

## SPRING IN HIERON 38: SEE WHERE YOU'RE STANDING

Transcriber: Cole

(recap)

**Austin** (as **Index**): We are here for our Lord. Please stand aside.

**Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Well, we'll happily retrieve him for you, but I'm afraid we can't give you entrance to our settlement right now.

**Austin** (as **Index**): Our Lord needs us. Has called for us. We go to him.

**Austin**: They begin walking forward.

**Jack** (as **Lem**): How can I get you to stay away from the Last University?

**Austin** (as **Index**): You can kill us. There is no other way.

**Austin**: And they take a step forward.

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**Nick**: Fantasma says,

**Nick** (as **Fantasma**): The only people I know here, Benjamin, is you.

**Austin** (as **Benjamin**): I-

**Jack** (as **Lem**): Oh my god. It's Fantasma. [**Austin** and **Keith** laugh hard for seven seconds; **Sylvia** begins laughing]

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

**Jack** (as **Lem**): Fantasma! It's- it's- Oh my god!

**Jack**: Just like, gets down off the horse.

**Jack** (as **Lem**): I- How are you... Ok, this is not the... Benjamin, is he- is he real? Are you real?

**Nick** (as **Fantasma**): I am... not sure, honestly.

**Austin** (as **Benjamin**): He's-

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

**Austin** (as **Benjamin**): Um, so I have these crystals. They-

**Jack** (as **Lem**): Uh huh.

**Austin** (as **Benjamin**): They um- I learn with them. They're-

**Jack**: Just like, star stuff strikes a tower in the back. [laughs]

**Austin**: [laughing] Yeah, exactly.

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**Austin** (as **Samot**): [sigh] Ephrim, stay back.

**Keith** (as **Fero**): Yeah- no one likes this!

**Austin** (as **Samot**): [exasperated] Of course they don't. I don't like this.

**Keith** (as **Fero**): You're the one doing it!

**Austin** (as **Samot**): Because it is necessary.

**Keith** (as **Fero**): Says fuckin'- says who?! [**Sylvia** mutters] It's crazy!

**Austin** (as **Samot**): Ephrim, you know as well as I do what my kind are capable of.

**Keith** (as **Fero**): It- you're proving it.

**Austin** (as **Samot**): [slight pause] I am.

**Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): You of all people should also know what we are capable of.

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**Austin**: You- so, two things happen. The tree gets bigger. It works. It smashes through the roof of the tower, and it claws its way towards you and like, it's going to like, interrupt Samot. And then lightning strikes it, and part of it starts to turn into the star stuff. And then it rewinds. Samot reconfigures locally, and it unbreaks through the tower and returns back to the size it was a moment ago. And in fact, Ephrim? You're back downstairs. And it remains corrupted by the star stuff.

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**Keith**: Samot is- has star stuff in him.

**Austin**: Yes.

**Keith:** I want- I want to attack it with the Spring. I want to push it out of him.

**Austin:** This thing sprouts out of your hand and like- as if there were like, spears growing from it- like, slams into the side of Samot before he can react. Pushing the star stuff out of him, is like... a real fucking problem. And I think like, the lightning keeps striking, but he isn't in control of it anymore.

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**Jack (as Lem):** Okay, Fantasma, are you still there?

**Nick (as Fantasma):** [whispering very badly] Yes, I'm still here. [**Sylvia** and **Keith** laugh]

**Jack (as Lem):** Okay, right. We're going to have to work on- okay. I need to- I need to get to, I think the dormitories? And I- I can't walk on that stuff, it'll kill me. Do you know how I can get to the dormitories?

[Jack de Quidt's "[Something](#)" finishes playing]

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**Austin (as Samot):** [tired] No more. [pause] No more.

**Austin:** And you, like, thrust at him with the sword and he reaches out, and he grabs it. He grabs the sun-fire as if it were a, a solid thing. Or he makes it a solid thing as he does it. And he just has like a vice grip on it. And it is absolutely burning his hand, but he just holds it, and he holds eye contact with you. And then he snaps it. He snaps the sun in two and I- I- he snaps it in two.

**Keith:** Does half disappear or is it- cle-

**Austin:** It's cleft into two. It's like cleft into two half-suns, and like, that's just a fact of this world now, is there are- there is- there are these two suns now. Um, and then reaches out with his reconfiguration just on you. Um, very- like, and just like, touches your chest to do some damage. Uh, taking the best of this 2d10- Hey! That's not so bad. That's only a six. [**Sylvia** sighs relief]

**Austin:** So, that's a two plus four, so six.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Um, as like, part of your- actually, you know what? I know exactly what he's doing. It's like, he knows there's the weakness in your arm from the Heat and the Dark. And he like, further opens that- that wound. And like, again, I actually think th- here's- I think this is real god shit. Real god hours. Subtract six permanently.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Samot don't play. [someone low whistles]

**Sylvia:** Now I have a total of ten HP.

**Austin:** Phwoof. [end of recap] Um, Fero?

**Keith:** Yeah?

**Austin:** Uh, what are you doin'? As Ephrim gets hurt really bad by Samot beginning to unmake him.

**Keith:** Ok, so... question. Do I take Balance from um- from when I used my Elemental Mastery move?

**Austin:** Uh-

**Keith:** We said that Samot- that you don't have hit points for Samot, but-

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** -I take Balance when I deal- when I deal damage.

**Austin:** When you touch someone and deal damage. Yeah, absolutely.

**Keith:** Ok.

**Austin:** Yeah. Totally.

**Keith:** Alright, I just wanted- I wanted to make sure.

**Austin:** Wait, no. Wait, you don't- you don't take Balance, you take- What's the thing you take?

**Keith:** Balance, yeah. Balance for healing.

**Austin:** What's that come from?

**Keith:** That comes from when I deal damage. I-

**Austin:** Where does it say you get that from? It's- Oh, you take it when you deal damage.

**Keith:** Yeah, I get Balance when I deal damage.

**Austin:** That's what I- Yes.

**Keith:** So then, I use it to heal myself or other people.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Right?

**Austin:** Got you. When you deal damage, take plus one... Yeah.

**Keith:** So, I'm concerned about Ephrim...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Um, don't let him catch me say that. [**Austin** and **Sylvia** laugh] Um... I'm concerned- I'm very concerned about Samot. I presume he still has Spring inside of him.

**Austin:** Oh yeah. It's growing, for sure.

**Keith:** Yeah. Um... I... [exhales] Hm. Before I do anything else, maybe I should- Maybe I should Parley?

**Austin:** Give- What do you have that Samot wants?

**Keith:** Um... I- I have uh... Arguably I have proof that the Spring can be used to do more than just eke out a living and that it would- [**Austin** sighs] it's a terrible idea to just replace everything with terrible white light that kills the planet. And replaces it with a new planet?

**Austin:** He... He isn't interested in a life where there could be gods again. And as long as there is a continuous relation to this world, there can be. That isn't a thing he wants.

**Keith:** Alright, then I guess I... I guess I try to um... pull him apart with the Spring that's inside of him.

**Austin:** [exhales] Pwoo. Ok. Um, you can give me that roll to see if you can do this. Uh, I want to be clear, like, it is not- I mean I think, no. You just did it, right? You start to pull him apart from inside, right?

**Keith:** Right. Well, it's- Yeah, it still would be- would- It would be an Elemental Mastery roll still.

**Austin:** Yeah, but I'm gonna- Like, you can win that roll, and that is not going to kill Samot. Um, he is gonna undo it. You know what I mean? Like, this is reconfiguration. You're going to need an opening here, at this point, that is not- that is a surprise. Where he does not see it coming. Where he cannot just be like, 'No, I'm stopping that as it's happening, and putting this shit back in your-' It worked the first time cause he had no idea what the fuck you were doing.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** But at this point, like, he is going to basically rewind time every time something... unless it's something truly out there and surprising. That blade I let swing once, you know?

**Keith:** Mhm.

**Austin:** But you're gonna need- you're going to need something to pull his attention away. Which makes me think, what's up with the other party at this moment? [light laugh] Uh, y'all have made inside the central tower. Do you go down into your- your place of power, Fantasma?

**Nick:** Um, I open up the uh- Yeah, I open it up which takes the form of um... let's see. He finds a certain rock in the wall.

**Austin:** Ok.

**Nick:** And uh, like, touches it briefly, and it glows. And then the floorboards near him start to twist and move down into a spiral staircase.

**Austin:** Awesome. And because the stars aren't here, there- this part and you go down there- this is all safe.

**Nick:** Cool.

**Austin:** So like, you don't- you don't even- Lem can go that way if Lem wants to go that way. You can go that way, if your spell falls, it's ok. Like, you're not gonna get- it's not gonna spread here because the stars aren't here to spread it.

**Nick:** Um... do you think... So, they would have been- If he had set up portals to other parts of the uh, college- university-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Nick:** -they would have been rituals, right?

**Austin:** Probably, right? I- You tell me. Are they rituals? Are they enchanted something? Are they-?

**Nick:** So, this is the place of power.

**Austin:** Yeah, which the book just says-

**Nick:** Yeah, it's pretty vague.

**Austin:** Which means that we can do whatever the fuck we want, you know?

**Nick:** Ok. [light laugh] Yeah.

**Austin:** Uh, you're a level ten wizard. Like, fuck me up, fam. [**Austin** and **Nick** laugh] If you want there to just be active portals here, we can do that, you know?

**Nick:** Alright, yeah. I mean that- so that-

**Austin:** Yeah, go ahead. Do you lead everyone downstairs?

**Nick:** Yes.

**Austin:** What do you do?

**Nick:** I say,

**Nick** (as **Fantasmio**): Follow me, everyone.

**Nick:** And I lead them downstairs, and it looks uh- it's- Everything in there is totally inverted. It looks like the tower above, except we're on the ceiling.

**Austin:** Ok. Great. Good. Does the like- does the- Is there the moment of like, you walk down the stairs, and you don't realize it, but the- but the like, center of gravity switches, and suddenly you're walking upside down, basically?

**Nick:** Uh... no.

**Austin:** You don't- I guess really what I mean is for the camera.

**Nick:** Sure.

**Austin:** But not for...

**Nick:** Uh, yeah. Yeah. That's- that's cool. So, there's a like a little- there's like, a small floor in between. We go down the stairs-

**Austin:** Ok.

**Nick:** -and then as soon as um... the other end of the staircase- the rest of the party sees me step into a- a hole in what is-

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Nick:** -the floor, and then I just flip around.

**Austin:** Perfect.

**Nick:** Like um... David Bowie in Labyrinth.

**Jack:** [amused] Oh my god, David Bowie.

**Nick:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Austin:** Wow, yeah. Perfect. Good catch. Good. Everyone is synced up. And Red **Jack** goes like,

**Austin** (as **Red Jack**): Ugh, alright. [foley of groaning slightly] Oh. Ok. That wasn't- that wasn't so bad. [**Sylvia** laughs]

**Austin:** Um, and then we see what is this place like. Like what are- what are you- what are- Where are the portals at? Cause I'm sure Lem is eager to go through them.

**Nick:** Uh, the portals are all in the same place that the doors are in the main hall of the- the central tower.



**Jack:** Ohhh.

**Austin:** Cool. Right. That's awesome.

**Nick:** Except you can see through them, and they just go into some- like, you can- you can see through them clearly.

**Austin:** Perfect.

**Nick:** So, you can see right into the dorms from where we're standing.

**Keith:** [quietly in the background] Damn.

**Austin:** Do they work both ways?

**Nick:** Uh, no.

**Austin:** Or like, can you- can you pull someone back through them is my question.

**Nick:** Yes. Uh, so on the other side, it's just gonna be a wall.

**Austin:** Right.

**Nick:** But you could like, tie a rope around yourself and go through.

**Keith:** Damn, Fantasma's a little creep.

**Nick:** And then follow it- [laughs] Well?

**Austin:** [laughs] I don't think it's like that. [**Sylvia** laughs] But he is certainly- He's been known to be paranoid, so- [**Keith** laughs] Um, so these go everywhere, right? These go to like, the old- the place that turned into a temple, that they turned into a temple. This goes into the store room and the gardens.

**Nick:** They would go to- Yeah. They would go to all the major points of the university.

**Austin:** Awesome. So, is this- Lem, are you doing like, a... a like, 'I have to run and get everyone into this inverted tower cause this is the one safe place'?

**Jack:** Yeah, I mean I think maybe that might be how...

**Austin:** Or is it-

**Jack:** The actual answer is no, right?

**Austin:** Right, no.

**Jack:** The answer is I'm gonna find Emmanuel.

**Austin:** Right. Is that what Red- I guess that's what Red **Jack** and Blue J. start doing immediately, is like,

**Austin** (as **Red Jack**): We'll go get people from around the campus. You find your Emmanuel. He owes me more dragon meat.

**Jack** (as **Lem**): Um, do you have like, a chalk or something? I don't want to like, tie a rope around me, but I want to like, mark the wall where I came from. [**Jack** and **Nick** laugh]

**Jack:** So, I don't... Cause I otherwise it'd just be like, looking for secrets in Dark Souls, right? On the way back.

**Nick:** Yeah. [**Austin** laughs] Um, actually... uh, I don't know. It... I'm gonna describe it. Let me know if this works or not.

**Austin:** Yeah, go ahead. [overlapped] This is your section of the world.

**Nick:** I'm gonna say uh, Fantasma reaches into his pocket and pulls out exactly what Lem just said, a little piece of chalk.

**Austin:** Perfect. And it's real. Like, it is- it is- If there's- This is a thing. Like, you are a projected hologram.

**Nick:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And we don't know how long you'll last, but it is- it is real.

**Nick:** It's-

**Austin:** It is a piece of chalk that could write.

**Nick:** Yep. It's got the same sparkly bits that I do. [**Jack** laughs lightly]

**Austin:** Oh, cool.

**Nick:** And then I hand it to Lem, and I say,

**Nick** (as **Fantasma**): Make an 'X' on the other side of the wall, and you'll be able to pass back through.

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

**Jack:** And just like- like, trail of blood behind him, [**Nick** laughs] Lem just like-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** -limps through into like- two health is...

**Austin:** No health.

**Nick:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Good thing no one there knows how to cure wounds or anything. [**Austin** laughs lightly]

**Jack:** I know. [light laugh]

**Austin:** I don't- I don't know that anyone here does actually. [laughs]

**Keith:** Really? You don't think uh... Fantasma knows Cure Wounds?

**Austin:** No, I know that Fantasma doesn't know [**Nick** laughs] Cure Wounds cause I put together his play- his spellbook today.

**Keith:** Oh wow.

**Austin:** After **Nick** sent me all the spells he has.

**Keith:** I could have sworn he did.

**Nick:** Wouldn't uh- I mean you don't think Ben picked somethin' up from his dad?

**Austin:** Maybe, Ben- Maybe Ben has- Maybe you know what? You know what? Ben probably has...a Cure-

**Keith:** He spent all his time learning Double Fireball. [**Nick, Austin,** and **Jack** laugh]

**Austin:** I mean that's- That is what he did.

**Nick:** There is- there is an advanced uh- er you know, the Advanced Moves which are not... necessarily high level.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Nick:** Um, there is a wizard move called expanded spellbook, which lets you add a spell- a new spell from a-

**Austin:** From?

**Nick:** -spell list of any class.

**Austin:** Oh, that's interesting. So, he could have some Cleric spells then.

**Nick:** So, he could totally have some Cler- In fact, he's human, right?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Nick:** Uh, humans get a bonus Cleric spell. Human wizards-

**Austin:** Oh, by default?

**Nick:** -get one Cleric spell by default.

**Austin:** You know what? Then I think this is good. You've made the case. I think before you walk- walk through, Benjamin is like,

**[0:15:00]**

**Austin** (as **Benjamin**): Wait, Lem. Just...

**Austin:** And he does- he does what looks like Lay On Hands, which is- which would be the Paladin like, version of that, but he's just casting Cure Light Wounds. But he's doing it the way he used to see his dad do it.

**Jack:** Hm.

**Austin:** Um, so- You should heal-

**Keith:** That's really cute.

**Sylvia:** That's really cute.

**Austin:** It's real cute. Eight! And he rolled an eight. Heal eight fuckin' damage!

**Jack:** Hell yeah!

**Nick:** Nice.

**Austin:** It was a 1d8. He rolled an eight. I- I love it when the dice come together. [light laugh]  
Um, which you brings you back up to ten.

**Jack:** God Hadrian... Hadrian's gonna be so proud.

**Austin:** I know! And he's like,

**Austin (as Benjamin):** I hope you find Emmauel. Um.. I hope he's ok. Also, thank you. You don't like, know me that well, but you definitely- I have- I'm glad you didn't get hit by the fireball.

**Jack (as Lem):** Me, too. Um, yeah. Your dad's gonna be really proud of you.

**Jack:** Uh, and then just disappears through the portal.

**Austin (as Benjamin):** That... I was gonna say some more stuff.. Bye. [**Keith and Jack** laugh]

**Austin:** And then he comes back around. I think he like, actually, runs over and like, is like,

**Austin (as Benjamin):** Blue J, you were fuckin' incredible. I-

**Austin:** And like, looks over at Fantasma.

**Austin** (as **Benjamin**): I mean you were really incredible. [**Nick** and **Jack** laugh]

**Nick**: Uh, Fantasma like, puts his hand on his shoulder and like, gives him a little, you know, the most smile Fantasma does. A little, wry little like, uh, you know, corner of the mouth-

**Austin**: Yeah.

**Nick**: And like,

**Nick** (as **Fantasma**): I've taught you well, my boy.

**Austin**: [laughs] Um-

**Nick**: That's Fantasma taking credit for [laughs] for Hadrian's life.

**Austin**: Yeah, of course. Yeah. For Hadrian's- [laughs] Yeah, exactly. Uh-

**Keith**: How does the time work between- like, how does the passage of time work for Fantasma before he was the projection? Like when he was in the book.

**Austin**: So... when he was in the book- he's in these crystals, right? He was in these crystalized-

**Keith**: Oh, the crystals, right.

**Austin**: So, this is the thing that we've been- We've been just doing this without having ever said it out loud. These are crystalized lectures. These are like recordings- He- There were recordings of Fantasma's lectures all- like, you know, tons of them, that- that Benjamin had found over the- over the winter while he was here.

**Keith**: Ok.

**Austin**: And those were all before the party knew Fantasma. And so, I think that they were just- He's like, stuck in that day. Ya know? He's like- it's always that day for him.

**Nick**: I imagine it-

**Austin**: It's always whatever- that set of days, right? Go ahead.

**Nick**: I imagine it like- This is gonna be a very specific reference, I apologize. But that episode of- it's one of my favorite Geordi episodes. That episode where Geordi has to fix somethin' with

the warp engines, he calls up the... uh, what's that word? When you're tryin' to fix somethin' and you run- The diagnostic program-

**Austin:** Yes.

**Nick:** -for the warp engine, and it's got the lady that designed the warp engines as part of the program.

**Austin:** Ohhh, yes. Yes.

**Nick:** But then he adds some more perimeters and makes her a fully interactive hologram.

**Austin:** Right. It's like-

**Nick:** And then she becomes like, a version of that woman that doesn't really exist.

**Austin:** Right, and then is also kind of like, 'Hey, Geordi? This is kind of fucked up.'

**Nick:** Yeah, yeah. No, totally.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Nick:** Like, Geordi ends up falling in love with her. And then there's a great episode like, a season later where he meets the real one, and she's nothing like the hologram.

**Austin:** Yes. Which we talked about here, right? Like, this is a Fantasma who- You told me before we started playing that you wanted to play him as like, actually confident instead of just like-

**Nick:** Yeah, this would be Fantasma in his prime. Like, in his comfort zone. Like, he is-

**Austin:** Right.

**Nick:** He holds a place of distinction.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Nick:** And like, this is just- this is him.

**Austin:** [exhaled laugh] For- for fans of [Be Good and Rewatch It](#), the now on-hiatus uh, Waypoint rewatch podcast, we spent a lot of time talking about Mr. Darcy in Pemberton versus

Mr. Darcy out in the world. Where out in the world, he's just kind of like, prickly and annoying and clearly like, on one. But at Pemberley, he's just like- He's hotter. Like, he's like, a better person, and it shows. [Nick laughs] He's just like, comfortable. He's himself. And so, all the qualities that make him annoying elsewhere are replaced by ones that are like, 'Yeah, I'm home. I'm comfortable.' And I like that about- I think that this is a similar situation with this Fantasma.

**Keith:** I- The- the real quick- The- I guess I just want to know, how long has Fantasma known- this version of Fantas- the crystal Fantasma like, been aware of, in time-

**Austin:** Being-

**Keith:** -Benjamin.

**Austin:** He's only been- uh, so it's- The question there ends up being, how early could Benjamin have started doing this?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** We know that the only reason he can bring him out into the world this way is from the Book of Life, this time. But I think it was the first time he started studying- using the Book of Life to help Sunder and Stornras repair the Blade in the Dark.

**Keith:** Ok. And-

**Austin:** That was the first time he started looking at bl- that Book of Life.

**Keith:** And so-

**Austin:** And so- Yeah.

**Keith:** Benjamin's- er Fantasma's familiarity with Benjamin comes from Benjamin's impression of their relationship?

**Austin:** Comes from talking to Benjamin.

**Keith:** Ok.

**Austin:** Oh, wait sorry-

**Keith:** Well, you said it was one day... that-



**Austin:** What was one day?

**Keith:-** Fantasma is stuck in the- in one day. I guess- it doesn't really-

**Austin:** Well, it's that- it's that- I guess it's-

**Keith:** -doesn't really matter, so we can move on, if we want.

**Austin:** No, I know, but it's that- It's like, that era of- Cause it's not one lecture that was crystallized.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** It was probably a set of lectures from- So, it is not one day, but it is- I think it's exactly what- what um, Fantasma just said- what **Nick** just said which is like, like that one doctor in Star Trek, it is like, an impression from a moment in time.

**Keith:** Got it.

**Austin:** From whatever the most recent-

**Keith:** Mhm.

**Austin:** -moment in time was. Maybe a little bit more like, um, a kind of like, assemblage of all of those different Fantasmos, but that's just all people. People are just assemblages of all the people you've been.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Ya know? So, um... But knows Benjamin for the last few years, I guess, is probably right. Like, since the last year and a half, maybe? Since- since the sword was repaired.

**Keith:** Got it.

**Austin:** He's been secretly studying with Fantasma. So-

**Nick:** Basically, this crystal has many facets.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yes. Um... Fantasma, as everyone is running around to save people, what do you do?

**Nick:** Um-

**Austin:** Are you heading upwards? Are you waiting here?

**Nick:** Who- So, who else is... Is it just me and Benjamin now?

**Austin:** I guess actually- I think- I think, at this point, Ben- Yeah, and I think Benjamin... Benjamin is like,

**Austin (as Benjamin):** We need to go- [exhales] we need to go up top.

**Nick:** I- I assume that- Oh, wait. Would- would Fantasma know... about-

**Austin:** About this place?

**Nick:** Would he know like, who is causing this?

**Austin:** So, this is a- That would be a Spout- I mean, at this point, no.

**Nick:** Ok.

**Austin:** Right? Cause of 'What are these fuckin' stars?' I don't know.

**Nick:** Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Ok.

**Austin:** Um... I think Benjamin probably would have said the words- would have explained who Samot was to you at some point. Uh-

**Nick:** Sure. Well, I mean-

**Austin:** And would-

**Nick:** Oh, was Samot... post?

**Austin:** Yes. Like that interaction, you mean?

**Nick:** No, no, no, no, no. I mean just him, period.

**Austin:** You would have-

**Nick:** Nah, he existed. Yeah.

**Austin:** He was definitely- Yeah, yeah, yeah. You would have known- But, but remember, you barely knew who he- No- People barely knew who he was at all because he'd mostly just been in Marielda for... hundreds- thousands of years-

**Nick:** Sure. Right.

**Austin:** -since the Erasure, right? It was only when stuff got- started getting weird and the pillar- er the towers that were pinning the world into place started failing that he started leaving Marielda. Um, before that he was content to wait and hope that this just worked.

**Nick:** Ok.

**Austin:** But when the Book of Life fell off the pillar, and the Heat and the Dark started to- to kind of come back, and, you know, people started making plays, he- that was the 'Is it time already?' is like, he had this moment of breath-

**Nick:** Right.

**Austin:** -where he could just like, live in Marielda, not even as like, a real king. Just kind of like, live there and take that in. And he enjoyed that.

**Nick:** Mhm.

**Austin:** And then things got thrown into action, and he had to start trying to find a new plan. So, now we're here with one of those new plans.

**Nick:** Right, ok. Uh-

**Austin:** So-

**Nick:** So, Fantasma asks Benjamin,

**Nick (as Fantasma):** Is the person responsible for this up there?

**Austin (as Benjamin):** Absolutely. That's where I saw Fero go.

**Nick (as Fantasma):** Then we need to see him.

**Austin (as Benjamin):** Alright.

**Austin:** So, do you just walk up these stairs?

**Nick:** Yep.

**Austin:** Ok. Up top, I want- I want us to get- I want to get this group together so I think like, the timing on this works out such that by the time the two of them appear up top, it is when um... Fero, you have tried to like, rip him apart, and he rewinds it. Like, for the third time or something, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Um, we definitely get the like, anime thing of just like, Ephrim, you trying to swing and then like, it being blocked by- by his hand over and over. You know, kind of wide-angle shot circling this- this kind of cloud cover tower, as attacks come in and he rebuffs them. Um, and then the two of you appear on the roof. Ephrim and Blue J- er sorry. Uh, Fantasma and Blue J appea- Ah, not Blue J either. Fantasma and Benjamin [light laugh] show up. Fero and- and Ephrim, what do you do as you see them? [**Sylvia** sighs an 'uhh']

**Keith:** I think... I think I'm too busy to even say anything.

**Austin:** Ok. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I'm- I feel like that's kind- like, I hate to use the same answer, but I just had a lot of my- like, a third of my life sapped away.

**Austin:** Yeah, fair.

**Sylvia:** Um..

**Austin:** [sighs] I think Benjamin innately runs- like, instantly runs over to you, Ephrim, cause he sees that you're hurt really bad. Um, and like, pulls up like, a mage armor type bubble around the two of you. And is like,

**Austin (as Benjamin):** Are you alright?!

**Sylvia (as Ephrim):** ... I'm as alright as I'm going to be. [struggling foley]

**Sylvia:** Ephrim's like, really stiff moving now.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Um, he... like, he- where his arm used to be has spread up and like, it's visible up even on his neck a little now.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Um... and he's basi- Basically, it's just like, tryin' to let Benjamin know that there's not really anything he can do.

**Austin:** Yeah. Um, Samot turns and faces you as you- as you um, come up the stairs, Fantasma. He's wearing um, this kind of like, platemail armor that has been shined so- maybe it was built out of this- It's hard to- it's built out of some material that almost looks like, 'What if porcelain was metal?' Um...

**Nick:** Ok. That's cool.

**Austin:** And he's wearing a- like, a long, white wolf cloak. Um, and actually, as he sees you, um... Actually, you know what? Sorry. He doesn't have that on anymore. I think at some point in that fight, it actually came off. This is an important note that- Don't worry about it. But it came off at some point during that fight. Um, and actually, it probably came off around- around the same time that you hit him with the plant stuff. Um, and he sees you, and I have a really important question.

**Nick:** Ok.

**Austin:** You don't look as much like Fantasma as you did when Samot met you, but does the Charm spell still work? Does he see you and go, 'You're my friend, Fantasma'?

**Nick:** I mean I would think so.

**Austin:** Because you are, right?

**Nick:** Because I am. I am Fantasma.

**Austin:** Well, I think then in that moment, he just like, stops everything, and he goes,

**Austin (as Samot):** Fantasma... I thought you were dead.

**Austin:** And if anyone wants a fuckin' moment, here is a moment.

**Nick (as Fantasma):** I see my reputation precedes me again.

**Austin:** [light laugh] And he's like,

**Austin** (as **Samot**): What do you mean?

**Jack:** Stone cold. [**Austin** laughs]

**Austin:** And he takes a step forward towards you, and he is like, completely- He's like,

**Austin** (as **Samot**): I thought Arrell and- I was told that... It's been a decade since I've- With you here, there are so many other options.... No, it's too late. [sighs]

**Nick:** Do I have to uh- If I want to just play along, is it a roll?

**Austin:** He- I- Let's read the Charm spell. How- What's the Charm spell say? I don't think it does. I don't think it is. Uh, 'the person' da-da-daaa- '-counts- counts you as a friend until they take damage-'

**Nick:** It just says...

**Austin:** '-or you prove otherwise.'

**Nick:** 'Counts you as a friend.'

**Austin:** So, I think like, until you take damage in the- It's not just like, if they prick their thumb [light laugh] a month later, they're like, 'That guy's not my friend!'

**Nick:** Right. [**Keith** and Nick laugh]

**Austin:** So, until you prove otherwise, he will believe you are his friend.

**Nick:** Ok. Alright, so yeah. Um... Fantasma's gonna roll with it. Um, what was the last thing he said? Oh, with you here, there's options or something or other.

**Austin:** There's other options. But then he was kind of like, 'Ah, but it might be too late.'

**Austin** (as **Samot**): If only I'd known. [sighs] I've lost Hadrian and gained Fantasma in the same day.

**Nick:** Fantasma uh- Is he facing Fantasma?

**Austin:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Nick:** Ok.

**Austin:** And at this point, I think has walked past Ephrim, Benjamin, and Fero showing his back to them.

**Nick:** He uh- Fantasma reaches out and grabs uh... does like, the deep- like grabs his forearm- like, in that kind of like, double-deep-

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Nick:** -handshake uh, that some- that super close friends do. And he says, uh,

**Nick (as Fantasma):** There's always options, my friend. There's always options.

**Nick:** And I would like to cast a spell-

**Austin:** What's the spell?

**Nick:** -as I am touching him.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Nick:** Uh, that spell... will be Dominate.

**Austin:** God. [Keith laughs] I- There is- there is some shit at play here that is so much... that you don't even know about. This is great.

**Nick:** Oh wait, did I click that?

**Austin:** Uhh... What did you click?

**Keith:** You clicked Intelligence. Yeah, Intelligence.

**Nick:** I accidentally rolled Intelligence. I don't know how I did that.

**Austin:** Um, that's ok. You would have hit-

**Keith:** That should-

**Nick:** No, I don't-

**Austin:** I mean it should be the same, right? Cause it's-

**Keith:** It's- Yeah, it's the same.

**Austin:** Unless you have-

**Nick:** Yeah, well it's- it's exactly the same.

**Austin:** So, yeah. So, that's a nine.

**Nick:** Ok. [laughs]

**Austin:** The spell is successfully cast, and- er sorry. The spell is cast, but choose one. Either uh... da-da-da- [reading] 'You draw unwelcome attention or put yourself in a spot; The GM will tell you how. The spell disturbs the fabric of reality as it's cast, take minus one ongoing to cast a spell. Or after it's cast, the spell is forgotten.'

**Nick:** Um, I'm gonna... take the easy way out and choose the spell is forgotten.

**Austin:** Ok, yeah. So, [reading] 'your touch pushes your mind into someone else's. You gain 1d4 hold.' Give me that 1d4.

**Nick:** It's just slash 'r,' right? 1d4.

**Austin:** Yeah. Slash- yeah. One. [light laugh]

**Nick:** [laughing] Oh no.

**Austin:** [reading] 'Speak a few words of your choice, give you something they hold-' You can spend them one to one. 'Make a concerted attack on a target of your choice, or truthfully answer one question.' Um, before you make that decision, really quick, to Ephrim and Fero, this is as good of an opportunity- His back is to you.

**[0:30:00]**

**Austin:** Like... if there is a backstab comin', you could do it during this Dominate.

**Sylvia:** [sighs]



**Keith:** Ok... I... I... I don't think I have anything where I could figure out how to do this without killing Samot.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** In the time- without... without losing our chance to do it.

**Austin:** I will say there is still chances, and I'm- One of these things is, I think, in this moment, from this height- in this moment of brief breath, you can see that Severe is almost here. Though also, who knows what Severe- honestly, who knows, right?

**Keith:** Yeah. I don't know. I don't know what- I don't know why um, she's coming back.

**Jack:** Whose side- yeah, exactly.

**Austin:** I mean this is the thing that Samot is getting at that is true. Which is every god has done reconfiguration. The thing he's doing is a different sort of reconfiguration. It's the only sort of reconfiguration that would prevent future reconfigurations from happening. Right? That is the argument he is making is 'no more'. And so like, even Severe who might be coming up these stairs to help you- er like, riding into town to help you, has done the thing he is doing, in terms of destroying the world for people.

**Keith:** Mhm.

**Austin:** Ruining it utterly. Samol did it.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, there is not- This class of being sees the world in such a way that individual lives don't count. Or they do when you know them, ya know? The best they offer is like, 'Hey, I'll- come here and hang out with me while I do it, and you'll make it through to the next world.' Ya know? It's not... They are not a good class of being, as- as much as some of them have been our favorites. And so, like, that is- You're- you're right. Like, I think Severe's coming, and- and I look at my prep, and Severe's going to give you other opportunities to- to do some shit here, ya know? Prize fight of the century: Severe versus Samot. That's a thing that could go down if you don't pull the trigger here while Fantasma has Samot dominated. There will be other windows that open. But... also you are well within your rights to not trust Severe either. So... so, yeah. What do you do? Fantasma, do you have a decision on what this Dominate is?

**Nick:** Oh boy. This is a big decision.

**Austin:** It is. I also think it can just be... keeping him like this- keeping him open. Do you know what I mean? Um...

**Nick:** Sure.

**Austin:** Which is , I guess, the equivalent of give you something they hold which is like, 'their time' in a weird way.

**Nick:** Oh, yeah. Ok.

**Austin:** But you could do- If you have something else in mind, I'm also totally open to it.

**Nick:** Well, the- the thing I had in mind... I don't know if this is the best thing to do.

**Austin:** Let's talk through it. Always rather talk through it because it's good to have that convo.

**Nick:** Yeah... Um... let me uh... read Dominate again here. 'Speak a few words, give you something they hold, make a concerted attack, truthfully answer one question.'

**Austin:** Ok.

**Nick:** I want to ask him a question-

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Nick:** -that he has to truthfully answer.

**Austin:** What's the question?

**Nick:** The question is,

**Nick (as Fantasma):** Do you know why I joined the university?

**Austin (as Samot):** No. I-

**Austin:** And there's like- I think there's a bit of him realizing he doesn't know you at all, and it's- he can't quite fi- he can't quite- because he's still dominated, can't quite put together what's happening in this moment.

**Nick** (as **Fantasma**): I joined the university... to learn. But not just learn from books... I joined the university to learn from other people... People like, these wonderful... group you've seen before me. Who, I've just met most of them today. [**Keith** laughs] And they've immediately treated me like family. I did learn a lot from books. I learned a lot of spells. But the best thing I learned while I was at the university was that ultimately, knowledge comes from other people. And if you destroy these people now, that knowledge will be lost. Everything that they have done. Do you not see where you're standing? They've taken... an amazing- a once amazing monument to knowledge and wisdom and truth... that was destroyed... and they've rebuilt it. They've done it again. They also know... that knowledge comes from other people. They also know the power of community. That is why I joined the university.

**Austin** (as **Samot**): [quietly] That's why I built it.

**Austin**: And I think he just like, turns to face you, Fero and Ephrim. Like, he's given up. What do you do?

**Keith**: I use Elemental Mastery.

**Austin**: You pull the trigger?

**Keith**: I do it.

**Austin**: Is that your mercy?

**Keith**: Yeah.

**Austin**: What's the thought here? Or is this- is this... in the moment, is this... I just want to give you the chance here, to be like- I'm being very clear. He is at your mercy.

**Keith**: He's at our mercy now.

**Austin**: Yeah. I'm- I'm not gonna stop you. So... what's it look like? Do the trees like, bloom out of- [overlapped]

**Keith**: [deep breath; exasperated] I don't know! Hold on. Let me think. [sighs]

**Austin**: [laughs hard] Ha- ha- HA! Role playing games are good! You know what? You think about it. He's at your mercy. Lem King, you've drawn an 'X' on a wall.

**Jack:** Ok... I'm not dying anymore?

**Austin:** People are- You're not. People are yelling. People are screaming. The starstuff is getting closer still here.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And individual stars have kind of spread out and begun to just like, walk through the places to like, spread their creep, so to speak.

**Jack:** Uh, I'm gonna like, raise my vo- Well, shit. It's tough, right? Because like, if I- I don't really know how the startstuff operate, right? Where like, if I say aloud, 'we have a safe place-' [light laugh]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** -are the sta- are the starstuff the sort of creatures that will be like, 'ah, safe place'?

**Austin:** I don't know.

**Jack:** Hm. Ok. I think what I'm gonna do is I'm just gonna like, grab the shoulder of someone who is passing me-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** -and put my finger to my lips and push my hand through the wall marked with an 'X' -

**Austin:** Nice. Good.

**Jack:** -and just kind of like, look meaningfully at them, and at people around.

**Austin:** Yeah. Um, and people keep coming. And they like- they like- It spreads. And like, everyone gets very quiet, um, and like, line up very orderly and move through. And like, people are holding their han- each other's hands. And they're moving and they're moving and they're moving. And you don't see Emmanuel.

**Jack:** Uh, and I just stop the line. I just stop one of the people from going through.

**Austin:** You're like, 'Stop.' Uh huh.

**Jack:** And I say,

**Jack (as Lem):** Where's Emmanuel?

**Austin (as Random Civilian):** He- he was helping everybody- He's back towards the- He's- uh, towards the entrance, I think.

**Jack (as Lem):** When you last saw him, was he alive?

**Austin (as Random Civilian):** Yes-

**Jack (as Lem):** O-

**Austin (as Random Civilian):** Well... an- he- I- Hard to say cause of- he's undead.

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

**Jack:** [amused] And I just like- [**Austin** laughs lightly] I just push the person through the wall like-

**Austin:** Ok.

**Jack:** It's not even like a 'Keep going,' it's just a like, 'Alright, fuck off with you.'

**Austin:** God. And I think to build on the- [**Nick** laughs] One of the things that Nick had said previously, was that like, the way this door works is like, you have to- originally it was like, tie a string-

**Jack:** Mhm.

**Austin:** -to- to keep the chain through. And I kind of like the idea of like, you've built a rope of people.

**Jack:** It's hand- Hand on hand on hand. Yeah.

**Austin:** It's hands- it's hand on hand. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, you're able to pull people through it as long as people are still- as long as this rope is still here, the door is open where the 'X' is.

**Jack:** Yeah. So, I just start like, pushing past the- the rope of people-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** -uh, deeper in towards the, you know, where I was pointed to.

**Austin:** Yeah. Um, and you get- search through rooms, and you're like, looking quietly. It's just like, deathly quiet, right? Because you don't want to make a noise. And you finally-

**Jack:** It's just- Do they- do the star people make footsteps when they walk?

**Austin:** Yeah, totally. Absolutely, yeah.

**Jack:** So, you can just- Like, the sound of footsteps is mostly like, the very quiet footsteps of people in the chain, and then just like, this- these- the click of the- of the star people walking-

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah.

**Jack:** -from room to room.

**Austin:** It sounds like they have on like, metal- It's like, a- it is a click. It is like a [foley] 'kah-lick kah-lick' like that and- as they move through the rooms. And then you do hear- You hear like, the sound of like, something being thrown. And you turn a corner, and it's like, the stairwell. This is the second floor- er the third floor of the dormitories. And it is Emmanuel like, well past the end of this line of people, throwing chairs and tables down the stairwell to try to stop the stars [Jack laughs] who are slowly walking upstairs. And he's like,

**Austin (as Emmanuel):** What are doing here?!

**Jack (as Lem):** I came here for you. Uh-

**Austin (as Emmanuel):** I- I'm fine- I'm- Ok, I'm not fine, but how- how did you get in?

**Jack (as Lem):** There's a... Ok, the wizard Fantasma is here. He's upstairs. [Austin laughs lightly] It's like- He's not Arrell, but he's just like- he's up-

**Austin (as Emmanuel):** He's upstairs, we're on the- we're in the third floor. This is the top floor.

**Jack (as Lem):** Oh, right.

**Jack:** [laughing] No, I think that's like, Lem is- is pointing-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Lem has now gotten so turned around by like- [**Austin** laughs]

**Jack** (as **Lem**): He's- he's in the tower. [**Nick** laughs] Um, uh- he has a portal. He has like, a network of portals that run through the whole university. I was so worried about you.

**Austin:** Um, he like, grabs your hand, and says,

**Austin** (as **Emmanuel**): [whispering] Let's go.

**Jack** (as **Lem**): Ok, ok. Follow me.

**Jack:** Uh, and just like, down along the line of people.

**Jack** (as **Lem**): All these people are- They're going into the portal. But we have- [whispers] We have to be quiet.

**Austin** (as **Emmanuel**): [laughs] You just shouted about the portals. The network of portals.

**Jack** (as **Lem**): They don't- they don't know where they are. [laughs]

**Austin** (as **Emmanuel**): Ok.

**Jack:** Running past the line of people and- [laughs] [**Austin**, and **Nick** laugh]

**Austin:** [amused] Ughhh. Um, wait, so you cut this line?

**Jack:** Um... uh, no. But we go to the- to the head of it to make sure people are getting in.

**Austin:** Ok. People are getting in. [overlapped] A star turns the corner.

**Jack:** Um, so we're the like- we're the- the ride operators-

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** -in a Disneyland ride, instead of cutting the line.

**Austin:** Um, a- one of the stars turns the corner [**Jack** breaths deep] and sees this long line of people. What do you do?

**Jack:** O... k. Now I didn't draw my blade on a star, so I still have-

**Austin:** You still have your blade. I'd say it's probably like, fifty feet away from you, past this long line of people. Maybe more- more feet than that. I was overestim- er underestimated on feet.

**Jack:** [laughs] Fifty feet is... is pretty big.

**Austin:** It's not that- It's big, but it's not that big. Not for like, a big dormitory in this giant campus city.

**Jack:** No, that's true.

**Jack (as Lem):** Emmanuel, are you armed?

**Austin:** He like, puts up his fists. [**Sylvia** laughs]

**Jack (as Lem):** Oh Jesus, ok. Right, no, don't do that. [laughs] [**Keith** and **Austin** laugh]  
You mustn't touch-

**Keith:** [imitating Emmanuel] 'I used to be a pirate!' [**Sylvia**, **Jack**, and **Austin** laugh]

**Jack:** Just- I mean he was a terrible pirate. That's what I saw in him.

**Austin:** [responding as Emmanuel OOC] I was as good a pirate as I could be.

**Jack:** Yes, that is true. [**Keith** laughs] [amused] Emmanuel is- is dropping into the third person omniscient narrator here to let us know [**Austin** laughs] his feelings about piracy. [laughs] Um- [**Nick** laughs]

**Jack (as Lem):** No- no- You don't have a dagger? You don't have a knife or something?  
You don't have a ladle?

**Austin (as Emmanuel):** I- Did you think I was throwing chairs because I thought I didn't want to waste my dagger? I threw the dagger immediately.

**Jack (as Lem):** Ok. [laughs] Alright. Fine. Um... ok. [sighs] I'm gonna try and fight this thing.

**Austin (as Emmanuel):** No! People, just hurry! Everyone hurry!



**Austin:** And , 'oh, ok.'

**Jack (as Lem):** Ok, let's step it up folks! [laughs] **[Austin laughs]**

**Austin:** They are not gonna be able to step it up in time. This thing is walking quickly. [foley]  
'kah-lick, kah-lick, kah-lick.'

**Jack:** Hmm, [speaking as Lem ooc] Emmanuel, let me check my moves list.

**Austin:** [responding as Emmanuel ooc] Of co- of course.

**Jack:** [speaking as Lem ooc] That's what I call my ideas.

**Austin:** I'll also- [laughs]

**Jack:** Gonna check my inventory real quick.

**Austin:** Yeah, to see if there's like, a cool thing you've forgotten about?

**Jack:** Like a- like an invisibility cloak or something.

**Austin:** Uh huh...

**Jack:** Hey, **Austin**, back before I knew combat pattern magic, how did we handle me executing the pattern? What was that rolls wise?

**Austin:** It's still Arcane Art. Arcane Art's a default Bard move. Unless you mean something else.

**Jack:** Ohhh.

**Austin:** What do you mean?

**Jack:** i mean like, you know how the like- [overlapped] semioticians-

**Austin:** If you just want to make a pattern- You just want to like-

**Jack:** -semioticians can do magic shit?

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** And like, I'm not trained in that, but like-

**Austin:** Uh huh. I would say that's a Spout Lore to know if you know the pattern. [Jack laughs] And then- then to execute on it. It's two rolls. So, Spout Lore which is Intelligence. You got a plus one in that.

**Jack:** Ok.

**Austin:** Truly I love looking at character sheets and being like, 'well, what do- how do the characters end up different?' And Lem is one Strength, zero Dex, zero Con, one Intelligence, one Wisdom, two Charisma. Truly a master of- Uh, a jack of all trades; master of none. Uh, whereas if I look at someone like Fantasma, uh, Fantasma is uh... zero Strength, one Dex, zero Con, three Intelligence, three Wisdom, two Charisma. [Jack laughs] So...

**Jack:** Um, yeah. I'm trying to think like... Do you remember when we were- when we were planning Twenty-two Brown Birds?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And you and I wrote like, a full A4 document of interesting things the pattern could do? [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And it like, took us forever. I'm not saying this cause I have a good idea. I'm saying this because finding- finding ways for the pattern to behave interestingly is really tricky...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Outside of an academic context. I want something that- I want something that feels like invisibility, but isn't. Um, we know that the pattern can't make people invisible. That's not how it works.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Jack:** Um, it couldn't- it could work through coincidence of gaze. Through line of- through like cones of vision-

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Jack:** -and lines of sight. Um...

**Austin:** Like, is it a thing where the thing that happens is the star starts to- that like- you know how in um... heist movies, you get the thing where like, there's a loop? There's the loop of the- of like, a video tape so that it makes it look like the room is empty?

**Jack:** Mm.

**Austin:** Um, is it a thing where you mess with the perception of the star, so that it thinks the hallway behind it is the hallway in front of it, and so it just turns and walks in a loop? **[Jack laughs]** To try to like- Do you know what I mean?

**[0:45:00]**

**Jack:** Yeah, I mean what's the semi- semiotic basis of that? Like, how did the orcs work out you could do that is the-

**Austin:** I mean they-

**Jack:** Cause like, a thing I don't want with pattern magic is I don't want it to feel like... I'm not just like, casting a spell.

**Austin:** Well, we... we already knew that there was- We know that there's the like- We know that there's like, transportation pattern magic cause we've seen Uklan Tel do that stuff. So, in some sense- Actually is- Is that actually the thing that it- that you could do is that like- the opposite of a transportation pattern magic is like, the inverse of the stuff that Uklan Tel does is you walk, but you don't go anywhere?

**Jack:** Huh.

**Austin:** Where like, the thing that's happening is friction is being removed?

**Jack:** Yeah, I really like that.

**Austin:** I don't know what the- I don't know how to make that happen. Do you know what I mean? But it's no less- That's no less ridiculous than um- but you have to Spout Lore to make that move to know if you know how to do the thing we're talking about.

**Jack:** Mhm. Mhm. Yeah. Uh, but we haven't. Now we have a story idea that we didn't before.  
**[light laugh]**

**Austin:** Yes. Yes.

**Jack:** Ok, so that's an Intelligence- Do I have anything that will help me here on this roll?

**Austin:** I don't think so.

**Jack:** I don't think so.

**Austin:** No.

**Jack:** Ok. Let's give it a go.

**Austin:** Yep. 2d6 plus one. That's a nine. So, that means that it's interesting. It's on you to make it useful. Um, which to me means that I think it's just that much harder to do as like, a pattern. Like, yeah, you know this pattern, uh... good luck doing it in this dormitory.

**Jack:** Mm.

**Austin:** So, uh, I'm gonna- I'm basically gonna give you a negative one on the- on the actual doing it roll because it's you running through the rooms trying to find this shit.

**Jack:** Yeah, tryin' to find stuff, like-

**Austin:** [over **Jack**] Um, what is- what is it? What is the stuff that you need to make this pattern?

**Jack:** Oh, like, complete fuckin' bullshit, right? Like, I feel like- I feel like, if we- if we say that Lem can make patterns expeditiously, we will be letting him down in the last moment.

**Austin:** A hundred percent. Yes.

**Jack:** It's like, a blanket that is draped over a coat rack. It's like- it's like, um-

**Austin:** You have to set that on fire, but before the- before it burned up all the way, you have to like...

**Jack:** Lem takes Emmanuel's um, communications cube-

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** -and send his own cube a message, [**Austin** laughs] which he then sends back to Emmanuel's cube again.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** [amused] And then destroys it or something.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. Um-

**Jack:** It's just like, the most- the most...

**Austin:** Give me an Arcane Art, which we're just gonna use as the stand-in. It's a Charisma roll, basically, to see if you do this. Min-

**Jack:** And then we take one away from it.

**Austin:** Minus one, yeah. Charisma minus one, or you could hit Scarred and roll Charisma if you wanted to do it that way, too.

**Jack:** Oh, sure.

**Austin:** This is actually a Defy Danger Charisma is what it is. It's Defy Danger Charisma minus one. The danger is the star.

**Jack:** Ok, so I'm just gonna hit scarred and roll Charisma.

**Austin:** Yeah, that's fine. That's an eleven. Even with a minus one. So, tell me what this looks like.

**Jack:** Mm... It's just the worst. It's like a fuckin' child's chemistry set on the floor next to this panicked group of people [**Nick** laughs] who are walking through a solid wall [**Austin** laughs] like, hands joined. And like-

**Austin:** As a star 'Terminator' walks towards them.

**Jack:** And like, I feel like at this point- [**Nick** laughs] I feel like Emmanuel is- is in three moods, right? Mood number one: I love my boyfriend, and I'm gonna stick by him in this time of difficulty. Mood number two: This is fuckin' useless, and I don't think it's gonna work. [**Austin** laughs] Mood number three: Yes, but I'd like it to be done sooner. Can we get it done sooner? [Austin laughs again]

**Austin:** Please~.

**Jack:** Just like, hopping from foot to foot, hopping from foot to foot.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Jack:** And then I think that like... You know, the pattern is- the pattern is founded on coincidence, so I don't want to let it get as neat as the thing gets its- reaches out towards me and you know, like, the-

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Jack:** -the pattern takes effect as it's just about to get- get us. I don't think we know it's worked at first until we notice that it's like four- five feet away from us, down the hall.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Jack:** And is taking steps... and just isn't moving laterally. I don't think it looks like it's sliding.

**Austin:** No.

**Jack:** I don't think it looks like it's frictionless. It just looks like, um- You know how in video games, uh, character animation and the fact that the character is moving are two separate things?

**Austin:** Yes, I do.

**Jack:** One is created to mask the other.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Jack:** And if you- you know, you can turn on the animation and turn off the moving, and the thing is just- it just goes. Um... Is the star confused about this? Do we see any kind of recognition or panic on its... on its...

**Austin:** No.

**Jack:** -in its features?

**Austin:** Um-

**Jack:** It just looks as though it is continuing to walk. It's just this like, implacable-

**Austin:** It's like, 'well, I gotta cover this distance.'

**Jack:** Mhm.

**Austin:** Um, Actually, I think the thing that happens is like, it does that for a few beats-

**Jack:** And then just stops?

**Austin:** -and then stops, and then two more stars come up the stairs. But by this point, people have had the time to get in the door.

**Jack:** Mhm, yeah.

**Austin:** Including you. [light laugh]

[crosstalking]

**Jack:** Yeah, just grab Emmanuel's hands.

**Austin:** And the door closes be- the portal closes behind you. Yes.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You guide him through, and you're the last two through the door. And you've saved a whole bunch of people here. Um, Blue J. and Red Jack have done the same.

**Jack:** And there's like a triage-

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jack:** -thing set up inside the-

**Austin:** Also, at this point, Red Jack has like, no armor left. He has like, a skirt on, ya know? But all of his armor has been starred and tossed away. He's lost his dope uh-

**Jack:** [laughing] Taking this moment-

**Austin:** -Monster Hunter armor. Yeah.

**Jack:** Taking this moment to unwrap some wax paper, eat some cured dragon.

**Austin:** [laughing] Exactly. Gotta get that stamina bar back up. Um... alright. With- with the safety of most of the campus secured, who is up on the roof? What's goin' on? You done the thing? Are- Have you committed, Fero? What are you gonna do?

**Keith:** I have committed.

**Austin:** Ok... [silence] [amused] To doing it? Or not doing it? Or something else entirely?

**Keith:** To doing it.

**Austin:** What's it look like?

**Keith:** I think it's um... Ya know if like- [sighs] You know in like, a shonen or something when they're doing the tournament? That they have a-

**Austin:** I do know. Yeah.

**Keith:** And like, there's the last um- there's the last frame of the fight where it just sort of freeze frames and does the Ken Burns movement, where it's like you know, you see the violence- like, a freeze frame of the last bit of violence?

**Austin:** [quietly] Yeah.

**Keith:** I- it's that.

**Austin:** So, is it just like... But what is the violence in this case? Is it the tree sprouting? Is it the... Are you doing something else with that sprout you were carrying around?

**Keith:** [exhales] I think that- you know, it's the Spring, and I think it's been getting bigger. And it's just at- all at once and very quickly, they move apart.

**Austin:** [sucks teeth] Um... yeah... And his body falls.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** In front of you. Um, to the ground...

**Keith:** I think Fero's like, crying about it. I think it was very hard to do.



**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And... all... This season for me was the season of Fero asking himself... 'I just signed up to go on that boat one time, how did I get here?'

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And I think all of the stuff- all of the- all of the shit that's happened since then... like, he just wants to go home and stop doing this.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And it keeps... happening. But-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I mean he was like, about to destroy the world.

**Austin:** Yeah... Ephrim, how do you feel about this?

**Sylvia:** [sighs] ... I don't think Ephrim looks at it when it happens.

**Austin:** Where are you looking?

**Sylvia:** Um... I think I'm looking back at Fero. Um... just like-

**Keith:** Fero's like, sitting on the ground.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** In this moment, as you look at Fero, beyond him, all of that lightning, which remember-like, it's lightning that stays in the world in three dimensions. It you know, cranes out all around. It branches, but then it stays locked in into the ground. You don't know why- You'll find out eventually, but all at once, there is this like, wave of bright green energy that passes through it. Um, and... all of it kind of falls from the sky and drapes over the world. Vines and flowers and uh, bushes and new trees interlocking with the Spring that is already there.

**Austin (cont.):** Um... in fact, I think Benjamin points down from the- to the south from up here, and he can see and shows everyone the volcano next to Marielda, which had previously been

just this- Like I said, like, it looked like it was a tornado made out of lightning or like, a spider nest made of lightning. And all of it turns green and pink and red, and like, slowly like... um, what's the word I'm looking for? Not confetti. But um... da-da-da- like, not tinsel, but- The stuff you like, throw, and it's like- it unrolls?

**Sylvia:** Like streamers?

**Austin:** Like streamers, yeah. Like- like streamers. Like vine-like streamers falls all around the mountain. And when it hits the mountain- the volcano like, it blooms bright green and red. And like, the world comes alive with this new color. Kind of a second Spring. Um.. and I don't- You know, I don't know what the Marielda party got up to, but it was some shit. Um, Fantasma, is this a moment where you go back to the crystal? Is this the moment where your energy is spent, having cast that spell? Are you for like, the cleanup or is this- is this it?

**Nick:** Yeah. Uh, no, that's uh... I think that's it.

**Austin:** Um...

**Nick:** As um, as Samot crumbles, the uh, the little sparkly bits-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Nick:** -just take over. And uh-

**Austin (as Benjamin):** You um- you did- You helped me so much. You were like, I'll be- I thought you would look older. [**Nick** laughs] Sorry. I mean... like, more tired.

**Nick:** He says something, but you can't hear it. It just sounds like, uh, you know, a bad-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Nick:** -radio tuning. And then he's gone.

**Austin:** I think Benjamin comes over to you, Ephrim and Fero. And says, um... Oh! Here's an important thing. He maintains the spell that you cast, Fantasma. He like, sees you fading, and he actually thinks very quickly and just like, pulls the spell around him. Um, and like, carries it over to- to Ephrim-

**Keith:** The Dispel Magic?

**Austin:** The Dispel Magic, and is like,

**Austin** (as **Benjamin**): I need to work on-

**Nick:** Oh, ok. Yeah.

**Austin** (as **Benjamin**): Can we... can we go downstairs? Um, there's a safe spot, and we can- I can work on- If Sunder's there, we can work on fixing this... I hope.

**Austin:** And like, he will not look at the body of Samot. And I think, you know, there's cleanup for the first few hours, but it's kind of hard because everything is rumbling and the ground is shaking, partially because of what the other party got up to down in the City of First Light. But also because of Severe's hoofbeats getting closer and closer until finally, Severe shows up and sees all of this. And at this point, I think the- the starstuff has been dispelled. And like... it's just a fucking disaster mess. You know, there is a- there is a recovery effort at- happening right now. Um, I think the stars have like, become- the stars that stood here have been turned into like, Annihilation style tree people who do not move anymore. Actually, maybe they will start moving eventually. Who could say?

**Keith:** Right now they're not moving.

**Austin:** But right now, they have been- they're like, part of the new- I mean, Alyosha called it the Verdant, which was like, a version of the Spring that was filled with Love instead of being filled with Power, right? And I don't think you got that here. Um, the thing that happened down south, you know, if that had happened to Samot with that blade, then maybe. But it did inject something new, right? It did inject what we talked about as being a feeling of unity. A feeling of- that there was a- there was a degree of like, um, collaboration involved that was not in the Spring as it was.

And I think this new, second Spring begins to blend with the first Spring, which gives you an in to talking to it and like, beginning- and we'll figure this out in, I think, an epilogue-finale game. Just like how- what does the world look like now that the Spring has sprung all the fucking way. [light laugh] Because with this little push like, the world as we knew it... I think the world is more Spring than Samol now. Like, the tree has grown such, and with this added layer especially. Um... but Severe is still here. Galenica is still out there, and I'm curious, Fero, as Severe arrives and begins to help everyone like, pick up the pieces, like, what the hell do you even say to her?

**Keith:** [deep sigh] I haven't seen... I haven't seen Severea since uh, Severea and Galenica both really bothered me.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Um, so... I guess what does she say to me? Oh, I- [laughs; jokingly] 'Hey!' [laughs more] Um, no. I don't say 'hey'. I don't yell 'hey'.

**Austin:** Oh. [laughs] Ok, it was a payback- it was a payoff from the past.

**Keith:** Yeah. Um...

**Austin:** Um...

**Keith:** I, you know, I'll... [exhales] Fer- I- Fero is not doing well right now.

**Austin:** No.

**[1:00:00]**

**Keith:** I don't know if... he has it in him to....

**Austin:** Have that conversation.

**Keith:** I think that he would have it, but I don't- like, I don't know that he could go like... If he were to talk to Severea, he would want to be- he would want to do it in a certain way, and I don't think he can be that way right now.

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Keith:** So, if she came up to him, he would- he would have that conversation in the way that he is now. But I don't think that he would engage because he's not in that place.

**Austin:** Yeah... um... I think she is going to engage. You- you killed her nephew. Like-

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Um, and I think word gets aro- like, I guess that's a good question, actually. Does- Benjamin will tell Blue J, for sure. Ephrim, do you spread the word that Samot is dead?

**Sylvia:** No... not immediately, at the very least. Ephrim's like, shell-shocked and really like, feeling bad.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Especially after the like, last thing- like, the last attack Samot made against him.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, then I think she just asks you directly, Fero. And like, is confronting you.

**Austin (as Severea):** Was my nephew dealt with?

**Keith (as Fero):** Yeah.

**Austin (as Severea):** Will you turn your swords on... Galenica and I next? Do we have something to worry about, Little Bird?

**Keith (as Fero):** Are you... about to try and... kill everything on the planet and replace it?

**Austin (as Severea):** No, I was thinking of leaving.

**Keith (as Fero):** Then no.

**Austin (as Severea):** Some of the mistral, you know, some other people in the north, some orcs, we uh, we're turning that moon into... kind of a... a cool place. You might want to come through. And we're thinkin' like, what if we just left? With the moon?

**Keith (as Fero):** Whether I'm on it or not, I think leaving is a really good idea.

**Austin (as Severea):** [light laugh] Samot thought so, too, and now I see why.

**Keith (as Fero):** [exhales] Samol told me that I'd like him...

**Austin (as Severea):** Samot? [overlapped] Samol liked him.

**Keith (as Fero):** Yeah. He said, 'Give him a chance.' And I did.

**Austin (as Severea):** Yeah... Listen, you and I could go back and forth all day about problems we have with Samot... We all meant well. Lessons learned.

**Austin:** I don't think there more from- from her today. Um, there are a- a couple more things we have to...[inhales] wrap up though [exhales] before we- we finish today. Um, so... Hella?

**Ali:** Hi. [laughs]

**Austin:** Hi. Um, I don't- Where are you when Adelaide is like,

**Austin (as Adelaide):** Hey, I need you here right now.

**Ali:** I- I don't know the timeline here. Am I like, on the boat home?

**Austin:** I think- So, I mean like, they just saw the lightning sword-

**Ali:** [quietly] Ok.

**Austin:** -so it's probably like-

**Ali:** Fwoof.

**Austin:** -on the way down the mountain?

**Ali:** Yeah. Ok. [laughs lightly]

**Austin:** Um, and I think she's just straight up like,

**Austin (as Adelaide):** You might... want to bring Hadrian.

**Ali (as Hella):** Uh, if I can do that, I will.

**Austin:** Yeah, he has that move that lets him talk to Death, too.

**Ali:** Oh, hell yeah. Ok.

**Austin:** So, like, he can ride that- that skill set.

**Art:** Oh.

**Austin:** Hadrian, you're here with us.

**Art:** Alright, yeah.

**Austin:** Um... and like, one second you're- we get y'all like, climbing down this mountain towards one of the boats that will take you back across the sea- or the river. And the next moment, we get you in Adularia like... I think what we get is like, the two of you getting into that boat, and then we get the shot of like, a boat docking, but it's a boat docking at Adularia, even though your- your bodies are still in- You know, the metaphysics of Hieron are very strange. Your bodies can be in multiple places at once.

One place is quiet on a boat. The other place is arriving in Adularia on the beach, and on that beach you see... Samot and you see Adelaide. Um, and the sea is lapping at- at uh, at their feet. And Samot looks bad... Um, all of the starstuff that was in him has been replaced by the Spring. And it's like, growing... through him in weird ways. Um, yeah. I don't want to get too detailed, but it... was described, and it- the way that it- the way that I think it went is pretty rough, Fero, fair to say?

**Keith:** I tried not to describe it as best I could.

**Austin:** Yep, and I'm gonna follow suit. Um, and... [exhales] Samot like... turns away as the two of you approach, and just like, looks at the skyline of Adularia so that he doesn't have to make eye contact with either of you. Um, and Adelaide looks to the two of you and says like,

[Jack de Quidt's ['What I Want'](#) begins playing]

**Austin (as Adelaide):** [sighs] Well, he washed up here... What am I supposed to do with him? ... My grandfather would mend him up and send him back, but I don't know that I can... The Spring isn't that different than the Heat and the Dark. I don't know that I can just stitch him up... Or if I should... [exhales]

**Art (as Hadrian):** [quietly] What do you want out of this?

**Austin:** Who are you asking?

**Art:** I'm asking Samot.

**Austin (as Samot):** [quietly] I don't know... I had so many ideas. So many plans...

**Art (as Hadrian):** That's all over. Ok? ...The part of your life where you have plans and you make things happen? That's definitely done. But if you want to tell me that you want

to live in a... hut by a beach somewhere, and no one ever sees you? We might be able to make that happen... [music continues softly] What do you want?

[music quiets]

**Austin:** And he turns back to you and is just sobbing.

**Austin** (as **Samot**): I can't have what I want...

**Art** (as **Hadrian**): Is that really true? ...Assuming we can't put you in there?

[music finishes]

**Austin:** So...

**Art:** He like, looks around.

**Austin:** This is like, a wild thing because like, Austin Walker thought the answer was going to be 'yes.' And we have like, a story-telling decision to make here, which is in the middle of that fight, Fero removed the stars from Samot... Um, and I always had a trump card this season which was that Samot had control of the stars after the halfway point, which meant that at any point, he could have removed the star shield from the Blade in the Dark and gone into it to reunite with Samothos. And so, what our decision needs to be is, when Fero removed that ability from Samot, is it all gone? Does he have enough left to pull that shield off of the Blade in the Dark? Or is like, the darker tragedy here- or is the better story here that in pursuit of what he went after today, he lost the ability to do that?

**Art:** I don't know. It's kind of fucked up to be like, 'I'm gonna wreck the world, and then I'm just gonna-'

**Austin:** Mhm. Yeah.

**Art:** '-bounce and go uh, be with my husband, and y'all figure it out.'

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Keith:** That was my thinking from earlier.

**Austin:** Yeah. I think it's- I think it is like... you know...



**Art:** But I am... I'm not here to- to... [**Austin** blurts a laugh] Ooof... now I see.

**Austin:** We're very much here. Mhm.

**Art:** I got that, but- but like... I don't know that Hadrian... can... pronounce judgement on Samot, for a hundred reasons. From... from- from... worship to that's just not who Hadrian wants to be anymore.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** Hadrian doesn't want to pass judgement on anyone. Hadrian wants... shit to get along.

**Austin:** Hella, how do you feel about this, as- as Death's Servant?

**Ali:** [laughs] Um... it's tough because I think that when you have to weigh the like... everything I just did in the last two hours is so fucked up. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, and let me be honest, y'all didn't even see it. Stuff in the Last University was very bad.

**Ali:** Um...

**Keith:** It still is bad, right? It's not-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** [sighs] Ughhh.

**Art:** Um... ok. Maybe- maybe- maybe cut this out. Um... what's... Ohhh. No, I can't do that. [**Ali** laughs]

**Keith:** Oh, wait. What is it?

**Austin:** Now we gotta know.

**Art:** Ok, so... what are Hadrian's scars made out of?

**Austin:** They're- What are they made out of?

**Art:** You said they look like Samot's scars, and Samot's scars are made out of starstuff.

**Austin:** Yeah, but wait... But were they not? Or were they?

**Art:** I mean it was- it was from getting hit with the- the Advocate, which is not made out of starstuff.

**Austin:** Which is not made of starstuff, no. No.

**Art:** Alright, so I-

**Austin:** You have your sword though, which is made of starstuff.

**Art:** Yeah... ok... Adaire is gonna have to give me that other sword. [Ali laughs] Like-

**Austin:** Which other- Wait, which other sword?

**Art:** The sword that- that stabbed the lightning. Do we still have that?

**Austin:** ...The sw- Oh, no. That- that sword went into that lightning.

**Art:** [sighs] So, I'm gonna be out- At one point, I had two swords. I'm gonna end up with zero swords?

**Austin:** Oh my fucking god. [Ali and Austin laugh]

**Keith:** You're gonna give- Wait! You're gonna give this guy a sword?!

**Austin:** You're not gonna give him a sword. But you're gonna use it, right?

**Art:** ...Yeah.

**Jack:** You know, give him a sword. [Austin exhales a laugh]

**Art:** Give him... Like, give him a hand.

**Austin:** It will consume this sword, if the thing you're talking about happens.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Which actually, I like it more. If this is a choice that Hadrian is making, it's- it... One, the fact that it would have to consume this blade that Samothos gave you is good. It's a good little bit. But it's also like... it puts it in your hands and not Samot's hands.

**Art:** And I think... I think it gives- I think it gives the right amount of finality. I'm done with this family. [**Keith**, **Austin**, and **Jack** laugh]

**Austin:** You know what?

**Keith:** We've all been there.

**Austin:** I- A quick reminder, Galenica, Severeia, still up top.

**Art:** They've never spoken to me. If they wanted a relationship, they would have- they would have said 'hey' by now. Everyone else has. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. They said 'hey' to other people. They said 'hey' to Fero, mostly.

**Art:** Yeah, I'm not-

**Nick:** Fero said 'hey.'

**Austin:** Fero said, 'hey.' [**Austin** and **Keith** laugh hard] Yes, we've established that today. Ughh.

**Art:** Um, but that's fine. Ya know?

**Austin:** [quietly] Yeah.

**Art:** I think- I think... I think Hadrian's done... being the Sword of Samothres. And so I don't need it anymore.

**Austin:** What does opening up the Blade in the Dark with the starstuff blade look like? Cause I know it's like, cutting diamond with diamond here. Also, Hella, you get to keep your sword.

**Ali:** Oh, thank you. [laughs]

**Austin:** I'm not gonna fuckin'- Are you kiddin' me?

**Ali:** [laughing] I appreciate that.

**Art:** So, yeah, I- Um, what does it look like? Um, how does it... how does it work? It doesn't fuckin' matter how it works.

**Austin:** It's fuckin' magic, my guy.

**Art:** It's fuckin' magic. Um, is it like- is it like, a magic trick? Is it like, pushing it into the side, but it doesn't come out the other end?

**Austin:** Mm. Yeah.

**Art:** Is that like, too...

**Austin:** No, it's dope.

**Art:** Alright.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The- the word, is it too dope?

**Art:** Yeah.

**Ali:** I think that's sick.

**Austin:** [laughing] Yeah, honestly?

**Art:** But like, if you're picturing it at home, and it's not looking cool enough in your brain, um, just imagine we spent a lot of money on this effect, [everyone laughs] This effect cost a fortune. We- All the budg- I don't want to say all the budget cause we hit a volcano with lightning, but like...

[**Austin** laughs]

**Keith:** The- the- [laughs] The lightning was a flashlight, and the volcano is made of paper mache.

**Art:** All those like, really low-

**Keith:** Took for this one-

**Art:** -low fantasy episodes of Winter, we were saving all the money for this one. [**Ali** and **Austin** laugh] Um... our imagination bucks.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** So, yeah. I think it- it's- it pushes it through, and it like, makes a little... not like, a little, but like, it makes like a- like a hole? Like a-

**Austin:** Ok...

**Art:** Like a fancy- [**Ali** makes uncomfortable noise and laughs] and like, a really high fantasy hole. [**Keith** laughs hard]

**Austin:** Ok, wait. Hella has... Hella seems to have some issues here. Hella?

**Ali:** I do want to say two things. I do think that there's a moment here like, when... when Hadrian is approaching to stab her sword with a different sword, I guess- [laughs]

**Austin:** Again.

**Ali:** Um, that she's like,

**Ali (as Hella):** Are you sure that you want to do this? ...For him?

**Art (as Hadrian):** I'm not doing it for him... I'm doing it to be done. I'm doing it to go home.

**Austin (as Adelaide):** I mean, look. I could just toss him in the Heat and the Dark, too. It's not that big of a deal.

**Art (as Hadrian):** No. It's fine. He's been separated from his family for too long. It fucks with you.

**Austin (as Adelaide):** Yeah.

**Ali (as Hella):** Ok. If you say so.

**Ali:** Um, the second thing is that like, we already have the great- We've already had an image of Adularia appear on this sword before. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. Er of Aubade- of Aubode- Aubade.

**Ali:** Aubade. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sorry.

**Austin:** [simultaneously] Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

**Ali:** Another Winter reference. Um, but-

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** So, I think maybe instead of a cool hole, it's like a mirror?

**Austin:** Sure. Like, it opens-

**Art:** I want it to be super shiny though.

**Austin:** It's very- it- Let me tell you. It's all the way shiny. So, then the blade takes like- As you push the blade in, it glows, and as the glow like, spreads, it reveals Aubade there. Um, but like, Hella, you gotta kill him with this fuckin' sword. What's-

**Art:** Wait, wait. Give- give me just a minute.

**Austin:** Ok.

**Art:** I think like... Hadrian puts his hand on Samot's shoulder and says,

**Art (as Hadrian):** [sighs] Tell him I said hello... Thank you. And goodbye.

**Austin:** I think he just nods.

**Art:** And Hadrian doesn't want to look at this. Hadrian turns- turns away.

**Ali:** Yeah, I think that she- She like, waits until Hadrian is able to like, make some distance.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Ali:** Um, and then turns to Samot, and it's such a weird thing cause they- I think this is- There was maybe three or four times in the last two months that Hella was like, 'Oh, I really have to talk to Samot,' and then just didn't. [laughs]

**[1:15:00]**

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Ali:** And this is the first time she's like, making eye contact with him. Um, but-

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** I think that there's a part of her that is at least like... I think it's a struggle to like, have to do this and feel like you have to say something. But not know what it is. And I think in like, showing

that frustration, she kind of... she kind of like, looks away for a moment and under her breath is just like,

**Ali (as Hella):** Well, I'm just doing this for Hadrian, too.

**Austin:** And I think he just like, looks up to you and makes eye contact. And maybe this is the first time you're seeing it. Like, he doesn't have the golden eyes that he did before. Um, and he just looks like a fuckin'- He looks terrible. [**Ali** laughs] So... it looks bad.

**Ali:** It's- it's great to be a neutral person cause you can be mean to someone in their- their fucking [overlapped] dying moment. [laughs]

**Austin:** In their final moments? Yeah. Yeah. Alright.

**Keith:** Uh, actually- His- his dying moments were a little bit earlier.

**Ali:** Oh and that.

**Austin:** And worse, honestly. Honestly real bad.

**Ali:** I fucking bet.

**Austin:** Yeah... Um... and then you strike him down?

**Ali:** Yeah, I don't know how to respectfully stab somebody.

**Austin:** Me either.

**Ali:** But-

**Austin:** I think it's- it's very tasteful. We got Kurosawa back from the dead to do some- some you know, lightning and cinematography.

**Keith:** I- I bet if you zoomed in real close on the sword part moving-

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** -so you're not seeing anybody.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** I um, I think that you like, see the- the image of Aubade like, get closer to his chest, and I don't think that you see like, the wound.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** But that's like, the- the last moment of Samot that-

**Austin:** Mhm.

**Ali:** -we get, I guess.

**Austin:** Yeah. You know, wish him well.

**Ali:** Yeah. Big ups.

**Austin:** Uh, and then you two are back in the boat. Um... floating back towards Marielda.

**Art:** Wait, do you want like- Do you want to end this on a joke? Cause I have one. **[Ali laughs]**

**Austin:** ...Yes.

**Art:** We can cut it if we don't like it. **[Sylvia and Keith laugh]**

**Austin:** No, tell me your joke. I'd love to hear the joke.

**Art:** It's just Hadrian looks at Hella and is like,

**Art (as Hadrian):** She definitely would have told us if something happened to Rosana or Benjamin, right? **[Austin and Ali laugh]**

**Austin:** Ughh.

**Ali (as Hella):** Yeah. One hundred percent. Yep.

**Art (as Hadrian):** Alright, so I'm not gonna like, regret- not gonna regret that. **[Austin laughs]**

**Ali (as Hella):** Regret not asking?

**Art (as Hadrian):** No, regret giving him peace.



**Sylvia:** Ooo. [Keith laughs]

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

**Art (as Hadrian):** I'm not gonna have to go in there after him. [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** Uh, and I think like, [laughs] I mean in this moment, um, there's a couple things. One is... somewhere a body washes up on a shore. And then, the other is... what is happening to Hieron, which I think we can only talk about- We have to start talking about at the ground level. Um, so... Hella, Adaire, Throndir, and Hadrian, I think at this point, you've gotten on that boat. You're headed north. Um, you are leaving behind, I think, most of the anchor because they want to stay and make sure everyone is safe in- in the City of First Light.

[Jack de Quidt's "[Spring in Hieron](#)" begins playing] [guitar strumming]

And all through your journey home, the ground shakes and the sky rumbles with echoes of old thunder claps. [piano added] The river that carries you back towards the Last University splashes up above its banks, dragging back detritus of broken earth. [clarinets added] 'What is happening?', you might think. But for those of you who, in the newly green campus of the Last University, brave the stairwells of the old college towers, you have an answer you might wish you didn't. With the use of the Blade of First Light, the stars with their unique capacity for blending one and all have themselves blended with Alyosha's plantlife. And the new being feeds on the Breath and Unity of Ingenuity Alive. With your help, the second Spring has arrived.

[claps] And the world is shuddering apart. [tambourine shakes; piano hits hard] Hieron itself, the body of the dead god, Samol, he who made the nothing blink, is shaking away like dirt falling from a tangle of roots heaved up from the ground. In fact, what is left behind is more like a root system than not. [light, quick piano chords] A sprawling rhizome of life. Old and new. Expanding in every direction. [claps] This is not the world tree that Alyosha was building. Disruptive in its own right, but familiar in shape and hierarchy. [piano only] Roots feeding trunk, lifting canopy. A shape in line with the model the gods built after countless reconfigurations. Shining their light only on the top of the structure.

No. [clarinet picks up] This new world is an endless growing lattice of life. In some ways, the old Hieron has been flattened into a more unified whole. What once floated in the dark, like an iceberg, a vertical superstructure composed strata after strata of arrested time and history has been pulled together and stretched longways across countless branches and buds. In other ways, distance has only expanded. We once asked, 'Does Hieron have a horizon?' Now there

are too many to count. With a new one growing monthly. [claps; guitar returns; followed by piano] Massive root stalks, some as large as a single lamina of old Hieron, twist and turn through space, running into neighbor branches, each carrying their own gravity. No more simple up and down. Only in.

In plain terms, we are left with a truly new world. Some towns, once distant trading partners, now call the same sprout home. Other cities have been divided and parceled out along a root stalk by the second Spring. Old neighbors now separated by miles and days. Forests wrap around the world in rings like a root of ginger dipped in green. Rivers flow into waterfalls which run upwards towards the lakes above. The oceans have been turned into countless seas. Some like those the lap at the edge of Adularia glide in impossible orbit of the new rhizome. Others break across diagonal shores, connecting two world limbs that would otherwise be a year apart.

And all of it warmed by the light of a hundred or more suns. Illumination sneaking in between leaves or blaring across endless avalanches of soil and sand. A dark city deep in the roots. Its roads and rooftops flecked with orange and yellow from a dozen distant suns. A seaside town shimmering from the blue-white glitter light of a sun submerged. For all their effort in blotting out the lights of the lower stratae, there were depths that even Maelgwyn's cult could not descend to. Stratae where Samoths once shaped multifarious suns.

This is the world you live in now. [clarinet returns] A world without top, bottom, or center. A world unrecognizable, but alive. A world that grows into the Heat and the Dark instead of receding or retreating from it. A world guided by an unending instinct towards unity, but not a unity that prizes you above everything else. [claps return; tempo quickens] This is a world that demands you bring your own purpose and which rewards that drive with a pallet of endless possibility. It is finally a world beyond Hieron. [music finishes]

And next time, we will draw its map.