

Winter in Hieron 17: Undelivered Resignations

Transcriber: the dread biter#0090 [0:00:00-0:06:47]; Cole to finish

Austin: You see him when you are about a day's travel northeast of Rosemerrow on your journey to the New Archives. He's a man, around thirty or thirty-five, average build but with runner's legs. You know this because his pants have been torn to shreds and you can see the musculature of his calves. He steps toward you, though, in not so much a sprint or a jog as a shamle. And as he gets closer, you realize that he's only got one arm —

[Music - "Inside" begins]

Austin: — the other removed somewhere between the shoulder and elbow. His eyes are dead, but he steps closer and closer. What do you do?

Jack: Can we call out to him?

Austin: Sure. What do you say?

Jack (as Lem): Hi. Hi there, you doing okay there?

Austin: [amused] There is no response. He just gets closer.

Keith (as Fero): He said "Are you doing okay there?"

Austin: Nothin'.

Jack: ...Okay.

Keith: Does my World Talker ability help at all here?

Austin: Okay, let's get to some dice, I guess.

[**Jack** laughs]

Austin: What's that — what — hm.

Keith: That just lets me talk to basically anything, whether it's an animal or a table.

Austin: Does it say that? Does it say "whether it's an animal or a table?"

Keith: It doesn't say that — it doesn't say literally that. Um.

Jack: Keith has the innate ability to gloss RPG books into Keith.

[Laughter]

[Music plays out to end]

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker. We are continuing to play Dungeon World. Joining me today: Keith Carberry.

Keith: Hi! Hi. My name's Keith Carberry. You can find me on Twitter [@keithcarberry](#). You can find the Let's Plays that I do at [Runbutton.net](#). Little unprepared to have my name be first!

Austin: It was — I pulled it out of thin air. Sylvia¹ Clare, what about you?

Sylvia: Hi. I'm Sylvia. You can find me on Twitter [@captaintrash](#).

Austin: And Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi. I'm Jack. You can find on Twitter [@notquitereal](#), and buy any of the music on the show at [notquite.bandcamp.com](#).

Austin: There we go. So we're gonna continue playing Dungeon World, like I said. And because we're back to Dungeon World, I just wanna restate the old agenda. "My agenda is to portray a fantastic world, to fill the characters' lives with adventure, and to play to find out what happens." Like I said, we're picking back up after Rosemerrow, and I'm gonna do a little — I'm gonna do a little back-and-forth and kinda wrap some things up there as we move forward towards the New Archives. But first, let's finish talking about this guy who's walking towards you.

Keith: So, sorry. I have —

Austin: What's your ability?

Keith: I have Thing Talker, not World Talker.

Austin: Not World Talker.

Keith: Thing Talker. Yes. World Talker is I can talk to elements. Thing Talker —

Austin: But you don't have that yet, right?

Keith: No, no. Yeah, I have Thing Talker. "You see the spirits in the sand, sea and the stone. You may now apply your spirit tongue—" which lets me talk to animals "—to inanimate, natural objects, plants and rocks, or creatures made thereof, as well as animals. Thing Talker forms can be exact cop—" oh, 'cause that's for the shapeshifting part. Anyway.

Austin: Right. That's not what you're doing. Yeah.

Keith: You know, if a corpse — I think a corpse is an inanimate object. A natural, inanimate object. So I was — maybe this is like a walking corpse.

Austin: [doubtful] Mmmm. No, this is — this pers — this person isn't saying anything.

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

Keith: Is an unnatural corpse?

Austin: This person... I think you could talk to this person with the special move that you have called Talking. It's talking to a person.

[**Jack** laughs]

Keith: Okay.

Austin: He's just not saying anything.

Keith: Oh, okay, he's just not say — okay. Well. I gave it a shot.

Austin: Mhm!

Jack: Can I hop down from — are we on horseback, or how are we travelling?

Austin: That's a good question. How are you travelling? Because we need to figure out those details before we get too much farther.

Keith: I'm a horse, and Lem is on horseback.

[Laughter]

Austin: [doubtful, amused noise]

Sylvia: Wait, are you making me walk?

Jack: Well, no, I assume that we have —

Keith: It's a very long horse. It's a extra-long horse you can both be on.

Jack: Is Devar coming with us from Rosemerrow?

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: It's a limousine horse.

Jack: So we've got him. So it's —

Austin: A limousine is not a horse, no.

Keith: No, it's a limousine horse.

Austin: Oh. Mm. [negation] Mm-mm.

Jack: It's Devar, Fero, Ephrim and me?

Austin: That's correct. Did you ask Emmanuel to come with you?

Jack: Oh, man! I think I did, yeah!

Austin: He's not going anywhere.

Jack: [reproving] Austin.

Austin: What he tells you is — what he does is he says

Austin (as Emmanuel): I've got your card. I know where you'll be.

Austin: And then he explains that he knows that there will be more refugees coming to Rosemerrow, and that it is important to have someone who's on the inside there. Who can help them assimilate and avoid the Ordennans.

Jack: That's fair.

Austin: Whether they're fleeing from Velas or fleeing from Nacre. And then he says...

Austin (as Emmanuel): Plus... I'll be able to help more people. I have a friend in the Archives.

Austin: And he gives you a little wink.

Jack (as Lem): You didn't tell me about this?

[Keith laughs]

Austin (as Emmanuel): I meant — N —

Austin: And he just shakes his head.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Once people are settled, I'll send word. And I'll visit, at least. And then we'll see.

Jack (as Lem): [hopeful] Okay.

Austin: So yeah. I think that's Emmanuel.

[06:47]

Austin: Uh, but Devar is coming, so it's the four of you. And to just restate things really quick, just to get us caught up before we deal with this undead man walking towards you.

Jack: Ah, great. So, he's undead.

Austin: Oh yeah. Def. Um, the wizard, Arrell, is on his way to the New Archives you have reason to believe because he's looking to- for more information about something that will help him complete his goals. Ordenna is invading Velas in order to stop what they are calling the undead plague, and to kind of increase the reach of civilization. Of course, y'all know, I think both in and out of character, that this is more than- or just different than like a disease. Like this

isn't just like a, 'Oh, if you touch a zombie or if you get bit by a zombie, you become a zombie thing.'

In fact, let me just give a brief reminder on this because there is a zombie walking towards you. And this useful information, and also because it has been literal multiple years since we recorded the Adelaide stuff and Nacre. So, I guess Adelaide explained to Fero, as the only one here who was in that conversation because Lem was with Emmanuel at the time. Adelaide explained to Fero and Hella that she wanted a world without death. Which is originally what her father, the previous god of death wanted. And that y'all also knew that Calhoun disagreed with that. And that's why he killed his father and fled. Until Hella killed him. And then he was stuck as the god of death, until Hella killed Adelaide, and became the Queen Slayer. Shout outs to Hella. Shout outs to Ali who is listening to this.

And then Adelaide became god of death, and then because of the magical properties of Nacre, where remember, you- once you spend a night in Nacre, you can't ever leave. Um, there is like, slow spread of Adelaide's reach, right? Like that's being called a curse or a plague by the Ordennans and by regular people, cause that's what it looks like. It looks like a disease, but really it's like, Nacre is sort of expanding its borders because as people go around and sleep places, like, they're expanding the borders of Nacre and the so called curse.

Um, another thing, briefly from Marielda, and I guess this is really just for people who maybe skipped Marielda or went from- right from season 1 to season 3 of Friends at the Table without touching Marielda. The god of death- when the god of death is like, in command in a place, the way that Adelaide's getting more and more in command, that person also then just gets to decide like, 'Hey, do I let your spirit- your soul- through to whatever true death looks like? Or do I bring you back?' Like, that's what happened with Samoths. Tristero had abdicated his power in Marielda, so he was not able to prevent Samoths from actually dying and eventually getting- There's a whole- [sighs] If you haven't listened to Marielda, you should go listen to Marielda.

Um, but yeah. So, now that's the other little complicated thing is it's not just like, 'Oh, no one can really die.' It's 'Oh, when someone dies, you're probably gonna come back unless- What if Adelaide prefers you to be dead? And why would she want that? What are her goals there? Who knows? You'd have to find out. I think that's probably- Also, Ordennan steel does fuckin' kill people. That's the other one. Ordennan steel- that's a rule of this world and the undead that we set up forever ago, and is still true. Ordennan steel fucking kills you dead. That's it. Ok, what else? Ephrim, you believe that there is a thing that you can do with the blade that you have. Um, that will bring the sun back.

Keith: Was it- I thought Ephrim have- has the sun.

Austin: He has a blade. I never said that that thing was the sun.

Keith: Oh.

Austin: That was a thing that Ephrim said. Which is a totally fine thing to believe.

Sylvia: Ephrim says a lot of things.

Austin: Uh huh. [Jack laughs] Um, and I- I feel like I'm curious. Fero, what is your like, motivation at this point?

Keith: [sighs] Um... Well, I- So, I think- we left off at like, kind of a cliffhanger where maybe I was gonna stay in Rosemerrow.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Um... I don't think- I don't think Fero's good at staying in Rosemerrow or he would have been there already anyway. Um-

Austin: Right. So, what did you- In fact, we'll just do this first little you know- I kind of prepared some new love letters for everybody, but yours is pretty simple.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Um, and I'm curious. What you um- What Fero does on his last day in Rosemerrow? Like, as everyone's prepping, and we'll get to prepping in a second cause I'm curious how much- like, I am a little curious how many rations you pre- you did, and I'll set up like, how far this travel is and all that, too. But for now, I'm just curious, what did Fero do on his last day in Rosemerrow?

Keith: I think that- So, Fero snuck onto the Feritas farm. Kind of not-

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Snuck implying I didn't go to see anybody, and I didn't see anybody. Um, but I went into the barn, and in the barn, there's these big, huge- you know the sort of barn doors where it's like they meet in the center, and they're just like 20 feet tall- you have to stretch them part.

Austin: [overlapping] Uh huh. Uh huh.

Keith: You know, walking through there. It's not- it's not a hobbit sized barn- it's a- er a halfling sized barn. It's a regular barn. And uh-

Austin: Do not get us sued by the Tolkien estate, please. Thank you. [laughs]

Keith: Ok. I will promise not to incur litigation. Um, and uh, to the left of the door is a really rickety old ladder leading up to sort of a loft thing. I- I think Fero spent a lot of time on that loft sort of- maybe surrounded by old, unused bales of hay.

Austin: Hmm.

Keith: Just sitting.

Austin: And just thinking by himself?

Keith: At- [sighs] I mean thinking, but as a side effect of not trying to be anybody at all.

Austin: Hmm. Ok. That's- So, so just kind of sol- just complete solitude. No-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: No uh- Ok. Um, so let's deal with this guy.

Keith: [overlapping] For the- for the second time in Fero's- since the start of the journey here.

Austin: Yeah. Um, so back to this guy walking towards you. Nothing? No one's doing anything?

Jack: Um, can I- can I hop down from the horse?

Austin: Yes. So, you do have a horse? Just to be- Oh, the horse is Fero, right? That's right.

Keith: Right, yeah. Want me to be a horse?

Jack: Uh, no. This is a horse. No, this is just a horse.

Austin: Ok. You're not riding on Fero's back.

Jack: No.

Austin: Ok. Good to know.

Jack: That would be very weird. [**Sylvia** laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Um... Ok.

Keith: Would it be that weird? Like, after the first time? Would it be weird?

Jack: I think the first would be weird enough that there wouldn't be one.

Keith: It's like- I just like- Imagine a tool and it's like, a crazy like- 'Ah, I don't know what I would even do with this tool.' But then somebody shows you, and you use it once, then it's like, 'Oh, this is just something that I do.' It's like- using a tool.

Austin: But then also the tool is your friend.

Keith: Yeah, right.

Jack: This is like a Marielda-style flashback to Fero pitching this to Lem.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And I'm just like,

Jack (as Lem): No. No. Uh, look...

Austin: No, dude.

Jack (as Lem): Look, I have [laughs] I've- I've taken Elgash Or's horse from... a place.

Austin: Stable? Ok.

Jack: Just a big horse. Um, yeah. So, I'm gonna hop down from the horse and you know, with my sword in my hand, approach the guy, but not in the sense like, 'I'm gonna approach you and stab you with my sword.' But more like, 'Look, I've got my sword, and I'm also approaching you to try and close the distance.'

Austin: Uh huh. Ok. I really like shot in my head. It's like, it's- So, we're a day's travel outside of Rosemerrow, northeast. Still on the road. And a day's travel today is not a day's travel a year ago, right? Like, um, it used to be pretty quick to- not quick, but like, it was if you moved at a good pace, you could get between the New Archives and Rosemerrow in a week. You believe that this trip is going to take you anywhere between 3 and 5 with the snow and the dark.

Jack: Wow.

Austin: Um, at least. Who knows? We'll see what rolls reveal. And- but I do really like the shot of this as being like, both moons high in the air, and so, it's- it's fairly bright considering.

[0:15:00]

It's not- it's still nighttime, but like, lots of- lots of light coming down on an old pre-erasure road that goes up- Or actually, you know what? Maybe this road is actually more recent. This is a Rosemerrow road that goes up to meet a pre-erasure road. You can kind of see it on the map here, as kind of the brown or dirt road is where you're at. You're like here, let's say. Or probably even closer to Rosemerrow. Um, and I just like, a nice shot of just like, fields that have been abandoned and covered with the snow as you hop off your horse and walk down this- this kind of dirt path towards this man who is walking closer to you. Um, he just keeps walking. Like he's not stopping for you. He doesn't make eye contact. He's-

Jack: Is it clear that he's like- What's his gaze on?

Austin: The middle distance. Um, like I guess you could imagine he's looking at your friends behind you, but there isn't- His eyes aren't darting between different people. They're just looking forward.

Jack (as Lem): Hey, where are you going?

Austin: Nothing.

Jack: Ok.

[crosstalking]

Austin: Unless you're stopping, he walks past you.

Keith: Lem, how close are you?

Austin: He's 5 feet away from you right now.

Jack: I'm not gonna stop him. I'm just gonna- I'm gonna let him keep walking.

Austin: He walks right past you. Um, up close, you smell the scent of rotting flesh.

Jack: Oh geez.

Austin: And you can see where his bone is exposed from his arm.

Jack: Am I reminded of the um, of the- of the halfling ghosts beneath Rosemerrow?

Austin: No, not at all.

Keith: And is it- is it the sort of undead that we saw in Nacre? What like-

Austin: [stammering] What's that mean?

Keith: Like, before- Before someone goes full ghost-

Jack: No, no, no. That's what Emmanuel's like. He's fine.

Austin: Yeah. Emmanuel's fine. Emmanuel is-

[crosstalking]

Jack: He's sweet smelling.

Keith: Smell like rotting flesh. Oh, sweet smelling.

Austin: Right, Emmanuel- Emmanuel does not smell like rotting flesh.

Keith: What does he smell like?

Jack: Pastries.

Austin: Um, like pastries and perfume.

Keith: Ok.

Jack: Um, I think that like- So, this is like our first legit- I don't... I don't want to say zombie, but it might be a zombie.

Austin: You don't- It is hard to know.

Jack: Yeah. It sure is, huh? Alright. Well, it's out of Lem's hands. Good luck, folks. [**Austin** and Jack laugh]

Keith: Um, I... Ok. Um, I'm gonna un- un- turn back into a- into a halfling.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: And I'm gonna see what happens if I just give like, a little push.

Austin: He like, takes that like- He does the thing where like, bounces backwards for a second, and then steps forward again.

Keith: Ok. Sort of like- like the- that robot dog, the Boston Dynamics robot dog when they kick it?

Austin: Yes, yes. Exactly like that.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Where it's just like, 'Ah, the only thing I can do is stand up, so I'm gonna keep doing that. 'kay.'

Sylvia: Ok, can I Discern Realities?

Austin: Sure. What's that look like? Tell me what you're doing. That's a thing I want to make sure we're getting- that we're doing better.

Sylvia: Um, well, the main thing I'm looking for-

Austin: No, no. What's it look like? Tell me what Ephrim-

Sylvia: Oh, what's it- what Ephrim's doing?

Austin: Give me- Paint me a picture of what Ephrim does.

Sylvia: I mean, it is basically him looking for- like looking for tracks...

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: ...and like, footprints from where this guy's coming from. Like, did this happen recently?

Austin: Ok. I see what you're saying.

Sylvia: Uh, things like that. Yeah.

Austin: So, you're like, literally looking at the ground. You're- Ephrim is like-

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Ok. Yeah, give me a Discern Realities. Um, I just- I bring this up because we had a really great comment from Hamish, who built the...

Jack: Sprawl!

Austin: ... Sprawl which was like- One of his things that he said was really great about Counter/weight with us was that we got very good at describing our- our specific actions. Because we were really engaged with the world and like, building like pictures of it. But that recently we've gotten into the bad habit, and I take this com- I take this criticism completely accurate- I think it's completely accurate- and just saying, 'I attack him.'

Sylvia: Yeah. [**Jack** laughs]

Austin: And like, 'I want to hack and slash'.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Which is not- which is us at our worst, so like, we should-

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: We should really work on that.

Jack: That's really good. Thanks Hamish.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely.

Sylvia: Yeah. Um... so I think... Uh, I got a 12.

Austin: You got a 12. Hey, that's good. 12 is really good.

Sylvia: Um, so-

Austin: So, you get three questions, right? Is that right? Or am I wrong?

Sylvia: Yeah. So, the first thing I'm going to ask is the obvious one. What happened here recently?

Austin: Um, so I think you actually notice this from looking at him. Um, he looks like he was attacked by animals. You can see that the clothes around his- his legs- the pants around his legs that were ripped- He has- he has like, bite marks in his- in his musculature. And his pants are like, torn off. Um, he has blood and scars on his remaining right hand from- clearly from pushing like a wolf or a bear or some sort of animal away.

And then, the- on first glance, it looks like maybe something just ripped his arm off or broke it or something. And then you do notice that the- and you notice this because of who you are- um, the wound on the arm- There is a degree of physical force ripping it, but there are also signs of a burn. Of a cauterization. Like not clean in any way. [laughs lightly] Um... this isn't a lightsaber cut, right?

Sylvia: Um, ok. Yeah.

Austin: But it's this strange mix of- of heat and just pure physical force.

Sylvia: Ok. [exhales] Um, ok. Oh god. I've got 2 more questions.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: I've never rolled this well on Discern Realities. Um, what should I be on the lookout for?

Austin: Good question. Um, [sighs] Probably just whatever is ahead, right? Um, there are- there are no signs that he was unprepared. Like, he has his shoes all the way on. He was- he's wearing like- his top is a leather jerkin. This wasn't an ambush. This- he seems to have just been in his daily whatever he does. Like, he's just a guy, and like, he wasn't attacked in his sleep or something. So, you get the impression that maybe whatever the next settlement is up ahead, you should be careful going into it.

Sylvia: Um, hmm. Not sure what to use for my last one here. Um...

Jack: Have you got a question-

Keith: What are the-

Jack: Oh, no. Go on.

Keith: Oh, I was gonna ask what the rest of the questions were cause I can't remember.

Sylvia: Uh so-

Austin: It's- go ahead. I'll let you do it, Sylvi.

Sylvia: There's um, What is about to happen? What here is useful or valuable to me? Who is really in control here? And what here is not what it appears to be?

Jack: The thing that's concerning me right now is um, just based on the kind of presentation of this guy is whether or not what he has is infectious in some way. And I wonder whether or not there's a question that you could ask that might reveal that in the hopes that we could maybe nip that in the bud if that was an issue. Cause if he's going back the way we've come, he's gonna hit Rosemerrow.

Keith: The one that always sticks for me is 'what here is not what it appears to be'.

Sylvia: That's what I was kind of leaning towards. Um, I think that could theoretically maybe address both. Cause I did ask 'what should I be on the lookout for', but I don't know if that would cover infectious diseases.

Keith: It wouldn't? Like, touching this person would hurt-

Austin: Yeah, I probably wouldn't give that to you on- on- Or maybe I would. Like, if there was a visible sign that it was contagious, I would have given that to you.

Sylvia: Yeah. Uh huh.

Austin: But um, but there isn't anything like that.

Sylvia: Yeah. Uh, I think I will go with what here is not what it appears to be just because I feel like that's the most we can get- what we can get the most from.

Austin: I'm trying to think if there is any way I can give you the thing I want to give you here. [sighs] Or uh, to be clear, there isn't a third- there's isn't a fact that you would have gotten from a different question that I'm like holding on for if only you had picked the right question.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: There's a fact that I think a different observer might have been able to get maybe, but you just might not have enough information yet to get the thing that is not-

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Um, as far as you can tell, everything here is what it appears to be. This guy is undead.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Austin: He- His wounds would have been fatal. There is no way he's alive. Um, you know there's no sense of like, um... [sighs] There's no sense that he- that his heart is beating or anything like that. Like, if you had checked him for a pulse, you wouldn't have found one. Um, [sighs] I'm trying to think if there's any other- Um, ok. You get- you get close enough to him at one point, where he does make eye contact briefly and then looks back past you. Which suggests that he is not- He is not mindless. Like he's not-

Jack: He's in there.

Austin: He's- Yes. There is a him.

Jack: Yeah. Hmm. Do you want to make a move on him, Fero? Or-

Keith: Yes. I want to- to parley.

Jack: I don't think that's- Ok.

Austin: Tell me what- What do you do? No, again, tell me what you do.

Keith: Ok. I have food.

Austin: Hm.

Keith: I have r- I have meat food. And I'm going to take it out of my pocket, unwrap it cause it's not just loose meat in my pocket- that's just- [**Jack** laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: And you know what? It's a satchel. It's not in my pocket, and I'm sorry that I said pocket.

Austin: That's fine.

Keith: Um,

Austin: I don't want you to get sued from the- the Pocket Foundation.

Keith: No. Big Pocket.

Austin: Without getting license. Big- By Big Pocket. [**Keith** and **Jack** laugh] By the JNCO Jeans Company.

Keith: Yeah. I'm gonna- Uh, and I'm just gonna sorta like, sorta just like waft it. I'm gonna waft it tow- at him.

Austin: Ok, so this- Yeah, parley says when you have leverage over on a GM character and try and manipulate them, leverage is something they need or want. Um, so yeah. Give me a charisma roll.

Keith: Alright. That is... It's a 9.

Austin: Alright, so that's a 9. So, on parley, on a 7-9 they will do what you ask, but they need some concrete assurance of your promise right now. So, what are you asking of him?

Keith: I think that I- I think that I want ackn- acknowledgement, hopefully- words or sounds, but at least sort of a- an acknowledgement of me. That's what I want. I want to be looked at...

Austin: Right.

Keith: ...and hopefully talked to.

Austin: He- So, if he smells it, and then he does the thing where he like, turns slowly back at you, and then like, raises eyebrows and leans forward a little bit.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And is like,

Austin (as **unnamed undead**): Hmm [sniffs the air]

Austin: And like-

Keith (as **Fero**): Oohhh. It said, 'Hmm.'

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: So, if I- so the assurance, can I break off- I want to break off a piece and give it to him.

Austin: Sure. Um, he- he takes it and then just like- What type of meat is it? Like, give me an image.

Keith: Um, I- I assume that it's probably- You know what? At- when I was at the Faritas farm, I probably raided the fridge- and it's beef. It's kind of- like, a strip of beef.

Austin: Hmm, ok. Um, he just like, bites into it and rips a piece off. And begins like, open-mouth chewing it.

Keith: Uh huh.

Austin: And then like, he swallows it, and then the second piece he eats, he like, close-mouth shews it. And like, is a little bit more- you can see a little bit of light coming back to his eyes.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Um, and then he- he just like, finishes the whole thing and then just sits on the ground.
[Keith laughs] So-

Jack: Hey, I take that back. That parley went great.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Thank you. Does- He doesn't say anything? He just sits?

Austin: Just sits, and now is like, again looking off into the distance back the direction he came this time.

Keith: Um, I give my canteen of water.

Austin: He... [soft laugh] He- he drinks from it and then hands it back to you.

Keith (as Fero): Thank you.

Austin: Nothin'. He has like a- He looks really scared.

Keith: Ok, well that's not good. I-

[crosstalk]

Jack: Oh, I- Oh. I think know what to do.

Keith: Do I- Ok.

Jack: I have a move called Charming and Open. Which is not the best named move for what I want here, but it begins with the words, 'when you speak frankly with someone' which I think is- is actually pretty fitting.

Austin: Hm. So, what do you- what's- What do you do?

Jack: So, I'm gonna walk over, and he's a human, right?

Austin: Uh, yes. He is a human. I should have been clear.

Jack: Um, so I'm gonna walk over, and I'm going to take off my bag, and I'm gonna sit down opposite him.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: And I'm going to... try and make eye contact with him. And if that's not an option, stop trying to pursue that. Like it's-

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: I'm not gonna try and get up in his face. I'm going to-

Keith: Yeah, that's neither charming nor open. **[Austin laughs]**

Jack: I'm gonna thank him for stopping.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: And then I- I get to ask him a question from a list and he must answer truthfully, then may ask me a question from the list.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: And I must answer truthfully, too.

Austin: Oh, interesting. Ok.

Jack: Do you want to run down the questions?

Austin: Yeah. So, you can ask 'whom do you serve?', 'what do you wish I would do?', 'how can I get you to blank?', 'what are you really feeling right now?', and 'what do you most desire?'.

Keith: I- I like 'how do I get you to communicate?' is what I like.

Jack: Yeah, my concern with that is that the answer he's going to give is 'you can't. I don't want to'.

Keith: Yeah, well...

Jack: Uh, which is a truthful answer. Like, that's a- that's a fair answer.

Keith: Yeah, no. But that's, you know. It either works or it doesn't, I guess.

Jack: I mean, I feel that that's kind of a non-starter though at that point. Um, there's a danger when- when kind of given questions like this by the game to- to try and play it like a sort of a correct answer situation. Try and second guess what **Austin's** doing. [Austin makes an affirmative noise] And I don't think that is helpful or narratively interesting in the long-run.

Austin: Yeah, try to ask the question you think Lem would ask instead.

Jack: Yeah. Um, so I- I think the question I think Lem would ask is 'what do you wish I would do?' I mean, this move is called Charming and Open, and he's just sat down in front of this guy.

Austin: Um, he just like, looks you in the eye, and he says like,

Austin (as unnamed undead): Help me.

Austin: And then it looks like he's crying, but there are no tears coming out. He starts bawling like, he makes the sounds of so- of sobbing. Like, the almost laughter of sobbing. The like, impossible to hold down cries coming out from your esophagus. Um, but there's no liquid in his eye for it to come out.

Jack (as Lem): It's ok. It's ok. We can help. Um, it's ok. How long have you been on the road?

[0:30:00]

Austin (as unnamed undead): I don't know. I don't know. A day- a week. A day?

Jack (as Lem): That's ok.

Austin (as unnamed undead): It's been dark. It's been so dark.

Jack (as Lem): Yeah. Uh huh. Yep. Uh, yeah. We've been in Rosemerrow, and it's just... it's pretty bad there.

Austin (as unnamed undead): No.

Jack (as Lem): No?

Austin (as unnamed undead): They were gonna- They were gonna help me in Rosemerrow.

Jack (as Lem): Who?

Austin (as unnamed undead): There are people in Rosemerrow.

Jack (as Lem): No, there are people.

Austin (as unnamed undead): I was gonna go to Rosemerrow, and they were gonna help me in Rosemerrow.

Jack (as Lem): No, no, no, no. There are people. There are people. There are people. Uh, who are you looking for?

Austin (as unnamed undead): [pauses, exhales false starts] Someone to help me.

Jack (as Lem): Just someone. Just someone to help you.

Austin (as unnamed undead): Someone told me there were- things were still good in Rosemerrow.

Jack (as Lem): Yeah, they're um- I think if you- I don't know if you're in any shape to get to Rosemerrow, mate.

Austin: And he just like, looks down at the snow and like lowers his head and let's his arm drop to the side.

Jack (as Lem): It's ok.

Austin: And like pulls his knees up closer to him and just shuts down.

Jack: He's just lost consciousness?

Austin: No. He's just looking down. Isn't respond- He's not responsive anymore. And he doesn't ask you a question.

Sylvia: Um, can I- So, I'm assuming I just- Ephrim's outfit has a cloak of some sort-

Austin: Sure.

Sylvia: Could I rip a part of that off and- It's more of a symbolic thing than anything, but wrap it around where his arm has been severed.

Austin: Totally.

Sylvia: So, it's covered up.

Austin: Yeah, he is- he's like, he's like deadweight. He totally lets you do this. No problem.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Jack: Um, ok. [sighs]

Austin: I want to reiterate that he smells terrible.

Sylvia: Oh. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Um, yeah. I think I'm just posing this question to the rest of you. Like,

Jack (as Lem): We can't just leave him here, right? [**Sylvia** sighs]

Keith (as Fero): We can, but it would suck.

Jack (as Lem): Ephrim?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): I just- I don't know what we're to do. We can't go back. We can't go back to Rosemerrow.

Austin: Devar is- Yeah, Devar is like,

Austin (as Devar): Man, I don't think there's anything we can do for him.

Jack (as Lem): We can take him with us, Devar.

Austin (as Devar): To where?

Jack (as Lem): To the Archives.

Austin (as Devar): That boy is- that boy is dead.

Jack (as Lem): I mean, how long is it gonna take us to get there from now? 3, 4 weeks?

Austin (as Devar): Yeah, and he needs to eat. We didn't pack an extra person's worth of food, man.

Jack (as Lem): And he's probably not gonna like-

Keith (as Fero): I can get food. I'm like, good at that.

Jack (as Lem): Oh, that's true. He's probably not gonna like-

Jack: And I like, walk over and kind of whisper it,

Jack (as Lem): Is he gonna like, hold together for that long?

Keith (as Fero): Oh, also I packed for myself, but I don't need to eat. So, he can have my food.

Jack (as Lem): Oh.

Austin: Oh, did you- Why would you have packed food for yourself then?

Jack: Oh actually.

Keith: Because I like to eat. This is established, that I like to eat.

Austin: Oh, you do like to eat. That's true. That is established.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, this is true.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I mean-

Austin (as Devar): Alright then, fine. That's alright. Alright, but like, we can't pick up every lost puppy dog, y'all.

Keith (as Fero): This is just one puppy dog.

Austin (as Devar): Yeah, ok.

Jack (as Lem): Uh, no. Hang on. This is- This is new. I've never seen this before. And I've been to some places.

Austin (as Devar): No, I told you about the stories. I told you that things near the Archives were not so good with the whole undead thing. This isn't new.

Jack (as Lem): You think we'd just be bringing him back to- to more- more of what he is?

Austin (as Devar): No, I haven't been back in a minute, but- Let's just be careful, alright?

Jack (as Lem): Ok.

Austin (as Devar): I'm not sayin' I don't trust him. I'm just. [sighs] I don't know.

Jack (as Lem): No, I feel you.

Jack: Have you got like a cart?

Austin: Ok, let's- Good question. Pause. Let's talk about how you've prepared for this.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: Um, so I'm gonna say that this is between 3 and 5 weeks of travel. Every day of travel, unless you are apparently a druid, requires you eat. [Jack laughs] Um, and the way that that like, base level, just pure whatever ration- they don't taste great; they don't taste bad- costs 3 coins. And each ration gives you 5 uses. So like, how many packs of rations did you buy? Let's start there.

Jack: Oh my god. I thought you were gonna finish that sentence by doing the maths for us.

Austin: Oh, I can have the math. Like, but the question ends up being like, are you prepped for...

Keith: [overlapping] We are prepped for a- We are-

Austin: ...a 3 week trip or a 5 week trip? Or- Or more than that?

Keith: I bet that we prepped for a even month. For 3 people.

Austin: Four people. Cause Devar-

Keith: Sorry. Yes four people. Yeah.

Austin: Devar also bought food. Devar provided his own rations for 4 weeks. Um, if that's the case, then that is 4- er no, that is... 7 times- What's 7 times 4? 28. Is that right? 7- Yeah, 28. So, that would be 28 divided by 5, which is- round up to 30. So, that would be-

Sylvia: Ye- Around 6.

Austin: 18 coins. You'd need 18 coins to get that many rations.

Keith: I'm very rich.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. I think everybody in this party is super fucking rich, right?

Jack: Ok. Can I- Can I take enough for another week?

Austin: Yeah, totally. Just add another-

Jack: So, that's- Uh, how much is that? How much is one?

Austin: One is 3 coin.

Jack: 21, ok.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-

Jack: Because like, I've traveled on this road before presumably. Not- not at all in these conditions.

Austin: Yes. Not in the snow and the dark, but yeah.

Jack: But I think that like, so... So, and I think Lem's memory of this journey is very much like- like a memory of a very long journey that you have, which is you just remember the most striking bits. Like, the bit where a road turns very suddenly.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Or where the you know, the- the camber becomes like, an escarpment and just drops away down a mountain or whatever.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And so, as far as Lem's concerned, the only bits he can really remember are tough.

Keith: Uh huh.

Jack: And he knows that it's snowing, so I think- I think I've packed extra based on that.

Austin: Ok. So, then the... the way that works is- So, you spend that coin. Then also if you want horses, it is 75 coins for a horse. Which can carry 10 things- load 10. And then you do a cart and a donkey- All this stuff is on page... 328.

Jack: Um, and so I'll just write down a month of rations.

Keith: So- Uh-

Austin: Yeah. That works. Or you did 5- did 5 weeks, right?

Jack: Yeah, 5 weeks.

Keith: I can be- I can be our carting animal.

Austin: Totally. So, you just want a cart then.

Keith: Yeah, we just need the cart, I guess we don't need the-

Jack: Well....

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: No, I'm buying a horse.

Austin: Well, you're buying a horse. Right, right, right, right. But- which is 75 coin.

Keith: Wait I thought you said that you stole it from Morbash.

Austin: Oh yeah, you don't need to buy one at all.

Jack: Uh, I took it from Egash Or.

Austin: Yeah. Elgash Or.

Keith: Or Elgash Or. Sorry. Yeah.

Jack: Sure. What's Elgash Or's horse called?

Austin: What is Elgash Or's horse called?

Keith: Elgash Horse.

Jack: Nope. [laughs]

Austin: It super isn't. Um, I think he's like the opposite of a Geralt situation in that he never names his horses.

Jack: So, I've just got a horse that doesn't-

Austin: You've got horse.

Jack: Great.

Austin: You've got a horse and plant.

Jack: Yep. Uh huh. This confused Lem for days. Trying to work out what he'd call it.

Austin: Uh huh. Did he ever settle on a name?

Jack: Nah, Lem has just gone like, 'Well, fine. I guess I got a- It only answers to horse now, I suppose. So, that's great.'

Austin: Um, good. Good. [laughs] Uh, Devar's horse's name is Tyler. Um, which I know what you're thinking- not a good horse name, but he liked it, so... **[Jack laughs]**

Jack: This is like calling a horse Derek.

Austin (as Devar): Yeah. That was my last horse.

Austin: Says Devar. **[Jack laughs]**

[crosstalking]

Jack: Uh, and so everyone else is-

Austin: Uh, what else is-

Jack: Oh, Ephrim's got a horse.

Sylvia: Yeah, I also- I have a horse, as well.

Austin: What's your horse's name?

Sylvia: Oh god. Um-

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Fuck. Um [laughs] The only name that's in my head right now is Walter, which is not a good name. But it's- Walter the horse.

Austin: There it is. Walter. Walter and Tyler. Yep. Uh huh. Walter, Tyler, Horse, and Fero. All the animals. [**Jack** laughs] Um, perfect.

Jack: I cannot believe that we have a reputation as a show for naming things elegantly and aptly. [**Austin** laughs]

Sylvia: It's um-

Jack: We've ended up with Walter, Tyler, Horse, and Fero.

Austin: And Fero, the other party member.

Keith: We also- hold on. But that's- That's true, but we also have a reputation of being- of being pretty funny.

[crosstalking]

Jack: That's actually-

Austin: And these are good names.

Keith: And sometimes the being funny part wins out over the being elegant and apt. [**Jack** laughs]

Austin: Uh huh. Fair.

Sylvia: Listen, Walter was the name of Ephrim's horse as a child. It's- it's nostalgic.

[crosstalking]

Austin: Fair, fair.

Sylvia: There's many reasons for it.

Jack: Oh. Such a shame about that horse. You could see the smoke for miles. [**Austin** laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. Listen. Puberty's rough for an immolator. [**Jack** laughs] Things happen. You can't control it.

Jack: Oh dear.

Austin: Alright. So-

Jack: So, do you we just put- we put the guy- we put-

Austin: Well, so the cart is [typing noise] So, the cart that you have-

Keith: Is after the horse, cause we don't want to put the cart before the horse.

Austin: Oh my fucking god.

Jack: I'm gonna mute my microphone and take my headphone off.

Sylvia: Jesus. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Austin: The- so, I'm gonna charge you- I'm gonna charge you 30 for this cart.

Jack: Ok, so I'll take 10 each.

Austin: I'm gonna give it load 30. Then the thing with that that was that 25 of that cart is rations. So, there are only 5 load left. So like, he could just barely fit in there is what I'll say.

Jack: Ok. And he can't support himself on a horse.

Austin: No.

Jack: He'll just fall off.

Austin: He'll just fall right off. And he doesn't like- If you lay him down, he goes back to this like, kneeling position in the back of the cart.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: He won't lay down. He wants to be upright. But not standing. Um, cool.

Jack: I guess he's like- Yeah.

Austin: Oh boy.

Sylvia: What's his name?

Jack: We don't know.

Sylvia: I want to ask him what his name it.

Jack: Oh, I don't think that's-

Sylvia: No, I want to ask.

Austin: You ask him, and that day he doesn't tell you. The next day, he doesn't tell you. The third day he just says like,

Austin (as unnamed undead): Jeremy.

Jack (as Lem): Ok.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Ok.

Keith (as Fero): That was name of one of Ephrim's horses.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): The third one.

Austin: The third one, yeah. Great. Alright, so- let's do a check we haven't done since that time the- our friends, the boat pirates showed up. Which is a move called... Undertake a Perilous Journey.

Jack: [laughs] Oh no.

Austin: When you travel through hostile territory, choose one member of the party to act as trailblazer, one to scout ahead, and one to be quartermaster. Each character with a job to do rolls + Wisdom. So, you just gotta roll + wisdom to decide which one you are each.

Keith: Uh-

Austin: Also, real quick. Does anyone want to buy anything else before you go? Before food- besides food. You have all that money, and so like, I want to make sure if you want somethin' that's like before you leave Rosemerrow is the time.

Keith: Yeah. Is um- Hm.

Austin: Like, more adventuring gear might be a good idea. Herbs or poultices or bandages. Or potions. All that stuff is on page 326.

Keith: You know what? Can I-

Austin: You need armor-

Keith: Can I full up myself on halfling pipeleaf?

Austin: Totally. That is uh, some money. That is 6- er 5 coins.

Keith: 6- oh, 5.

Austin: 5 coins for 6 uses.

Keith: 5 coins for 6.

Austin: And it's 0 weight.

Jack: What does halfling pipe leaf do?

Keith: Alright, so that would give me 10 uses.

Austin: When you share halfling pipeleaf with someone, expend two uses and take +1 forward to parley with them.

Jack: Oh, nice. Nice.

Keith: Yeah. Um, and ok. Can I- So, my armor- I have leather armor.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: It's worn. Can I get leather armor that will protect me more than 1? Or is all leather armor 1?

Austin: All leather armor is one.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Worn is a thing for me to fuck you over with.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Um, you could get lea- Instead of-

Keith: Then can I get a better leather armor with a better tag?

Austin: Yep. Yes, totally.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: So, if you spent like, 20 coin, I would let you go leather armor, not worn. And if you spent 30 coin, you could do- add another tag.

Keith: Ok, what's a good- What's a good armor tag, guys?

Austin: That's a good question.

Jack: Chitinous.

Austin: That's like a cool tag. That's like a cool, Morrowind tag for armor.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I'm just- I'm [sighs] I don't want to- to get onto too much of a diversion, but I'm just scrolling through this, and we can pay for an assassination if that's something we want to do.

Keith: I do have- I actually have-

Jack: We can afford about 3 of those.

Keith: I actually have that written down to like- as a thing like, 'Hey, just remember you can pay for a hit.'

Austin: Yeah. You- The thing is to remember is like, 'Alright. Who are you paying for it? How do you know that person? How do you- Who do you go to for that?'

Keith: Yeah.

[crosstalking begins]

Jack: Oh, I tell you who- in like perfect knowledge-

Keith: I- There's

Austin: You know what's good?

Jack: Oh yeah?

Austin: You know what's good about this book is an assassination is 120 coins, and then literally this thing above it is a run of the mill killing for 5.

Jack: I know who my pick for both would be. And I don't think Lem knows them. And it's Claret Holiday.

Austin: Yes. Good. Uh huh. That would be a good p- a good pick.

Sylvia: I think I'm also gonna get some armor, as well.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: The same leather armor.

Austin: Same leather, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I honestly don't think there is much scale or plate armor. Like-

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: A thing I've been thinking about a lot lately is I think the only nice armor you've ever seen in your lives has been the guards in Nacre. And what Hadrian wears and sort of what Hella wears. But Hella's, I even imagine as kind of put to- I guess Hella's post-Queen Killer is way better than Hella's pre-Queen Killer. Like, they gave her good fucking armor and Ordenna knows how to make armor. But like, Velas and Rosemerrow like- Making armor is a- is a hard industry. Like, it's tough to know that skill. And we're post- post- apocalypse, but we're not just

like, back to normal where there is big, blacksmiths making cool-looking armor. Like, just good armor is a rarity in this world still.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Lots of chainmail. Lots of leather. Some scalemail, but like, scalemail the way like, the thatched roof of a house is like pulled together from a bunch of different things. Like, not- not elegant scalemail. Like Guild Wars 2 scalemail.

Keith: Ok, I thought of a tag.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: Intricate.

Austin: Ooo. Yes. Good tag.

Keith: Which is not ornate specifically because...

Austin: Right.

Keith: ...you know, I'm still a woods weirdo.

Austin: A wood boy. Yeah, I gotcha.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: But you're- but you're- it's intricate. So, what's- what makes it intricate?

Keith: Um, I think that it's like, all of the- all of the- it is made of a bunch of different leather pieces, and they are woven together in a way that looks- not looks- It is. It's very complicated. Uh-

Austin: So, you look like a final fantasy character. Got it.

Keith: Yes. Ok. Sure. Final Fantasy character.

Austin: Belts, zippers.

Keith: No, there's no belts.

Austin: Pockets.

Keith: Did I say belts? May- you know what?

Jack: That's just orc armor.

Keith: There's a big- there's one big pocket because I have been bought by [Keith and Jack laugh] JNCO.

Austin: By Big Pocket. Gotcha.

Keith: Is it like a leather hoodie? [Keith laughs]

Austin: Fuck. [Sylvia laughs] I can't believe we're a Ubisoft game.

Sylvia: Um, I actually do want to have the ornate tag on mine. Would that be thirty gold, as well?

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Ok.

[0:45:00]

Austin: Uh, you know what? It's ornate. It's 40 gold. It's 40 coin.

Sylvia: Ok. No worries. I can- It's worth it.

Austin: Yeah, you're both- You're all so rich. Uh-

Keith: Yeah. Can I- You know what? I'm gonna get a- while I'm in Rosemerrow...

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: I'm gonna get a haircut.

Austin: Oh, give me 2 coin.

Keith: Alright.

Austin: Oh yeah. I mean, you can get more. You can get a more expensive thing.

Jack: It's 3 coin less than a run of the mill killing.

Austin: [laughs] It is.

Keith: I can get like a- John Edwards haircut?

Austin: If you spend 5 coin, you'll get a killer haircut.

Keith: Alright. Sure. I got a killer haircut and this beard trim.

Austin: Take +1 on your next charisma thing.

Keith: Alright.

Austin: Alright. [quietly] +1 forward-

Keith: Oh, have we healed up since uh...

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Also heal up all the way. I'm not gonna make you pay for that separate. Just- I want you to be in a decent place here. Um, ok. Alright, so that's everything. Everyone's bought stuff? Fero got a new bow. Everyone has rations. Everyone got horses. Good names. Everything's settled. Everything's good to go. And now, it is time-

Keith: I want to point out that I- I did not get a horse cause I am a horse.

Austin: Ok. You're a horse. Right. Now it is time to Undertake a Perilous Journey. When you travel through hostile territory, which this is, partially from just things and partially from just the weather and the dark, you choose one member of the party to act as trailblazer, one to scout ahead, and one to be quartermaster. Each character with a job to do rolls + Wisdom.

On a 10+, the quartermaster reduces the number of rations required by one, the trailblazer reduces the amount of time it takes to reach your destination I'll say how much, the scout will spot any trouble quick enough to let you get the drop on it. On a 7-9, each role performs their job as expected. The normal number of rations are consumed, the journey takes about as long as expected, no one gets the drop on you but you don't get the drop on them either. So, who is doing what?

Jack: I'm prepared to trailblaze this cause I know the road.

Austin: Hm. Sure.

Keith: Um, sorry. What are the other 2 roles?

[overlapping]

Jack: Quartermaster and-

Austin: Scout and quartermaster.

Keith: I've gotta be the scout, right?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. That makes sense.

Sylvia: Yeah, so I guess I'll be quartermaster then.

Austin: Nice.

Keith: I've also got dope wis, so.

Austin: You do have dope wis. I guess that's the other thing to think about here, is if you wanted to- to game it- Like, who- what- which of these is the most important for you? But you don't have to do it that way. You could just the way where-

Keith: Probably scout. Or what's- trailblazer? Trail master? Trailmen? What was the other one?

Jack: Trailblazer.

Austin: Trail- Trailmix. Yeah.

Keith: Trail...mix. Yeah.

Austin: Uh, trailblazer is- is how long it takes to get there. I think scout is probably the one to be [laughs] careful with, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Especially after we picked up a guy who just got literally torn apart.

Austin: His name is Jeremy. Thank you.

Sylvia: Jeremy. I was the one who ask that.

Austin: That's- you were.

Sylvia: I should have remember- I remember that.

Austin: Uh huh. [typing] There we go. Um, I'm also counting Devar as a... Let's decide. What is he? Hm... not a warri-. I'm trying to figure out which hireling he is here. Um, yeah. I- Hm...

Keith: Not a burglar?

Austin: No, he's definitely not a burglar. He's like, an academic, you know?

Keith: Yeah. But he's an- he's a New Archives academic.

Austin: Yeah. He's not like- But he's not like a trap-disarmer, is he? Uh, maybe he is. Maybe he can do a little bit of that. You know what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna give him- So, the way that these work- hirelings work- they get um... They have a loyalty, a main skill, and then 0 or more secondary skills. He has a loyalty of- let's see. [thinking noises] Yeah, things definitely changed. That's true. Um... his cost is he really wants this to be- he really wants to find uncovered knowledge as he plays- or as he works for- with you all on this trip. [Jack laughs] And like, the second it feels like this is- the second that like, this- that he feels like that's not possible with you, that will lower his loyalty. Um, his loyalty is 3 by default. Um- 2- is anything start-

Keith: What's the max?

Austin: It doesn't say, but starting loyalty higher than 2 is unusual as is starting loyalty below zero. Uh, so he gets- he has a 3 which is really good.

Jack: Nice.

Austin: And then he has a skill of- I'll give him 1 in experimental trap disarming, a 1 in a hero's welcome, um and then-

Jack: What is hero's welcome?

Austin: Uh, when you enter a place of food, drink, or entertainment, you will be treated as a friend by everyone present, unless your actions prove otherwise.

Jack: Nice.

Austin: He's just good like that. Uh, and then-

Jack: Does he know-

Austin: I'll give him 1 in warrior actually. Where you- if you're doing an attack alongside him, he- he'll add one to the damage done. Just like a +1.

Jack: Does he know pattern magic?

Austin: Um, a certain sort. You can talk to him about it.

Keith: Well- he was the one who was talking about like, 'hey, we just do- magic now.' Right? That was-

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: Well, it's compl- sort of. A little- you'll see.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: You'll get there.

Keith: We'll get there.

Austin: Alright, so let's get those wisdom rolls going.

Jack: Ok. Alright. Wisdom roll coming up. Clicking the button.

Austin: Uh, so you are trailblazing.

Jack: Shit.

Austin: That's a 7. That's fine.

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: 7-9, it's as expected. Alright. Let's see scout. Keith?

Keith: Um, scout is-

Austin: Fero?

Keith: Sorry, it's just a wisdom roll?"

Austin: Just wis. Everything's wisdom. That's also a 7. And for Ephrim?

Sylvia: A 5.

Austin: There's a 5. **[Sylvia laughs]** Ok. Well, good news, everybody. Food is a problem. Food is a serious problem. It turns out that Jeremy is ravenous, and you put him back there with his- with the food. And the- So, right now, you, you basically instead of- he takes- he takes twice as much food as a normal person. Um, so if- if he would be taking normally 1 a day, it's gonna take you 4 weeks to make this trip, so it should have been that he eats, what is that? That's 28 pieces of food? 28 rations? He instead eating 56 rations.

Jack: What? **[laughs]**

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith (as Fero): Jeremy! Stop.

Austin: He doesn't respond.

Jack: How do we mark this down, Austin? Cause we all have a bun- we have different numbers of rations in our inventory.

Austin: Well, there are- how many of them are in the back of the thing? He eats- So, in the back of the **[laughs]** In the back of the- the thing there are 25 things of rations. 25 weight of rations.

Jack: Ok, and a ration is 5, right?

Austin: Is 5 uses, yep.

Jack: Uh huh. So, he eats 10.

Keith: A total of a 119, if we count Jack's extra week.

Austin: Wait, what?

Keith: Sorry. Number of rations I thought that's what we were working out. So, it's 4 times-

Austin: No, we're working out how many he ate specifically.

Keith: How many he ate, ok.

Austin: Yeah. So, he basically ate 2 months worth. He basically ate, yeah. 56 uses which is...

Jack: Great.

Austin: ...7 and a ha- a little over 7 rations of the total are gone.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: Um, it was just a mix back there, so he just ate 7 of that mix that were in the back of the cart. So, instead of having a bunch, you have less than a bunch.

Jack: [laughing] Ok.

Austin: At some point, the final week of this trip is going to be rough.

Keith: Well, I can- I can like, hunt very well.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Totally. But you'll have to make those rolls once it's time to do that.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Ah, Jeremy.

Austin: So, on your way, a couple of other things happen. One of them is another little love letter, and this one's for Ephrim. Um, so, one night while keeping watch, which- which obviously there are- the scout roll looks ahead to make sure your not being ambushed, but when you make camp you still have to like, have people make sure that you're not going to get jumped. And one night while keeping watch, you hear a snap, but it's not like someone stepped on wood. It's like someone lit a fire. It's like the crackle of a fire. And you investigate it, and you notice in the distance that there is a light of a small flame.

And when you get a little closer, you notice that there is a small creature that's like, halfling sized. Maybe a little shorter than a halfling. And it's hard to tell in the dark, but it's like, scaley. Like a sacely or a furr- like scale and fur mixed together. It has like, a long snout and big bright eyes. And she is like, sitting by the fire. She's not sitting by the fire, she's sitting just outside the light of the fire. It's as though- as if she had set a trap, but then you just totally sneak up on her, and she's a little- she's a little cobbin with like, leather armor on with daggers and a hood up around her- her big head. Her big, dog-lizard head.

And you are able to like, get the drop on her, and she tells you that her name is Highwater, and that after a little bit of interrogation, she reveals that she was a spy from the Church of the Dark Sun. And she's following you. And in the middle of this interrogation, it becomes clear that like, she is more impressed with your power than she is committed to the cause. Um, and in that moment, you realize that you could sway her using like- obviously you've always been a charming person, but this feels like a gift is coming alive in you. And that you could tempt her weak mind with your inner fire. Tell me what this looks like, and then give me a roll.

Sylvia: Ok. I think- I mean, I described it in the um, last couple sessions when I did it with- Oh, what was his name? Obelday.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Um, it's sort of a variation on my Give me fuel, Give me fire, which I still need to get a better name for.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Basically, the way I see it is, Ephrim's eyes almost take on the same sort of like, color as the flame that he wields.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: It's not like- His eyes don't just start glowing, but it's like this faint, um this faint just quality added to them.

Austin: Right.

Sylvia: That makes them cap- like, more captivating and um, it- the feeling like, real physical difference in it, he seems more confident when he's talking while this is happening.

Austin: Ok. Alright, well. You can tempt- tempt her with your inner fire by rolling wisdom.

Sylvia: [exhales] Ok.

Austin: On a 10+... there's a 12. On a 10+, their will is suppressed, and they follow you and do as you desire, so long as nothing startles or surprises them. So, you- you've recruited a little bit of an apostle here. What do you want her to do?

Sylvia: Oh man.

Austin: I'm reading follow really broadly here.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: She'll follow you, not like, necessarily literally follow you. She was sent to like, observe you, and if you got in the way, kill you.

Sylvia: Ok.

Keith: They sent one person to kill all of us?

Austin: No, no, no. Just Ephrim.

Sylvia: No, just me.

Keith: Oh ok.

Sylvia: I have an idea. I could get her to go tell them that I'm dead.

Austin: Hm.

Keith: Oooh.

Austin: That's pretty good. I like that. I like that a lot actually.

Sylvia: Yeah. I think that's what I'll do is I'll tell her to tell them that I'm dead, and then if possible, come find me and give me any information on what their next move is.

Austin: Ok. Cool. She tells you what she knows now. Which is that they are making moves on the- She just says it outright- the tower of Samol.

Jack: Ah.

Austin: She doesn't give any information about what that might mean necessarily. But that the- with the sun out of the sky, they believe that now is the time to strike. And that if they can defeat him in this weakness, in this moment of weakness, then the Heat and the Dark will come.

Sylvia: Alright.

Jack: That's really troubling news.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Uh huh. Do you share this with the rest of the group?

Sylvia: Uh... Yeah, I do actually.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: Cause I know that Lem has had ex- Like, Lem has run into the Cult of the Dark Sun.

Austin: Yes, totally.

Sylvia: Like, literally. [**Jack** laughs]

Austin: It's worth noting that she does call it the Church of the Dark Sun, not the Cult.

Sylvia: Ok. Alright.

Austin: Because she's from it, probably. So, yeah. Ok. As you continue, you come to a village. You can see a village up in the distance. In the- at this point, there's only one moon in the sky. It's probably about a week in. Um, and as you get closer, you can smell in the crisp air, the obvious and overwhelming scent of rotting flesh.

Keith: Gross.

Jack: Do I know this village?

Austin: Probably. Yeah. This is a tiny, little farming village. This is again, you're still in the road between Rosemerrow and the big- there's kind of a larger imperial road- or ancient road.

Jack: Uh huh.

Austin: So, you're still on the Rosemerrow side of the road, and this is just like- I'm tryin' to think of a- It's a small little town that you've probably passed through a couple of times on the way between the New Archives and Rosemerrow.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: It's just like Treeton. They do some logging on the northern end of this big forest. Um, and ship the wood back to Rosemerrow. There was time when this whole area was woods, right? Where like, all of this in here- all of this was all woods, and they've- they were the ones who like, broke down the woods so that the road could be there, and then like, all of the rapid expansion has come from little villages like this. This is not the only one. But yeah, so that's what you know about this place.

Jack: Ok. And it's just absolutely- just-

Austin: There are probably 150 people total in this town, normally. Um, it's a- it's fairly small. I mean, it's still a town, right? It's not just 2 huts. It's not just 3 families. There are definitely those sorts of villages also; 3 or 4 families.

[1:00:00]

So, it's a little bit more than that, but it is- it isn't- We're not talking about Rosemerrow or Velas. We're not talking about a place that would be on a map even.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Outside of a very local one.

Jack: And there's just the stench of death about it?

Austin: As you approach, yeah. Um, when that stench hits, Jeremy turns- Jeremy's like, looking out the back of the cart, and he turns and looks over his shoulder at it, and then like, turns back to look away.

Jack: Are we stopping?

Austin: I mean, the road passes through.

Jack: Ah, geez. I mean, I guess same question.

Keith: Um, we sho-

Keith (as Fero): Hey, Jeremy?

Austin (as Jeremy): Hmm.

Keith (as Fero): Is it like, dangerous to go in here?

Austin (as Jeremy): It's dangerous everywhere.

Keith (as Fero): Is it particularly dangerous in there, though?

Austin: He doesn't say anything else.

Keith (as Fero): Alright, I mean, I guess we should go through as if it's normal.

Austin (as Devar): Let's just get through here as quick as possible, and then we'll just get on our way. We're like, 3 weeks out. Maybe 4. We'll be fine.

Jack: Is this Devar?

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Ok.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yeah, I agree with Devar.

Jack (as Lem): Alright. I mean, I guess, be ready.

Austin: Um, you roll into town, and god, it is- So, you kind of come through this little archway to come into town. There are- there's like, some limited wooden like, pikes in the ground as like, barricade-style walls, but there aren't like, there's not like a wall to town. But you come through a little like, archway into the town proper, and there are bodies everywhere. There's a couple leaning next to each other up against a well in the center of town. Um, there is a- there are a group of people, heads down on a bar table.

On an outside- like an exterior of like, a restaurant. And they're all just like, laying there. There are some bodies that are frozen, and other ones that are not. There's a big bonfire towards the center of town that is clearly running low, but- but must have been massive and huge at some point. And there are a few bodies there in- in the like- the embers of the fire, but not- not burning anymore. Um, hundred, hundred and fifty people dead- undead sitting in place, not moving. What do you do?

Jack: So, I'm going to um... I think- I think you know, we've probably got lanterns hanging from the bridals of our horses.

Austin: Uh uh.

Jack: Which are casting just like a small amount of light. But I think that in the front of the cart, we've probably got burning torches, so the cart is kind of a beacon.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And waving- waving the cart on so that it keeps moving, I'm going to hop down from my horse and pull a torch from the thing and keep walking alongside, but at ground level.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And this is going to be a Discern Realities roll.

Austin: Good call. Give me a roll.

Jack: So, this is rolling intelligence?

Austin: Wisdom.

Jack: Wisdom. That's a 9.

Austin: Ok. Um, so you get 1 question from this list.

Jack: Ok. It's on- under basic moves? Yes.

Austin: Yeah, yep. And remember that you get +1 forward when acting on the answer.

Jack: Yeah. Um, kind of, I guess, working from the- from the perspective that these are fairly broad questions with fairly broad answers, I'm gonna ask, 'what here is useful or valuable to me?' And I think this is just like a low camera shot moving alongside the cart with Lem walking on ground level.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. Um, The thing that you notice that is useful and valuable is that you can see that this- the- Alright, so there's a few things here. And they are all valuable in that they paint a picture. The first thing that you notice is that- you lift the like the flame out- the torch out and you're moving through town, and you notice that there are, in the ember- in the embers of the fire where there were bodies burning, two spectral forms. Again, just kind of- they're just laying as if they were still physical things on the bon- on the sticks and stones of the bonfire. Just laying there. Eyes blinking occasionally. Ghostly eyes blinking.

Jack: These look like post- post Nacre ghosts? Like Nacre ghosts?

Austin: Yeah, these are- these are- These look like Nacre ghosts.

Jack: Yeah, ok.

Austin: These are ghosts. So, that's useful in that you believe this to be at least a similar thing to what happened in Nacre. Probably the same thing, but you can't be sure. Two, you notice that there are some actually dead bodies. And those bodies have armor on them and have the markings of some sort of bandit clan or something. Like, they have a- the same way that you- you have a tatt- It's like, probably just a tattoo. Like the sort of tattoo that- that a thieves guild or that a group of highway men would have to show their allegiance to a loca group. And those people are properly dead. They are not undead.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: And then, you also can see that a lot of the wounds come from a mix of different weapons, including some of the weapons of the dead people. So, there's like a halberd that has a really big axe head on it. And you can see that one of the- one of the people whose heads are down on the- the kind of bar table- the kind of bar top has this huge gash from when- where an axe would have been plunged in. You see someone has been cut to pieces by what would look like a couple of little daggers, and you can find those daggers on one of the other dead bodies. You can't account for all of the weapons. There are more people who did- who killed this town that are accounted for here. Um, but you can draw that- you can start to draw that conclusion.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: Also, you can take some of those weapons and sell them probably.

Jack: No, I'm fine.

Austin: You asked for something useful or valuable.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: I'd say they're about 50 coin worth- also you could just rob this- Actually, no. That's a thing. You notice that, in fact, the coffers of these places have been looted. Not all of them. In fact, it looks like it was mid-looting when things went bad. Or when everyone- whatever happened happened. Um, the- there are like, like the town center- or the town hall or whatever has been completely looted of gold. But like, a couple of the little businesses still have their safes uncracked. Or not even safes, just like their lockboxes with a lock still on it. Things like that.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: You just roll through?

Jack: I mean, yeah. Unless if anybody else has anything. The impression I'm getting is that, the thing that's telling here is that- is that this town is cursed, and we know that the curse spreads by cursed people- Is it specifically sleeping in-?

Austin: Spending a night.

Jack: Spending a night.

Austin: You don't have to be asleep. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Ok. Cursed spending a night.

Austin: Um, you should also... I was gonna say something else, and I've lost it. That's ok.

Jack: In a place. Uh, hang on. Who here is cursed? It's just Fero and me?

Austin: That- Oh, no. Now it's ever- you've been traveling together for weeks.

Jack: Oh, Ephrim's cursed. Can we communicate this to Jeremy. I'm worried that the reason he's not laying down is because he doesn't want to sleep because he's afraid he's gonna spread the curse?

Austin: You just tell him that?

Jack: I just tell him,

Jack (as Lem): It's ok. You can sleep.

Austin: He just shakes his head.

Jack (as Lem): No?

Um, no.

Austin: He um- Every once in a while, you just hear a wail from somewhere. Someone wails in this town. And then like, caught themselves and goes back to being quiet. And it reeks. Like it is the grossest, almost overwhelming smell you've ever had in your life. I suspect Devar can't keep it together and throws up.

Jack: I keep moving, I guess. [sighs]

Austin: Alright. Another week goes by. And you see another village, and this time, you're further along this path. You're kind of on this big, old imperial road of brick that's heading eastward towards the New Archives. And there is a slightly larger town in terms of- Or sorry. You know, it's not a larger town. It's built into a- an old- not watchtower, but like an old fortress. Like a gate that was on this- this old road that used to lead from what is now the Mark of the Erasure all the way down to the City of First Light.

And there's just, you know, a big stone like, gate-wall-fortress type thing that's been converted into a tower at some point in the last 100 years. And- and the main structure is this main fortress like, tower that kind of octagonal. That has this really like- it's a very pleasant to look at domed top that has the symbol of- of Samoths coming out of the top. This single ring that comes out of the top and like, this little circle in the sky that kind of- you can see from as you approach, even in the moonlight. And you- again catch the whiff of rotting flesh, but not as strong this time. What do you do as you approach?

Jack: I- I did the last town. [**Austin** laughs] Now this one's on you lot.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Um...

Keith: I guess I want to look around to make sure there's nothing like, dangerous before we go right in. Just aga- I don't think there is. Um..

Austin: Uh huh. So, are you looking around just in like, halfling form? Or are you-?

Keith: Yeah. I'm- I'm gonna do- I'm gonna do a sort of bird circle Discern Realities.

Austin: Ok. So, give me the bird change first, cause this could mean something.

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Austin: This place is called Baron's Gate. Like, owned by a Baron.

Keith: Ok, that's a 7 for that, so I get a one hold.

Austin: Which means you get one hold. Right.

Keith: Um, and then Discern Realities is also a wis roll?

Austin: Correct.

Keith: That's 10.

Austin: Ok. So you get 3 questions from Discern Realities. I'll paint you the picture as you fly up closer. What type of bird are you?

Keith: Um, I'm gonna be the panther.

Austin: Ok. So, you take up to the sky and you- you look down. And you immediately recognize the smell- or what the smell is coming from which is there's a group of about 10 , 12, 15 people who like, the- your senses can identify that that's where the smell is coming from. And they are hurling rocks and torches at that big center tower. The tower is made of rock, but like, the curtains for caught fire . They're kind of pushing in on the front door.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: And there are just like, arrows coming out of them. There are-

Keith: So-

Austin: People are tossing hot oil down from the tower onto them, and like, that's not stopping them in anyway.

Keith: Right, cause they're dead.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: And so, these are not- these are not uh sort of dejected undead, these are sort of actively [light laugh] mad at these tower folk.

Austin: As far as- Yeah.

Keith: Oh, what is about to happen?

Austin: Um, the- unless they are stopped, the bandits are going to break into that tower and probably kill everyone and take their stuff.

Keith: Oh ok. Those are bandits. Ok.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Um, that also answers what is about to happen.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: So...

Austin: So, that's one. Make sure again, take +1 forward on this. Uh, and Lem, you're +1 forward from before if something relevant happens.

Jack: Ok.

Keith: Uh, what should I be on the lookout for?

Austin: Um, hmm. More of them? Archers positioned in strategic places. They're clearly probably not only gonna try to through the front door of this place. They might try to like, get onto this thing from a nearby tower or climb it with a ladder.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Or- and if you're in the air and are noticeable as a creature, and as like, a- more than just a creature at any point, they'll probably shoot at you, too.

Keith: Yeah. Um, is there is anything that's not as it appears to be?

Austin: Um, what I'll give you is that it's clear from- you're able to like, fly down and peak through the windows of this big- this big tower.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: There are very thin windows. It's like- it's like little eyelets that are spread throughout this tower. It's a very wide tower. This is like- this isn't a bell- This isn't a belltower. This is like a fortress tower, right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: And you can tell that like, the people of Baron's Gate have gone into this tower to hide from these people. And they are probably like, 50- 50 people inside. With another 20 or so up on the roof, and like aiming arrows out of the eyelets and trying to defend them. So, 70 people total?

Keith: Ok. I guess I go back. I tell everybody, and then I'm like,

Keith (as Fero): Uh, do we help them? Or...? [**Sylvia** sighs] Like- I don't know. There's a- There's 15 of them, but if there's you know... Maybe if we start fighting, they'll- everyone- like the other people defending the tower will come out?

Austin (as Devar): Man, you ever fight a zombie?

Keith (as Fero): Yeah.

Austin (as Devar): Oh. Ok. [**Sylvia** laughs] Ok.

Jack (as Lem): It didn't go well though. I mean, it- really it didn't go great.

Keith (as Fero): It- it went pretty well. I mean, we ended up getting captured, but not because we did a bad job.

Austin: I should note that the bandits were acting like people, to be clear.

Jack: Yeah, they're not like-

Austin: They're not like hurling their arms. They're not like, clawing at anything. They're using weapons. They're wearing armor. Just to be clear.

Keith: Yeah, I was- I was thinking about the pirate fight. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. I wanted to be clear to the audience.

Keith: Oh ok. Yeah.

Austin: This wasn't like night of the living dead. This isn't- this isn't like the swarms of zombies. These are bandits who happen to be undead.

[1:15:00]

Keith: Yeah. Um-

Jack (as Lem): There's 15 of them.

Keith (as Fero): Yeah, we could do that. I could take down 15 people by myself.

Keith: And then I sort of puff myself up a little bit.

Austin: Of course. Good.

Jack: How close are we to the Archives?

Austin: Another 2 weeks at least.

Jack: Ah, god. Um-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Cause like you haven't gotten to the mountains yet, and it is snowy and dark. And there are not as good roads.

Jack: Yeah, like- I don't know if this is something we should be- you know? I don't know if this is something we should be messing with.

Keith: I- I'm going to do something I've never done before.

Austin: Which is?

Keith: I'm going to Commune with the whispers.

Austin: What's that? [**Jack** laughs] And what's that look like?

Keith: Well, I spend time in a place, making note of its resident spirits and calling on the spirits of the land, roll + wisdom, you will be granted a vision of significance to you, your allies, and the spirits around you. On a 10+, the vision is clear and helpful to you. On a 7-9, the vision is unclear, its meaning murky. On a miss, the vision is upsetting, frightening or traumatizing.

Austin: Cool.

Keith: The GM will describe it. Take minus 1 forward.

Austin: Ok. Give me a roll, and again like, what's this look like Fero doing?

Keith: I think that it looks like- I think that it looks a lot like someone trying to um- It's... ok. It's sort of like- It's sort of like the moment in a movie flashback, where the person is like, like concentrating really hard on remembering something, but instead of a flashback that shows you what happened, it's a flash forward that shows you what's going to happen.

Austin: Uh huh. Uh huh. Ok. Give me a- give me a roll. I almost said give me a ring. Give me- Give me a call.

Keith: Give me a ring. Give me a call. Um- alright, so this is plus 2 wisdom. Do I get my...

Austin: Yeah, you get a plus 1 for this.

Keith: ...my ongoing for this. Ok.

Austin: I think it's only a +1 forward, not a +1 ongoing.

Keith: Ok, yeah.

Austin: So, you'll spend it on this basically.

Keith: Right. Yes. Yeah.

Austin: So yeah. Roll- roll- whatever you roll, add another 1 to it.

Keith: Op, 10, so 11.

Austin: That's a 10. So, an 11. Nice. Um, hm. Ok. So... Making not of its resident spirits and calling on the spirits of the land. Alright. Vision of significance to you, your allies, and the spirits around you. Um-

Keith: The vision will be clear and helpful.

Austin: Yeah, so, you see 2 different things. Actually you see- there's a pretty good stream of it. Um, I'm trying to think what this look- What's this look like? Like, what- how? This is the first time you've done this. Like, how do you know to do this firstly?

Keith: Um, so-

Austin: Or is this- Go ahead.

Keith: When I was sitting in the barn- Ok, so I- I sort of- The first- Fero had to have a first time turning into an animal. And that's gotta be wild. Right?

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: That's gotta be crazy. And I imagine that it like- that stuff sort of happened by accident, just by being in the spot- just by being on the- cause he- the- his Born of the Soil is of the mountains. And so, just by being there, just like- something clicks where you're like, 'Ok, I'm so in tune with this, that now I can do a thing that I've never done before.' And I think that that's the same sort of thing that hap- Like, I'm picturing myself up in the loft of the barn, sort of avoiding people and thinking as a side effect of just being in solitude. And all the sudden having- a vision.

Austin: Hm. So, what was the- was that the first time you did it was in the barn?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: What did you see in the barn?

Keith: I assume it had to do with the- with the gnolls.

Austin: Hm. I think you see a very clear vision of the- of a future in which Mother Glory and you helped them together to reintegrate into the society of Rosemerrow. Even with Lutz gone, there's just like, a very goofy image of her lifting you up in one hand and like tossing you in the air and then catching you when you- when she catches you, you're like some sort of little cute animal. And then she tosses you up again, and then she's gone, and you hit the ground and slam your- yourself head first into the floor. And then when you pick your head back up and look around, there are no gnolls anywhere. This time, what you see- So, there isn't any sort of aspect

of like- the animals or nature in the vision, I guess, right? It's just an actual vision. You're kind of like-

Keith: Yes, yeah.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: It's a vision that's guided by the spirits of the land.

Austin: Ok, so the- you're looking- you're looking down- Here's what it looks like. I think you're looking down at this place, as a panther, as a bird- Uh, if you missed it, in our world, panthers are birds. Uh- just- just in case you'd forgotten.

Keith: Panthers are brds. They're big, black birds that can turn into 100 small birds.

Austin: Yeah. Uh, and you see almost like sand-like versions of the cart. Like it's like claymoti-clay... claymotion? Is that the word I'm looking for?

Keith: Claymation?

Austin: Claymation. Thank you. Claymation version of the cart and your friends coming up to help. And then, everyone gets out of the cart, including Jeremy. And the first thing you notice is that Jeremy has his arm again. And on his arm is a tattoo that matches the rest of the bandits here. The second thing you see is a horse. And hear- you hear it like thunder. A horse on the horizon coming from the- coming from the east. Heavy, heavy clops of the- of the horse- the horse's hooves that sound like thunder as they get closer. And then you realize there are more than one horse coming from that direction.

Keith: So, what direction is it?

Austin: It's from the east.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: So, there's- that's what you get from that. Pretty useful.

Keith: Yeah, pretty useful. So, what I'm getting from that is that Jeremy was with these bandits, right? And then we dying, and it took so long for him to die that he sent the night, and then died, and then was a zombie.

Keith (as Fero): Jeremy, you asshole. Are you a bandit?

Austin: Uh, these bandits are undead. I want to be clear about that.

Keith: Oh, the bandits are un- right, yeah. So nevermind.

Austin: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes.

Keith: I was thinking of the other bandits.

Austin: Which the- previous ones? The dead ones?

Keith: The last town's. Yeah. The dead ones from the last town.

Austin: There's- the tattoo on those- on those bandits um- which-

Keith: I like how every bandit has their own type of tattoo.

Austin: No. no, no. This is the same tattoo. That's my point.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: My point is that these guys have the same ones as the past ones.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: I think there's probably lot of tattoo- like lots of very- It's all amateur tattoos that they're just doing themselves.

Keith: Right.

Austin: So, it's- it's systems of lines. It's just like-

Keith: It's a stick and poke tattoo.

Austin: Yeah, it's just- Exactly. It's like- and so it ends up being like, 2 lines horizontal, and a third one that diagonally connects them or something like that.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: It looks like a 'z' of something.

Keith: Alright, I re-

Keith (as Fero): Jeremy, are you a bandit, you asshole?

Austin: Hm. He doesn't he's not giving you anything.

Keith (as Fero): Ugh.

Austin: The cart is stopped outside of Baron's Gate. Devar is just like, shaking his head.

Austin (as Devar): What do you- [sighs] You mad at a bandit? Ok.

Keith (as Fero): I had a vision. I had a visions. He's a bandit. We can go help these people. There's horses coming from the east. That's what I know.

Austin (as Devar): Ephrim, you know this church?

Keith (as **Fero**): Horses are probably more bandits, by the way.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Sorry, this church?

Austin (as **Devar**): Yeah, the tower. It has the Samoths symbol. The circle. You know it?

Sylvia: God. Um- Would he? I feel like, so- I think Ephrim definitely knows it because we've talked about how Ephrim's spent a lot of- like we mentioned this, I think um, in some of the consulting detective episodes that Ephrim's spent a lot of time traveling.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: As part of his education.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: And trav- And since he's traveling from the east, he would have had to stop probably around here.

Austin: Right. Totally.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: This is definitely-

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I can imagine a young Ephrim seeing this place.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: In fact, like, we've talked a little bit about Ephrim as a child and like, you know, Arrell kind of gestured to the fact that things were a little more chaotic than you might remember. I can imagine this being a place that Ephrim feels a deep- a sudden deep nostalgia for as being a constant. Um, this was the furthest west you came for a long, long, long time. And things changed a lot out to the east, but here, Baron's Gate was always the way it was. There was this big, central church tower that doubled as like a military fortification. And there was lots of like, makeshift homes and tents and little huts and stuff all around it. And like, even the huts and tents didn't change that much. You remember that you had- uh, Ephrim eats meat, right? This is not- Ephrim's not-

Sylvia: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Ok, good. Cause I know Fantasma was a- was a vegetarian. Ephrim remembers there's like a very good chicken dish. Chicken and like, some herbs that you used to get here as a little boy.

Sylvia: Ok. Well, that kind of makes my decision for what I want to do here. Remembering that.

Austin: Ok. Uh huh.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): One way or another-

Sylvia: And this is Ephrim saying this now. It's like,

Sylvia (as Ephrim): One way or another, we need to help these people. Whether it's-

Jack (as Lem): I think you're making a mistake.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): I- [sighs] I can't just let this happen.

Austin (as Devar): Man. Ugh.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): You can go if you want to.

Jack (as Lem): No, I can't. No, I can't.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): I'm not gonna let these people just die.

Jack (as Lem): We are so close, Ephrim.

Keith (as Fero): To be fair, we're only half way.

Jack (as Lem): Ok, right. So, why don't we just go back to Rosemerrow and get some people?

[crosstalking]

Austin (as Devar): That'll take 2 weeks, man. [inaudible]

Keith (as Fero): And then it would take a month.

Jack (as Lem): No, I was- Yeah, I was being- Yeah, I was being sarcastic. It's- I don't think that's a good idea, right?

Keith (as Fero): Oh.

Austin (as Devar): It's just- It's been a- It's been a while.

Jack (as Lem): No, it's yeah.

Austin (as Devar): I forget how dry you are.

Jack (as Lem): It's fine. I- Well, you know. I did destroy a city accidentally.

Austin (as Devar): [laughs] I didn't tell me about that.

Jack (as Lem): No, it's fine. Really. I just have- I- Actually now we're talking about it, it kind of- Stuff like that makes stuff like this kind of thrown into- a new light, if I'm honest.

The last time I was in a place like this, it didn't go great. I mean, what it is- What are we doing here, Ephrim? Are we just gonna go down there?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Here's the way I'm seeing it. We have a few options. The first- I'm personally not willing to do, which is just leaving. The second- which admittedly is not the brightest idea is to just charge in there on our horses, which also probably shouldn't do. What I'm thinking, and you're not going to like this at all [**Austin** laughs] is we could try and get them to follow us in some way. Um-

Jack (as Lem): Ok, sorry. So, plan A is we go to my home. That's plan A.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yes.

Jack (as Lem): Plan A is we go to my home.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yes.

Jack (as Lem): Plan B is we die miserably long before we reach my home. And then Plan C is we bring them to my home.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): No-

Keith (as Fero): I feel like you're not representing plans B and C accurately. I do have a problem with plan C though in that if they- once we outrun them, they're just gonna go back probably.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yeah, but these people could get out of here by then.

Keith (as Fero): Yeah, but like, to go where? It's super dangerous. We should just kill them. There's only 15 of them.

Jack (as Lem): Which direction would we draw them in?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): To the east here. There is these like, mountains, right? It's a bit of a detour, and it's not gonna be a smart one to do. Like, I'm freely admitting.

Austin: I mean, sorry. The east is where they're- you're headed. You're headed east.

Sylvia: Yeah, well, we're heading kind of northeast around these mountains, aren't we?

Austin: Well, the road goes east. It's not on this map.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: The way you get to where you're going is-

Keith: Does it go in between those two peaks there?

Austin: Yes. That's exactly right.

Jack: There's like a mountain pass here.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Yeah, it goes like that.

Keith: Like a-

Austin: Up like this.

Keith: Like in here. Yeah, that's where-

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack (as Lem): Ephrim, here's what I'll say. The Archives I knew, 15 bandits, ok. Fine. The- the thing I'm mostly concerned about is a lot has changed since I was there last. That's the first thing. And the second thing is that I didn't exactly- I didn't leave them on the best terms. Um and if I return with 15 bandits...

Keith (as Fero): Well, you've got that plant nice and healthy, right?

Austin: Good question. Let's do that love letter really quick. How's that plant goin'?

Jack: [laughs] Are you gonna make me roll?

Austin: Oh, I am. You had to have been taking care of it this whole trip.

Keith: Um, as-

Austin: Give me a wisdom roll real quick.

Keith: As we stated before, I'm very good at taking care of plants. I know a lot about them. Um, can I aid on this wisdom roll?

Jack: No.

Austin: You totally can. Give me your aid roll first.

Jack: Oh ok.

Austin: Unless he won't let you.

Jack: No, I mean...

Austin: I mean, do you-

Jack: No, I'm not gonna let him. [laughs]

Austin: Ok. [**Sylvia** laughs]

Keith: Listen, last time, we had a great trip. [Keith and **Sylvia** laugh]

Austin: Nice. Christ.

Keith (as **Fero**): You're not gonna let me help?

Jack (as **Lem**): That was the first thing you did after we started hanging out together.

Keith (as **Fero**): There's- There's not downside other than it hurts me, too, if something goes bad.

Jack: I'm going to press the button. [**Austin** laughs] This is wisdom?

Austin: Yes, wisdom.

Jack: [laughs and claps] Yes!

Austin: That's a 5.

Jack: That's a 5.

Austin: It's a 5.

Keith: Well...

Jack: Oh, perfect.

Austin: Um, so tell me a little bit about-

Keith: There's nothing I can do to help, I'm glad you stopped me.

Austin: Just tell me a little bit about what goes wrong here first. What's the first time that you realize you fucked up, Lem?

[1:30:00]

Jack: With regard to the plant?

Austin: Yeah- well, yeah. [**Austin** and **Keith** laugh]

Jack: Um, so I think that- So, I was given the plant in Velas, right?

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: And I first showed it to Fero in- in Rosemerrow, the night of the heist. And I think if I'm honest, the answer that I realize that I'd screwed it up was the day after Morbash gave it to me.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: When I woke up and it looked different to the way it looked yesterday. Uh and so I just sort of went like, 'Well, you know, maybe it'll- maybe this is just kind of a phase it goes through?'

Austin: Oh, boy.

Jack: I guess? And when I showed it to Fero, and he asked, 'You know, it looks like that, doesn't it?' I went like, 'Yeah, absolutely. As always. Yep. It's always looked like that.' But it's begun to look more and more like that. And it's very different to the plant that Morbash gave me.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I don't know how unwell it is, but Lem has known from pretty much the offset that he screwed it up.

Austin: Well, here's the- Actually, here's the thing I like. I like that it is unlike the plant that Morbash gave you. It's really-

Jack: It's like its leaves have changed shape.

Austin: Yes. Um, it's gone from- it's gone from having- we described it originally as being pot-like. As being- looking like cannabis.

Jack: Yeah like multiple-

Austin: Like the leaves of the marijuana plant. [laughs] And now it looks like a little miniature weeping willow.

Jack: It just changed?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Can't we just get another one?

Austin: No. The only- it only grows in Velas, and it was the last one.

Keith: Is it now?

Jack: The orcs are fairly good at like, spotting the difference between things.

[crosstalking]

Austin: [laughing] People are good at spotting the difference between a pot- like a planted pot plant and-

Jack: Sure, no I mean, if we're gonna try and- if we're gonna try and like, fool- fool someone, Morbash is not the greatest person to fool, I guess.

Austin: Yes. Right.

Keith: I guess, the best case scenario then is we just give it to him, and we go like, 'Yeah, everything's been going really good. And we got it to this point, and it's doing great.'

Jack: I haven't commun- I haven't communicated this to you, Fero. You still think this s exactly what the plant is supposed to look like.

Keith: Wha- No, I'm saying like, we can just tell- we can just tell Morbash like, 'Yeah, it's going really good. It's supposed to do this.'

Jack: So, I think-

Keith: It's like- you know how a butterfly looks way different than a caterpillar?

Austin: That's way different.

Keith: This looks way different than a pot leaf.

Austin: Oh my god.

Jack: So, I guess I'm trying to- I'm trying to water it, but at this point, Lem's attitude towards the plant is similar to one's attitude towards a letter that you should have written, but have been putting off.

Austin: [laughs] Yep.

Jack: Which is that looking at it makes Lem feel faintly guilty.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: And he will put off interacting with the plant for hours, and then interact with it suddenly and feel a lot more relieved afterwards. And then go straight back to worrying about it. It's in his bag, but it's near the bottom of his bag because he's kind of put lighter stuff on top of it because he doesn't really want to have to think about it.

Austin: Uh huh. Good.

Keith (as Fero): Do you think it's that it's been in a bag for a month?

Jack (as Lem): You know, I kind of considered this, but when Morbash gave it to me, he must have- like he must have known that I had to transport it, right?

Keith (as Fero): I think he maybe thought you were gonna carry it.

Jack (as Lem): Ca- No. I can't carry it. [**Austin** laughs]

Keith (as Fero): Well, you can carry it. That's the thing. You just decided not to.

Jack (as Lem): Right, sorry, Ephrim. I can't-

Keith (as Fero): You just said it'd be more expedient-

Jack (as Lem): Sorry, Ephrim, I can't attack the village cause I have to carry my plant.

Keith (as Fero): Well, you can put it down.

Jack (as Lem): I'm not gonna put it down. I'm not gonna put it down. Look, I don't even know why-

Keith (as Fero): This is why Lem is impossible.

Jack (as Lem): I'm gonna [sighs] I'm gonna pour some water on it. Ok? But not because you made me.

Austin (as Devar): Morbash is gonna be pissed, man.

Jack (as Lem): [exasperated] Yeah, I know. Look- Hang on. I don't need your [laughs] I've got enough of this already.

Austin (as Devar): I'm just trying to get you prepared.

Jack (as Lem): Oh, I'm prepared. I've been prepared since, you know, like-

Jack: And like, Lem just gestures at the violin.

Austin (as Devar): Alright, but what if we um- You know what it looked like, right?

Jack (as Lem): Yeah.

Austin (as Devar): Alright, so what if when we get there, we take it to a guy who can make it look like the way it used to look. That's the whole thing right now, right?

Keith (as Fero): Wait, you mean disguise it? Or have some pattern magic away all the mess ups that Lem did to it?

[crosstalking]

Jack (as Lem): Um, Fero, I mean, you don't- Yup.

Austin (as Devar): A little bit A, a little bit B? It might cost us a lot, but-

Jack (as Lem): Yeah, um... Can we maybe think about that as we get closer?

Austin (as Devar): Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Alright, let's come back into the present cause we're not having this conversation while the bandits are attacking this town. [Jack laughs]

Keith: Listen, bad stuff happens all over the place. Bandits kill a whole tower of people every day.

Austin: Jesus Christ.

Keith: But-

Austin: What is your alignment?

Keith: Chaotic.

Austin: Read it to me.

Jack: Chaotic-what?

Keith: Chaotic, just chaotic.

Austin: But what's it- What's it say? Like, read the thing to me.

Keith: It says, 'Pull the weeds of the past out by the roots.'

Austin: Ok, so you're not really interested in any way about these people.

Keith: Well, I didn't get to finish.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: I was interrupted mid-thing. But this is the tower that we're at now. And those people will die if we don't do a thing.

Austin: Oh, I see.

Keith: Now, I'm finished. I'm just-

Sylvia: I'm gonna try something.

Keith: But that-

Austin: What are you trying?

Sylvia: I'm gonna do anything to them over there, is like, my reassurance to Lem is like,

Sylvia (as Ephrim): I'm not gonna- not with them, just let me try something.

Sylvia: I get off my horse. And I walk around to Jeremy and I'm assuming he's still looking down?

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: Like, he's still looking away. I grab him, like by the hair and make him look at me.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: And I like, get down at eye level with him, and I'm just like,

Sylvia (as Ephrim): You're going to go over there, and you're going to tell- tell your people that they need to leave because what is happened to you, and what has happened to them is the least of their trouble. Don't go into specifics, [**Austin** makes affirmative noise] but you need to tell them that something is coming, and they need to go.

Austin: So, this is again...

Sylvia: Moth to the Flame.

Austin: ...tempting a weak mind with your inner fire. Sure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Give me a wisdom roll. Also, Jack, mark experience. You failed.

Jack: Ah yes.

Austin: Also, Sylvia before, mark experience from before.

Sylvia: And I do it again.

Austin: Also, Sylvia mark more experience because you just failed again. On a miss, they become agitated and upset, your fire having sparked their hidden desires. Um, let me take a look at your whole situation again really quick.

Jack: I think as Ephrim gets up and specifically as Ephrim kind of pulls Jeremy's face, Lem is just backing away- backing away from-

Austin: Describe what you're wearing and stuff, again. Like, what's your- describe your whole situation.

Sylvia: Me?

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: So, Ephrim doesn't- isn't wearing heav- that heavy stuff.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Like he doesn't need winter gear like everyone else, obviously.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: So, he's basically wearing leather armor and with the ornate bit of it, I was thinking it's basically got like, markings of Samoths on it, and then like, fur around the collar.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: Um, I think like fox fur or something. I don't know.

Austin: Right.

Sylvia: And then a cloak as well, which has been ripped cause he bandaged Jeremy's arm earlier. Um, yeah.

Austin: Right. Um, alright. So, he- you pulled him by his hair?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Ok. He pulls away from you, and it rips out of his scalp. Like the hair rips. **[Sylvia makes uncomfortable noise]** And he like, reaches back and grabs you by the shoulder, and pushes himself up to standing. Like kind of wobbly at first. And then pulls the bandage you gave him off of his arm revealing the bone again. And as he does that- like, as the last of the bandage is pulled away, you see a ghostly arm sprout from there.

Sylvia: Oh, Jesus.

Austin: And you can see the tattoo like, in like the 2 lines with the 3rd line connecting the 2 like glowing. And he- it's weird. He like reaches to grab for your throat to grab it, but then also, like his ghost hand stays around your throat while he moves his physical arm through the ghost hand to like, punch you with the exposed bone in the throat that he's choking.

Sylvia: Ugh.

Austin: What do you do as he's trying to do this?

Sylvia: Um, I'm like to try and summon my Burning Brand.

Austin: Um, ok. If you do that, you will take damage as you're doing it.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: No, I know. That's...

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: ...the only thing that I can think of doing.

Austin: Alright. Summon your Burning Brand.

Sylvia: That's a 10.

Austin: Nice. What's that give you?

Sylvia: Uh, I get to choose 2 tags. It gives me- My burning brand is a weapon made of fire that I can just summon at will.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: It starts with the fiery touch, dangerous, and 3 uses tag.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: So, what I'm going to do with- cause I rolled a 10, I'm going to remove the dangerous tag.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: And give it the close tag.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: So, it is basically just like a short sword, I guess would be- or a long sword. I don't know which would be more close. Which would fit the close descriptor more.

Austin: Close. Close is a- is like a long sword.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Yeah. Um, touch would be a short sword, probably.

Sylvia: Yeah, ok.

Austin: So, as you're doing that with one hand. He does the thing where he chokes you and then moves in to hit you with the exposed bone, and you manage to pull just a little bit as your summoning your burning brand, but he does catch your throat with his exposed bone, and you take 4 damage total. Armor does not protect you from this. As this happens, you hear those thunderous hooves on the- in the distance that Fero foresaw.

Keith: Uh hm.

Jack: Are they multiple horses?

Austin: It sounds like it.

Keith: It's multiple horse. It's probably bandits. Probably more bandits.

Jack: Oh, I was just- yeah. Ok. Ah, jeez.

Austin: What are you all doin'?

Keith: I'm going to turn into a giant, poisonous vole.

Austin: [sighs] Give me a roll.

Keith: And burrow into the tower.

Austin: So, start with the roll. Start with the turning into a vole.

Keith: Yeah. So, 12. So, I have 3 hold.

Austin: Alright, you have 3 hold.

Keith: I'm spend one hold to do the burrow move.

Austin: Ok. So, you're burrowing. That's what- So, at this point, at this point, to paint this picture, Ephrim you are being choked to death by a weird ghost-zombie who had his ghost hand around your throat and is trying with all of his might to stab you with the exposed bone, um as his ghost hand tries to hold you in place, and you have a fire sword. Uh, Devar has pulled the crossbow from the cart and it loading it. Um, Lem, what are you doing?

Jack: Uh, drawing my sword and kind of getting into a defensive position between the guy and Devar.

Austin: Ok. Uh, the guy is really focused on Ephrim right now, just so you know. And then, the vole is heading in towards the tower. It's gonna take you a few- it's gonna take you like, a turn to get there, Fero.

Keith: Ok.

Jack: Cause we're like on a ridge above it or something.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You're just outside town.

Keith: It's a while away. I'm a supernatural vole. But-

Austin: Yeah, but it's still. Space- space and time.

Keith: No, no. I'm saying I'm super- I'm a supernatural vole, but distance is distance.

Austin: Distance is distance, exactly. Exactly.

Keith: You guys keep interrupting me halfway before my shit changes what it's gonna mean.

Austin: You gotta- you gotta foreground the part that makes it sound like- like it makes sense. Um, alright. He is coming at you again with this- with this exposed bone. What do you do?

Sylvia: I think I'd like to try and cut off the rest of that arm.

Austin: Ok. Give me a- So, you're just like chopping like at him- like in the super-

Sylvia: Yeah, like-

Austin: Oh, actually. What's the range on it?

Sylvia: It's close.

Austin: He's too close for it.

Sylvia: Ah, shit.

Austin: Yeah, close means, like the distance of a sword. He is like, intimate. He is like hand.

Keith: Punch.

Austin: You'd have to break- you'd have to get distance from him in some way.

Jack: Could I make a move?

Austin: Totally. What do you want to do?

Jack: Um, I'd like to try and cut his head off.

Austin: Sure.

Jack: I don't know if that's gonna do much, but I mean, like it's worth a shot.

Austin: Give me a roll.

Jack: This is just Hack and Slash, right?

Austin: Yeah, yeah. So, you're just like, walking up behind him with this?

Jack: Yeah, um-

Austin: Then you'll just do your damage. He's not in a defensive position.

Jack: How do I roll for damage?

Austin: Hack and slash is for when you're in a melee. Uh, you should have a damage die.

Jack: Oh, yeah. I do. Yeah, it's just-

Austin: A D6.

Jack: It's just a D6.

Austin: And then I think your sword might do another thing.

Jack: Uh, let me just check. It's close and messy.

Austin: Yep. Good. Give me damage.

Jack: It doesn't seem to- it doesn't seem to give an extra- an extra 1.

Austin: Just- just roll the d6 then.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: Cause yeah, hack and slash isn't really about-

Jack: That's a 5.

Austin: Alright, um, you remove his head from his body, and blood goes all over- just all over your face, Ephrim. Just like gross. And it's like, [sighs] if [laughs] if this blood was a pond, there would be mosquitos nesting in it. Like it's- There's no life to this blood. It's still on your face, It lands and doesn't run down your face. It lands and stains you. It isn't- it's almost- it's almost

Keith: It's just like a coagulated jelly.

Austin: Yes, yes. It's super gross. And it continues to choke you. Um, it- and phasing in is a new ghostly head. Uh, Vole, Fero.

Keith: Hello.

Austin: You are now getting to the tower.

Keith: Uh huh.

Austin: And you're gonna burrow in from below?

[1:45:00]

Keith: Yes.

Austin: Alright, um, as you burrow up from below, you hear just screams of men and women and children and the priest and everyone's like, 'Ahh!'

Keith: I would- I would like to take great care that as I burst through the bottom...

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: ...I also re-turn into a person, and not an animal and say,

Keith (as Fero): I'm saving you! Not hurting you!

Austin: Give me- you know what? First of all, give me a Defu- give me a Defy Danger wisdom...

Keith: Defy Danger wisdom.

Austin: ...to be able to sense where you can safely come up without hurting anybody.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: As a giant, poisonous vole.

Keith: 13.

Austin: Alright. That's a 13.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Good roll. Um, yeah. Alright, so you're safely able to sense where there's no movement or something.

Keith: Uh huh.

Austin: And also like, as you're burrowing up, people are running up to the higher floor. So, inside it's like, 8 floors top- hall- tall. But it is like, there is the hollow center where there is like, literally like, a fire pole that people could come down.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Uh, and you turn back into Fero, and the priest says, like- She says, like,

Austin (as unnamed priest): Oh, phew. Thank Samoths.

Keith (as Fero): Hi, I was passing by and I'm very powerful. Would you like to be saved?
[Sylvia laughs]

Austin (as unnamed priest): Oh no. This is- Are you-? Wha- Did you take care of the bandits?

Austin: And then it's like- boom, boom.

Keith (as Fero): No, no. I decided- my group was back there arguing about whether or not to save you, so I decided to just do it.

Austin (as unnamed priest): Ok, everyone go upstairs. Just everyone remain safe, please. Um, this man- [sighs] How-

Keith (as Fero): This hole will take you pretty far away from uh- where the bandits are.

Austin (as unnamed priest): Oh, you want us to go through your weird hole.

Keith (as Fero): Yeah, burrow down through- you can follow me through this hole and then go back out.

Austin (as unnamed priest): Ok. Ok. Um, that makes some sense. Ok.

Keith (as Fero): Yeah.

Austin (as unnamed priest): Alright.

Austin: And she starts to like, get the- like goes down the list and starts to get like, the people who are most vulnerable, and grabs one of her like, her um, most trusted assistants to help start leading people through this hole. Which is like, not lit and dangerous, but they take some- they take a lantern and are like, very carefully moving through. Um, alright. Lem and Ephrim? What do you do- Oh, oh. Take a- take- you do one more damage to this guy because as soon as you cut off his head, you like, step aside, and Devar shoots him in the back with a crossbow.

Jack: So, I just roll damage again?

Austin: No, no, no, no. I'm just adding 1 to that 5 because that's part of how he works as a hierling.

Jack: Oh, ok. Cool.

Austin: Ok. Um, Ephrim? Are you- are you- He's still very close to you. He's still like in- He's still in hand range and not close range. YOU still need to make distance.

Sylvia: Is he still- Is he still grabbing me?

Austin: Oh, yeah. With his ghost hand.

Sylvia: Yeah. So like- God.

Austin: Like, you can try to just push him away. Like just-

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Describe to me what Ephrim does.

Sylvia: I think it's just sort of like, desperately trying to ram him into the cart.

Austin: Hm. Uh huh.

Sylvia: Like, so it like catching him behind the knees.

Austin: Right. Uh, that sounds like a Defy Danger strength to me.

Sylvia: Of course. Yeah. [inaudible]

Austin: Cause you're trying to get him away more than anything else.

Sylvia: Yeah, this is not going to go well. Oh! It went better than I thought.

Austin: Hey, that's- that's an 8. Well, so it's a- it's a uh- what do we call that? A hard bargain comes out of this basically.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: So yeah, on a Defy Danger, on a 7-9, which you got a 7, right? Or an 8.

Sylvia: Yeah, I got an 8.

Austin: You stumble, hesitate, or flinch. The GM will offer you a worst outcome, a hard bargain, or an ugly choice. Um, you- Here's your- Here is your hard bargain or ugly choice. You can- and you feel this in a divine way- you could push his physical body away from you, and it would rip his spirit from it permanently, making it so that he could never go back to having a physical form. Or you could let him continue to hold on.

Sylvia: Fffff, oh boy. Problem is, I feel like killing a ghost is gonna be way harder. Um, but also, I don't want to die? So, I think I'm gonna have to do that.

Austin: Ok. So, I think the picture I really like is, Devar's crossbow bolt hits him in the back, you push him against the cart and pull away, and you just see his body like, [foley] buh-bop, collapse back into that kneeling position he'd been taking this whole time, head down, as the rest of his spirit- as his glowy Nacre spirit like, comes out of him and is pulled forward. And hey, at least you can't get stabbed by his weird- by his exposed bone anymore. But he's still trying to choke you as a ghost.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin (as Devar): Any of you all ever fought a ghost before?

Austin: Asks Devar.

Keith: Yeah! Oh, I'm not there. [**Sylvia** laughs] [Keith pretends to yell as Fero] Yeah!

Sylvia: [laughing] In the distance.

Jack: Yeah. Have we fought a ghost before?

Austin: **Jack**, you can't say that. You were the one who was always asked to. Every time.

Keith: [laughing] Yeah. We have.

Austin: A couple of times now.

Keith: Yeah, you and I have, together.

Austin: Oh boy. This is gonna be fun. Um, but you're able to shake him loose also. So, now you're at close distance, Ephrim.

Sylvia: Ok.

Keith: Oh, here's the trick about fighting the ghost is that it didn't work.

Austin: Right.

Jack: I don't think I've ever sucessfu- I know I ask about fighting ghosts a lot on the show. I don't think I've ever-

Austin: Uh huh. You fought ghosts.

Jack: Have I successfully ever fought a ghost?

Austin: Not you. No. You fought ghosts.

Jack: Hitchcock- Has Hitchcock fought a ghost?

Austin: Yeah, Hitchcock

Jack: Hitchcock used the ghost bane that he got from the witch to fight the ghost.

Austin: Yes, correct. Uh huh. You don't have any of that.

Jack: Ah, crap. I mean-

Austin: And Hella used her magic, anti-magic sword.

Jack: Could I use- could I use the pattern?

Keith: Wait, she strangled. She did strangulation.

Austin: Oh, she also did that, but first she used her Ordennan steel against- against [inaudible]

Jack: Yeah. Like, Ordennan steel, I think would- will do it.

Austin: Does anybody have any Ordennan steel?

Jack: I don't think so. I dont-

Austin: I don't think so either. Yeah.

Keith: Um- I mean, how- No. That-

Austin: Um, Devar- would Devar?

Keith: I have those- I have those orcish flay knives, but those are orcish, not-

Austin: Those are not- Those are orcish.

Keith: But they're cool.

Austin: They're cool. Uh huh.

Keith: Wait, hold on. I have those ornate throwing knives.

Austin: Those are ornate, not Ordennan.

Keith: They could be both.

Austin: Time to find out by throwing them.

Keith: Yeah, I guess. They were in that tower. That's important.

Austin: Yeah. But for now, Ephrim, you are at distance. What do you do? You're like, close distance.

Sylvia: With the spirit.

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Of Jeremy.

Sylvia: Yeah, I guess- once- I mean, I was gonna say once I catch my breath, but I can't do that yet, huh? Um-

Austin: Not so much. I mean, he's not choking you anymore, at least.

Sylvia: Oh, ok.

Austin: Yeah, you've broken- that's what I'm saying. You've broken his hold on you, too.

Sylvia: Oh ok. Um, yeah ok. So, I guess it's like a second of Ephrim coughing, and then just this like, wild swing at the ghost.

Austin: Ok. Give me a- Is that- is that Hack and Slash for you or do you have a special attack move?

Sylvia: It's Hack and Slash, but I roll with intelligence when I use my burning brand.

Austin: Ok. Cool. Sounds good.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Austin: Mark another XP with that 5.

Keith: Oh man, someone's gonna level up.

Austin: Yeah, right? Oh my god.

Sylvia: I mean, ironically when I level up, I have a perfect move for dealing with ghosts.

Keith: Oh, that's great.

Austin: That's good to have.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: That will be really great later on.

Sylvia: I'll be dead, but you know.

Austin: Oh my god.

Jack: It's called ghost killer.

Keith: Well, you'll be undead.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Um, so what are the tags? What are the tags the thing has right now?

Sylvia: Uh, thankfully I removed the dangerous one. It is just close and fiery , and then also 3 uses, but that's down to 2 now.

Austin: Yeah. Um, so the thing that dangerous would have done, would be that I would have made it burn you just now.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Instead, the thing that happens is, you like- So, it's like a short sword, right?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: He- You swing it at him, and his arm- it like, goes right through his- his body. And he grabs it with his right- the like- his right hand and tosses it into the cart, which catches fire.

Sylvia: [exhales] Fuck.

Austin: With the remaining 2 weeks of rations.

Sylvia: Oh god. Ok.

Jack (as Lem): Ephrim! [**Sylvia** laughs]

Keith: I feel like, hold on-

Jack (as Lem): Ephrim! [**Sylvia** continues laughing]

Keith: So, Ephrim burned down the museum. Burned down the cart. Is there- [**Sylvia** continues laughing]

Jack (as **Lem**): Ephrim! My specific argument for not engaging with this was that I was worried we would end up in a sort of a ration screw-up. [laugh-clapping can be heard] Or like, we'd- we'd disadvantage ourselves in some capacity. So, this is just go- Is there any water nearby?

Austin: Well, there's snow everywhere.

Jack: Alright, I'm going to immediately start trying to pile snow onto the cart.

Austin: Onto the fire, ok.

Jack: Yep.

Sylvia: Um- could I...

Austin: Uh hm?

Sylvia: Go ahead.

Austin: No, you go ahead.

Sylvia: Well, I have that move that let's me command fire. Could I try to minimize the damage with that?

Austin: Ah yeah, again you can do that- You can totally do that to fuck with the fire. That will leave you completely open to whatever he wants to do. You're in a melee right now.

Sylvia: Yeah, I know.

Keith: That's fine. You deserve it.

[crosstalking]

Sylvia: Yeah. I know. It's- one of those things where it's like- you know.

Austin: Ok. Give me a roll then. What's the- so tell me- This is- this is Zuko style?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: This is when you bend the flame to your will?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: So, you do like- you do like cool hand motions?

Sylvia: Basically, is how we've always described it.

Austin: Ok. Uh huh.

Sylvia: As me just moving my hands, and the fire moves with it.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: God. Please don't be a 5. [Jack laughs] An 8!!

Jack: Oh, yes!

Sylvia: Uh, it's short-lived- It'd be- is the- what happens. The effect is short-lived.

Austin: So you- [laughs] That means you get enough- Ok, but that means that you're able to get it under control long enough for- for Lem to start putting it out a little bit with the snow. But not for- you're gonna end up losing some rations here. I'm gonna have to take rations away from-

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: -for you from here. But it's not as bad as it would have been, I'll say. But-

Keith: I mean, the good news is that we're not fuckin' taking Jeremy with us.

Austin: Take another 4 damage, as Jeremy um, just like, grabs your hands as your doing this hand stuff. He just clutches them and squeezes. And you can feel the fire in you dim.

Sylvia: Ugh.

Austin: The uh- the quote that's next to the ghost entry in the Dungeon World book is really good. It's a Murakami quote, and it says, ' People naturally pay their respects to the dead The person had, after all, just accomplished the personal, profound feat of dying.' [Jack laughs] It's very good.

Keith: I have an out-of-timeline question, I guess.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: So, it um, it takes time to- for me to study an animal or an object for me to transform into that thing.

Austin: Yes, so- the people [laughs] I think the first people from the tower emerge from the hole. Do you lead them back out, or are you like, still in the tower? Like as a-

Keith: Oh yeah. For sure. Well, I knew Jeremy was- in a fight, so- or everyone is in a fight with Jeremy, so yeah. I definitely.

Austin: Fero, you lead- as you pop back out, you just see this ghastly green specter. And there are men, women, and children who are like, 'Ahhh!' They see this ghost choking this man, or like, struggling with this man of the cloth.

Keith: Hm. How to do- the ghost thing- You know what? I'm gonna try something. I'm going to transform myself into a panther.

Austin: Give me a roll.

Keith: Um, because- 11. So, that's 3 hold. Because panther magic-bird, lived over with the ghosts, maybe can hurt ghosts.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Maybe. That's my-

Austin: Maybe.

Keith: This is my reasoning here. Yeah. Um, so I guess, I guess we gotta do a sort of a poke my head up, see the fight happening, and then just sort of spring up and then transform into a bird and just lunge right at Jeremy. Claws- claws forward.

Austin: As you do that- people who have been following you are like, 'Ahhh' and run back into the hole.

Keith (as Fero/Panther): No guys! It's ok! It's good! Just wait a second! God.

Austin: Um, there is light to the east as the tower catches fire. Uh, what um, give me a- give me a- what is this? A Hack and Slash?

Keith: Hack and sl- It'd0 be-

Austin: What do you do as the as the bird?

Keith: It would be a dangerous attack. Claws forward and just sort of-

Austin: Ok.

Keith: I'm going to try and grab Jeremy by the shoulders

Austin: Ok. Give me-

Keith: And sort of just dig into those shoulder. Oh, that's not the right thing. Is it a strength? What's-

Austin: No, that's just- that's just damage.

Keith: What's the roll?

Austin: You just roll 2d6 plus strength. Strength. Always strength for melee.

Keith: Ok. Um, so this- Oh no, that's the same one.

Austin: Did you- do you take on- That's 1d6.

Keith: Sorry, I have buttons, And the buttons, I guess, are not the- what I thought they were.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: Plus 2. 11

Austin: There you go. Um, so you do not take any damage here, and you feel like you give- you feel like you've give him a squeeze for a second, and then

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: ...your claws close and pass through. Dealing limited, deeply limited damaged.

Keith: Ok. How limited?

Austin: You just do 1 damage to him through this.

Keith: Um, 1 damage, ok. And then I'm going to open myself up to attack, and take another attack.

Austin: Do additional-

Keith: This time, instead of trying-

Austin: You just do double damage. You just get to- you just get to roll a second attack- er you don't get to roll a second attack when you- when you open yourself up.

Keith: Right.

Austin: You just- you just- do an additional-

Keith: Can I attack in a different way? Like narratively?

Austin: That would be a different roll.

Keith: OK.

Austin: That would be- so, if you're opening yourself up to attack so to speak, then that's- you just - you would do a second- I would give you a second damage point here.

Keith: Right. Ok. I'll do- Yeah, I'll do that.

Austin: If you wanted to attack in a new way, you would have to re-roll. Alright. Which means I get to roll a damage on you, also. Um, so you take 6 damage.

Keith: Ok. I use shed, and I turn back into my halfling form, and then I take out my ornate knives for the next attack whenever that happens.

Austin: Oh, that'll be different- You switching back to that. Yeah, that'll- next time we come back around.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Um, but yeah, you've- you manage to like- it does feel like you've touched him twice. Um, how- how are you doing-

Keith (as Fero): Guys, I figured out the trick! Just transform into a bird!

[2:00:00]

Austin: Into a magic bird. [**Keith** laughs] And then hit him a billion times. Good. Um, Lem? How are you feelin'? Devar is like- Devar shouts to you to like,

Austin (as Devar): Hurry up and put the- put the fire out! My good bolts are in there!

Jack (as Lem): Uh, ok.

Jack: Uh, did the snow do anything? Have I tried that yet?

Austin: Yeah, give me a- I feel like it's probably a Defy Danger dex to do that since that's-

Jack: Hm, my least good of the skills.

Austin: Uh hm. You wouldn't be-

Keith: Is that a -1?

Jack: No. It's-

Austin: You wouldn't be good to do this roll if you- if Ephrim hadn't done the control fire to give you the opportunity.

Jack: Oh yeah. Ok. I assume we've got like, a shovel on the side of our cart. You know, like the-

Austin: Sure. It has parts.

Jack: The sort of old timey, American cart.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: That's a 6.

Austin: That's a 6, friend.

Jack: That's a fail.

Austin: So, no.

Jack: No? That's not a failure?

Austin: Uh, here's what I'll say. No, no, no. I'm saying yes it is a failure.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: Absolutely. So, mark XP. You- you um [sighs] The snow is just like, not- maybe it's packed too tight like may- or maybe it's not packed enough? Maybe it's too- there's not enough- It's not dense enough. It's not just wat- It's fluffy in a way that couldn't put this fire out. So it's just evaporating. Um, you could reach in and grab either a bunch of rations or the bolts for Devar. You'd take damage, but you would be able to get one of those things out before they burn.

Jack: I'm gonna try and take the bolts.

Austin: Ok. Give me- er you can just do it. But I'm just gonna do damage to you.

Jack: Ok. How much damage are you gonna do?

Austin: [typing] I'm gonna roll. 4. Take 4 damage.

Jack: Ok.

Austin: Ok. And you toss Devar the bolts, I'm guessing?

Jack: Uh huh.

Austin: He's like struggling to switch out to these other bolts.

Keith: Glad that he had the good bolts in the carts and not with him.

Austin: Why would he keep the fuckin' Ordennan bolts on him? That's not- that's a waste of bolts.

Keith: Oh, these are Ordennan bolts.

Jack: Oh yeah. This is like, the good stuff.

Keith: Well, good call.

Austin: Uh hm. Um, and he's like struggling to do that. Ephrim, what are you doing? He has your hands now. He's like, holding your hands and like, trying to like suck you're- your life energy out via like, his weird ghost-phantom touch.

Sylvia: Oh man. I'm trying to think of what to do to get away. [laughs]

Austin: He begins screaming at you, but not from his mouth. From his eyes. It's like the reverse of the thing you do with your eyes. Where they like turn to fire. His like, are like- it's like his eyes open and they're cavernous inside.

Sylvia: Ok. Um, can I try and move so that if Devar was to take a shot, it would be easier for him to get a clear shot.

Austin: Totally. Yeah, absolutely.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: How are you doing thar? Like, are you just trying to drag him into position?

Sylvia: Yeah, basically using my own weight where if he wants to keep choking me, he has to move this way.

Austin: Are you- Wait, so you're just doing Goku on Raditz basically.

Sylvia: Basically.

Austin: Ok. Do you have an idea whether or not an Ordennan bolt would stop when it hits a ghost?

Sylvia: No, no clue.

Austin: Ok. Give me a-

Sylvia: I'm taking a big risk here. It's either get shot or get choked.

Austin: Yeah, it sure is. Give me a- a defy danger stre- I don't know if it's strength. Like, what is it? How are you doing it? Are you trying to strongarm him? Are you trying to trick him? Are you trying to-

Sylvia: Um, I like- honestly the way I saw it was almost just like, I don't know if strongarm is the word, but just like, digging in with my feet and trying to step back.

Austin: Ok. So here's what I'll say. If you let him do damage again, I'll let you use constitution for this.

Sylvia: Ok. Sure.

Austin: You know what I mean? So-

Sylvia: Yeah. Um, yeah ok. I'll go with that.

Austin: So, that way you're- you're- yeah. So, you roll constitution. Defy Danger Con.

Sylvia: 8.

Austin: Uh, alright 5. Uh, so yeah What I'll say is you're able to get him into position. So, you take 5 damage.

Sylvia: Um, on odd number damage, I get to a roll 1d4.

Austin: Oh yeah? What happens?

Sylvia: Yeah, Fighting Fire with Fire. I'll just read the move first.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: When you take damage, and that damage is odd after armor, which doesn't apply here.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: The flames within you come to your aid, roll 1d4 and either add that many uses to your burning brand, take that result forward to summoning your brand, or reduce the damage by that amount, your choice.

Austin: Cool. That's a really cool move.

Sylvia: Yeah, it's- You've been rolling way too many even numbers. [**Austin** laughs] So, 2. So-

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: Reduce that down to 3, and what I think it looks like is- The way I described- the way- the one instance where this has happened before, I described it as- Ephrim's brand basically went back into him

Austin: Ok, right.

Sylvia: What I'm seeing it as is um- not enough to change the situation with the cart...

Austin: Right.

Sylvia: ...But some of the fire comes off of it.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: And like, the color in his face kind of- like instead of being as pale as he would be being choked out, he kind of like, gets a bit of a surge for it.

Austin: Hm. Gotcha.

Sylvia: Like, he's still gonna be hurt, but like, it's- like his will is almost back in him.

Austin: Totally. Totally.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Oh yeah. Um, alright. So, the thing here is, you got an 8 on your Defy Danger.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Austin: Which means you can hold him in place to assure that this will hit, but you will be also in the line of dan- like, you will-

Sylvia: Yep.

Austin: You're holding him again like, Goku-Raditz style. You're chest- ern not exactly like that obviously. You are facing him. You are behind- you are in front of him, and you have positioned him to be in front of Devar. You're not standing next to him and holding him in place where Devar could get a clear shot on just him.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: So, take 6 damage from this cross- the first of these crossbow bolts. Um, which does, in fact, pass through the ghost, and you can see Jeremy is missing where it hits. Like, he fizzles away. And there's just a gap in him now, um, that is not like stitching itself closed. And Devar takes another aim, and shoots one more time with the second and hopefully last of these. Take 14 damage.

Sylvia: Oh, guess who's dead?

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Who? Who's dead?

Sylvia: Me. And I mean, Jeremy, too.

Jack: Oh geez.

Austin: Jeremy, too.

Sylvia: But also- also and probably the bandits.

Keith: Oh man, Sylvia. You're Piccolo.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah. No Goku.

Keith: You just Piccolo'ed yourself.

[crosstalking]

Austin: No, you're Go-

Sylvia: Goku's the one who died.

Keith: He's Piccolo. Sorry, I got it backwards.

Austin: He's Piccolo. You got Piccolo'ed. Um-

Keith: You got Piccolo'ed.

Austin: You got Piccolo'ed.

Jack: We may have just replaced one ghost with a second ghost. [**Sylvia** laughs]

Austin: Well, you know. Things happen sometimes.

Sylvia: No, those were Ordennan bolts.

Austin: Those were Ordennan bolts. Uh huh. Well, so let's- let's look at what happens here. When you are dying, you catch a glimpse of what lies beyond the black gate of death's kingdom. The Gm will describe it. Roll. Roll plus nothing. Yeah, death doesn't care how tough or cool you are. On a 10+, you've cheated death. You're in a bad spot, but you're still alive. On a 7-9, death himself will offer you a bargain. Take it and stabilize or refuse and pass beyond the black gates into whatever fate awaits you. On 6, you're fate is sealed. You are marked as death's own and you'll cross the threshold soon. The GM will tell you when. Give me that roll first, and we'll talk about what you see.

Sylvia: It's just a straight 2d6, right?

Austin: Yes, straight 2d6. [typing can be heard] That's an 8. [**Sylvia** exhales]

[**Jack** de Quidt's "[Broken Branches. or the March of the Unstill](#)" plays out in the background]

So, this bolt passes into you, Ephrim. And you drop to the ground, and you're blood is spilling out all across the snow, and the bolt has like, sparked it and it catches fire like it's oil because it's your blood, of course. And as you begin to lose consciousness, the loud thundering from the east grows louder, and it begins to echo through the valley. And you can see from the ridge, looking down this tower, a group of 10 or so horses arriving. The first one is beautiful and black and massive. It's a war steed with armor on.

And it's ridden by a woman who is wearing a similar sort of plate armor, black and gold. And between blinks, your eyes recognize that that is Ordennan armor. You tell that clearly. In fact, she has the badge of a justicar. And her face is entirely covered in bandages. She looks almost like a mummy. Her hands, her neck, her entire head except for her lips and her dark eyes are covered in bandages. And you're bleeding out, and you're struggling to keep your eyes open. And she is so far away from you, but you can kind of see or sense her lips part. Maybe it happens with the sound of thunder. And her voice bellows across the valley.

Austin (as **Corsica Neue**): My name is Corsica Neue. I am the Sovereigness of the Unstill. The Cavalier Queen of Death. The Baroness of Broken Branches and Undelivered Resignations. If your spirit lingers, if you are what the west island calls undead, if you are curdled blood and eroded bone, hear me now. You are my kin and my subject, both. Drop your weapons now and join me. Or confront your final death on the length of my blade.

Austin: You blink 1 last time, and she draws out her sword and lifts it into the sky and you can't be sure if there's a causal connection here or not, but the sun comes out.

[Jack de Quidt's "[Spring's Light](#)" plays out in the background]

It is bright and clear, and it doesn't raise. It just appears there in the sky. And it's not warm in the right way. You can see by it's light, and you can feel it just so on your skin, but it doesn't go deeper than that. It does not orient you the way the real sun did once. It does not warm you really. Ephrim, it doesn't feel real, and you just know this. It's not the real sun. That's not the real sun, and you think that over and over as you're bleeding out in the snow. That's is not the real sun. And part of the reason you now that is because you feel a different type of heat. Something much, much hotter. You hear waves for a moment. Feel a sea breeze behind you. Hear the cawing of gulls.

And you linger in the face of a pearlescent palace. Ivory and rose with touches of red and gold. You are there now in Nacre, and you take a step towards the staircase that leads to her throne room. But blood drips down from your chest falling out of the wounds where the bolts of Ordennan steel still rest. And when it hits the floor, the palace begins to recede away from you. And the breeze slips past. You are in a black abyss. And it is hot. A third sort of heat now. One that exhausts you. One that feels like it at once predates you, and will outlast everything you've ever known. But that other heat. The real heat of the real sun has not left you either. And you feel it reach for you, cradle you, and begin to draw you away from the nothing.

From the empty resting place of so many souls. From the Heat and the Dark. And you blink again and in rhythm with your eyes opening and closing, we hear the sound of hammer hitting anvil being swung upwards again. Clink. Woosh. Clink. Woosh. Clink Woosh. And then you stand up. Stumbling. And you are in a forge hanging over a pit of dark, liquid fire. Bolling purple and black. And in its strange light, you see him. Brown. Taut skin. Firm chest. Tools in hand. Dark hair rising like flames as he works away on some new invention. And you find your footing. And then his face, a smirk painted on it as he works. And then his body turns to you. Samoths turns to you.

Austin (as Samoths): My summer son.

Austin: His eyes recognize you and light up.

Austin (as Samoths): Spring's light comes soon. And you will be its charioteer.