moment, and, you know, in her vision it blends with what she saw during the running the Thread, the leading of the new Strand, and she swoons, and for her it is incredibly bright. And for Sabil it's all hat.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. From this moment now, the end, I draw an Age 2 card. Um, boom. Replace my first one, and then we... tch-tch-tchhhh... I'm trying to see if there's any... "Ending your turn. Once the conversation is over, so is your turn. End it by drawing a new card for the upcoming Age and adding it to your hand (i.e. draw Age 2 cards" blah-blah-blah, we did that, okay. After it's "over and you have redrawn a card, it's time for the next player to take their turn. After each player has taken a turn in a particular Age, play proceeds into the next Age." So. Uh. Asper. You have three options:

"FILLER WORD. Sometimes we need to fill the air and stall for time. This unique way of gathering space to speak is particular to us." "Someone is left speechless" is the prompt.

"CREATE A WORD. Pair with any Aspect and create a word for an important concept linked to that Aspect. You define the concept. When picking the concept, explain why the origin of the word is special. Did it come from another language? Was it found as a marking somewhere, or is its origin simply lost to time? Build the word using the "Create a Word" instructions provided in the rulebook." So that's an example where you would actually literally come up with new sounds and phonemes and stuff. Not new ones, but build a word out of them. And then,

"GREETING. How we greet one another. Small rituals to open conversation that reflect who we are. It may differ based on who we say it to or when we say it." And that prompt is "Meeting in an unexpected place".

Oh, the CREATE A WORD prompt was "Desires revealed".

DRE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: So. Which of those do you want to do?

[Pause]

DRE: And so, the little red text at the bottom...

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: Is how, like, how the word is used?

AUSTIN: No, that's a prompt for the scene that you're going to frame.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: The way it's used is just the definition up top, right? A greeting is a greeting, it's just that you wanna see a scene in which you're meeting in an unexpected place, but the greeting would be a general greeting.

DRE: Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: So, right now we have the word "brightsky" which we know means, like, "wonderful", "a vision of hope. Milk and honey and all that is good." Like, we all want our days to be brightsky.

DRE: I got you. So it doesn't have to be a greeting specifically about—Oh, I met you in an unexpected place.

AUSTIN: No. In fact, it should NOT be that.

DRE: Okay, got it.

AUSTIN: It should just be... Because you might have a character who uses it in a meeting in an unexpected place, and another character who explicitly DOESN'T because it's not an arranged meeting or whatever, you know?

DRE: Okay. Um... [Pause] I think I'm gonna CREATE A WORD.

AUSTIN: Okay. So. Which Aspect are you pairing it with?

DRE: Um, Aspect 2, "Never forget your dead."

AUSTIN: Ooh, okay. So, let's look at the CREATE A WORD stuff here. "Certain Action Cards are labeled "Create a Word" and instruct the player to do just that. They replace the BUILD A WORD portion of the turn with a special phase to construct a word from scratch."

So actually we should start with the other part, now that I think about it, we should make a connection first. So, you've picked a card, you've tied it... What is the concept that you have here? Before we get to the CREATE A WORD...

DRE: So... I want to create a word that refers to the emotional state of kind of what I was describing earlier, of the idea that there are certain, like, things that happen in life to everyone, but then when they happen to you something about it feels very specific.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Or like that moment where, like—logically you know that, like, this person passing away isn't particularly worse for you than it is for other, like, someone else to lose someone important to them...

AUSTIN: Totally.

DRE: But in that moment that emotion feels bigger, and specific, and targeted in a way that your logic can't grapple with.

AUSTIN: Totally. I like it a lot. Um, so. "Certain Action Cards are labeled "Create a Word" and instruct the player to do just that. They replace the BUILD A WORD portion of the turn with a special phase to construct a word from scratch. Follow the steps below to construct your new word. Or for more advanced play" there's a whole chapter later that we're not gonna use. [laughs]

"There are many ways to tinker with words. You'll decide how these original words came to be; they may stem from an outside community, a mix of languages in cultural contact, or perhaps they are a borrowing with mysterious origin. These new words can add depth and dimension to the language you create." So, Step 1, you pick a root. Do you see this stuff, by the way, Dre?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, just want to make sure. Pa-pa-pah. Pick a root. "Pick one of the options below to form the root of your new word. They are arranged in groups from simple to more complex. Focus on the sounds of the root itself and choose what makes you happy. Follow your taste and don't worry about which inventory it comes from yet." [laughs] There are four Inventories here: Basic, Average, fricative, heavy, sorry, Fricative Heavy, and Balanced. And then there's a second step which is choosing an affix, or affixing an affix, I guess, "Choose one of the affixes below to attach to the root to form the full word. Pick an affix from the same inventory as your root. The affixes are grouped according to whether they join with roots that begin or end with a consonant (C) or vowel (V)."

So, what jumps out for you for this word?

DRE: Hmm.

AUSTIN: Basic Inventory are things that are like "ka, li, tu, ma, pi, ipu"...

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Average Inventory are things like "eb", and "ol", and "us", and "blef". You'll see that there are certain characters here that have a special pronunciation guide underneath, be sure to check that out, because I definitely went "blef" over and over again before I realized... oh, actually it IS "blef", isn't it? Is it "blef" or... Yeah, it's "blef"! I thought it was "blef", it's "blef".

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But like, that's not "zad", that's "3ad".

DRE: Yeah. I actually like, um, let's see...

AUSTIN: For people listening, there're about forty of these, ten per Inventory, and that's just the root, and then there's like, all the affixes later, and that's like another, I don't even know, like eighty...

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There's a lot going on.

[Pause]

AUSTIN: See, what is the— Go ahead.

DRE: [starts talking simultaneously] What's the... no you go ahead.

AUSTIN: I said, do you want this to sound round, do you want it to sound swift, do you want it to have a sort of like plodding, like boom-boom rhythm? Do you want it to have?..

DRE: No, I want it to actually be something that is kind of like, um, like short and like sharp.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Like, it's the feeling of being punched in the gut made into a word.

AUSTIN: Okay, interesting. Um.

[Pause]

DRE: Umm... I kind of like... Is that "vawt"? Is the v-a-w-t, is that "vawt"?

AUSTIN: "Vawt", yeah, "vawt".

DRE: I like that.

AUSTIN: So that's the root, and we need an affix with it too. So, that is a fricative heavy word, so we scroll down to the next thing, there's the Fricative Heavy Inventory, and so "vawt" is a consonant initial and consonant final word, so you could have "vawt-ja", "vawt-etj", "vawt-iv", "vawt-ozga", "vawt-uwej". Or you could put the, like, a prefix above it, like "he-vawt", or "zi-vawt", or "vlo-vawt", or "zwa-vawt".

DRE: I actually like "vawt-iv".

AUSTIN: Yeah, me too. That's good. You wanna... or I guess I'll write it for you on this card, unless... Oh, you can write on stuff, yeah, go ahead and write that on the card here.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: “Vawtiv”, I like it.

[Pause]

AUSTIN: Cool, so. Now you’ve done that, you’ve added the thing to the word, you’ve made the word vawtiv, which, again, means the feeling of... can you describe it again?

DRE: So, it is that feeling when logically you know that something you’re going through is something that everyone goes through...

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: ...but in the moment the rawness and the harshness of the emotion overwhelms your logic.

AUSTIN: Right, love it.

DRE: So, it’s like... I’m trying to think of... like there are times when I’d been like, extremely depressed, and in that moment I feel like I, like whenever something goes wrong for me, I feel like I’m cursed—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: —like there’s some sort of like great power out there, it’s not even like God or something, but there’s just something out there that is actually focused on making me miserable.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

DRE: And like, when I’m not as depressed I look back on those moments and I recognize that like—Yeah, that are things that are happening that are like, that I was upset about, and they were like valid for me to be upset about, but it’s not that overwhelming like, hopeless feeling, or that targeted feeling.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, cool. So, now we need you to create a scene, um, have a conversation. So, read the prompt at the bottom, which is what, again?

DRE: Whoop, I clicked out... Um, “Desires reveled”.

AUSTIN: Ooh, okay, interesting. Then choose at least two characters... you’re the one who picks characters, you can choose yourself, you don’t HAVE to choose yourself [laughs], but you can. Um, and then, once you set the participants, as a group, you two should answer—or three, or whoever it is—establish where the conversation takes place, what you’re doing. I’ll say again, like this opening Age is sort of the status quo, this is like a snapshot of the society, the Isolation working before change really hits it. So. So yeah. What is the scene? Who’s in it?

DRE: I think it's Asper and Sabil.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

[Pause]

DRE: And... Janine, do you think that there are like... when Sabil is using remain, is there like something that makes like a... something like... a type of remains that's like more potent than others? Like, I'm thinking about your previous scene, like Timea was like "Oh, I've got enough money now for the good stuff". What makes the good stuff?

JANINE: I think in Timea's case she meant more in terms of service, in terms of like... whatever—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: I was going with like "Sabil is super good at this" versus like "Should have the good copper pipes that you get—

JANINE: It's a master vs apprentice kind of thing.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

DRE: Uh-huh.

JANINE: You get a discount for going to the Chorus Binders College...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[Dre chuckles.]

JANINE: ...to get your hair cut. [She laughs]

DRE: Is it like, do you think...? Is a bone a *bone*, or...?

JANINE: So, the reason I gave Sabil the name, the nickname Dust-Eater is because I imagine it as being kind of like... a lot like the process where you can get someone's ashes turned into a diamond [Dre hums.] or something like that. Basically, the base component you're working with is ash, is dust.

DRE: Yeah.

JANINE: And then you're adding something to it, or doing something to it, that... I mean, maybe it could be a thing of like... you, depending on how different metals have different efficacy...

DRE: Yeah...

JANINE: I have been kind of thinking of it as a more like... um, I don't know, mono, like, something... I've been kind of thinking about it as the material itself is kind of consistent, it is the material, this metallic ash, um, substrate kind of thing.

AUSTIN: I have a question on this—

JANINE: Yeah?

AUSTIN: —which is—Is there a difference though between using someone's remains who were Bonded and someone who's un-Bonded?

JANINE: Uh....

AUSTIN: You know what I mean?

JANINE: I don't think you would... Um... Yeah. I mean, my technical answer is like you'd probably have to remove the... when you incinerate the body, the metal elements would need to be removed or separated because it would be like a clump of stuff in the ash, and the whole thing's going to be a mess...

AUSTIN: [laughing a bit] Yeah, right.

JANINE: But like the greater thing is—does having this process done change your remains in a way that makes them more...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: ...apt to take to the metal or something like that. I don't know, again...

AUSTIN: [crosstalking] I guess—

JANINE: Like, my whole... I'm really drawn to the idea of like—this is a process that sort of reduces everyone to the same thing.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: Yeah, totally. And actually, I think I like that, 'cause I think maybe the scene is... like I think maybe part of this process is that Asper, when they're like counselling, you know, like a family or an individual or whatever... um, you know, the latter part of this, part of that process

is also talking about like—this is what will, this is what the remains will go through, this is what they'll be used for.

JANINE: Uh-huh.

DRE: Um, and maybe they bring in someone like Sabil to help like explain that process.

JANINE: Yeah.

DRE: And maybe this is like we're jumping into the scene where Asper is explaining that someone, this person is particularly vawtiv, and it's like, how do you explain to that person that... this part... the remains of this person they loved is just the same as anybody else.

AUSTIN: Yeah, let's jump in and have this scene. Where is it?

DRE: I guess like... I wonder if it's in Asper's... I don't know, I don't know what their office looks like, but maybe it's there.

AUSTIN: Are you, Asper, are you currently on-world or have you already taken off with the fleet? I imagine it's like a thing where we're in the process of leaving behind one set of... one Strand and moving to the next one.

DRE: I think Asper... Asper might be one of the last people to leave the world.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: I wonder if there is like a... I mean, I don't know, do you think it is...

AUSTIN: Kinda makes sense, actually, right?

DRE: People that are like, you know, either maybe about to die, or like who are ill, maybe they're the last people to be put on the ships—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: —because, you know, just 'cause when someone is very very sick or like frail... You know, moving them might not be a good idea. And so, Asper just is one of the last people to leave because their services are probably more likely to be needed planetside than shipside.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. [Janine hums.] I can see that. So yeah, it could be like on this world which is like green... I almost said like the green hill zone, it's not what I was...

JANINE: [laughing] I heard you almost say that as like... you wouldn't say *that*.

AUSTIN: Is it like... Yeah, I wouldn't say that! What type of... not planet is it even, but what type of area is it where you're in? Is it big open plains, or is it a bunch of ships that are

landed and there's like a... almost like a... the equivalent of having like a bunch of... not a tailgate party but like, [laughs a bit] you know, bunch of ships that are opened up [Dre laughs quietly] and local homes have built around it for all people are here on the planet for however long that is.

DRE: Janine, do you think Sábíl would be planetside, or would she be like up on a ship and Asper has like asked Sábíl to like come back planetside?

AUSTIN: Is it Sábíl? I just want to get this right.

DRE: Oh, Sabil, sorry.

JANINE: Sabil. Yeah. Every time it comes up it just makes me feel whiter and whiter?

DRE: No, I like Sabil.

JANINE: I didn't... no. it's fine. I think Sabil is inclined to spend as much time on the ship as possible.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Is this a thing that being Chorus Bonded and also enhanced would allow you to just straight up project your presence there?

DRE: Oh.

JANINE: Maybe. Um, I don't know.

AUSTIN: We should, the thing I wanna say here, we should lean in—we should make it big, right? Like—

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —it should feel bad when it's gone. [laughs]

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, you know, one of the things that—I kinda breezed past it 'cause we don't read the book—but all of the Aspects and the way we play and the ways in which our words connect to them and everything else, should be really bold. It should be really really, we should not be subtle here. The subtlety is... you know, I think we have a deep interest in restraint and subtlety generally [Dre chuckles.]

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But given that we have nine scenes. [laughs] Play big, right? And this is an opportunity to do that, so. Maybe it's not this, but in general I just wanted to put that forward.

[Pause]

JANINE: Um. Then yeah, I mean it... Yes, I mean it makes sense for spacefaring people, it's not unreasonable that they might have abilities like this anyway.

AUSTIN: Right. Cool. So. What's the, what's your area look like, Asper?

DRE: Hm.

JANINE: [in stage whisper] I guess the other thing is also that Sabil... her presence, her physical presence maybe isn't the most comforting.

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: Oh, sure. Yeah. Um. No, I don't think Asper has an office, they probably go where they're needed. So maybe they're just like out in a field, um, and because... yeah, if Sabil, if Sabil's presence is sort of unnerving for some people then maybe Asper is just isolated themselves out in the field to talk to Sabil.

JANINE: Like still projecting or like in person?

DRE: Um, I think whichever Sabil would prefer. Like, I would imagine like in our society like is there even like a huge difference between someone being physically there vs projected?

JANINE: I think for Sabil there is. I think Sabil probably finds planets *very* loud.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I also think that it's.. I think that the thing that Sabil can do is the thing that Sabil can do because she's the Magician, right? She has not just done, like... maybe not *no one* else could do it, right? But I think projecting is a rare enough thing you'd be like "Oh shit, that's the Magician!", you know? The other thing I wanted to, the other note that I wanna say here that's coming together in my mind that's interesting is—maybe we're, the three of us are tied to the rear of the fleet, like we're the ones who... Or at least maybe Asper and I.. Even though I take the lead and I do the Thread-Running, I come back home, and then recover and wait for the end of the fleet to follow up. Like, I also have to like... I have to run the rear of the Thread, right? I have to come back and kind of seal it behind us or whatever. Um, and so, the two of us at least are at like, that is the part of fleet that we're a part of. In terms of why the three of us are tied together. And maybe, Sabil, maybe that's just also where you happen to be? As like one of your ships is part of the last that, that always leaves last.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: For safety in that, in some ways.

DRE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Anyway. So. Open field, beautiful open field. The sun is, I would say it's like a hazy day maybe. What is the conversation?

DRE: Hm.

[Pause]

DRE (as Asper): Sabil, thanks for making the time for this.

JANINE (as Sabil): No problem.

DRE (as Asper): I know... [sighs] I do this with a lot of Chorus Binders and you're actually really good at this, and I think I'm really gonna need your help on this.

JANINE (as Sabil): No, I'm glad to help.

DRE (as Asper): Um.

JANINE (as Sabil): I don't know why the others would be bad at it, but.

DRE (as Asper): [laughs] They're not... It's not that they're bad... I don't know. [Short pause] Sometimes when someone is...particularly vawtiv they need... They don't need me to help them , you know, empathize and be understanding, they need someone to just give them, you know, the by-the-numbers of what's gonna happen.

JANINE (as Sabil): Hm.

DRE (as Asper): Um. So this person that I want you to speak to... It is... their partner passed away.

JANINE (as Sabil): That is one of the harder ones, certainly.

DRE (as Asper): Yeah. When I've spoken with them, they... They would really... They would find it comforting to know exactly what's going to happen to their partner's body, but I'm worried that they will ask you to promise that it will be used in a way that is... you know, particularly significant because of the way they felt about her.

JANINE (as Sabil): Hm. Well. I would say that... Name an instance when what is done with it isn't significant.

DRE (as Asper): Hm.

JANINE (as Sabil): When we use this material we don't use it to plug holes in the wall.

[Dre chuckles.]

DRE (as Asper): Yeah. I could say that, but... It sounds different coming from you.

JANINE (as Sabil): That's fair.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's scene. Unless you want more there. I don't think we need more...

DRE: No-no-no, I was about to wrap, yeah.

AUSTIN: Awesome, cool. So. Now I'm going to draw you another Age 2, an Age 2 card to replace that first one... It's a good one, you've got EUPHEMISM, that's a good one. [Janine laughs.] I'll note that I've got DISCOVERY, which is a good one for someone who has the Explorer archetype to have [He laughs. Dre chuckles.] And now, before we continue, I'm actually going to interject because there's another thing that you can do in this game that we haven't done yet, and I wanted to wait a couple of turns to do it. Which is: you can at any point create a— I think it's at any point in between turns, basically—you can make a Variant. "Any player can create a Variant at any time; it doesn't count as a turn. To make a Variant: Discard any card from your hand." The text is irrelevant. The discard is just... that's the cost of it. So, I'm gonna discard GOOD LUCK here. "Declare the new..." Actually wait, let me take that back. One second, wait, come back! [laughs] I'm gonna use it, I'm gonna use it as the thing... There we go. So... close this deck... Alright, so, discard it from your hand, um. "Don't go through the normal turn sequence." Instead, "Declare the new word or phrase you're defining and what Language Item it's related to. Add it to the Language Tableau. Write the Variant down as a Language Item and place it next to the item it's related to. Draw a card for the upcoming Age, as in a normal turn."

So, it's a way to effectively eject cards you don't want from your hand and draw new cards from an upcoming Age, and also continue to add new words or new variations on established Language Items to the game. And so, what I'm gonna go is add a new Variant for vawtiv, actually, called... what did I want?... I wanted... think I wanted vawt-ja... or vawt-etf... vawtesh is what I wanted. [Dre hums.] So. ...Can I just flip this? Can I flip it, write it like on the back? Eh, I'm gonna take this instead, I'll just take one of these many index cards that we have here [Dre chuckles], shrink that down... So yeah, vawtesh is the feeling of having vawtiv and then getting past it. It is the feeling of being like "the world is against me, I am small and miserable and etc." ...Why can I not... Please, let me rotate this, *please* let me rotate this... There's like a token thing in front of the rotate thing, it's gonna kill me [Dre chuckles]. it's fine. It's fine, it's fine. I think I can turn off... [sighs in exasperation] no, can I not? Here, let's just... eh. Ugh. It's fine. I'm just gonna write on it. Um. So yeah, vawtesh. Alright, there we go. Which is like... not the inverse, but the like... when you face vawtiv and

get through it. [typing] When you overcome vawtiv. [Dre hums.] Okay. So that is my little thing and that is a rule that we can all use, just as a clear, as a thing. It's not like a special thing for the Facilitator only. [laughs a bit] Okay. Janine. You have some cards also.

JANINE: Um. I do.

AUSTIN: Your cards are

TERM OF ENDEARMENT. "An affectionate name to call someone in the Isolation. Using this word is deeply meaningful, and we remember the first time we say it." "A tender moment shared in secret" is the prompt.

DEATH. "Our language for ultimate loss." And the prompt is "Letting go."

And THE PAST. "How we refer to what's come before and how it shaped us. This may be a specific time period in the past or the past as a general concept." And the prompt there is "What haunts some of us."

So. Let's walk through the flow of play one more time here. Make a Connection. So which one of those do you make a connection and to what Aspect do you want to connect it?

[Pause]

JANINE: Sorry, you keep like cutting out in a way that it's really hard for me to tell when you stop talking and when it's just cutting out.

DRE: Well, yeah, I'm getting that too, actually.

AUSTIN: Let's hop into regular Discord chat then.

DRE: Okay.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Let's see if that helps.

[Pause]

AUSTIN: Hello.

DRE: Hello.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Hopefully this is better

JANINE: Shout it out.

AUSTIN: Shout it out.

JANINE: Play it.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Alright.

JANINE: You're okay.

AUSTIN: So. I read your three cards, you should pick one of them and make a connection, and explain, describe why the Aspect has led to a new word for the concept.

JANINE: Uh-huh. Um. Before I pick one of these, can I get the rules for setting like a scene again?

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: 'Cause I don't know how to connect these to the existing player characters.

AUSTIN: So you set a scene and hold a conversation. You can have other characters in the scene, but 1) they can't be outsiders to the Isolation, they must be someone from the Isolation.

JANINE: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, and the thing that I'm not sure is does it have to be two player characters, let's see... "play out a scene in character, based on the prompt"... "This scene will highlight the language you've made"... "Choose at least two characters to have a conversation"... So I think you do need two.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think you could do these, I mean I think one of the things here is like... we just need to figure out how to do those, you know?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Time... We can jump through time, we can reframe some stuff...

JANINE: Um... [Pause]

AUSTIN: Is there one that you're feeling like... it connects to or that you're interested in the most, but you're having a hard time figuring out the connection?

JANINE: I like... It's basically one of them feels like a topic that's relevant to what's already been happening and the other two I just don't have ideas for.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: Like, I... You know, DEATH feels like we've been talking about death a lot, so that seems like the easy one, I have nothing for the other two though [laughs].

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, I think DEATH is a totally good one to do. I think TERM OF ENDEARMENT is definitely hard for where we're at, though the last scene did include a conversation about a partner losing, or a person losing their partner, so a term of endearment could have, could definitely come up there, though I don't know what the "tender moment shared in secret" is. Though you know. Listen.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: If you're doing some dust-eating or whatever the fuck... That seems like a kind of [Dre laughs] moment. And in THE PAST...

JANINE: That sounds like some euphemism shit!

AUSTIN: [laughs] THE PAST is also... I could see a connection because we are ending one Strand and beginning a new one, right? So like, what is the name for the... immediately past Strand? I could see a scene around that. But I think DEATH is a totally good one. Especially given that like Asper just set up this idea of like "Can you please talk to this third party for me?"

JANINE: The other thing is I don't... I don't super want to have a conversation about a dead partner.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fair.

JANINE: That's the other thing. I'm comfortable talking about it in vague, but getting really into the nitty-gritty is a little...

AUSTIN: Sure. That we can do... I mean, there's other things that we can do given what your job is, right? [laughs a bit]

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which one... I guess here is my question: which of this three do you think is the most important for the Aspects that are on the board? To... Or not the most important, just the most interesting to you? To fill out a special word for that we could continue to use tonight as we play?

JANINE: Um... Oh! Okay. I have an idea for THE PAST.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: [thoughtfully] What Aspect does it go with?.. [Pause] This is a Chorus Bond thing.

AUSTIN: Okay. Zzzip! I moved it. How does it connect? Describe why this Aspect has led to a new word for the concept on a card. So how has the Chorus Bond led to us having a new word for the past? Or a past or whatever.

JANINE: Uh, I think there is an effect that certain Bound people can pick up on—probably like most, because I suspect this would be like noisy to a degree—but I think there's a sort of an effect where people can hear past space travel—

AUSTIN: Oh. Sure.

JANINE: —like engines and things because those... kind of the equivalent of like leaving tracks in the snow but it's like this sort of energy thing. And they would sort of spread out like ripples in ponds. So it's not even necessarily that someone's been to this exact place before...

AUSTIN: Sure. Sure. That's good. I like that a lot. So which...

JANINE: And that I imagine would also be haunting to a degree.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, totally. Well, we can talk about that, right? 'cause we can talk about how it haunts us or if it haunts us.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you have a direction for the word there?

JANINE: Uh... I feel like it should be something that like evokes, uh... I mean, things that I imagine are like footsteps or like ripples or like tracks...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Is it a sound word? Is it a patter, is it a rumble? Is it a... Is it tracks? Yeah, is it... Is it a hum? Is it a hum, the past? Is it...

JANINE: Hum is good too.

[Pause]

AUSTIN: God. Given our... the context of all of this too, of like... Given the context of the world of Twilight Mirage and COUNTER/Weight, hums have a certain connotative quality, you know? [laughs a bit]

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There are hums that you don't want to hear, and we can hear them. From a long time ago. Even from our own, right? Maybe we don't know if it's ours or if it's someone else's. Um. I'm not sure if there's anything else there. [Pause] Probably some stuff with engines or 'gines' or like other things that engines and space do, other sorts of sounds.

JANINE: Humming, thrumming...

AUSTIN: Thrumming is good too.

JANINE: Murmuring...

AUSTIN: Murmuring feels haunted in a good way.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The Murm? The Murmur? Murmuring...

DRE: [laughs] I don't like The Murm.

JANINE: The Murm is... [laughs] The Murm is like—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Something about that feels like a mall for space teenagers.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Let's go to The Murm and get some orange julius...

[Austin and Dre laugh.]

AUSTIN: God.

JANINE: Umm...

AUSTIN: Um... Trying to see if there's anything else...

JANINE: I feel like there *is* a word for some kind of [sighs] audio trail...

AUSTIN: Oh, like a... not like a reverberation, but like a...

DRE: Um...

JANINE: Resonance?

AUSTIN: Someone said "Echo, obviously" in the chat. [laughs a bit]

JANINE: Oh, we'll copy Echo Reverie!

AUSTIN: Oh wow, we got it! [Janine laughs shortly] Is there like a... When you say “audio”, you mean like a... almost like radio more than audio, right?

JANINE: Yeah. Remember what those machine were called that the ghost-hunters used to just skim radio channels?

AUSTIN: The RF Scanner or whatever?

JANINE: Yeah... OH it was called the HAM!

[Austin laughs quietly]

DRE: It's like the things that makes white noise, right? While it's like...

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: [typing] “ghost hunting equipment”... Oh, a spirit box? A radio sweep ghost box?

[Janine laughs]

DRE: I think they do call it the spirit box but I feel like there is like another term for that...

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Keys, white noise, fast scanning radio frequencies...

JANINE: I think that's a dead-end.

AUSTIN: ...transmissions... Transmission, is there something? Mission? Is there something with -miss? Is there, uh....

JANINE: [laughs] I was gonna say The Murel?

AUSTIN: What's the Murel?

JANINE: Like murmur and Borel...

AUSTIN: It feels like 'morrow, feels like it's the future.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I still like murmur in a general direction. What do you call it when an engine is doing like a thing that engine does?

JANINE: Pur-ring?

AUSTIN: Oh, it's purring. That's not really what you want, huh? [He and Janine laugh.] The Purr? The Past? The Purr? [laughs] Croon? Strum? Wobble?

JANINE: Wake? Is another like—

AUSTIN: Ooh, wake is good!

DRE: Oh, wake is good.

AUSTIN: Wake is it, you got it! Boom. Love it. Can we fuck with it a little bit? Is there like a... I mean, wake is already good but...

JANINE: Wake is also almost too past-y though. It's almost like I just said "yesterday".

AUSTIN: Yeah. You're right. "In the wake"...

JANINE: Like 'cause of... Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Like this goes, already, we *do* this one already. But this will be referring... This will be... yeah...

JANINE: This is more like a ship's wake...

AUSTIN: You know, we're getting too far away from your original concept which is: it is sounds we hear. So let's, I think we should zero in on that, right? 'Cause that is the, the word is... First time someone said it, they were saying: "Listen to me, yesterday is like this hum we all hear." You know?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then that stuck. Um.

JANINE: Verb?

AUSTIN: Like reverberation?

JANINE: Like reverberation but also like action.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I like that. Yeah. Like past action.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's like it started with reverberation... Yeah, I like that a lot. Do you want to add that to THE PAST?

JANINE: Yes. [clicking, typing] I was thinking if we could like spell it a different way but all of those ways are terrible, is the thing.

AUSTIN: Vr.. Vurb, v-u-r-b? Vurb, vorb. [laughs]

JANINE: Think about literally any of them and they're worse.

AUSTIN: Vurb, vorb. [He and Dre laugh.] What about Vorb?

JANINE: If you can't say it without laughing it's not a good... [She laughs.]

AUSTIN: [in a deep voice] Listen, I just wanna leave the Vor— [laughs] Listen.

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: I just wanna, I just gotta... I gotta put the Vorb behind me.

[Janine laughs.]

AUSTIN: Alright. What is your scene? Frame me a scene.

JANINE: Uh, I think the scene... Actually, I wonder of the scene is—is it Tímea or Timea?

AUSTIN: Timea.

JANINE: Timea? Timea. I think this scene might be Timea coming back for a check-up because... You know the thing you do where sometimes you go to the doctor and like you have a problem in mind...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And you're kind of just hoping they'll just like figure it out?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: ...without you having to like, say anything?

AUSTIN: Oh, I just don't know what this is yet!

JANINE: No, like, Sometimes I get headaches, and I don't wanna be like "I get headaches sometimes." Because your doctor's just gonna be like "Well, you're human so congrats!"

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: But then nothing comes of it, so you have to go back and be like "Heeey."

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Okay, I like that.

JANINE: So maybe for Timea the Verb is a bit much.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay. I like that. So I think it's been a week. Or it's been more than that, let's say it's been a couple of weeks, and it's like we're getting ready to leave this world behind. And this, it's like the last gasp of the last Strand, of the Verb Strand. So here's a question. Is the Verb, when we use it to refer to what's come before, we now use it in terms of like it is the past generally, not a particular past?

JANINE: Yeah, I think it is like... It should evoke the past the same way a footprint evokes a foot that was there, you know what I mean?

AUSTIN: Oh, so it *should* be a particular past, you're saying?

JANINE: N-no...

AUSTIN: Sorry, I misunderstood.

JANINE: I guess I just mean it should be more physical. When we say "the past" it is just this big shapeless like... thing.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: But I feel like this should have a more... because it's also referring to this like... actual what has come before us physically.

AUSTIN: Right. The thing is I just wanna hear it in a sentence which I guess we'll get to. Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The sentence shouldn't be referring to the sound, that's the key.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right. You know what I mean? Okay. So yeah, I think it's been a week, and I'm just like... I think Timea just like shows herself in and sits down quickly in the chair, and like [sighs], like rests head back on chair and like absentmindedly like pokes, or... I don't know what you do with antlers. Do you like pick at them?

JANINE: Like rub 'em on a tree?

AUSTIN: Yeah, she like rubs them on something... Are there things to rub our antlers on across our ships?

JANINE: That's cute, I want there to be.

AUSTIN: Yeah, let's do that. And this is just like—she does that and is just like clearly irritated, and she's like—

AUSTIN (as Timea): Hey. thanks for taking me again so soon, I know I wasn't scheduled until the next Strand which is like in a while, um, but I just... I can't keep this... You're gonna think this is ridiculous... It's just, it's really loud in there right now.

JANINE (as Sabil): Hm. That's not ridiculous at all, that's a... Well, I wouldn't say it's very common but I would say. you know... [sighs] 60%, so reasonably common.

AUSTIN (as Timea): Like sixty of us?

JANINE (as Sabil): [sighs]

AUSTIN (as Timea): I'm kidding, I know how decimals work...

JANINE (as Sabil): [laughs]

AUSTIN (as Timea): They wouldn't let me fly a ship otherwise.

JANINE (as Sabil): Well, you never know. You know, it's... You are more sensitive to things now, and if you think about it... Present is very very small, and the Verb is very very big, it's infinitely bigger than it could be for...It's infinitely bigger than the present ever could be 'cause it's everything that was.

AUSTIN (as Timea): Yeah, but there is more moss in the history of all of our kind than there's eaten in any one life, but I don't have to *taste* all of it. Why the hell do I have to hear the whole fucking Verb?

JANINE (as Sabil): [sighs] Well... In some sense it is just... background noise, it's a... It's a crowded room and you are there with your friends and you're just trying to hear their conversation...

AUSTIN (as Timea): [tiredly] And you're telling me there's not—

JANINE (as Sabil): And the Verb is every other conversation around you.

AUSTIN (as Timea): So there's no quick fix for this?

JANINE (as Sabil): You'll probably get better at tuning it out. Some days it'll be a conscious thing, some days it won't be. And some days you'll just be fine, you'll hit a nice... you know, the ships will go through a nice quiet patch where... [Timea scoffs.] You know, coincidences happen, sometimes there's not a lot to say in one particular location, sometimes other locations have everything to say.

AUSTIN (as Timea): That's just brightsky. You have all that... you're really.... your antlers are really nice. How is it that you get to where you're at, and you're not just hearing this all the time? Would it be easier if I... had antlers like yours?

JANINE (as Sabil): No. I don't go on-world much. I find it easier in here. I can... I can tune myself more to just this place. The materials here, the everything here, it's familiar and it can... What works for me is not gonna work for you.

AUSTIN (as Timea): Well. [sighs] I'll do my best not to be vawtiv, carry my own burden, and... Anyway. Thanks again for seeing me on short notice.

JANINE (as Sabil): Of course.

AUSTIN: I think that's scene. Um. So. We should take a break, but before we do I wanna read what happens... First of all, does anyone wanna do a Variant before we wrap up this Age? Is anyone itching to switch out cards?

JANINE: Uhh, man, I really wanna get rid of some of them but...

AUSTIN: [crosstalking] Also you should get a new card, my bad. One second. Boop. There's your new card, WIDENING, which is an Action card which will, presumably, widen out the use of a certain term which is interesting. Um. You don't have to do it now anyway, you can do it anytime before your next term...

JANINE: I will get rid of TERM OF ENDEARMENT though—

AUSTIN: Totally, totally.

JANINE: —'cause I... It's difficult for me to—

AUSTIN: Imagine using it?

JANINE: —think of one of these characters... I don't it works with this character.

AUSTIN: Sure. Then yeah, then if you have a Variant in mind now, we can do that now, or we can wait before your next turn, you'll have more words on the board to play around with, right? To make a Variant, so. No rush on it if you don't want there to be.

JANINE: Can I make a Variant of the word I've just put up?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JANINE: Can I get a card there or are we just putting them on the thing?

AUSTIN: I'll just... What was I doing? I'll take this...

JANINE: You put a little card into the other one thing...

AUSTIN: Oops. Come here. Hey. Take this card, boom.

[Dre laughs,]

AUSTIN: And I'm zooming in, that's not what I wanna do, grabbing one of these index cards and boom. there you go, What's your Variant?

JANINE: Um, my Variant I think is going to be... This might be to cutesy... I was thinking of Diverb...

AUSTIN: Oh no, that seems fine.

JANINE: As like the specific moment when the present becomes the past...

AUSTIN: Ooh, that's good. Yeah, no, let's do that, I like that a lot. I'll just write underneath... What should I write? [Janine crosstalks but she's cutting out.] Yeah, you got it. And now I give you another Age 2 card. TITLE OF COMMAND, interesting. Okay. So. Dre, you don't have any other Variants to play right now?

DRE: No, don't think so.

AUSTIN: Okay. So. Now that we have all made our first scenes and our first words...

"When an Age is over (meaning each player has taken a turn), it will mark the beginning of a new chapter within the Isolation's story. To move into the new Age, follow the steps below: Read the Transition prompt for the upcoming Age. These prompts provide a framework for the Transition, reminding us of how the story of the Isolation should change when entering the new

Age. The three Transition prompts are:"

Age 2. This is the one we're going into, "An event to foreshadow the end of the Isolation. It finds its way into all conversation and is impossible to ignore."

And then we will "Address the prompt through one of the Backdrop Pathways.

Each Backdrop comes with two Pathways to answer these Age transition prompts. When entering Age 2, pick one of the Pathways to follow. When entering a new Age (including Age 2), read the

passage from your Pathway under the Transition prompt you just read.

Transitions between Ages mark the passage of time. It could be weeks, months, or years. After reading the passage in the Pathway, flesh out details and the specific meaning to your Isolation together. Make sure you address:

If specific people or groups are referenced, who are they?

How much time has passed during the Transition?

How does the community react?

If the Transition in your Pathway ends with a question, you should discuss it, but you don't have to resolve it completely. Let this be a seed for the fiction you develop in the upcoming

Age. Each Pathway provides a different take on language loss for that particular Isolation. If you've already played through both Pathways..." which we haven't done, that doesn't matter. So. This is where things get tricky. There are two things we can choose from, two Age Transitions. There is a black column and a red column. We are picking one of them and sticking with them. I will say, at a high level, the black one is about assimilation, the black one is about being brought into something bigger, it would be about the Hypha coming to stop on planets and stay there. The red would be being driven away, would be being killed, being fought, or being, you know, terrified so badly that we as a culture end. I think both of these are viable. And the thing that makes me the most curious, the thing about this is... I mean, I guess I can read what the two current options are for us, but once we pick one that's it, we're in it, like, we don't jump between this two sides, you know what I mean? Is... There is a thing coming for the Hypha. That thing is the Divine Principality. We know that the Divine Principality is a combination of the worst traits of the Divine Free States and the Principality of Kesh. It is a... I described it earlier as being this kind of boiling mass of substates, like the Holy Roman Empire, that are all loyal to a Prince or a Princess, to the Principality, right? To whomever is the sovereign of the Principality, but it is a collection of Houses, of bickering Houses, and weird interlocking, you know, substates, and it is unstoppable when its full might comes to bear. As many have already learned in the galaxy. Here we may only be getting the start of one House or of one, you know, minor power, come into contact with us, but in the end it will be something we cannot successfully resist. And so for me one of the biggest questions is: how does this thing, the Divine Principality, that has part of its roots in a nomadic fleet, react when it comes into contact with something like the Hypha? Is its urge to integrate? Or is its urge to take from it? And I don't have an easy answer here because I know in the history of what the Divine Principality becomes, it will sometimes do the former, and it will sometimes do the latter. Just as all empires do. Do either of you have thoughts on this?

DRE: So is the question whether the Hypha will take or integrate or whether the outside force will take from us or integrate us into it?

AUSTIN: We do not make this choice. We as players, as co-authors are making this choice. Take a step out of your character role here and decide what you think is more interesting for the future of this game. You can read through these different groupings here... if you look at the Legacy it becomes pretty clear from the bottom ones here are like... one of them ends up being very much about becoming comfortable, you know, residents of the thing that has colonized us, and that is a tragedy in some real way, right? To have given up our culture in favor of what this new world is. Like, I think this game is very smart because it does not frame lack of conflict as being good in and of itself. And then the red path is that we do resist in some way. There is unjust action done and we bit by bit are unable to stay here, we don't get to continue to live in what have been our ancestral homes, we're driven away and the language dies. Like, that ends up being the most important way to think about this. Regardless of the outcome, the words we've written down here, they dwindle. They become something maybe only a handful of people speak if that. There's no happy ending here, but I'm curious which of these two tragedies we are more interested in pursuing. For now I can read what the two different options are for this Age.

“Entering Age 2. An event to foreshadow the end of the Isolation. It finds its way into all conversation and is impossible to ignore.”

In the black path we have, “A powerful Hypha woman marries an outsider, and instead of shunning her forever, her kin attend the wedding. What permanent change to Hypha customs emerges from this unlikely occasion?”

And then the red path is, “Dark rumors precede us—people are convinced we work evil magic, communicate with spirits, and lay curses upon those who cross us. How can we convince fearful outsiders that we are harmless, so that trade might continue and we might eat?”

Neither particularly positive things. [He laughs a bit.] Do you have thought? Anyone have a strong inkling one way or the other? Or even just... I’m curious what you think about these two paths.

JANINE: My number one thought is that like if... If they encounter people who can, you know, control this like psychic things that had been taken as just an arbitrary manifestation...

AUSTIN: Yeah,

JANINE: It seems like the more logical thing to try and incorporate that rather than drive it out. And like a practical empire-building kind of thing... In the coldest most cynical way to look at it.

AUSTIN: I will say it is, but I’ll also say that the last thing that we heard from them was declaring all other Divines heresy. [Janine hums.] There is a theocratic element to the Divine Principality, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It refers to the riches of this empire as divinity, and... I think you’re right that there’s a version of it that... I think it’s one of the things that should be contested going forward. Does it try to incorporate it or does it not? But the thing that we have to make a decision about more broadly here now... Like, I can imagine us going down the red path and making that choice to try to like “Oh look we can give you this too” and it still being the red path, you know?

JANINE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I’m not making a decision, like, I really *am* interested in both of these. And I will say that like regardless of which we choose, I promise you there will be Hypha in whatever Season 6 ends up looking like, it’s just a matter of what is their starting position there, you know?

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: And also there won’t be this Hypha culture. This Hypha culture will have been something that died a long time ago. Dre, how are you feeling?

DRE: Um.

AUSTIN: I know it's a toughie.

DRE: Yeah. Trying to think... Where is this stuff in the rulebook?

AUSTIN: Uh, so the specific read are on, it's in the...

DRE: I see it, I have that, sorry.

AUSTIN: You got it.

[Pause]

AUSTIN: I will say, at a high level the first Age's thing is like, hey, "a marriage that begins to get rid of this boundary" vs "dark rumors", the second Age is, or the transition to Age 3 is that "we stay places longer, we stopped leaving" vs "a killing", like there's an actual killing that we are.. You know, it's actually broader, it's not clear if it's our killing, a killing of someone from us or somebody else being killed, but we are trying to appease someone who is angry and powerful. And then the final Legacy divide is that we become, we fall into who they are or we are... we slip away into hills perhaps to find new lands... those who survive and... those few who survive.

JANINE: This game would be very easy to adapt to my Dragon Age group [laughs].

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. Uh-huh! Totally.

JANINE: Very easy, very tidy. [Austin laughs.] No problem. Very little highlighting required.

AUSTIN: Do you want to take a break now and come back with a stronger idea? Or feeling? Or do you wanna finish this part of the conversation and then take a break?

JANINE: Up to y'all.

AUSTIN: Dre, how are you feeling?

DRE: Hmm. I'm just reading through both of these columns and...

AUSTIN: No worries. [laughs] They are depressing!

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I guess the other thing here is let's think about this questions and how we as characters will engage with them, you know?

DRE: Yeah.

[Long pause]

AUSTIN: I think part of me leans red because... Straight up because I want to be very clear about how bad the Divine Principality is.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know, I think there are lots of characters in our... in the history of Friends at the Table, and lots of factions for whom there are like, The Ibex Defender has logged on, right? And I think there are characters for whom their behaviour is worse than their intention, and characters whose intentions are worse than their behaviour, and there's often debate around a lot of that stuff. And I think that's like, healthy, right? I think that's right, oh yeah, different interpretations, blah-blah-blah... I think there can be different interpretation about a lot of this stuff, and I think that part of the Divine Principality is... People are going to have a favorite House of the Divine Principality, or whatever we end up calling their Houses, that's gonna happen, I know that. But I don't want that to be the first blush, I don't want like "And look, they integrated with the...", I don't even want that on the fucking table.

JANINE: Yeah, yeah, that's the thing.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I don't even want like that centrist liberal bullshit like on the table, to where like... No, that's not... One, that's shitty. And like maybe it's on us to make it clear how shitty that is, and that's why we're starting with this game, but. I want... I think I want to go even further and be like, Look. Immediately *this* is what they did. And so, I lean red on this.

"Dark rumors precede us—people are convinced we work evil magic, communicate with spirits, and lay curses upon those who cross us. How can we convince fearful outsiders that we are harmless, so that trade might continue and we might eat?"

And maybe the way this happens for me is like, you know, part of the way the Strand works is that we go to and from a bunch of places, over and over and over again, over generations and generations and generations, but we'd leave, right? And we don't, we... You know, again, we leave some certain things behind, but we by and large are not touching the places. We're not leaving big cities behind. And so, while we were away from one of these worlds, the Divine Principality, or maybe a few of them, in this entire New Strand, the Divine Principality has come and set up colonies, and they've probably already, you know, colonized the other people who lived there, the people who maybe aren't spacefaring races who've lived at these places. They're like, they're in control of this places now, and they've learned that we do strange shit with our antlers, right? They know that we have access to some stuff that is maybe taboo, but at least powerful. And I think the conversation ends up being... I think that's what we see as we land and when we send our first troops—not first troops, Jesus,—our first like, scouts into town to be like "Oh hey, we're ready to set up trade again like we were 34 years ago" or whatever it is, we see like a deer, a

huge stag head with its antlers on a stick at the towns gates, and it's like Oh. Okay, things here have changed.

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: So yeah. Awesome. Let's take a quick break, and then we'll continue to... Again, I think it's probably been... I think it's probably pretty close in age to where we were before, I just wanna answer those questions before, um... I think it's probably been, you know, weeks or months in terms of like how far into the.. how far into this Age we are. Maybe a little longer than that, but I don't think it's been like years or anything. And... just trying to see if there's any other questions we need to answer before we take a break, before we lose connection here... Oh, there's a second part of this that I completely forgot about that's super important! I'm a fool.

DRE: Oh.

AUSTIN: "How much time has past?", "How does the community react?" I think we're afraid, right?

DRE: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And here's a thing. How do the Bonded feel specifically? Because the threat is specifically about our Bond. [Pause] And maybe this is something we can actually tie into the second part which is:

"Each Age Transition brings about change in the Isolation. This change will transform an Aspect in the community. For any Transition except when entering the Legacy, complete the following steps before moving into the first turn of the next Age:

As a group, choose an Aspect to evolve. This Aspect must be in the current Age. Discuss how the Age Transition has brought about a change."

"Decide on a replacement for the Aspect. Write it on a new index card and place it in the ring for the upcoming Age. This new Aspect should be directly next to the Aspect it is replacing, but closer to the

center." And the other Aspects just jump ahead, they just move ahead. So like, the example that they had in the book is that they had like a bunch of like space truckers, and they had an Aspect that was "We are running from the past", and then that became "We are fighting the past". Um, so. Which of these...

JANINE: I have a suggestion.

AUSTIN: Please, go for it,

JANINE: Since the Bonded are kind of in the root of this thing, I wonder if people stop like volunteering and like seeking it out as much?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah.

JANINE: Because, you know, it would be like a bonus for the most part, like, Of course I wanna be able to do this cool thing, but then it becomes the thing maybe where instead of people voluntarily pursuing the procedure and picking their doctor or whatever, they have to be like nominated? It becomes more bureaucratic, it has to, it's like... We need a certain number of people with this ability to keep functioning...

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: But people are less like eager to do it.

AUSTIN: Right. So, do you think it becomes that... The Chorus Bond becomes like... Not drafted, or is it a draft? What is it?

JANINE: Yeah. It might be, like...

AUSTIN: I'm a little afraid that this is so reactionary and harsh for where we're at.

JANINE: Yeah, I think it maybe is a step... Maybe the change is just that like people aren't volunteering as much.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: It's... There's a dramatic wane in interest, and then part of the play becomes what do we do about that like...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Right.

JANINE: Where does that go?

AUSTIN: Right. Like the Chorus Bond is... "There's not enough people in the Chorus Bond anymore" becomes an Aspect. Okay, I like that

JANINE: Like it becomes, like at least one person of every family, and then instead it's one person from every, like, neighborhood...

AUSTIN: Right, right. It becomes way less rare, oh no, way more rare rather. Okay. So, Let's move these up so.... So the Strand... Oops, just moved that, that's good, good-good-good... Get both of those,,, Slide that forward. "Move the other Aspects into the upcoming Age." I think you leave... yeah, "Leave the Language Items where they are." Grab all of these, slide that forward, and then... Do I flip this one? No, I think I just grab it. Okay, I'll just add a new one. [Pause] Whoop. Uh-oh. I moved like a thousand things at once, fuck. [Janine laughs.] There we go. [Typing] Here's a question. Do people remove it?

JANINE: And snap their antlers off? Like...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can't just remove the reliefs or the...

JANINE: The way I had described it up to this point is like you're basically hollowing out the antler and the antler that remains is like a veneer basically on top. Like a shell.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So you could snap those off, sure.

AUSTIN: Um. I wonder if even that starts to happen. Voluntarily, of people who are like...

JANINE: Oof, yeah.

AUSTIN: "Listen, I don't want to die." So.

DRE: Jeez.

AUSTIN: I also bet it's not... God, like, yeah, that's a scene that we can have, but I bet it's... I bet someone comes and knocks on your door for this, Sabil. We'll talk about that in a moment probably.

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Um. Let me make sure there's nothing else. Oh! Last thing, and this is useful. "Each player may discard a card and redraw from the Language Deck for the upcoming Age." So, if there is one more you wanna get rid of, you can do that again now without having to make a Variant. I think we're good?

DRE: I'd like to get rid of EUPHEMISM.

AUSTIN: Okay. I'll grab it.

JANINE: I think might get rid of DEATH, I think we've moved past that.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You wanna start making stuff that has to do with new stuff, basically?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Boom. NARROWING for Dre, for Asper, and CREATE A WORD for Sabil. I think I'm gonna get rid of BAD OMEN, I think the time for omens has passed [laughs a bit].

Unfortunately. I think we're in the shit. CREATE A WORD! Okay. Let's take another couple of minutes break and we'll be back with the second Age.

DRE: Okay.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which hopefully will move faster because, you know, we know what the fuck we're doing now. Alright, BRB.

JANINE: Yeah.

[Long pause.]

AUSTIN: Hello! I'm back here also. I think there might be—

JANINE: I'm back!

AUSTIN: Oh, Janine is also back. Dre is muted and maybe also gone.

JANINE: Who could say?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[Long pause full of clicking, typing and assorted rustling.]

JANINE: How's it going?

AUSTIN: It's going. I had a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup which is good.

JANINE: Ooh! Oh man, I want some of those.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: It's been a while.

AUSTIN: They are very good. [pause] Some conversation in the chat... trying to get to the... to understand what the troughline was when I was describing liberal centrists. And I think it's partly because in a lot of places in North America the word "liberal" is often used as a stand-in for like "the left" which is understandable—

JANINE: Yeah. I mean in Canada that's our left-wing political party is—the Liberals.

AUSTIN: Except that isn't NDP even actually...further left?.. Historically?

JANINE: Well, yeah, it is. I mean NDP is further left and I would say Green is generally—I could be wrong—Green is generally further left than them but like... You know, Canada...

AUSTIN: But your Liberal is certainly further to the left than America's.

JANINE: For most of my life Canada has been an unofficial two-party system—

AUSTIN: Right. rights.

JANINE: —because the NDP were in power for a bit and then they fucked up very bad, and then were just like relegated to basically like pseudo-party status, and only recently have they really regained a lot of ground, and the Liberal was basically our left.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And I think that chat has done a good job of explaining the line between liberalism and progressivism in the “American left”, like in the Democratic Party specifically, but I think if you're interested in more of that, that is the kind of... the key term you should look into is the difference between liberalism and progressivism in the Democratic Party, and that's like a small small small way of looking at but very much so that progressives are interested in big picture institutional analysis critique and change, structural change, are interested in, you know, equality of access, not equality of opportunity, and also not just access in the sense that a market has... if things are cheap in the market that's good enough. In general the kind of liberal, kind of neo-liberal especially, wing of Democratic Party, which has a history with the Clinton administration, the kind of Third Way American politics... not just American politics, honestly, like, UK also had this... this belief that like the marketplace can do the work of strong governmental institutions if we leash it right. That stuff for me is like part of where arguments around things like “Oh but assimilation is good” come from, and so I wanted to like cut that off at the pass.

JANINE: Uh-huh. “They're all happy, they just don't speak their language anymore or know anything about their culture...”

AUSTIN: Exactly, e-xactly. Yeah. So. So yeah. Dre, you're back?

DRE: Yes, I apparently missed all the fun stuff.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. We just got back, I was just clarifying some political speak. Like you do. So. It is Age 2. We've evolved some Aspects, and we have... We wrap back around and I'm gonna jump back to my cards. My options are:

DISCOVERY. “Something new is discovered. A geographic feature, a piece of technology, or something about ourselves which was previously unknown. Name this new discovery.” And the prompt is “Hope in an unexpected place.”

EPONYM... Eponym? I'm still not sure where the emphasis goes on that one... which is...

JANINE: Epona.

AUSTIN: Yeah, epona. I got it, Epina. ...which is an Action card. "A piece of language based on someone's name. Sometimes the story behind a word is standing right in front of us." And in this case the thing that it changes is instead of just doing the thing of like Oh, I'm gonna play this card and put like this thing: "Make a Connection: Pick a player character and a concept. Explain why their name is attached to that concept." Then "Build a Word: Make a word for the concept rooted in their name." And then their example is: "Silhouette" originated as a jab at a French minister of finance, whose frugal policies", uh, it's very tight, "were mocked in comparison to the simple portraits that now bear his name." And then the prompt there is "Finding yourself in an unexpected place." So I could use that to be like "Oh, I want there to be the word Sabil or Sability or something to mean something." Um.

Then, the last one I have is CREATE A WORD with the prompt "A surplus", oh [laughs] "A surprise for some." Misread surplus as surprise.

Um. I think I want DISCOVERY. And I think it's gonna be fucking terrifying. [Pause]

I think all of us should be here for this scene. We... And I think I'm gonna tie it to... I think I'm gonna tie it to the Strand. No. Mhmm. I'm gonna tie it to Never forget your dead. Here's a question. Do you think, do we think that the Divine Principality knows it's the antlers? And the dead part?

DRE: As in that's what they are...

AUSTIN: As in... Yeah, yeah, that we build the Chorus Bond by way of that. Probably not yet, right?

DRE: I'd say not yet.

AUSTIN: Then I'm gonna put it somewhere else, I'm gonna put it...

DRE: Um, some people in chat are saying they can't see the outward ones ...

AUSTIN: Oh, good catch, thank you. Got it, thank you. Okay. I am going to put it up here, on the Strand. And the discovery is of a Divine. I think we see a Divine for the first time. Ever. [sighs] Let me look at something really quick. I got some, I got some stuff... [typing] And it becomes our stand-in word for new bad discoveries, do you know what I mean?

DRE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: God, like, you know? It's either gonna be the name of the specific Divine or it could just be "Divine". [Pause] I kind of like it just being "Divine". "A piece of technology or something about ourselves"... Not something about ourselves. The prompt is "Hope in an unexpected place." Okay. Yeah, okay. So. We are the last of the ships to arrive at a new place, right? That was the thing that we kind of set up was that we're kind of at the tail end of the fleet.

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: We are coming to land on a new planet... I think it's all three of us and we're kind of like in the rear of our stuff, the rear of the fleet, the final five or six ships... And we see the arrival of the Divine Principality's like... not a huge military force or anything, right, but like a collection of colony ships with... transport vessels that presumably have food and supplies for their colonists. And they're escorted by this thing that looks almost like—I actually think they'll probably retake humanoid form in a real way with the Divine Principality—but I almost imagine it like a... I'm debating how... I'm going back to the question of restrain vs playing big here... I think that it is just this massive suit of armor that has... like it's almost as if it has moons orbiting it... It is, it is huge, right, like it's as big as our biggest ship...

JANINE: Big Zenyatta.

AUSTIN: ...Which Zenyatta? What?

JANINE: Big Zenyatta? [laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, yes! That Zenyatta. I was thinking who... I was thinking of Zenigata from Lupin III...

[Dre and Janine laugh]

AUSTIN: And was like “Big Zenigata”?? Yeah, big Zenyatta with those, like that style of orbs all around. But it also has this just like... is kind of flying through space all like surrounded by all this much smaller ships that are carrying transport goods and orbiting around all of them is, yes orbs of Zenyatta, and those are each... We get like the slow close-up and and we realize like—Oh, there are people living on those giant orbs, there are people who are working inside of them, and it's like a living... it's almost like it is a living micro-planet of its own that has a pilot. And everything orbits around it. And this is Unity. This is the Divine Unity. And I think that is connection, word for discovery is Divine, and it's explicitly a bad type of discovery. And so it's like... there's a degree of like built-in sarcasm to me in like... You go to the doctor, you get some bad news, it's just Divine. And this is why we say it that way. But I think I want the scene of us on the ship figuring out why is there hope in an unexpected place. And I think this is like we've all been called to like some central ship that is safer, and there is some sort of like... there was some sort of speech, now we're... Like, what are the public spaces on our ships? Are they open and green, are they... I kind of like the idea of there being almost... We've already described it as like there are city streets on these ships, so like, are there also parks? If you gathered a lot of people, where would you gather them on a ship like ours?

JANINE: I think they need to be open but also because our deer people are gonna be in crowds larger than crowds that deer would be in—we've also established that like, you know, regardless of genders there are antlers...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JANINE: I think a thing that would be important is in this public spaces some kind of thing that sort of delineates where people stand. Like I don't know if it would be like with ropes or if it would be just like circles painted on the ground... 'Cause I imagine getting your antlers caught is...

DREL Oh yeah.

JANINE: Kind of like you're in a crowd, and like everyone's antlers are cracking the other, why would anyone ever be in a crowd? [Dre laughs.] So that means some sort of like, I don't know, like they have like the way they pave the ground or something is like with big round stones, and it's like you know, okay, well, this particular large stone is used in this exact measurement so everyone would stand... If everyone stands on one they won't... their antlers won't crack around like... I feel like there needs to be some element of that.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Just for comfort's sake.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I like that a lot. So I actually think... I'm like thinking through really like—Okay, then we would've already used this word at this point so I think it's probably already... we've already seen this thing for the first time, we've... People are, the people who are already on the planet are on the planet, but we're stuck in space, and I think maybe the scene that I want is the three of us in... Again, still not a big group of people, but like... We think that we're going to be seen, we think we're going to be caught. And instead we are... for some reason we not, and maybe that is where we find our hope in an unexpected place. So yeah. So I think we're in that scenario that Janine just described, and I am not in a good way, I think... I don't think... I don't know that we've ever met necessarily, Asper, so there is just this young deer, you know, with the inlaid antlers being like...

AUSTIN (as Timea): [in a whisper] Oh man, oh... this is the worst possible thing... This is... I...

AUSTIN: Oh, I've just realized I should explain why it's connected up there, I just realized did not, which is... When it arrives, it disperses the Strand.

DRE: Hmm.

AUSTIN: And so like, the first... the rest of where we're supposed to go during this run of the Strand is lost, and that's part of why we're lost in space—we know what planets we could have gone too, but like the Strand isn't there anymore, we have to run a new Strand, and that's not a thing you normally do. I forgot a big part of what Unity does, right? So yeah, it disrupts that path. So for Sabil and I, like we straight up can see that it's gone, right? Anyway. So. Timea is just like

AUSTIN (as Timea): Ohh, this is the worst. Oh. I wasn't supposed to do another Thread Run for another... for years, really. [Sighs] I'm sorry, I'm freaking out a little

bit. Sabil, I'm not trying to diss you, but you're older than me... [Janine laughs] Have we ever gotten through anything like this before?

JANINE: Uh, I mean, I wonder if... I mean, I have to wonder if like she's so wrapped up in her own shit that she wouldn't even have an answer for this... Um... I don't think it has happened before but also I feel like it's one of those things that like... as a little... as a little fawn... skin-fawn... [They all laugh quietly.] she like probably asked one of her parents like "What happens if the Strand goes away?", and then like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And then her parents were like "We just go and pick it up again, like when you drop your rolling ape toy or whatever the hell." [Dre snickers.] "You just, you go back and you pick it up, and it's fine." And she like...

AUSTIN (as Timea): You can't just pick it up! [Janine laughs]

JANINE (as Sabil): Well, it's not gone forever, it's... You get a new one, right?

AUSTIN (as Timea): I don't know! I think...

JANINE (as Sabil): Statistically it must have happened before, and we're all still here.

DRE (as Asper): Timea, instead of trying to figure out whether this exact specific thing has happened before, I want you to think about where is another time that you have felt this upset, this confused, this scared...

AUSTIN (as Timea): My last... my last Divine, yeah.

DRE (as Asper): And what did you do?

AUSTIN (as Timea): Uhhh... It was... it was, you know, long in the Verb... [sighs] I... We were planetside, I was being chased by my big brother, he was bullying me, and I ran into the woods. I thought that it would scare him away but it didn't. He kept looking for me. And I found my way back home. And he didn't. And he was just in there. And a day passed. And, you know. If ever there was a feeling of vawtiv, that was that. I felt like.. of all the people you choose me for something like this?

DRE (as Asper): And yet you became vawtesh.

AUSTIN (as Timea): Yeah. But only after I found him. I made Divine. He did not leave those woods walking. Someone wears him now, and that is... good. Maybe it will help us.

AUSTIN: And I think like maybe there's a moment here where like... something must happen, right? Maybe... They know about the Chorus Band, they know they don't like it, and

maybe we know why. Like, this thing gets close enough to where we should be detected or some ship does but, Sabil, you and I, and everyone else who still has the Bond feels a moment of tuning, right? Feels—I know we've decided not to use tuning, and then we used tuning forks, and now here we are again [He and Janine laugh a bit]—but like, if we focus ourselves just so we can be invisible. And this ship passed by that should catch us. But it doesn't. And in some ways like... that's Divine for them, you know? But on the other hand, another thing here is like—this is all the more reason why we need more Chorus Band members because this is something that could theoretically save us even though it draws a target on our back. I think that's my scene here.

Am I forgetting a step? Let me check my steps... Turn structure... "Have a conversation", we did that, "Draw a card." Gonna draw a card... Oh, I gotta get the new cards out! Hell yeah. And put the old ones away, we don't need those Age 1 cards anymore... or those Age 2 cards, actually. Age 3! We don't need the character archetypes either. There we go. Shuffle those. Age 3.

Alright, Asper.

DRE: Hmm. Let's zoom in here...

AUSTIN: Yeah, sorry, I can make them bigger if you need.

DRE: No, it's fine.

AUSTIN: Your options are...

DRE: FILLER WORD...

AUSTIN: FILLER WORD which I love but I almost wish we had it already, you know?

DRE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: NARROWING. "A specific instance of something we hold dear surges in importance. Take an existing word and make it more specific. Add more context, meaning, or intent behind the word. Make a Connection: Pick a previously defined word. Explain how its meaning has become more specific. Skip the Build a Word phase." And the still frame the scene. And the example is: "Starve" once meant to die of any cause, but now means to die of hunger." That's interesting. And the scene prompt is "A wager with high stakes."

And then GREETING. You have GREETING still which is how we greet one another and "Meeting in an unexpected place."

DRE: Hmm. I think I might go with NARROWING.

AUSTIN: Okay. Where are you connecting it? Or which past word are we using here also? Oops. I;m gonna slide this down here.

DRE: So, I could put this on the cards that are already in place, right?

AUSTIN: Correct. Yeah.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: 'Cause you'd be narrowing one of those.

[Pause]

DRE: Hm-hm-hm. Right. And so the example there is where "starving" means... used to mean dying of anything and now means to die of hunger. So...

AUSTIN: Right, right.

DRE: Ugh, maybe I don't do that... [laughs]

AUSTIN: Could be Verb? Could we start referring to a specific thing with Verb? Or could it be... hm.

JANINE: Verb could get more imminent.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Because we're dealing with more people kind of close to us in a way where we kinda have to pay attention to their tracks, so Verb could become a more like...

AUSTIN: Oh, right!

JANINE: Like an imminent thing. [Dre hums]

AUSTIN: Like it almost retracts back into like... Does the presence of the Divine Principality's ships and stuff, are they so powerful and so strange that literally they are immediately producing wake that we are... like psychic wake or radio wake, audio wake, that is making Verb a present thing instead of like...? It originated by being "Oh, this is a sound that we hear, this is a reverberation" and then it became like "Oh yeah, the past", and now it's like we live in Verb. Verb is everywhere.

DRE: I like that.

AUSTIN: Um, and is there still, it's a different?.. It's "A wager with high stakes", that's interesting.

DRE: Hm.

AUSTIN: Alright, so I've added NARROWING to Verb. Put it up here that way, it's 2nd Age. "Skip the Build a Word phase." Okay. We don't have to build it 'cause the word is Verb. So. It sounds like... So is the NARROWING that Verb is now about that Verb returns to being

about the feeling of the wake, the audio wake in your antlers, or is it about we are alive in the Verb like the present? Does the past become the present in this way? Have we Diverbed? [Dre laughs] Or has the Verb become a specific past which is pre-Divine Verb?

DRE: Hm. I think it might be that, just because the Verb is now a pre-Divine experience... Because if it is messing with the way that like people that are Chorus Bound are like... just like taking in reality, that seems like a very marked difference.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Right, right. It used to just be the Verb. Now it's the Roar or something, right?

DRE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: We can fix that with a Variant if we want in a bit.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So what is the scene, what is the wager with high stakes?

DRE: [in a whisper] God.

AUSTIN: No outsiders still, so this still should be... You know, I think, I think that you're allowed to have NPCs but they should be only interior... only, again, people from the Isolation and no outsiders, full stop.

DRE: Okay. Okay, here is the wager with high stakes. Since we discussed that going into Age 2...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: I think, Janine, you had said that people are not becoming Chorus Bound as frequently as they used to?

JANINE: Uh-huh.

DRE: So I think like Asper is increasingly noticing that like there are... there's just that materials from bodies not being used. And also noticing this now... change in like how people who are Chorus Bound are experiencing things. So I think she comes to both Timea and Sabil with a proposal of... do we need to consider further augmenting or improving or something to people who are already Chorus Bound.

AUSTIN: [laughing quietly] So you're like showing up to be like "If only there were a way to do the thing that you already do that we don't know you already do." [Janine and Dre laugh.]

DRE: Or maybe it's...

AUSTIN: I like that! That's not me, I wanna be clear I'm not dunking on that at all.

DRE: Yeah, yeah. The only other way that I can think of—and maybe that's a much higher stakes wager—is that since the Chorus Bound are now reacting to the Divine, is there a way that we can reverse-engineer that so that either we can push the Divine away or like protect ourselves from it?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. And in this case we're understanding wager in this really broad way, right? Which is like we're taking... let's take a chance on something and we'll see if it works... Versus...

DRE: Well I think... Yeah, you're also like wagering like... let's radically alter a huge part of our culture and like what we use these materials for. [laughs a bit]

AUSTIN: Right, right. But it's not, you know "If I win this footrace then..."

DRE: Oh yeah, no no no.

AUSTIN: I like that idea. But it would require... Sabil, are you interested in opening up that secret to us?

JANINE: Um... I mean. do you mean me as the player or as the character?

AUSTIN: Both. The player, the player, Janine really is what I mean.

JANINE: Yeah, no, I don't mind. I think, I think the objection to it is different. I think the reason Sabil just does it to herself is less like... I think it's been a combination of things like, one, the material hasn't been that abundant in the past.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: Hm.

JANINE: And two, I think there's a degree of it that is like when a doctor can't get approval to test a vaccine they're just like "Well shit, I'm just gonna eat some... someone's gross germs and I'm gonna inject it myself and we'll see what happens."

AUSTIN: [laughing] Right. In a weird way we are literally like giving you a... like a legitimization to do a thing you've wanted to do anyway. Or wanted to experiment with.

JANINE: Yeah. I don't know that she even knows that it is like cool to do... 'cause you know, she... you know, I've gone over already how she like doesn't super look well...

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: And she doesn't like leaving the ship because it's too loud on the planets, and like all this little things of like... I think she'll probably need to be talked into it because... not out of like keep her secret but out of like "I don't know if this is actually a good idea."

AUSTIN: Okay, so let's zoom in here. I think the camera opens back in your office again. [laughs] So we're in outer space but mostly we're in weird orb offices... Um, and Timea is like...

AUSTIN (as Timea): Asper, I told you, I asked her, she said she doesn't have any special abilities or anything [Janine laughs quietly] just 'cause she has more stuff in her antlers! I would do it, I would take—I would be the risk, like I would be the—I already asked her for it and she said that it's not a thing!

DRE (as Asper): Umf. There just has to be... [They sigh.] I don't know, there just has to be something we could be doing.

AUSTIN (as Timea): I wanna get back to Verb as much as you do but like... I don't know...

AUSTIN: They're...we're just having this loud discussion in your waiting room. [Laughs a bit.]

[Janine laughs.]

JANINE: I think like Sabil probably like tries to just let you talk it out for a bit, [Austin laughs quietly] but is eventually just like...

JANINE (as Sabil): You know. It's not that it doesn't do anything, it's just that the effects might not be wonderful, they might not be what you have in mind.

AUSTIN: You know how like deer eyes are already pretty big?

JANINE: [laughing] Yeah. [Dre chuckles.]

AUSTIN: Timea's get *really* big,

AUSTIN (as Timea): [gasp]

AUSTIN: Okay, here's a really important question. Do the Hypha have human ears or deer ears?

JANINE: Ew! They have deer ears!

AUSTIN: [placatingly] Okay, just to make sure. Then they do that little deer ear flicker, you know what I mean? [He laughs. Dre also laughs.] And she's like...

AUSTIN (as Timea): Then you have to do it to me! Asper was saying that like... If we ever want to go back to the Verb like... we could try to use the Chorus Bond and like all the extra dust, all the extra... Like, people aren't doing it, but I'll do it five times!

JANINE (as Sabil): Do you remember when you came into my office, and you were so, so worked up about the Verb, and the Diverb? And telling them apart, and it was just so loud for you?

AUSTIN (as Timea): It has been Divine after Divine since then, so no, like, excuse me, I don't really remember that! What I do remember is that like... I wanna get back to... I wanna get back to drawing the Strand in the air, and I wanna get back to guiding people places... This is... This is me at full vawtesh, I... Let me go, let me do it!

JANINE (as Sabil): [after a pause] What if it goes bad?

AUSTIN (as Timea): Then it goes bad! There's a big weird metal... moon man out there! It's gone bad. Take the chance. And also if it works with me maybe it works with other people.

JANINE (as Sabil): Okay, [sighs] I'm just saying I have this... I have this, this... I have this paperwork I need you to sign. It's, it's a... it uses the word Divine a lot, and I don't want you to read too much into that, but also read a little bit into that as we've already gotten over... because this could absolutely break Divine in some big ways for you... I really want you to be equipped with this knowledge. It's... I don't... I haven't done this on anyone else. I know what it's done to me. I don't know what's it gonna do to you.

AUSTIN (as Timea): Asper, thank you so much! I don't know if it's just because Sabil thinks I'm a kid but I don't think... I don't think she would've gone forward with this without you.

JANINE (as Sabil): Don't thank them now, thank them in a few months.

AUSTIN: Um. Alright. I think Timea leaves. I'm curious if Asper and Sabil have any final words. Timea's like...

AUSTIN (as Timea): I'm gonna go get ready. I'm gonna let people know that I'm gonna be unavailable for a little while.

AUSTIN: And then... and then she does like... she lowers down the weird hover elevator out of your office. [Dre chuckles softly.]

[Pause]

DRE (as Asper): Thank you.

JANINE: I think Sabil just has like a really... not a full-on disapproving look but very much like a... like a “Well, you’re the person who deals with when sad shit happens, so...” [Dre laughs.]

AUSTIN: Yep!

JANINE: “This is more your problem than my anyway if it goes bad.”

DRE: Yeah, fair.

AUSTIN: Alright. I’m gonna get you a new card. Your new card is WHAT WE BRING IN which is a really interesting one. Alright.

DRE: i think I also want to discard one of mine and do a Variation...

AUSTIN: Sure. Which one do you wanna discard?

DRE: Um... I’m gonna get rid of the FILLER WORD.

AUSTIN: Okay. Take card, and that means drawing you another card, and that card is... TABOO, also an Action card. Both WHAT WE BRING IN and TABOO are Action cards which affect previous... I guess TABOO affects a previous one, I don’t remember what WHAT WE BRING IN does... Oh, that’s really interesting. It’s really interesting. I’ll read it when we round back to you. Um, Sabil.

DRE: Oh, do I need to... I think I still need to make my Variation.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah-yeah-yeah, sorry, what was your Variation? My bad.

DRE: Um... Oh, I can’t drag this cards.

AUSTIN: I got it, tell me where to put it.

DRE: I wanna do a Variation on... I guess vawtiv and vawtesh.

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: And it’s rum-vawt.

AUSTIN: Ooh! Which means?..

DRE: There’s an increased understanding that there aren’t just like two binary states, it’s not you’re vawtiv or you’re vawtesh...

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: It's that they're states that you can exist in at the same time, or you could be, you know... It's not like you go through vawtiv and then you're vawtेश forever.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. So there are moments of... Wait, we're all rumvawt? Whether or not we are in the moment...

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So does that sort of change the way vawtiv and vawtेश are used culturally to where like... It *did* feel like vawtiv was a thing that you marked someone with "Ugh, they're so vawtiv!".

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Versus like vawtेश was like Oh, you... you've given of yourself to the whole, you've taken it all, and you understand your place in it." Whereas now the default is like "Uh, some days you're a little vawtiv, somedays you're a little vawtेश."

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We're all always in a constant state of flux, I love that. So good. I also like "rum-" as a weird like side-connect to Verb and to the humming, you know?

DRE: Hm.

AUSTIN: Even if it's not where in-universe comes from, there's a sort of like rumble to it, you know. 'Cause "rum" and "rumble". Ummm, Sabil.

TITLE OF COMMAND. "One of you is gaining prominence in the Isolation. This is a title used by those who recognize your authority." "A call that had to be made" is the prompt.

CREATE A WORD (Action) which is as before except the prompt is "A change in status".

And WIDENING which is another Action card that says "Something becomes a much bigger part of life. This word infiltrates our speech in a way we had not anticipated." And it's an Action which means something different happens. "Make a Connection: Pick a previously defined word. Explain how its meaning has become more generic. Skip the Build a Word phase." Their example is.... trying to zoom in... oh right, sure. "The word "assassin" originated as a reference to a religious sect. It now refers to anyone who does the deed, regardless of affiliation." And the prompt is "What we wear with pride."

JANINE: Okay. I think I'm gonna go with TITLE OF COMMAND.

AUSTIN: Okay. Where are we putting it?

JANINE: We are putting it with... I think we're putting it with Chorus Bond.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Because I think this is also a scene with Timea. But I think the, like, title...

AUSTIN: Right. 'Cause we're making a word, this is how this game works, yeah, I forgot.

JANINE: We're *picking* a word more than, you know...

AUSTIN: Right-right-right, yeah.

JANINE: I think the title that gets made is Loess.

AUSTIN: Ooh! Spell that. I'll type it in a second.

JANINE: So, loess, L-O-E-S-S, I think is a word for like clay...

AUSTIN: Ooh.

JANINE: It's like a, yeah, I think it's... I'm 90% sure it's clay... Um...

AUSTIN: Wait, spell it again. L-O-E-S-S? [typing]

JANINE: Loess. I wanna put an "e" on the end because it sounds more like a profession.

AUSTIN: "E". Okay.

JANINE: Like a Loesse. You know, like a Loesse [laughs].

AUSTIN: Oh, right. Like a Loesse.

JANINE: So yeah, I think this title comes about sort of like... You know, using the idea of clay, it's... It sort of takes the idea of a Dust-Eater, but it is more of an art, it is a sculpting thing...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: This has become... the thing that Timea underwent is now a procedure that only Sabil does.

AUSTIN: So you are Loesse now.

JANINE: Sabil is The Loesse.

AUSTIN: The Loesse, okay.

JANINE: This is her title of command, like, among the Dust-Eaters she is the Loesse. I think... "A call that had to be made"... So, I think after Timea's procedure the follow-up

appointment is called but instead of being at Sabil's office it is at basically a... I mean what might pass for a Dust-Eater college? [Austin laughs] You know, it's like a sort of... I'm thinking of like the sort of XVIII-XIX century surgical theaters, of just like, there's a bunch of people, a bunch of deer people in, like [laughs] student robes or whatever. They are in robes. and it's like, Timea is like brought to the front, and Sabil is also at the front, and there's just kind of like an evaluation—if this worked then we have to start doing this more.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Alright. So. Is it like... so we're there and... Are we testing to see if it worked? Or is it the call? Is the call like—Hey, did this work?

JANINE: I think the call is mostly like—they want to know if it improves abilities or if it is still just what it is.

AUSTIN: So is this like... Are we in front of some sort of a class? Are we in front of a panel?

JANINE: Basically, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. I think Timea...

JANINE: These are all professionals already.

AUSTIN: I think Timea looks very sheepish, if that's a thing...

JANINE: I don't know.

AUSTIN: [laughing a bit] Like a deer in headlights.

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: And she's like

AUSTIN (as Timea): Thanks for having me and for... to the Loesse for letting me... choosing me for the procedure. I was already Bonded, obviously, with the Chorus, but given that there weren't a lot, I just thought it would be a good idea. And I'm happy to give to the fleet. Um. Anyway, what do you want me to do? What should I... Loesse, what should I do?

JANINE: I'm wondering what the best like... demonstration...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: ...would be... Okay, I think the thing that happens is Sabil like is standing by the door as Timea's talking, and then someone runs to the door and like hands her a stack of paper or whatever...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: Deer-paper, I don't know. And then she distributes in among the people, you know, sitting in a sort of crowd...

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: And this is basically some like extremely, extremely fresh intel [Austin hums] from like, sort of remote fringes of the fleet's reach, or the, you know, whatever we wanna say...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: That is basically something that like would normally be out of Timea's range in this particular moment being where she... situated where she is.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: And I think that Sabil clears her throat and then... maybe like says some coordinates? JuSt like gives Timea string of coordinates.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: And like looks at her very expectantly.

AUSTIN (as Timea): I... [pause] ...It's four ships, it's two transport vessels, food stuff... water, explosives... Thirteen onboard. [Sighs.]

AUSTIN: And she like straightens up, you know, like... It took a lot, but then... Straightens up.

AUSTIN (as Timea): I couldn't have done that before, there's no way.

AUSTIN: I don't know that we need than that.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So. Going into Age 3. Really blowing through it now. [laughs shortly] Oh wait, that's not true, we have to... You have to get a new card. Gotta get you an Age 3 card. DISUSE. Man, these are sad.

JANINE: Oh...

AUSTIN: Damn. Alright. So. "Read the Transition prompt for the upcoming Age." Oh boy. "What was foreshadowed has come to pass. The end of the Isolation is near. There is no escaping it."

“A young girl was murdered in one of the hill villages shortly before we passed through. What terrible sacrifices will we make to soothe the furious, placate the hateful, and mollify the unjust? What will we do when the sacrifices aren’t enough?”

So what happened? Is it one of ours who dies? Is it one of theirs? I’m guessing it was one of theirs. Is it something to do with the intel that we just got? Or this entire new type of intel?

JANINE: I wonder if it’d be... We... It could be that intel if it’s a thing that we act to avoid in such a way that it’s like really conspicuous to others, and then that ship ends up being a big threat to them basically it’s like “Why the fuck didn’t you tell us?”, like “why didn’t you do anything?”

AUSTIN: Right. If you could see...

JANINE: ...”Why did you just fucking sidestep it and let us get the hit?”

AUSTIN: Yeah, I like that a lot, yeah, yeah. Like, in other words, there’s like a... It could be a natural disaster type thing more even than... Or it could be a third party, right?

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: It could be one of the other groups in this area, right? One of the other villages that we used to work with, like... We just don’t show up that day, and when they go to that village, like, there’s an attack or there’s resistance or something. And when they ask us why we did not go... the answer is like we could sense it coming. And we left them to... let them die because who the fuck... We’re not gonna warn you!

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And they make it clear. You know. If you’re going to have that power... if you wanna keep your antlers, you will tell us the bad things that are coming. And “What will we do when the sacrifices aren’t enough?” We will see, I guess.

So, one of these changes. So, I guess like the big thing to say here is like... Who was it also? Who died? Was it a leader? Was it... the Candidate, the Excerpt, the Prince, whatever, of that Divine? Do we get like an echo of... there’s a moment in COUNTER/Weight in which a Candidate is attempted... there’s an attempted assassination on I think the Candidate of Grace pretty early on... Dre, you might remember more than me... Do we get that? Does the Candidate get killed? Or the pilot? That seems like a big enough thing for them to care, you know?

DRE: Yeah. Yeah.

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Alright. So I think that’s what happens. So the change in the Aspect here. Is it further Bond stuff? Is it like... something with our own dead? Do they... Do they cut off our ability to... Like is this the moment where they’re like “we’re figuring out how you do this” and

they make us forget our dead? Or try to? And then we react some way around it? [Dre hums] Or is it a reaction to be like “We have to get out of here, we need to move past the Strand in some way”? Or change it in some way? We have to leave our old territory behind. Because there’s the other thing that could happen here, right? Which is like... ‘Cause we don’t scenes for these big changes, right?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But like... The thing is that everyone knows about it. So maybe it’s something like... With the death of that pilot they are going to come in force. They are going to stomp out anyone who resists them. And so we are now in this position where it’s like... alright, then we have to get out of here.

JANINE: And at that point the Strand really *does* become a tether. Like it...

DRE: Yeah.

JANINE: It’s a thing that is just holding us here.

AUSTIN: Holding us here, yeah. And also, as a reminder, one of my things is the undiscovered potential in one of these, in the Strand, for me. And so I can imagine it being like... I can make the Strand... Or I can open the Strand up. We can go anywhere we want to... If we can get people on board. So maybe it’s like... something with that. Either we need to move beyond... we need to change the Strand or move beyond it. And that way is still kind of up for grabs, you know what I mean? Unless someone has another one, a different one.

[Pause]

JANINE: We suggested that the Strand was kind of like spores that have travelled that, you know, had something that we nutritionally need or something...

AUSTIN: Yeah, we did.

JANINE: And you would think... I mean, maybe the reason we follow it is because it’s hard to artificially, like, incubate it?

AUSTIN: Right, right.

JANINE: But if you crack that, then...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JANINE: What you end up looking for is instead of looking for those spores you’re looking for places that are hospitable of those spores as part of yourself.

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah. I like that a lot. So it's like... We need to learn how to control the...

JANINE: Or at least like... isolate them into like, stasis, so that we could then put them places.

AUSTIN: Right. [typing] Okay. Boom. And then we all can discard another card and draw it back up I think, right? That was the other thing that we all are supposed to do at the end of this and I always forget to during the Age Transition...I think so...

JANINE: Yeah. Yes.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Discard a card and redraw it if you want. Yeah. Let's see. "Surprise for some." Um. [Pause] I think I know what I'm doing so it doesn't matter for me, so I'm not gonna discard a card and redraw.

JANINE: I think I might wanna discard... Hmmm. I wanna discard WIDENING, I think.

AUSTIN: Okay. Boop. Boop. You got PERCEPTIONS. Dre?

DRE: Hm?

AUSTIN: Are you gonna discard any of these?

DRE: Uh... No, I think I'm okay.

AUSTIN: Okay. So. I know what I'm doing. I'm going to use EPONYM, and I'm gonna put it on these "Isolate the spores of the Strand..." and blah-blah-blah. So. An EPONYM is "A piece of language based on someone's name. Sometimes the story behind a word is standing right in front of us."

"Make a Connection: Pick a player character and a concept. Explain why their name is attached to that concept. Build a Word: Make a word for the concept rooted in their name." And my prompt is "Finding yourself in an unexpected place."

Um. I... So I think we get like... This isn't a movie in a way that a lot of our games are, this doesn't have that same visual storytelling to the same degree but. I think we do get the montage of more and more people going to the Loesse, and specifically Timea getting more and more... getting her antlers more and more inscribed and inlaid, and eventually, you know... until she has this just like... It's beautiful, right? Like combination of precious metals and cuts and designs and maybe jewelry? I imagine like by the end things are hanging from it. She also looks older now—I imagine this is probably a few years in at this point—and... I think... So she figures out how to spread them where we need... I think it's a scene with just her. She cracks the Strand. And gets it to where with the right focus and the right Chorus Bond you can draw it a little bit more... You can kind of like ID... Instead of being like "Oh it goes somewhere in these twelve planets", right, instead of this breadth you get the length. It's as it she learns how to focus it from this big, wide, curling, branching thing into a straight line. And she like pulls it all together and she can find and can like transport with herself with her ship and with the spores if the spores exist, and... And I think that the word ends up

being her last name because instead of being these bright colors the Strand normally is, all of the color gets pulled out of it, and for those who are on the Bond there's a degree of like... it's dusty, it's ashy. And so her last name is Asche, and I think it's just called... the Strand, this type of like focused, long-distance Strand, that gets you the fuck out of there—and here is the other thing: a whole fleet can't do this, this is I think part of the way that this disintegrates, right? It's like... you can ID a planet far away and you can start sending spores you need there but you have to do it with the Ash, and the Ash does not provide for the entire fleet. The people might survive, but the fleet and the culture of the fleet will not over a long enough time. And so it's called the Ash. And it's... you know, I think at first they spell it like her last name Asche but by the end it's just Ash. And my prompt is "Finding yourself in an unexpected place." And I think it's the first time she does it. And she lands on some beach world somewhere, you know? It's like a coastal forest, and using the Bond she's able to connect with people back home and like send an image, and you can see the moss beginning to grow on a tree, and it works, but she's far, far, far, a long way from home, and is maybe not even sure she'll make it back. And that is Ash. I don't think there's much... So, the dialogue is like... in this case is like, the papers call it, start calling it Ash, the people start calling it Ash, but I don't know that she... I don't know, maybe she can sense it in the Bond, but I don't know that we need her using it in a sentence in the same way, right?

JANINE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: I guess maybe if either one of you wanted to use it that would be fine but I think we've kind of done it here, and it's getting late, so I've no problem moving on. Um. Asper?

DRE: I'm gonna use this TABOO card.

AUSTIN: Okay. Where is that going?

DRE: It's going on "brightsky".

AUSTIN: Ooh. TABOO says "What was previously a common word is now only uttered in hushed tones or euphemism. Make a Connection: Play on a previously defined word. Explain why this word is now taboo. Skip the Build a Word phase. In the conversation, explore the taboo." "What was once common" is the prompt and that may have outsiders who can be people from the Divine Principality or elsewhere.

DRE: And I don't know if this is particularly like... a dialogue scene but I think, you know, in the wake of that Candidate dying, a lot of Hypha like... it's like the equivalent of people being like "Uh, you know, keep your chin up" They keep saying like, you know, "Look for the brightsky", but then as they come into contact with more and more outsiders they keep hearing them saying this "brightsky" in the connection to—

AUSTIN: Right! The death of the pilot

DRE: —the death of the pilot, and so it comes to have a very very bad connotation.

AUSTIN: Yeah. There's probably... there's definitely a point where like some shitty Principality guy is like looking, like, literally observing you as you do your work, Asper, and is just like "I don't want any of that 'brightsky' business".

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know, like that style of... Like, you don't even know what the fuck that means!

DRE: Yeah. And there's probably some Principality folks who are like "Well, they keep calling *that* night the brightsky, so they must've been really excited then."

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right. Right, and it was brightsky for them because they avoided... being caught up in it, and yet...

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm here for it. Sabil, you wanna take us home?

JANINE: Yeah. Um. Hmmm. Dre kinda did the thing I was going to do... [laughs].

DRE: Oh.

JANINE: I had to happen. It did.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: But I think your card worked for it better than mine would have, so... Or at least came to a more satisfying place... Um. Although I think... So I think I'm gonna do PERCEPTIONS, because it kind of piggybacks a little with what you established in terms of like... the fact that the outsiders are noticing our language, and it's having an impact on how that language changes. I'm gonna play that on Divine.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Because much like I imagine they have some opinions when they hear people say brightsky, and they don't really understand it, they definitely have opinions when they see...

AUSTIN: We say...

JANINE: ...a Hypha like step in shit and be like, "Oh Divine!".

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah!

DRE: Yeah.

JANINE: [laughing] That probably doesn't really go over great.

AUSTIN: [laughing] No! PERCEPTIONS says "Using this word carries a weight. When we say it, people form an image and it changes what they think of us. Make a Connection: Play on a previously defined word. Explain how using this word changes others' perception of the speaker." "In the conversation, explore the perceptions around this word." Yeah. "Shaping our own future", yeah, that's...

So. Tie it to that prompt at least. I know we're kind of rushing here as it's very late, I think you're all tired and [Dre chuckles] probably hungry, but... Give me at least a scenario here, where shaping your our own future with the perceptions of Divine changing here.

JANINE: I think this is... So this is sort of happening as the Hypha are looking for ways to pull away.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And to extract themselves. So I think the way that this ties in is just that like... Divine has been really really pervasive.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: It did really really root itself in language, it was just a thing that everyone said. And you... making it a sort of thing where if you say it in front of them, in front of outsiders... It can completely like... trade is done for the day, like that kind of thing, like they will just fucking send you home. Basically like they don't want anything to do with you at that point.

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: That is probably like a... Like a catalyst thing of like... you either stay and you really embrace your code-switching...

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Or you just make that choice. You're like—this is it, like...

AUSTIN: Right. Cool.

JANINE: So I think this becomes the big break of just like leaving those last few worlds that were a part of the original Strand.

AUSTIN: Right. If you wanna use this language—leave, but also in leaving, giving the way the Ash works, you're gonna end up outside of culture, you're not gonna end up... It's gonna

degrade eventually anyway. Um. Alright. So. That is the end of Age 3. I think that's... Let's see. So. Boom. "The last moments of the aftermath.

It is the end of the Czaten Dacha. Our horses are gone—sold, killed, lost. Our wagons burned, broken, abandoned. Unable to live among outsiders, those who survive slip away into the hills, perhaps to find new lands. What indelible signs of the old ways and old glories do they leave behind?" So. That is us entering now the aftermath here. It seems that what we know know for sure like... The Hypha have been scattered... and you know, you look at the map and you can guess they've gone some of these directions... But small, small communities, not the old way of life. Living by the Strand is gone for sure, right? And all the language begins to disappear, at least from mass use... I'm curious is there anything left of what we once had? Like, in a thousand years after this? Five hundred years? Ten thousand years? What is there to remind people of who the Hypha were? Which is especially tough given... the way we are a nomadic people.

JANINE: I think eventually it would get to the point where especially if you're scattering these groups... You're not... especially the smaller groups, are not gonna have the means to properly process all of the dead.

AUSTIN: Oh, definitely.

JANINE: So eventually you're going to get scattered remains. And those remains are gonna be like... You know, if you get the skull of someone who's Chorus Bound...

AUSTIN: God... Right.

JANINE: The... you know, because the exterior antlers are so thin and brittle, that's just gonna fall away, and you're just going to have these skulls that have these really ornate-looking—

AUSTIN: Yeah...

JANINE: —metallic antlers on them.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. Cool. Which... I wonder if those also become things that are displayed or traded or analysed, right?

DRE: Oh yeah!

AUSTIN: Like a 100%, right?

JANINE: Uh-huh.

DRE: There's a whole weird cottage bullshit industry about like boosting your Stratus powers by hunting these things down.

AUSTIN: Yup. Totally.

JANINE: Ground-up Hypha antler.

AUSTIN: Yeah. 100%. Which gets confused in the end, right? Because oh, originally it's these, but it's like no-no-no, any Hypha antler will do. Which is bullshit, right?

JANINE: Yeah. Oh yeah. Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Cool. Good. That's a great legacy to have. Um. So. "At the end of Age 3, deal out one Legacy Card to each player." Also, here's one. I think a lot of the ships just stay, right? Like because you had to make these trips in smaller ships, a lot of the big old vessels, like the old Hypha giant city-ships do just stay behind, and they leave in small groups on tiny quick-moving ships, and so. A lot of these planets just have these old arc-ships almost, right? That like... everything you would need to live a life is in those ships.

JANINE: [gasping] I, I'm sorry, I'm just imagining... I'm imagining these ships like... essentially like grounded, like landed, like on a planet with gravity, and like their systems shut off, and then people trying. like people finding one and being like "How the fuck do I get in here?"

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah. Yeah.

JANINE: "Why didn't they have any ladders?"

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: "How am I supposed to get up this twelve-foot thing into this hole?"

AUSTIN: And the answer is ladders, the answer is they build ladders, right? They go through the entire place and like turn it into something else, or unfold it until it's not a ship anymore at all, it's a city and they like rip out all the stuff. It's great, the Divine Principality fucking loves it because they can just go in and... take that technology and all that shit. Um.

"At the end of Age 3, deal out one Legacy Card to each player. After completing the Transition into the Legacy by reading the next step in the Pathway chosen, end the game by having each player do the following:

Give a narrated epilogue based on one of the Legacy Card's prompts. Take this moment to wrap up your character's story or reflect on the legacy of the Isolation. Players may go in any order.

Rather than leaving the story of the Isolation frozen, the Legacy provides a moment to reflect on the world as the Isolation leaves it. The Legacy is your time to define the place of the Isolation in history and to wrap up the stories of the individuals in it along with their language. Describe what happens during The Legacy rather than having a conversation. It may be immediately after the last conversation in Age 3, from generations in the future, a flashback, or anything in between. These narrations do not need to be in chronological order."

So. Let me get you all a card. Show this deck. Shuffle this deck..

JANINE: Alucard?

AUSTIN: Yep. Gonna get everyone an Alucard. Janine... Dre... I've not read all of these yet... And me. Go ahead and read these to yourself and then choose one to do an epilogue about.

[Dre sneezes, Austin laughs.]

DRE: Jesus.

AUSTIN: One of mine is extremely good, given...

DRE: Let me look at yours.

AUSTIN: Oh wow, yours are also extremely good! How the fuck did we draw these?!

DRE: Oh wow. Yeah. Uh-huh! Yeah.

AUSTIN: Janine, yours is fine, but like...

JANINE: Yeah, it's not as good. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Well, I'll just... Who wants to go first? [laughs]

[Pause]

AUSTIN: I will. Which is... I'm choosing "Out of the ash, a seedling sprouts." I think many many many years in the future, the descendants of Hypha who took this original Ashen route... One, literally eventually this new group of people, they're not called the Hypha anymore, they're called the Ash or the Ashen. And they create a new different nomadic culture. I don't know the specificity of it, right? I don't think that they're chasing the culture in the same way... or the spores in the same way, I don't think that they're like looking for the Strand, they don't have any of that language, right? But there is... they don't forget, maybe it's because of the proximity to Timea... [laughing] I was like "Tiara? What's my character's name?"—to Timea Asche, but the Ashen are... One, I want them to literally wear ash on their skin, like I want them to have like ashen marks, and two, I think that they become a sort of travelling nomadic group that... you know, maybe they do the work, they do some of the work that the Hypha originally did for others in service, which is like communications, and message, courier service and stuff... But I think they might actually try to carry forward some of what... the Loesse did, which is like... sort of spiritual and Stratus-related techniques. But they're just so much more primitive in terms of technological level of understanding than what the Loesse had, you know?

JANINE: You're stealing my thing, completely! [laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, I'm sorry!

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: You can do your thing then, you do your thing. I was trying to pay you homage. What is your thing?

JANINE: I was gonna pick "A hard decision made in secret." Because the whole Binding process and the Loesse techniques relies so much on apprenticeship, and relied on more dense cohabitation in order to make that stuff work...

AUSTIN: Oh, sure.

JANINE: In terms of instruction, like, you know, having like surgical theaters and stuff. If you're scattering things even more then it becomes much harder to have apprenticeship, it becomes more important to condense that instruction into materials that people can use on their own which also means like grossly grossly grossly simplifying the process...

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: And probably finding like the bare minimum of what does anything in order to be like "Here is, look, here is the absolute basic, like beginners guide" like, you know? Because the more complicated you get the more you really need that hands-on instruction. So, I think...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JANINE: The hard decision made in secret is just that like... She is maybe asked to develop a kind of system that people can self-teach this method, and she's like "What, that's never gonna fucking happen", but...

AUSTIN: [laughing] But.

JANINE: [laughs] But she's like. "Well. I can at least, at the very least get these basic elements, give these basic instructional tenets that people can use."

AUSTIN: I like that a lot. Cool.

JANINE: Maybe the difference is also that just now it is actually inlay. Now it isn't the entirety of the antler, it is just like a... filigree that's inlaid in the bone.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. Totally. U, Awesome. Asper?

DRE: Um. I'm kind of picking between two of these still...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: And I think “A ritual for the dead” is just like too [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, it’s kind of perfect, right?

DRE: And at first I was almost thinking of like a.... of Asper starting to change the ritual for the dead, to stop this kind of like grave-robbing future we’ve talked about. But I don’t know if it fits them in my image for them. I mean if they... one of the way they connect to their Aspects is having the courage to be vulnerable...

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: Then I think until like the end they continue¹ like saying there is a reason we always carried our dead with us...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: There is a reason why we did this even if it was... As it became more and more painful for us not just emotionally but like physically dangerous.

AUSTIN: Like that’s the one thing we never stopped doing. That’s never changed. We never did forget our dead.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you also thought that was the most dangerous for us from the jump, and yet.

DRE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Here we are. Yeah. That’s really good. Well. I think that is gonna do it for us tonight. Thank you for joining me on this first road Dre, the first step down the road, Dre and Janine. ...I’m making sure there’s no final steps here.

“And so ends the story of the Isolation. Take a few moments to reflect on the experience and talk openly about the game and the story you’ve told together.”

“How are you feeling? Did anything unexpected happen?” {He laughs a bit. Dre laughs.]

“Which parts of the language are going to stick with you? How will you remember this story?”
I really liked this a lot, actually.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I really like how quickly a lot of these words just *do* work, you know?

JANINE: Uh-huh.

DRE: Yeah.

¹ Misspoken as “she”.

AUSTIN: And I hope we find some way to... I suspect we will, in the same way that like.. Apostolos in COUNTER/Weight ends up being like "Oh, this is a revival of this old... the ancient culture" is how they're framed. I suspect that we'll see at least some like echo of the Hypha, whether that is through the Ashen or through the kind of smaller schools of... not even schools... of the Chorus Bond, like... I think we will see them as a species continue for sure, it's a matter of what that culture looks like, and I'm really curious about that, so. I really like all these cards a lot.

JANINE: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I really love the like the like, NARROWING, I really love the Variant rule, I really like vawtiv and vawtesh and rumvawt, like those were all really good. Not sure if there's any other things? That might be it for me.

Well. You can find me on Twitter @austin_walker. Where can people find you, Dre?

DRE: You can find me on Twitter @swandre3000.

AUSTIN: How about you, Janine?

JANINE: You can find me on Twitter @bleatingheart.

AUSTIN: As always you can support the show by going to friendsatthetable.cash. I suspect months and months and months from now we will release this and some of the other Road to Season 6 shows as a freebie, so if you're listening to this in that format then please go support us so we do more cool things like this. friendsatthetable.cash, you can also follow the show on Twitter, twitter.com/friends_table. Uh, alright, we should...

JANINE: Do we do a clap?

AUSTIN: We should time.is, yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

DRE: Oh, yeah, that website.

AUSTIN: time.is/just is what I do now. Just time.is. Uh, 20?

DRE: Sure. Alright.

[They clap.]

AUSTIN: [laughing a bit] You'll have to deal with it, Ali.

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: Alright, everybody, that's gonna do it. Have a good night!

JANINE: Bye!

DRE: Bye!