

Tips at the Table 34: A Different Anxiety (April 2020)

Transcriber: OldFashionedCyborg

[00:00:00] **AUSTIN:** Welcome to Friends at the Table. That's not right. Welcome to Tips at the Table. Uh, actual question live stream, I guess, focused on, uh, critical question asking hopefully smart answers and fun interaction between good friends. My notes have not been updated. I don't know why the slides notes have the wrong things, but they do and so I read that weird. Uh, I'm Austin Walker joining me today, Keith Carberry.

KEITH: Hi, my name is Keith Carberry. You can find me on YouTube at youtube.com/runbutton. You can find me on Twitter @keithjcarberry. I did a backward, so I got confused. Cause I was, I was re -- I was remembering I'm pretty sure Watson and Crick stole. Their research and they did they quote unquote, forgot to credit Rosalynn Franklins data when they discovered DNA.

AUSTIN: Oh, wow. Wow.

KEITH: So fuck -- fuck it. Fuck Crick and Watson and they're plagiarizing asses.

AUSTIN: Damn. Fuck off.

KEITH: Happy DNA day.

AUSTIN: Happy DNA then. Uh, also joining us, Ali Acampora.

ALI: Um, hi, you can find me over @ali_west on Twitter. You can find the show over @friends_table, and shout out to the penguins.

AUSTIN: Shout out to the penguins. You can support the show show at friendsatthetable.cash, which you're probably already doing. If you're listening to this. And if so, Hey, thank you very much for doing that. Uh, we're going to get right into it today because, uh, we have a hard out. And so we're going to try to move as quick as we can. First, when it comes in from, it doesn't mean we're going to give bad questions or bad answers, but you know, we're going to try to --

KEITH: I'm going to give bad answers.

AUSTIN: Okay. Dez writes in and says years ago at this point, my group switched from Pathfinder to Powered by the Apocalypse games. It was mostly a smooth transition with most, with mostly smooth gameplay now. Uh, but we always seem to trip up on roles like discern realities in Dungeonworld and assess in The Sprawl. Across GMs we all have a bad habit of thinking of it as a perception check. And then the questions feel like an afterthought. This happens on the player side as well, especially in The Sprawl where the questions just don't work like a perception check. The plus one forwards are hard to apply as well because the role doesn't come as much from wanting to act on the answer to one of the questions as much as, "What do we see here? What are we missing?" All of this is to ask what are ways

to break these habits on both the GM and player side? Um, Keith you've played like DnD and Pathfinder stuff. You understand like --

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This divide, right? I'm guessing, Ali, you can, at least you get it via just this description, even though --

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We haven't really played anything like that.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm curious for both of you as, as players, how do you, how do you deal with this?

KEITH: I'm curious from, from Ali. I do have, I do have an answer, but I'm curious after like, What I mean, cause I know the exact sort of switch and thinking that you have to go through.

AUSTIN: But I'm going to quiz Ali first and --

ALI: Sure.

KEITH: Like, what is it? I guess it's a stupid question. But the word, the wording of the question is like, what is it like to not have played a game where we're like looking around is something you use.

(Ali laughs)

Because that's really how it is in like --

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: Dungeons and Dragons or whatever you have to use looking around.

AUSTIN: Like it's a verb in an adventure game or something.

ALI: Right.

KEITH: Or like yeah. Or, or like the idea that --

ALI: Oh! Oh oh oh oh oh.

KEITH: You can notice things as a flashlight, you have to turn on and maybe it doesn't turn on right.

ALI: Okay. Yeah, I could, I don't (laughter) I've never encountered that. Cause I, you know, I, I play characters that I, you know.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Would walk into a room and view it, you know?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: Well, not always, but, um, you know, in that case. Um, so yeah, I, I don't know. I mean, I, I, I think that the, the exciting thing about these, these moves is the questions. So like (laughter) the way to sort of get out of it is to like really focus on just what the, the writing is. Um, because.

KEITH: The wr -- the writing of the questions. You mean?

ALI: The writing, the writing of the questions in the, in the game, like assess and discern realities, both have very specific. Well, there, I mean, you could also think of other questions, but they have very specific, like what's going to happen to, and things like that, that like, are the same as like.

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: Oh, you know, how many --

AUSTIN: Is there a hidden key underneath the chair?

KEITH: It can be what you want differently --

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: So a couple of things here, really. So, like assess is a really great one, I think, because assess specifically says when you closely study a person place or a situation, or when you quickly size up an opponent or charged or charged situation roll edge, um, and in the, in the like writeup for the way it works is, um, Uh, there's this great line to the GM that is like, if there was anything hidden in the scene that you want the players to discover, you will have to give them clues perhaps obvious clues assess is your best excuse to do so, give them information and see what they do with it. Um, for me, the answer is like give them information, right. It's just like, do it. Um, I'm curious, because you said there was like an easy answer for you, but I'm getting,

KEITH: Yeah, I mean --

AUSTIN: Is that what it was or what was it for you?

KEITH: Uh it's. It is you're, you're like right on the line of what I was going to say, which is like, The one of the really great things about the power bite of the apocalypse games for me is that like, uh, like, so I guess we can, you can go back to like, what is it the principles of the game or, or, uh, the --

AUSTIN: Goals or the principles --

KEITH: Prescriptive and descriptive line in this,

AUSTIN: Or whatever -- yes yes.

KEITH: In the early book, but like the, so the good, the good thing about saying that things are prescriptive and descriptive, like, it sounds like a rule that you've got to follow, but really all it is like, you just have to notice that you're already doing these things. And then the connect, the dots, is like, Oh, I'm already wondering what's happening here. I'm I've already started discerning reality.

AUSTIN: Right. I don't need to use the move to certain realities to start looking around the room.

KEITH: Right. You just --

AUSTIN: The GM --

KEITH: Have to say that's what you've already been doing.

AUSTIN: Right. You have to be like, all right, I'm going to get, I'm going to get ready to, you know, see if anyone's going to come in the door or like, I'm checking to see if there's like a cool escape route or whatever. And the second that happens the GM's job is to --

KEITH: Yeah, that's what's happening here.

AUSTIN: Is the GM is like, Oh, you're discerning reality. Oh, you're doing assess. Okay. Roll that go ahead. Um, for me as the GM, the thing that I start to do again, and again, is like, I mean, there's a couple of things. One is as if I was running a Pathfinder game or a DnD game or whatever, sometimes I'll have a list of like, what are some cool, what are some important things you can find in this room? Um, sometimes what I'll do is I go. Here's the thing you need to play this game. You're going to have it like if, um, if it is a key taped underneath the chair, then, then I'm going to say, you know, when you start looking around the room, you find the key taped underneath the chair. Um, uh, if, and also like in general, we don't design things in that way exactly. But, um, but you know, when you come in the room, you do, I will sometimes take a little bit of control of the character and, and talk about them as having competence in this way. And so it will, as you come in the room, you do a basic scan. And what you notice is. The chair is out of place. And when you go to like, and put it into place, you realize there's a key underneath, um, uh, or something like that.

Uh, there are also times I'll, I'll, I'll I'll wait until someone does that sort of like that sort of like, ah, I'm. Um, is there anything here out of place, blah, blah, blah, and you'll make them do the role for it. Give them the basic thing. And then what the rest of those. The, depending on what the questions are that they ask, give them stuff that is less about fact and more about motive, more about color, more about what else is happening in the kind of larger scale story. Um, um, you know, the, in general, in PBTA games, the stuff that ends up being interesting to me is not how you get through a dungeon. It's like, why is the conflict happening in the first place? Um, and so in general, when I'm looking at moves, like, Oh, like I'm looking at the questions from assess, um, what potential complications do I need to be wary of?

What do I notice by an effort to conceal it? Like, what do I notice this by an effort to conceal it? I might give the person what they, what is being concealed anyway, but giving it, giving it to them in a way that communicates why it was concealed or how it was concealed, which the, how can reveal something else

about. What they're up against stuff like that ends up being the way to start thinking about these questions. Um, the other thing is a player is just like insist that you're competent. Um, if it's, if it's, if you're you're rolling to search a space or something, then you're kind of seeding the idea that whatever is hidden in this room is so hidden that.

Like giving yourself five or 10 minutes to look through the room, wouldn't reveal it, which is not the case. Um, the GM shouldn't feel like they need to ask you to roll for everything. Uh, and so those are situations where you could say, Hey, I look around the room. Do I find anything? Um, and if the GM is like, no, you failed, you don't find shit. In fact, you trip and fall and hurt yourself. Um, you can be your own advocate here and say, there's nothing, are you sure? There's nothing. That's like, Sort of out in the open here, um, given the fact that we are professional treasure hunters, you know, stuff like that, don't be afraid of, of getting on that side of the advocacy over time that will adjust how I think the GM plays that, that move.

Um, and I say that because I probably adjusted how I've done that move over the course of the last five years. You know, I definitely started thinking of it as. As, you know, uh, um, doing a search role or something like that, uh, and, or doing a perception check and getting away from that has been very helpful, it turns out.

KEITH: I've got a little something extra to add.

AUSTIN: Sure.

KEITH: And I guess, Austin, I want to know how you feel about this, but, um, I think there's also, as some of them grew up playing video games, there's a tendency to like, think of like, Like everything is a set value where it's like, okay, this is the room where this happens.

AUSTIN: Yes!

KEITH: And this is, and this is where more of this happens. This is, and it's like, if you want them to have something --

AUSTIN: You can put it anywhere, anywhere.

KEITH: It doesn't have to be in the room.

AUSTIN: It doesn't -- yeah, totally.

KEITH: It can be like that, completely discerned realities in the wrong room.

AUSTIN: That's exactly, exactly right. That's a hundred percent. Oh, they failed to discern reality check, but then they killed the guard. Guess what? It was in his pocket now.

KEITH: Right, it's hardwired into the game.

AUSTIN: I do this shit all the time. If you go back and listen, I pray. If I listened to this entire show, every fucking episode, I would point out a thing that I slip that I like slight of handed from my prep in one place, into a different place.

And it doesn't mean you can't lock things off. Like I think like. The thing, the thing behind the door in, uh, in the Tower of Eventide at episode one is like a great example. Like, no, you don't get to go in there now, but it was, you know --

KEITH: I have to say -- here's the sound of Austin deciding that something is a new place, "Uh, you know what, yeah."

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's exactly right. Yes, exactly. Wow, great impression. Wow. You can really do any --. Um, but that's exactly right. Uh, and, and to talk about the second question here does the second part of this, which is that the plus one forward aren't from one to act on the answer. Um, so much as what do we see here, blah, blah, blah.

The, the one is just like, it's good for you. Take the plus one forward. Um, and I think if you're having trouble knowing how to apply, that that probably speaks to the answers not being built for application. Uh, we talk about this with beliefs, a lot in certain games where like, Hey, this has to be actionable.

Information should be actionable in the same way. If there is something that you find with an assess or discern realities roll that isn't actionable, then you shouldn't have made them roll to assess or discern realities to begin with. That is the, that is the point of having those questions because the answer in almost each case is something that should be actionable, even something like again, um, uh, what, what do I notice this despite an effort to conceal it?

If, if the thing is just, Oh, there's a key here. That's not enough. Like concealing it has a, if something has concealed, then you can, a lot of things echo out from that. Um, conceal is a verb, right? Which means someone explicitly hid something or wanted you not to see it. And so them having, it gives them an advantage because in the mind of the person who can sealed it, it was, they shouldn't have it at all. Right. So if they get the key card that was hidden under the chair and they swipe it and come in, they get a plus one forward, because that person was like, what the fuck? I locked that door and hid the key card. Right. Um, and if it's, and if that isn't a thing where they're going to get an advantage, then it probably wasn't concealed to begin with.

Maybe it was out of sight or something, maybe it was, you know, if you find it on a desk, you shouldn't have to roll, assess for it. If that makes sense. Right? Like if it's in a drawer that is not concealed, it isn't a drawer. Um, uh, so those are the ways in which you should think about the answers to these questions as things that innately can be, um, getting the plus one forward.

And the other half of this is like, fuck it, take the plus one forward. If you can't figure it out immediately, then. Just default to feelings of surprise, you know, having surprise or momentum. It's okay to quickly give the plus one forward and move on. You don't have to retroactively tie every single decision to complete narrative coherency.

Um, we're writing stories as we go and unlike most other linear sorts of fiction, we don't have the benefit of we, as in people were playing tabletop role playing games, the benefit of going back through and, and retroactively editing something and making it make more sense. Right. Um, anyone who sit down with any of this stuff and then retroactively, like, Oh, the reason you get this bonus is because of X, Y, Z three hours after it happens.

But in the moment, give yourself some leeway, make sure you take the plus one forward. Um, and, and as a general strategy is best practice. Think about action. When you're giving answers to the, to the original role to begin with. Excuse me.

KEITH: I'm sure that when the, when the, when the chips are down and any player would be able to make a case for why that plus one applies --

AUSTIN: To anything. Yeah. Right? Yeah. Um, and just be broad on that. Um, all right. Next question comes in from Nicholas, uh, who says,

"I've been running games for a little while now, but it's always been games with no real premise. I've just gone into this, to the session zero with a vague idea for genre informed by the system normally, and then latch on to the player's ideas as the session progressed, the game lasts until the players have achieved what they decided they wanted to play through. Uh, or they wanted a, yeah, what do want to play through, but coming up, I'm running a game with not only a predetermined premise, but a set time limit. I'm running Lady Blackbird set in Disney's Treasure Planet setting. The players are in a race for the late Pirate Kings, hidden treasure heavy One Piece influence here, and we have five sessions to do it in. So my question is, what tips do you have for preparing a campaign with a hard time limit and premise?"

My initial thought was like, we've never done this before, but that's not exactly true because most of our lives, we want to get done in a single session. We don't always do that. In fact, we, we often miss that, but the prep is in, is informed by that decision for sure. [00:15:00] Um, the biggest tip I have is throw stuff out, uh, is just throw stuff out is like if you've built a five encounter, like session in your mind and you get through two of them and you are four fifths of the way there go to the last one, um, hand wave stuff, summarize stuff, be willing to say, you know, Y'all go down two more levels of this, of this, you know, abandoned space station.

And, uh, you know, there are some, some minor encounters that you have here, but next thing you know, you're in the vault, you know, or whatever it is, you're, you're at the vault door or you find a shortcut. Well, you know what I mean? Like be willing to completely throw stuff out is one of my tips, which, which is tough because you've done that prep.

But again, just like you can slide a key from a desk drawer into a guard's pocket. You can also slide a security laser grid room from one space station to another one for the next session, you can reuse prep in that way and, and brief flavor it and see the, see if it does fit. Um, so that's one suggestion. Uh, any other thoughts here?

ALI: My first impulse on something like this is to sort of approach it episodically, um, where, like, you know, that you're going to have this story that you're going to divide in five pieces. Um, so trying to really

hone in on like, okay, in the first act, I want them to deal with this small time, dude, who, you know, leads into this other, like whole pirates guilt.

You know, whatever. Um, and then, you know, in the next setting for the next session, when I prep this other thing, they'll be dealing something that's like, sort of has to do with that. But as in this whole other place, um, and like trying to think of like TV or like, if it was like five individual chapters of something, um, might help just sort of splitting which ideas you want to put where, um, because you know that you're going to have that limit already. Um, so sort of being able to like plan out arcs in that way might help.

AUSTIN: I would also say if you have five sessions, it might be best to prep for three.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because if you go. I mean, my first thought is like, why do you only have five sessions?

Give yourself more wiggle than that. And less blind, you know, lifestyle is such that sometimes that's just not possible.

KEITH: That's not a Lady Blackbird thing, right?

AUSTIN: I don't think so.

KEITH: I didn't know.

AUSTIN: You can do a one shot of lady Blackboard for sure. Um, uh, I don't, I wouldn't trust any game. Well, I wouldn't trust any game that was like, you can only play this. You have to play this in five sessions because the session doesn't equal. Like there's no way there's no universal session length. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Um, there's there because session length is determined by everything from actual human, you know, resource availability needs time, but also in game resource balancing and outcomes. And how many, you know, this is like the idea of, of the, the person who makes blade, who made blades in the dark, runs a session and a downtime in every session, or it runs out a score into downtime. And every episode of blades, every session of blades that he runs. We could never. Um, we could even with cutting down the number of hours.

KEITH: Right, right. Yeah. That's like fifteen hours for us.

AUSTIN: Even, even, even cutting down the number of roles I've put in each, each like score each mission in, in a beam, saber from where it was in Marielda, it's still a, it's still way longer than that. And so it's just like really hard to, to consider that. So I guess maybe what would. The other side here is if you are committed to only doing five sessions, really work out what a session feels like, um, before you finalize prep, um, maybe that means running a session before you get to these five sessions, or it means holding

out on prep for two, three, four, and five until you do the first session and get a good feel for what the rhythm is.

Um, um, so, so yeah, maybe that's maybe that's the thing is like, is, is. Waiting to do that. Prep, prepping episodically, like Ali said, but maybe waiting to determine what those episodes are and how they fall across those sessions until you have a good idea of how much you can get done in a single session.

Um, so yeah, I hope that goes well. Let us know how that goes. Um, also the premise side of this, like. Uh, a solid campaign premise like whatever, no one cares, but you let your wings, uh, unfold to go where you need. Uh, unless you're literally being paid by Disney to do this the right way. It is. Okay. If you break premise, halfway through the, the, the. Um, the season, so to speak, if that's where the players feel like they want to go.

You know, um, you shouldn't feel like you need to impose that premise. Uh, again, unless there is some grander agreed upon tone or theme or something that everyone predetermined that they were interested in doing. And then you want to like zero back in on that because you're getting away from it.

Uh, but, but followed up the hearts of the people at the table and, and, uh, and, and let yourself have some wiggle, you know, Ah, alright, next question comes in from author X. This one I think is very timely based on where we are. Uh, it's not timely in the sense that I believe that author X sent this in forever ago, but we're just getting to it.

"Over the last year. I've done a lot more GMing and I've had a couple of short campaigns and a lot of fun, one shots, but I'm hitting a wall after a few sessions. I've been running Powered by the Apocalypse and similar games where the plot comes out of the players' input in the first session. And I feel like I've been getting pretty good, good at synthesizing players, a player characters and what they're interested in with ideas, I like and creating a fun adventure, but once an adventure hits its first climax, I'm totally lost in what to do next. I guess I just take all of my ideas and throw them in at once. So far, these have been filling campaigns that we play when the main GM can't run his game or a campaign that fell apart for other reasons after that climax.

However, in some cases it feels like there's more. There's more to do with the PCs and even the metaplot. For example, they've worded one of the overlords generals, but the overlord is still out there, conquering the land, and I'm just at a loss of where to go next or how to move the characters from the end of one story to the start of another.

I'm worried if I try to run another full time campaign, I'll lose my momentum again. After my first purse post-session planning ideas have run out. What can I, what can I do? Or what can I try to keep up a story after a fifth or sixth session? Climax? Should I be making more longterm plans from the start intentionally holding back elements from the current story or having a new session zero to get more ideas from the players after each arc, some combination of the above?"

Okay. Um, my impulse here is like downtown episode's rule. Uh, and if you've listened to Beam Sabre PARTIZAN, think about how many times I go into, I maybe, you know, maybe this doesn't come across,

but again, and again, I'll go into a downtime with like a loose idea of what comes next and then player motivations and interests generate what comes next in a real way.

You know, um, for people who are listening to the Fort Icebreaker arc right now, on PARTIZAN that comes out of an entanglement role, right? Um, uh, I think I knew that was on the table, but I didn't know that's what we were doing next. Uh, and that entanglement role brought us there. Um, you go back and listen to the stuff with the Sable Court.

The same thing happened. It was like players wanted to go do this thing. So we did this thing. And in fact, ironically, the prophet's path arc also comes out of that SBBR downtime, even though it ends up being a Rapid Evening mission because of the fact that they chose not to go do this one thing. Right. Um, uh, so there's like all sorts of like ways in which player players will flag what they're interested in if you give them some space to breathe and check out what their particular stories are and what they're interested in. Obviously we're lucky because, uh, Forged in the Dark games, literally produce a space in the kind of cycle of play for characters to like go off and do the thing that they're interested in, obviously.

Um, but you can, you can recreate that feeling. With, uh, with, with, uh, PBTA games, we did it in Spring, right? Um, uh, but I think that's, that's like the biggest thing for me, because then it will stop you from thinking about things in that sort of like here is the first full arc it's going to stop this one general way and focus instead on here's what this game is about.

It's what these characters are interested in. And in this moment, it overlaps with what's happening with this overlords general. Um, but the next step might not have. Anything to do with the overlord, you know? Um, so that's my, that's my advice. I'm curious, as on the player side, do you ever feel like you are like out of gas after an arc and like directionless and if so, how do you as players find direction again? Or is it just like, no, I'm good?

KEITH: When I feel directionless, it's usually, um, like character arc based not, um, like plot based. Um, but my, when we were looking at this question, my, my thought was mostly like, well, TV just does this by doing something bigger next.

AUSTIN: There's the new big escalation, right?

KEITH: Yeah. Escalate. And then that ends up.

AUSTIN: Freiza shows up.

KEITH: That ends up making TV shows, uh, really difficult to watch.

AUSTIN: Unless it's shonen.

KEITH: Tweeting, right? Yeah. Unless it's a show actually, unless it's a shonen then, and then that makes perfect sense to me, for some reason when it's, when it's Breaking Bad or whatever, I find it extremely annoying that things keep getting more and more dire and more complicated over, you know, seven years.

But, uh, when it's, you know, you and your friends coming up with ideas, you don't have to worry about. Uh, pleasing some audience. Um, uh, and you can just go for whatever you want. I mean, if you only, you don't have even have to have five or six climaxes, if you don't want.

AUSTIN: You just have, yeah. You could be that you can also be done. That is fair. Right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You can, yeah. You can get a climax out of it, out of a story, be like, yep. That was a cool one. Like one arc story that we told we can be done with this now, until we come up with new ideas to, to, to go with these characters.

KEITH: I know, I know people and I've heard mostly, I've heard stories of people who have been playing the same character for 10, 15 years or whatever. Uh, and they've like, you know, they start their dungeon dragons where there, they started as, you know, they can't tie their shoe without falling over. And then they ended up killing a God or whatever. And I'm like, that sounds like you should have done three campaigns instead of one totally. You can get to kill it -- god killing in one or two seasons.

AUSTIN: We done it before. Shit. Um, we've been known, uh, Ali, do you have any thoughts here?

ALI: Um, I have a couple of my first is that, um, time skips are so valuable. And so these views that you should do them all the time. Like if you're, if you feel like you're getting in a lapse with a character or with an arc or whatever, because it's like, Oh, they won this big thing and they should have the joy of knowing that this space was different for that amount of time, without like this extra stress of this other yada yada, what happens in five years? Where where's are those characters working? What does that world work like? Who's, you know, who's in power even then. Um, what changes in that time? And what would be fun about playing it, I guess, is also like the, the important thing there.

Um, but it's an easy way to fix this problem and I love to do it. Um, the, the other thing is that, like what Keith was saying about having characters that have been, that you've had for 10 or 15 years or whatever, or try not to feel burnout about that, it's just like, Try to think of. And it seems from this question that you're kind of doing it already, but it happens in such a row that it's like tough to keep going.

But like, when you just try to think of like, if you like those characters and cool situations for them to be in, sometimes the timescale on that doesn't always need to be, it doesn't have to be a through line with that.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Like if you have this team of cool. Assassins who steal stuff or whatever, you could just keep generating. Like you could have, there could be many boss arcs where it's like, Oh, we're going to do three or four sessions where they're going to be dealing with this one goon that they have to take shit from.

KEITH: I mean, the question even says overlord, they got the overlords general, but the overload is still out there. Well then go get the overlord.

AUSTIN: And, or, or just like, Hey, guess you, you can frame, I think about this a lot, because we're now in the middle of a season, which means my brain has to start thinking with the next season and, and thinking about different potential structures. Um, and one of the structures that like we don't do a lot of is procedural, like episodic style stuff, where there is a status quo that stays the same for, in terms of the world.

Um, uh, you know, I'm a big fan of. Clock's ticking. I'm a big fan of things at that faction scale moving around. Um, but there's a whole genre of storytelling across many sub genres. or intersecting, many other genres. In which, you know, not everything has to be Pirates of the Caribbean, right. Pirates of the Caribbean is the power scale goes up.

Um, like every new movie means that the world is at stake in a different way. They could have made five of those that were all just about like pirates. Um, and they never got to see monster Cthulu shit, um, uh, that they just stayed at. And I don't, I don't even watched all those movies. I watched the first one and like maybe the second one in a hospital once.

ALI: Um, They got progressively worse as they went on.

AUSTIN: I believe you. I believe you, you could instead do, and even you could, you could even, this is the thing is like, Fast and the Furious is on this arc and proves that it's good. So I'm like, I'm not saying you can't do it. We do the arc of progression of things, getting progressively bigger and bigger.

And suddenly the galaxy is at stake when the world is at stake, but there's an entire genre of storytelling that is like, yes, there might be an A plot that you get to eventually, but like Lupin the Third slaps and every episode is just those motherfuckers robbing someone. It is robbing season all the time and you don't need to have the metaplot layer, therefore, to be good.

And you can do that sort of storytelling in scifi fantasy genre fiction. Um, uh, I like big metaplots, but like I'm really interested in a world in which you instead start with like, Hey, this is going to be scaled such where we, things don't roll up. You know what I mean? Things don't necessarily snowball into a much larger conversation or, or, or something.

It is just like, Um, a cool set of I, if the Mandalorian had been better all the way through, it would have been a really, I liked the Mandalorian, but it actually only got really good for me when it decided to bring everything together. Um, but imaginable like, again, you can look at Hercules or [00:30:00] Zena as the style of episodic storytelling.

Like yes, sometimes the gods get involved and there's big, big, big plot stuff, but the stuff that's just like, man, this is the cool episodic adventure show. It's great. Um, and --

KEITH: So X-Files has nine seasons of television and only one season worth of that is like main plot.

AUSTIN: Right? Exactly. So like, let yourself tell stories in that way where it doesn't necessarily have to roll up or, or see if the players are interested in it.

Right. Because if the players are like, no, I want. I want, I need the next arc to be going further after the overlord then. Yeah, you can do that. But also that's a premise that the jet, the overlord can have 30 generals.

KEITH: What if there was a Hobbit Two book and it was just like slice of life in the Hobbit town after he did his thing.

AUSTIN: It's called Hobbiton. Okay. Keith, it's not called the Hobbit town.

I think that's right. That's right, right. I'm not making that up.

KEITH: Well, yeah, I think it's called Hobbiton. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Anyway, that's a bad name for a place. How was it called the Shire as the Homeland of the hobbits and inside of that, there's a place called Hobbit town.

KEITH: Basically I lived in People Town.

ALI: It's fine.

KEITH: You've been down to People Town.

AUSTIN: That's very funny. Anyway,

KEITH: Personville.

AUSTIN: That exists probably right. A Personville exists. Personville is totally a place. I was like, huh. Anyway, Personville Texas, but also there's a Personville in the continental op books by Dashiell Hammett. Anyway, um, uh, I want the next question. Any other thoughts here? Ali? Did you have thoughts here?

ALI: No. I had said my thoughts. I, um, agree and yeah. Yeah. I mean, especially cause this is games, right? And like, sometimes the thing that you like to do is you put a bunch of points into a character you really like, and you want to keep using that move that you like. And it doesn't matter that like, Oh, we got the general, right.

Um, I, as you were talking, I think another good way to generate like stories. If you can't and your players want more personal things is like, have each character have an arc, like if they destroyed that general, but like the pilot's still has like a rival who stole their ship or whatever. Like the whole crew is going to give, get that guy, come to my house next Tuesday, we're going to go do that. You know, or don't do that. You can't do that.

AUSTIN: Do that online, do it online.

KEITH: I also, I do have one more thing, which is, it sounds like. It sounds like author X wants to specifically wants to do like a longer campaign. But, but if you're just worried that you can't, then maybe don't worry about it, play to your strengths, just do, we'll just do one, you know, short to medium length thing.

That's great. And then move on and don't worry about it. Like if that, if your problem is more that you feel like you can't do it, then that you actually want to do it, um,

AUSTIN: Yeah. I mean, I think about this a lot because of the types of stories that we tell them like to tell. Um, I definitely think that there's a world in which it can feel like we are being, uh, prescriptive in terms of what good play looks like.

Um, we do a very particular type of game. I love doing it, but if you've listened to, for instance, our recent play through of, um, bell songs, you know, we also like doing the other type of thing, which is just like good fun, hanging out with your friends, doing jokes and, and bill. So world-building right. We ended up with a pretty well done fun world of animals in that game.

Um, but we, it didn't necessarily have to start from a position of like, this is going to be a big ongoing campaign forever, you know? Um, all right. Uh huh. Next question comes in from Derek B, who says,

"I play a number of role playing games with a group of friends often late at night. I am both often a GM and player, depending on the game. We don't take things too seriously and tend to drink alcohol during sessions during the last few sessions. However, some players got absolutely too drunk to play well or smartly and even fell asleep on the couch between rounds of combat. We like to party together as friends and do outside role-playing.

And, and, and, uh, do outside of role-playing. How do I broach the subject of becoming very drunk during sessions? How do y'all feel about drinking and playing especially games that demand some emotional clarity? I'm curious if you all have thoughts here."

KEITH: I believe a couple specific parallels that have that this brings to mind. Um, uh, like I, I think I told this story before of, um, a friend that was new to playing Dungeons and Dragons when I was jamming Dungeons and Dragons like a decade ago and brought like a hookah rig and then it caused himself and everyone else to be extremely distracted by smoking hookah the whole time.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Um, and I've also had, I guess, uh, also a pretty similar, uh, the first marathon that Kylie and I did for Run Button. Uh, I had invited some friends to help fill some time. And they were supposed to show up staggered at like two in the morning and then four in the morning and then six in the morning.

And instead one of them had the idea of carpooling. And so they all showed up at the same time and they all showed up way too high to do anything at all. Um, and, and, and I think if you smash these two things together is the same situation. I think, as this. I guess, like, I know that this is it's, it sounds like a

really, and it is, it's a, it's an uncomfortable thing to have to tell someone, Hey, you are ruining my time by being, uh, inebriated.

Um, but it's like, there are situations where it's like, everyone agrees. There are situations where it's not appropriate to be drunk. Like if you're driving or, you know, maybe if you're trying to play. Uh, you know, a pickup game of baseball, you probably shouldn't be too drunk to move. Um, like know that it feels like you're just hanging out and having fun, which is what you're doing.

You're playing a game, but it's just like, you know, if you can't play the game, I think you should say something. Um,

AUSTIN: I definitely think it's difficult because it's like, this is already a difficult conversation to broach if this is happening and all you're doing is watching TV together. Right. Um, but, but I think that there, it is probably worth a couple of things here. Right? Which is like, Mmm. Part of it for me, I've been in this situation before to the degree that.

KEITH: I want to say. I, I, I, I'm assuming from this question, That this person doesn't think that his friends have like a drinking problem.

AUSTIN: That is my read on this is that, that you're right. That this just feels like these are people who are hanging out and are it sounds bad to say it to sort of like not taking it seriously, but are not like as, are not for instance, interested in playing a game with that degree of emotional clarity and are mostly interested in hanging out and drinking and rolling some dice. Um, that is my read on this question. And Derek apologies if we're misreading that here. Um, but I, I don't read this as the sort of like, Hey, what do I do when, when a friend of mine is struggling with drinking or something like that is, is overindulging or is, is, is, you know, alcoholic, but, but needs treatment or whatever.

Um, which, which like, I've been in both of those situations before, and they're both very difficult. And the, if it's what you think you have is a, is a friend who is, who is in need of some sort of larger are, you know, rehabilitative treatment or, or counseling, then that should be a question that should be a conversation you should be having about that as the core issue and not about the role playing game night.

Um, and if that's the case, that should be a conversation where like, If you have that separate from the table, that's a one on one thing. That's like a direct, like much more like, Hey, and also please look up resources that are not just us saying, okay. To go do that. Um, I've had those conversations they're very difficult and, uh, upsetting and are often, um, especially with people that you care a great deal about often really, uh, Hard.

Um, and so, and so that's the thing that's like, well, I don't have the sort of actionable advice that I feel comfortable giving in a generalized sense on a podcast. Um, if it is just this other thing of like, Hey, the tone is not where it needs to be. People are like not taking it seriously and are willing to just like get hammered instead of thinking about what their characters are doing, or like stay engaged around of combat.

I tend to be like, that's the sign that you should wrap up for the night? Um, if someone is falling asleep, I don't know. I feel like that has to be the like, all right, let's wrap it up here. Let's pick up this fight next week. Um, and during the week, Conversationally raises the like, can we try to get, let's try to get through this this week.

Like, I know it's fun to, to, to drink, but like, let's try to get through this much of the session before we really go hard or whatever. Right. Um, which again will be uncomfortable and you will feel like a narc. Um, but if it's important to you, it's worth you voicing that. Um, And it's probably worth gauging what the degree of interest is.

Uh, because it, it, it sounds like maybe the other players just aren't there for that same style. Um, or if they are then it's worth, you know, being like we can do more of that. If, if we're not like going through two, six packs together, you know, um, probably more than that, if it's a full table, Ali, do you have any thoughts here?

ALI: Um, yeah. I mean, I, it, it echoes what y'all have said for sure. Um, it, yeah, I, you, it's tough because alcohol is such a weird subject. And again, if you have those like broader concerns for your friend's behavior, like. So Austin is right and being like, don't talk about it. It shouldn't be about this night. It should be about your relationship with this person going forward.

Um, but having said that, um, like I, you have more responsibility as a GM and as the host, and if you it's, it's going to suck and it's going to feel uncomfortable, but like, if you want to have a sober table, you have the ability to tell people that, um, and if, if people. You know, don't want to play a game unless they're drinking.

Um, that, that isn't always like indicative of a problem, but there's definitely other like compromises that you can make. Like, if you have four people, you could say, Hey, let's buy a six pack. Everybody can have one or two beers and we can sort of do the thing that we're we want to do here. And then. You know, next weekend, we'll go do the party that we usually do, but like, because we're actually playing this game, you know, there's a degree of soberness expected at this table, at least.

Um, that's the, I mean, there's, we've spoken about it before on the show where a thing to keep in mind with your group of friends is that like, not every. Not every activity is appropriate for every social event and playing a tabletop game is not a replacement for every social event that you can have with your friends.

So like, if you do want to go out and drink a bunch with your friends, like do it, with somebody else. Um, so yeah, I dunno it sucks. Uh, It'll probably be a hard conversation to have either way, but you should have it definitely. If it feels like it's being disruptive, because it's your house, it's your table. You are allowed to make those rules. Um.

KEITH: Also --

AUSTIN: Also, go ahead, What were you going to say,

KEITH: Oh, I was, I was going to say, I think this was already touched on a little bit, but, um, you know, we know there that you listen to Friends at the Table. Um, I, we don't know about your friends, but, um, Uh, I don't know. I don't know how true this is.

It seems to me that like role playing games, specifically like Dungeons and Dragons, like people understand it differently, more broadly and culturally, especially people that like that play Dungeons and Dragons a lot. A lot of the people play D and D and it's like a fun hangout thing. And so you might just have, there just might be a communication breakdown on what you're trying to do here.

Like, you know, um, if I listen, if I think of like podcasts that I, that I would listen to that played Dungeons and Dragons, like casually, like rules-light, Dungeons, and Dragons, or, you know, Like what are big cultural DnD touchstones, like the community episode with Dungeons and Dragons. And it's like, these are not, these are not like, like, like Derek says we don't take things too seriously.

I think that that's broadly how people treat Dungeons and Dragons. I don't know that that's the game you're playing, but like there might just be.

AUSTIN: If they're out here, like how do we do harm in understanding --

KEITH: Asking things in different ways.

AUSTIN: Right. Totally. Exactly. Um, and, and the other thing I just want to say is like, these are your friends, you hang out outside of doing this role playing game.

If you're like, listen, I don't want us to seem like a fucking narc, but I do want to talk to y'all about like how drunk we get every week I'm in let's the other thing is like, Involve yourself in the conversation as a, as a co actor in this, um, make sure that it's clear that you're not like. Y'all have to get your shit together and much more.

Like every week we get like really drunk and I really want to keep doing this, but like, I can't do it. If what we're going to do every week is get totally smashed. Um, I need to be, I like it. It is important to you. Um, and my suspicion is if you come at it as a friend of theirs and as the host, like Ali said and say that like, it's really stressful for you.

And it isn't like a thing where you think that like, it's bad. Like you're not like, Oh, this is a bad actor. You're like bad actors for doing this or something. But instead, really talk about and frame it as like, it makes things tougher for you to run this when everyone. Like gets a little too loose and a little too drunk.

Um, my, my suspicion is people will take it seriously. Um, and you know, I mean, also we're talking about this again as if it's still happening, which right now it probably isn't still happening because of, uh, social distancing. Um, uh, but the other thing there is like, if y'all want a night to like come over and drink and watch a movie together, that's a, that's a thing [00:45:00] you can set up as a specific night to do that.

And. It can seem corny to be like, today is our, is our night to get wasted.

KEITH: Just get drunk after the game.

AUSTIN: But just get drunk after the game or pick a specific event around that to like go get the keg or whatever. Um, there is like, there was a way to like, quote unquote, drink responsibly. That means about. Engaging with alcohol, with, you know, events that, that support that style of interaction.

And, and don't, don't leave someone in a position where they're like, Hey, this is not the type of thing I want to do when I get drunk. I like the second one that's happening. You should feel free to kind of take it seriously for your own self and advocate for your own comfort, because. It is, it is very, very serious to like be in a situation where everyone around you is inebriated in a way that you are not having fun.

Like that isn't nothing. And you shouldn't feel you shouldn't beat yourself up because you feel like you're the one who isn't trying to have the same amount of fun as everyone else. Those, those labels don't capture the breadth of what is happening in that moment. So. Good luck. I hope it goes well. Um, and again, I know this probably isn't super relevant in this particular moment, but when, when social distancing eases and you know, people are coming over again, there could be in fact, an impulse to go even harder.

And so probably good to have those conversations when that starts to happen again so that you can get ahead of it, you know? Um, alright, next one comes in from N who says,

"I specifically had a question for Ali because her referencing her longstanding Star Wars, RP with a friend, but also for everyone else who has ideas. My partner and I want to begin RPing one-on-one with each other and I've been scratching my head on figuring out how to run it.

I suppose my biggest query is how to tackle the division of labor on GMing or taking care of the game world. Is there a GM involved when you play who may--? When, when you play, who may make a session or is it more free form on what you're playing two characters together who go on various adventures, would you choose between yourselves on who plays the city guard and who plays the politicians or share those roles? Ali?

ALI: Hi. Hello, how are you?

AUSTIN: Want to talk about your experiences here?

ALI: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Um, so I think in the context of this question, um, the, the way that I would describe what we would do would be leaning more towards playing two characters together who go on various adventures. Um, I guess what we kind of do is each of us have like maybe four or five of what you would think is pretty traditional, like. Tabletop RPG player characters.

Like I have my Jedi, I have the sniper. I have the, I guess Keri would be an officer. I have a nurse and, you know, he sort of had the layout of jobs there. Um, but then, you know, they, they fit in different spaces in the stories or in different scenes, depending on what they are.

Um, And then, um, in terms of like figuring out how to run it, it's such a weird thing because I, I feel like the easier way to come across it. Instead of thinking about it, the way people think about tabletop games

is more considering it, like it's a writing project. Um, whereas typically what we'll have is it's very easy for us because it's a Star Wars RP.

So a lot of the like world stuff is predetermined. A lot of that work is done for me. That's why I enjoy it. But, um, In terms of like the, the more minor story, the things of like, Oh, but there is, you know, Here's an officer, but there's an admiral that all these people direct to. Right.

Um, what we'll typically do is like, depending on the scene, depending on who makes more sense, we'll play that character because they're a character that sort of exists in this world and touches all of those places.

Um, so, you know, if, if. Keri is having like a big argument with the general, because she works under him. Justin would play that character because it's a conversation. But if it's like him coming into like a meeting that she's having with somebody else to give her an order, I would do that because I know what he would intend to say to her, if that makes sense.

Um, and then, um, the other thing is that, like we share responsibility in the story, um, Pretty evenly. Um, just in terms of like thinking of where we want it to go and what scenes we want to do and things like that. Um, but there will definitely be in terms of like specific story arcs or specific scenes, you can sort of thinking of yourself as less of a GM, but more of a person who's writing the first page of a script where you get to be the person who's saying, you get to have the camera and say, okay, they're in this office. Um, this character is moving through this building. They're there. You know, their attention is here. This is the. This is the place that they're at. This is who they're expecting here.

This is who they're interacting with and you can kind of set up all those things in writing so that the other person sort of has a, a pathway like an on ramp, you know? Um, like if I, yeah. Um, I guess just to lay it out in steps is to be like, step one. Have a cast in place or characters that you know, that you want to play, um, which is similar to tabletop games where you kind of start there and then step two would be like, okay, what are, what's the general thing that we're doing?

Who are these people? You gotta gotta, they're fighting in this Mandalorian in Star Wars. And then, and then step three would be like, okay, what is this actual scene? And then once you get to that part, one person should sort of take over once you're getting to the actual writing part of it, because of that, it just, it kind of makes it easier to divide that labor just in terms of being like, Oh, I'm going to set up the scene and involve you into it.

And then it, it, it, I think it feels like it makes it easier there because both people will have a very, like an understanding of what the scene is, but also the other person's place in it. If that makes sense.

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, so I've only done this a few times. Well, so there's actually kind of two things here.

It's like there is, we often talk about one on one, um, which immediately sets up that GM player dichotomy, but what Ali's just described, what kind of, what I would suggest is. To not think about it as a one on one game, but a game with two players and two storytellers and two GMs or two, you know what I mean?

Um, and, and one thing is just like, those games do exist. If you, if you're listening to this and you know that we just played Bell Songs, you have access to go listen to Keith, Art, and I go play Bell Songs, uh, on the two most recent live, the table games. That's a, that's a game that you can go out on it.

You can do. Traditional ass, like adventure type storytelling. Right? Um, that core model does just work and there is no GMs involved in that game because what you do is kind of pass around, um, kind of focus on who is describing situations, talking about whether or not something is dangerous or risky. Uh, and then, and then resolving.

With dice when it gets to that point. Um, but up until that moment, you're kind of just like telling the story together. And there are inflection points at which you can kind of mechanize things. Beam Sabre has a GM-less mode, right? Like users, there are alternative rules in Beam Sabre. They're like, here's what this game looks like with no GM.

And what it really means is certain storytelling and mechanical. Uh, responsibilities spread across the table in the course of play where like determining consequences becomes an open conversation around the table, determining how much stress is, is it costs to do a flashback. So if you want to do something that is mechanical in that way, look for, look for systems that are built with that in mind, or that encourage that.

Um, and I will say there's another thing, which is you can all, you can also do one on one roleplay in which you could run The Sprawl with one player and one GM. Um, and I think the first step for me on this is to first talk with your partner about how, what you're most interested in doing to begin with.

Um, it's possible that one of you was like, I just want to GM I'm excited about doing world-building and controlling a bunch of different NPCs. And I don't really have a great idea for it for a main player character, but I have a bunch of good sketches for NPCs. Um, and I really like digging into the rules of building out encounters and et cetera. And like when that happens, like if that's, if that's how it works, you can totally just do a one-on-one game in that way. If instead, you're both like eager to play PCs or like player, character analogs. Um, um, then, then you can find something that works for you in that system.

Do the thing that Ali suggested go kind of systemless and, and basically treat it like a group writers project, a group writing room, um, uh, or, or meet somewhere in the middle where maybe you're handing off the camera control. Like. As I'm talking to this, I'm like, I would fucking love to do a Sprawl game where I'm playing a character and there's a GM.

And then the next session I play, the GM and the other person is playing their character. And eventually those characters intersect, like, obviously that's how I think about it because we do a show where we have two parties that eventually intersect. Um, but, but like that sounds sick, honestly. And at that point you both have enough GMing experience and then start talking about stuff in a much more open way

where you're able to say, Oh, well, when this works, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I think this is probably, you know, this is not The Sprawl, but this is probably risky standard. Right. And then your partner might be like, I'm, I'm, that might be risky limited. Let's be honest. Um, and that sounds really cute and fun to me.

Um, uh, but, but I think maybe the, the other, for me, the underscore thing here, the, the underlying thing is to, is to really figure out what it is, what type of experience you're looking for, because.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because, like, I think about something like The Tower, which we played in COUNTER/Weight there, that game has kind of, um, fluctuating degrees of authority, but still has it's so starts with fundamentally a GM and a player.

Um, those lines get really blurry by the end of that game. Uh, but, but. We started that way, because those were the positions we were comfortable being in to begin with. Um, and having that conversation, like, what do you want to do? What's your vision for this thing? Um, it can be awkward, but it's also really, really, really useful to finding something that works for you.

Keith, have you ever done anything like, like a one on one game?

KEITH: Um, so something that I've done a couple of times is a sort of no rules, um, like. Role playing, I guess, I guess you'd call it like a crash course thing where it's like, Hey, you should play. We should play like a role playing game. And someone says, I don't know what that is. And then we just do like a no rules, nothing.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Um, which is like, you know, those are fun. Um, uh, I guess so I don't, I don't have a ton to add on like the practical, like, Oh, here here's practical advice for how to go about doing this. I guess the only thing that I'll say is like, all right, And emphasizing something that you talked about Austin, which is like the, there are things with a ton of rules and things with no rules.

And there are, you know, a thousand things in between, and it's going to be work to figure out like what you think will work for you. But there are a ton of different ways to, to do a small story focused game for two people out there. And like you, and the main thing that you have to decide is like, like how much do you need the need, uh, written rules to guide you because you might not need them at all.

Um, or you might want something like a, you know, Bell Songs, which has a, is like a full game with tons of rules, but also no GM or something with a GM, you know, there's a lot of ways to do it. And I don't know which. I couldn't say which one to do and played all those games and I haven't even done this thing.

AUSTIN: Right. Uh, you know, I go to itch, go to go to, you know, wherever you're looking for games and, and look at games for two players, look at games for look at GM-less, uh, role playing games and see

what's out there and consider making choices based around what you find, because my guess is you will, you'll find something that excites you. Um, that, that happens.

KEITH: You know what? I do have a little bit of advice now that I'm like, if I, if I put myself in this position of like, okay, you've got to go do this. The thing that I would do is, um, I would do like. One shots of like whatever, you know, three or five different games look the best. Right. See what I clicked with.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Always going to try stuff out. There's no timetable, you know, like yeah. You can just play games. It's fun to play games. Um.

ALI: Yeah, for sure. Um, yeah, I guess that's the other thing is the, the, the, the, like the writing based role playing that I do. Came to me because it was such an established thing back on the, the old internet and like still is now, but you sort of need to find the spaces for it.

Um, I, I think that the, the, the reason it seems really easy to me to describe is because it becomes, it comes from a place that's so. Character first where it's like, Oh, I have these three women that I enjoy writing and want to everyday. So that's what I do. Um, and like think of different situations that they would be at, or like different, you know, banks that they get steal from or weird, you know, the battles that they get be in. And it's great. And I love to do it.

KEITH: I actually had totally forgotten earlier when I said, I know people, I mostly have heard stories about people who have run the same characters for a decade or more, or the person who I was talking about was partially Ali. Right.

ALI: And yeah, and I think, uh, just piggybacking on what you all have said, it's just like figure out the first step is always going to be like, what about this is interesting to us?

What do we actually want to do? Um, Because it, it seems kind of open-ended from this question, like if you want to write cool universes, there's a billion ways to do that in a billion, not a billion, but a handful of systems out there that could probably really help you. Um, if you wanted to just do that, like character writing thing. It's easy to do, have fun to do it.

KEITH: The other thing is you've listened to Friends at the Table. So you know, this, you don't even have to stick to one game.

AUSTIN: No, totally. [01:00:00] You can carry the same world across different games. It turns out we've done this many times.

KEITH: I love a thing with almost no rules. Um, but sometimes I also want a lot of rules. Like, you know, as much as, as much as I'm literally always down for, I don't know, like Fiasco or something. Um, uh, you know, like I'll look at, um, ah, shit, what's that like, God, what's that mech game with the great art.

AUSTIN: Lancer.

KEITH: Lancer. Every time I see Lancer, I'm like, I would dig into Lancer, like maybe for like 15 hours.

AUSTIN: Yes, totally.

KEITH: And have a great 15 hours with Lancer and then not touch it again for a year.

AUSTIN: God. I want that fucking hardcover book so bad. I don't know if it's, I don't know if it's delayed or not in terms of shipping because of the stuff or the terms of like production, but I just want to fall into that book.

That book fucking rules. Um, alright, cool. Uh, last question, coming up here from Dakota who says,

"Hey table friends, I've been playing in lots of games over the years. Uh, I'm constantly hit with a decision, uh, with decision paralysis when I'm making a new character resulting in enough characters to feasibly run an entire campaign where every NPC has a character sheet I filled out, I feel horribly anxious that my ideas aren't good or that I just can't hold focus long enough to commit to any one character as people who simultaneously make. Excuse me as people who simultaneously make new characters frequently for lives and bluff and invest hundreds of hours into single characters. Do you have any advice on how not to feel like your next idea is going to be better and you should work on them instead?"

ALI: Mmm. I have a very easy answer to this, which is you should believe that your next idea will never be better than your last one. Don't believe that.

AUSTIN: I'm the opposite, but go ahead. Yeah. Uh-huh.

KEITH: I don't think you should. Because that sounds like an equal and opposite anxiety.

AUSTIN: It does, yeah.

ALI: Well try it on. Maybe it'll help.

KEITH: And maybe holding both ideas at the same time.

On the one hand, it can make you feel worse. On the other hand, they could cancel each other out in your youth. So, yeah, it's --

AUSTIN: On the third hand you could ascend galaxy brain style.

ALI: Yeah. Achieve new brain levels. Um, anyway, yeah, that's a joke about how I approach this, but, um, I don't know. It's tough because.

Yeah. I don't know. I'll let one of your guys.

AUSTIN: No, no, no, no. I wanna, I wanna, I wanna, if you're comfortable, I would love for you to unpack the struggle because I know this is a real thing and I think it would probably be useful to voice that for you as someone who can cause a perspective on it.

ALI: Um, yeah. I don't know. I guess the struggle is that I know, I don't know that I have advice that, um, applies to this question great beyond that joke that I had. Um, cause I. I, I have a lot of fun focusing in on

one person, I guess is the thing for me. Um, and I, I guess the, um, the actual advice I can give is like trying to approach, trying to approach a character, um, making a character in a different way.

Um, I've definitely done that with Brown in a way that's like very intentional. Um, and I've been having a lot of fun doing it because Beam Sabre is a fun game, but like, there was definitely. Um, there was definitely the thing of after Twilight Mirage of being like, I don't want to have a character that in my head for that long before playing them, um, just because I don't want to have to sit down at the table and then have all of this stress of like what I think I should be doing versus.

Um, the ideas that I've been holding onto versus the ideas that everybody else has and you know, where the show was going, all of that other stuff. Um, whereas with Brown, it's really been a thing of like, I like this character. I like this playbook first and foremost. Um, and then I am imagining who this person is.

Who would be able to have these skills and then am deciding who this person is based on how I branch those out. And I feel like it's my first time doing that. Whereas like, with, with other characters, it's been like, Oh, I. You know, I have a, a role in mind and a personality in mind, and I sort of know what they think about the world.

And I have that with Brown too, but being able to sort of sit back and be like, okay, what does it actually mean to declare this weapon on, in their thing or to declare this way of speaking against these other things? Or like taking on this new skill has been, um, Exciting for me because I keep looking at that man.

And it's like new opportunities to play that character differently. Um, and if you are having trouble holding onto one idea for a character, think of somebody who you could sort of make that long, that long game with, instead of trying to think of all of these other archetypes that you think that you want to play, um, So, yeah.

AUSTIN: No, totally. That all adds up to me. Um, Keith, I'm curious if you have a different perspective on this or the same one, but.

KEITH: Um, yeah, I mean, I guess, um, if, if anything, I guess I'm closer to a two. To Ali's version of this anxiety, which is like worrying that I won't be able to make a good character. Again, it's not, it tends not to be an issue for me. Um, the thing that I, that I, that like, it's always, like, I've mentioned this before. I think I had a, you know, like a free fall analogy and, with a rope.

Um, so however that went, that's still true. Um, Uh, there's, you know, the, the problem for me is like making sure that I stick the landing in the first couple of episodes in terms of like, being able to get, make an immediate impression with someone. Um, and I, I think that my advice would be like, if I, if I had to give you something to tell yourself, like about like, you know, No, don't worry blank.

It would be like, I don't care how good of a role player you are or how good of an actor you are. There is a limit to how different you can pretend to be, because if you're reacting in the moment, your brain is just how your brain is. Uh, you cannot literally transform into a new person. And so for, for however many different ideas, you have, you are limited by being a one single person on how you're going to

portray them. Um, and you know, I'm sure that some, some people have a wider gulf than me between two characters. Uh.

AUSTIN: Uh, yeah? Hmm.

KEITH: But, but there will, there, there are diminishing returns and eventually you're going to run up against that. Like, no matter what it says on that paper, those two characters, are you, um, or they were at least made by you.

Um, and so. You know, I guess maybe, and maybe I'm maybe I'm wrong, but like take a look back at all the different characters that you've played and you will start to find similarities in the same way that me with the opposite problem, where I, I sometimes worry that my characters are too samey. Look back in the more and more work we do, the more different I consider, uh, even my most similar two characters, Farrow and Mako.

Um, uh, the, the further away, the, the more work we added to Friends at the Table. The more I'm like, Oh, they never were really that similar. I'm just the same person. It's just that, it's just that when you, your brain is gonna work the same way, no matter who you're playing. Um, and, uh, I don't know. Is that anything?

AUSTIN: That's something, yeah, that sounds good. I think like the, the, the note there, like you're going to have to play them is very important. Right. Um, there is, um, a. Uh, I'm gonna just, I'm gonna read this thing. I looked it up to see if I'd written about this. And I had, thankfully, um, so, uh, when I was in high school, I went to a panel, uh, where there were a bunch of game industry luminaries who are, who are, uh, giving a state on the video game industry.

And one of the people on the panel. I don't remember most of them, but one of them was Warren Spector, um, who was the designer of Deus Ex, um, uh, and had previously worked on other stuff at Looking Glass studios, you know, big, important figure in the history of what games, journalists like to call immersive Sims that are like first person adventure, full FPS, you know, stealth games basically.

KEITH: And Epic Mickey.

AUSTIN: Right? Epic Mickey is Warren Spector. Correct. Um, The first thing I remember about this, uh, event is that he was not impressed by me. I was a teenager who wanted to ask a question that was like, I'm going to show you how smart I am. Cause I, cause I really admire you. I asked him basically like a whole thing about photo realism and how we are moving away from photo realism.

Because, because the technology was getting there in the same way that once the photo, once the photograph was invented, uh, artists felt free to stop focusing primarily on realistic representation and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I was like extremely 17 year old. I'm trying to impress someone who I, who I respect a great deal.

He was not too super impressed. The second thing he, he, uh, I remember

KEITH: How did he telegraph to you he was not so impressed?

AUSTIN: And he was like, "Oh yeah, yeah, probably." That was like one of those. I was like, cool. Uh, the second thing I remember him saying, uh, is that he hated when people submitted, um, unplayable engine demos that were just like a cyber city filled with like glowing butterflies, um, flying through it to show like how good they were at art, because it's like a, it was like a really tired way of, of showing.

Tech technical skill, but mostly cause like that's just not what any game looks like that if what you're doing is like, if you're, if you're going to show someone a portfolio work, show them portfolio work, that's relevant to the type of work that they're doing. Um, and that like an un-interactive piece is not what we need good design for or good art for.

We need good art for what the player is going to be seeing, which is going to be much blockier than you're like, okay, High Rez pre-rendered CG or whatever. Um, the third thing, and this is the one that's actually related to this, to this question is that, uh, he said one of the biggest misunderstandings in game development, um, and people who want to break into game development is that, uh, we think often from the outside of the most important thing is a good idea.

Good ideas are worthless is basically what he said. Um, that over the course of his career, he'd had a billion good ideas. The only ones that were valuable to him. The one, the only ones he cared about were the ones that he executed on well. And I hated that he said this cause I was a 17 year old who thought he was filled with good ideas.

Um, and I hated it for like a year for like a decade. It was just like, Part of my identity. I was like very much like I'll fucking show him. I'm going to be made of good ideas. Um, I was furious about it through college. Like in, when I was writing about games is like a young freelancer in my early twenties.

Um, it's like, you know, I was the person who would open up. Google docs or open up word. It was mostly word at the time and read like I'm going to fucking change the, I have a great idea for a short story. I have a great idea for a novel I'd like message someone like we should do a tabletop game set in this dope world that I just came up with.

It's a great idea. Um, and then the thing that happened is, um, I would have to work on it. And then I didn't because of how debilitating it was to think about how good the idea was and how bad I would be executing on that idea that whatever I could do, wouldn't be as good as the idea was itself. Um, and then I went to grad school and when I was in grad school, there are due dates and there are really heavy requirements for quality in a way that there was not for me in undergrad.

And that I wasn't like a. That's what I wasn't good at the few things I was really good at in undergrad, but there's lots of stuff in undergrad that I was able to just kind of like. You know, fake my way through, um, get good enough at, but not actually engage at a more critical, deeper level. Um, the stuff that I really loved, I really did engage with, but there's a lot of stuff it was like, whatever. And then you get to grad school. And for me, at least it was like, Oh, I care about this and I need to engage with it. And I don't even have good ideas. I have like tired ideas and mediocre ideas. I have bad ideas, um, but I have to do

something. And the thing I had to do was put in hard work and get advice and turn to my support structure and my peers and my mentors.

And, um, it turned out that these kinds of mediocre ideas. Uh, got to be good enough. And like, when they were good enough, they started to get even better than good enough. I actually made them good and better. Um, and along the way, it kind of struck me that like the reason I never put in the work, right. The reason that like, I was like, I'm going to write a novel, it's going to be 400 words or 400 pages long, and I'm going to write I'm going to only write 40 of them. But then I got to grad school and I was like, I have to write a 70 page, a dissertation or a thesis, a master's thesis. Um, and then I wrote 120 pages and they're all like, you know, they're not great, but they're better than what they would've been when I first started is because I didn't start by saying, I need to write the most important thesis about alienation ever.

I thought this is kind of trite. Uh, I hope I can do it. I hope that they don't fucking fail me out of master. I took out a huge loan to do this. Uh, Oh. Uh, and I did it and I executed on it instead of focusing on what a big good idea I had. Um, and so like, you know, I think eventually I'd had some good ideas, but I've really adopted this as like a key part of the way I think about.

Everything I do, which is, it's kind of like a double edged sword on one hand, I think like all my ideas are trash who cares? These are all bad. These are all ripped off of something else. These are all inspired by something else that it's already going to get done. This is too opaque. This is too, um, a niche.

This is not niche enough. This is too pop. This is too mainstream. Uh, I'm playing in, in, in puddles out here. Um, uh, And then I focused on just doing it. The other side of that sword though, is a belief that the batting average has gotta be okay. Um, uh, one of the first pieces of advice that Jeff Gursman who, uh, uh, from [01:15:00] giant bomb told me when I first started working for him, that was like, it's okay.

If every piece you write doesn't do great numbers. It's about batting averages. It's not about home runs. Um, it's about like, It's not about like everything being the best thing that you've ever done. It's about like having a pretty good record of doing okay. Um, that is what ends up being really valuable in the long, in the long run.

And so one of the things I've adopted is just like, we start a new season and it's terrifying every time and I'm just have to believe. That over the course of our career of doing Friends at the Table, we'll have more wins than losses. Um, uh, and that comes from the belief that what we've gotten better at is not ideas we've gotten better at executing.

We've not worked on having cooler, more inventive, you know, character ideas or locations or settings. What we've gotten better at fundamentally is like sitting down and doing the damn thing. And the only way to get better at it is to do it. You know, I've said this before as like a bit of a life motto is like to do it, do it, right.

This comes from PBTA principles. And this goes back to what Keith was saying before about descriptive and prescriptive, uh, being the same thing, or are you needing to hit both of those things? Um, the way

that you're going to get over, like not having a character that you can commit to, is to take the step and commit to a character that you think will be worse than the next character you come up with.

They might be, they might be worse. You, you have to commit to them and then get into the practice of being that character, playing that character to develop the skillset that will eventually free you from that paralysis, because what will happen is. You will both recognize that all of your character ideas are actually more trite than you thought they were, but also that you can take something that's kind of trite and spin it into something you care deeply about, um, through sitting with them.

And I think part of that is just like, it is better to have a coat than linen, um, uh, in terms of like what you have with you in the moment. Uh, and, and all of the, all of the, um, the, the. The character sheets that you filled out don't won't mean as much to you as taking any one of them and spending 20 hours with that person and inhabiting them and building new ideas with them or taking them and writing a story about them, right?

Like, I want to be clear, you do whatever the fuck you want with those character ideas. You don't have to play them at the table necessarily to develop a relationship or a deep fondness, a deeper fondness for them. Uh, but the only way to get to that next step for me is to just like, Take that chance and say to yourself, my idea is, might not be that good.

Anyway, the ideas aren't, aren't valuable, a billion people every day have good ideas. Um, but those don't get you across the finish line. The thing that will get you there is doing the much more difficult work of trying to develop them and play them and put them, put them out there into the world and sit with them.

Um, so that is my big speech. I didn't mean to, I saw this question. I was like, I don't have an answer for this at all. I barely play characters. And then it was like, Oh right. The time that I saw that guy too said that I wasn't hot shit.

KEITH: Oh yeah, the Ultima guy.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. Um, I think that does it for us, unless anyone has any final thoughts here. Um, as always.

ALI: Are you sure that one of the characters are you sure that all of the characters that I play will never be as good of a character as Hella is? Are you positive?

AUSTIN: Yeah. A hundred percent. You're, in five years, you're going to say Hella is corny as shit. It's going to happen. Like this is the part of life. Is that like.

KEITH: It's been five years.

AUSTIN: Five years after Hella is like -- in 2025 or 2024 or whatever, we're all going to think Spring in Heiron was like really mediocre. And then in 10 years, we're all going to be like, damn Spring in Heiron fucking slapped.

ALI: Yeah. That's the thing is like the, that's the other part of this, which is like, catch me on the wrong day. And I already think that Hella is corny as shit.

AUSTIN: A hundred percent.

ALI: It's like, yeah. Yeah, you just have to commit to it and you do really enjoy doing the one thing. The one person does what they want to do. It's a fucking blast.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I want to be clear. I don't mean that your, all of your characters will inevitably all be shitty. What I really mean is like the only real metric you can't, you can't measure them until you've been in them.

Um, it's like a fault, you know what I mean? It's like, it's like looking at, it's looking at like seven potted plants and being like the next one is going to grow. Like, we're sorry. Seven. Uh, potted plants that haven't grown yet, just soil. And you're like, I got a water, one of these, but the next one's going to be tall.

You don't know how tall they're going to be. You don't know which one's going to grow in. Good. You know, but those seeds are, you know what I mean? If you really want to grow, you know, whatever, uh, a rose, you gotta fucking start watering and seeing which one of them is going to be a rose.

KEITH: Uh, and then you're also playing a tabletop game. So there's like four or five other gardeners that are also helping.

AUSTIN: Yes, exactly. Totally. Total, you don't know what else is going to be in the soil. You don't know who else is gonna, you know, so, so I, I know like, Oh, there's a lot of words to be like, be less precious. Um, but it, it is, it is, and it's a hard skill to develop.

Um, but it is the literal difference between me when I was 22 living in Brooklyn saying I wanted to be a writer and barely writing anything. And now 13 years later, 13 years of working on it, Literally living in New York, being a professional writer, the difference was getting over the fact that I thought I had good ideas.

Um, and instead admitting that I had kind of shitty ideas, but that what I did have was the ability to work on them until they were a little bit better. And that I only way I got that was by doing it and doing it kind of bad until it got better. Um, again, this is all, again, this is all like trite aphoristic shit of like practice makes perfect, but it doesn't, it doesn't make perfect.

What it does is make perspective. Practice gives you perspective on your own work and lets you understand when you sometimes I'll finish a podcast and like, this is like I've said this before and people think that I'm out of my mind. But one of the worst compliment somebody can give me it's to say that my work is always good or that like, Oh, every podcast you record is good.

Like, no, it fucking isn't. I know this, I make the podcast. I know when I turned into Conker, you might, It it's it's um, it's very complimentary that you think that about me, but, but it doesn't actually risk. It actually feels like. There's different levels of engagement at that point. One of my favorite things to do is

to talk to another person who makes podcasts and be like, whew, I just won the one I just recorded was not good.

And they go, yeah, I know how it is. Uh, because you know, when you didn't necessarily knock it out the park, but you only know that once you do the, the work of doing it to begin with and know, and getting your own kind of like scale for what good feels like, um, from the outside, you just don't, you just don't have that for yourself for your own work in the same way. Um, so, so yeah.

KEITH: One of the, this is a, this is only tangentially related to the question, but one of the most important things for like run button where it's just me and Kylie is like, knowing, like figuring out like. If we keep going, or if we don't cancel today, everything we do is going to be bad.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. Cause we know what reporting bad episodes feels like. And it's, it sucks while it's happening.

AUSTIN: If someone has to fucking watch it or listen to it later in the future and they know it's going to be bad.

KEITH: We can go back and redo it. Oh, um, cause we can, it's part of the whole thing is we have to play through the game. It's like, okay, we have to cancel today.

I'm feeling, you know, you know, I mean, I'm at like 30% for no real reason. We can't record today or we have to stop after only two hours because like we're already getting tired of this.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Or whatever.

AUSTIN: Totally. It sucks.

KEITH: But you have to that's, you know,

AUSTIN: knowing that is important. And the reason, the way you learn that is by putting out a bunch of bad episodes first and then be like, Oh fuck.

This is the thing.

KEITH: Sometimes it takes three. Silent Hill games to figure out how to make a silent Hill let's play.

AUSTIN: I've just started that. I need to watch. I'm very excited. I'm -- God, I'm also interested to hear some very --

KEITH: Oh, four? Yeah, you're right. So please four.

AUSTIN: Four to five. Now you're on the fifth.

KEITH: Yeah. Well now I think now I know now I know how to do.

AUSTIN: What is the. Okay. How was the fifth one going? I've only watched two episodes. It it's been good so far.

KEITH: I don't, I think the episodes are good.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's what I want.

KEITH: I don't want to say anything more than that because I think that's, that's fun. It'll be, it'll be fun for you.

AUSTIN: Okay. Good. I hope. I'm excited. Yeah. My enjoyment has nothing to do with whether or not the game is good

KEITH: Silent Hill Four is -- I've spent four,

AUSTIN: No, four is -- I've seen four, four. I've seen. Now I'm on five.

KEITH: No, no, no. But I just, I just can't get over that Silent Hill Four is the worst game that I've ever played in my entire life.

AUSTIN: I've been thinking about it a lot because of being, because from where I'm looking, I can look out into like the city streets and that's such a big part of Silent Hill Four, the room.

Is that like in the you're in the, you're locked in your house and you're looking out and seeing people walk around and be like, I want to be out there.

KEITH: I wonder if it would hit a little different if we had played it. But no.

AUSTIN: You still have to use the candles to fight off the .

KEITH: They don't even work. You need them. And they don't work it's so it's like a Coinstar it's like a Coinstar, but instead of coins, it's swords and instead of a machine, it's a, it's an apartment building full of ghosts.

AUSTIN: God, every time I try to stab a ghost with a sword, it never works. So I was in the subway station and it's not working. It's not working.

KEITH: It never worked.

AUSTIN: It never works. So I was in the subway, fighting a ghost. God. Alright. I think that's gonna do it for us this week. As always, you can send your questions to tipsatthetable@gmail.com. You should, you should Google Gabriel. What is it? Gu-- Gu--. How do you pronounce --

KEITH: Gundaker

AUSTIN: Coinstar to know what the hell we're talking about.

KEITH: There's two there's one in front of an audience that watched that one second.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think, I think the early yeah. Agreed. Yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes. Uh, uh, Also as another reminder, you can go to tinyurl.com/freebluff. Send it to your friends, tell people to go listen to Bluff City. Bluff City slaps, and that's available for everybody still. So please tinyurl.com/freebluff. It's the whole first season of Bluff City.

It's very good. Uh, yeah, hashtag freebluff.

ALI: Um, speaking of Bluff City, we just finished that, uh, last arc. So we did have music and new stuff soon.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think we'll have music soon. I want to be clear. That I there's a chance. Yeah. Jack just had to do a song for, for, for PARTIZAN. My suspicion is we have some more music coming.

Um, and because of that, I want to like, we'll have to talk about, I don't want to say, like it's not coming next week is what I'm saying. I don't think the next month, probably somewhere in there, right. That.

ALI: For people who are waiting at Bluff City, it is on its way. Uh, it is in the oven. The oven is preheated.

AUSTIN: Oven is preheated. There's a lot of it. It's a weird one.

ALI: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I just hope it's enjoyable.

ALI: Coming into the station, but not yeah.

AUSTIN: How many meters per second does the train rally? How many?

ALI: So funny. So at the start of the line, her train is gonna leave the, uh,

AUSTIN: No, it leaves the station, but you had to be prepared for it.

You have to use your action last turn to get on the train, even though it wasn't here yet.

ALI: So right. But, okay. We'll wait. But if it's, if this is the set-up of my turn right now and the train is leaving the station, then it's leaving before it gets divided.

AUSTIN: Right. Then you can, yes, you can delay your action if you want to.

ALI: And then as a great book keepers.

AUSTIN: Enjoy.

KEITH: Before since I brought it up, people should listen to, or watch the Silent Hill Five Homecoming let's play that we're doing on run button.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: What do you think about that, by the way? Because I --

KEITH: I don't want to spoil that. But I will tell you, I will tell you after this, you're not watching it.

ALI: Then watch it. Cause I am a silent Hill person, who's very curious about this. Um, Silent Hill Homecoming is an interesting game and I bet that.

AUSTIN: Do you, wait, why do you feel about -- good Ali?

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: Oh, well now I don't want to say

KEITH: I hate this game, Ali. I don't know if you know that.

ALI: It's really hated, but like as a game, it's not that bad.

KEITH: Being a game is Silent Hill's worst thing usually.

ALI: Um, yeah, I don't know. I think that that game tries to do really interesting things and is, uh, it's decent. Um, Have fun. I bet that let's play is very good. You should watch it.

KEITH: You finally know how to do a Silent Hill game, I think. We're only, we're only two sessions in. They were only like we recorded like six hours of it.

But I think that this is the one that's going to go good.

AUSTIN: This is I'm excited for it. Y'all haven't gotten like it's where a lot watched it. You haven't gotten lost in a school for three hours, so.

KEITH: No, we haven't. Got we. Okay. So we do, we do have one thing where we get kind of lost, but.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: There has been almost no frustration.

AUSTIN: No, Ali, if you wouldn't watch their let's plays, right? No.

ALI: Cause I know that I would get too angry,

AUSTIN: You would get so angry.

ALI: Cause it's like a, a different experience --

KEITH: You would have you would, I think you would stop. You would, you would. You wouldn't like me as much. If you had seen our Silent Hill 2 let's plays.

ALI: An important thing to know is that every time you guys are doing the bit, that's like the van is called this thing. Like, I -- prison. Right? That's the plot point of that fucking game and they're right.

KEITH: I can never remember the, I can never remember the -- cause Kylie does it. Perfect. every time.

AUSTIN: Kylie has it highly, has it a hundred percent down. I wish I had it all the way down because it's my fucking favorite thing in the world. Uh it's they're not called, they're not called bat vultures.

KEITH: They're not called bat vultures. They're called air screamers and they're, they're a manifestation of,

AUSTIN: Alessa's--

KEITH: Alessa's something from her favorite.

AUSTIN: Favorite. Book, uh, The Lost World by Arthur Conan Doyle.

KEITH: Arthur Conan Doyle, yeah. I used to say Author Conan Doyle. Let me see, let me search my -- I can search these comments. I'm.

AUSTIN: Pretty sure they're not called. They're not called air screamers?

KEITH: They are called air screamers. They're not called bat vultures.

AUSTIN: Uh, yeah, here, I found, I only found it on the something awful thing. Uh, duh, duh, duh. They're not actually, they're not called bat vultures.

They're called air screamers. They are the manifestation of Alessa's interpretation of the pteradactyls as shown in an illustration in one of her favorite books, The Lost World by Arthur Conan Doyle. Yeah,

ALI: C'mon. Duh.

AUSTIN: I get it. I get it.

[01:30:00] **KEITH:** Yeah, that was that.

AUSTIN: Shoutouts to MarioFan6489 by the way. But here's the thing, Ali is the next thing. Like immediately the best person left two comments on this single post. I'm going to single let's play episode. And the other one that they, that they, that they posted was "funny."

ALI: It's like years later, right?

AUSTIN: Uh, no, this looks like it's both six. I can't, I can't, I can't find the one saying,

KEITH: It's what? Say it. Kill me.

AUSTIN: I can't cause it's cause it's in Russian. So I can't say it cause I can't get the actual, I can't get to the actual fucking thing. Um, because of, I don't one second silent I'm on some site that just pulled videos. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah, I know the site. Yeah.

AUSTIN: They just pulled it. And now there's like in the, in the rest of the actual page is like advertisements for sex drugs. And that's not what I need to be on. That's not the site I need to be on. Um, did someone delete these comments?

KEITH: No. Okay. I found the real thing from Mario .

AUSTIN: Where's the other comment from MarioFan though?

KEITH: Oreo. Oh, I don't, I don't see it.

AUSTIN: Oh, I found it funny. They're both from six years ago. Funny. It usually takes me only about 10 to 15 minutes to get to the school. Even on my first run through of the game, it took me like no time at all to find the items laying around all three keys without the map and take out the enemies in my way.

Funny. Ali is this your alt?

ALI: It should be, I hope so.

AUSTIN: You would be LuigiFan6489, obviously.

ALI: Oh, yes. Oh my God. I have to watch all of this videos, under a burner YouTube account LuigiFan64 and share all of my thoughts.

AUSTIN: Please!

KEITH: Yeah. If I start getting a bunch of weird Silent Hill heckles I'll know that Ali got really bored.

ALI: Is this the third wave of let's plays, which would be like, I'm going to let's play this let's play from 10 years ago.

Log of me watching it and commenting once a week.

AUSTIN: I would love it. I would love it so much.

KEITH: There's no way you could restrain yourself to only once a week.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, definitely. Yeah.

KEITH: All commenting once a week or watching once a week.

ALI: We'll figure it out. The plan after this.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh.

KEITH: I think, you know, you would, I think you would like our first Silent Hill let's play.

ALI: I bet I would, but I

KEITH: We like that one.

ALI: I that's my favorite of the three of them.

KEITH: Oh, that's the first one is?

ALI: Uh, yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. You, you might like that.

ALI: Sure.

KEITH: I don't know.

AUSTIN: Okay, let's time.is. Also, yeah. Sorry. The run button let's play started playing in the background for a second. They're trying to get that.

KEITH: That's fine. This is already the Friends at the Table patreon, and so anybody else that wants to go to the content I've ever going up is

AUSTIN: 50 seconds Keith. Time.is?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. All right.

ALI: Um, anyway, yeah. Support content burger. If you can. I think, um, emojiidrome might have a patreon too, if you want to support Sylvie.

AUSTIN: That's true.

ALI: The whole friends, the table family. Okay. Bye everybody.

AUSTIN: Bye.