

Winter in Hieron 13: Rosemerrow, Oh My Rosemerrow

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ALI: Last time, on Friends at the Table.

AUSTIN: You all receive notifications that your old pals in the Golden Lance have been arrested. And it's probably very soon after that that you hear that Chancellor Gilbert Greene Byrd White Merrow Henderson Lenova Tevilton Bachman Brayer Slayton Showman Carolina Quincy Lutz has been assassinated.

[MUSIC: Outside]

AUSTIN: (cont'd) And there, in the middle of all these people there is a figure. Who... Again, does not light their surroundings, but it is— looking at it is hard to do because of how bright it is. As it moves and turns, it sets more things ablaze from its wings touching stuff.

ALI: Can I attack it?

AUSTIN: Arrell is whisking people away. Into what he refers to as the Study, a sort of physical space that he has complete control over. And he is, he is putting people into their own versions of that. A sort of like, solipsist heaven. He is trying to put people in a place where they have what is effectively an infinite amount of time to continue studying the heat and the dark and also just to like live in heaven. And I guess that's when you realize that this guy, who is connected to all of this shit is in fact, the Great Fantasma, leader of the Disciples of Fantasma.

[MUSIC ends]

AUSTIN: Where are we? So! When last we played, I'm not gonna do an intro, this is gonna get cut in a weird way I'm sure, when last we did this we had just wrapped up the Ephrim, Throndir, Hadrian turn inside of Arrell's apartment.

KEITH: *[sarcastic]* Yeah, wish that had been more eventful.

AUSTIN: *[sarcastic]* Yeah, if only we'd left on a higher climax last time!

DRE: *[sarcastic]* *[cross]* Pretty boring.

[Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: So now let's, let's move over to and go on down the line here, and go to Lem and Hella, who are... I guess, I guess first of all is there anything else that needs to be done before we start, does anybody have any notes or questions about rules?

ART: Yeah, what the fuck was that last time?

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, what was the thing you did? Fuck you!

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Alright, ah...

ART: Quick question, how dare you!

AUSTIN: Okay, good. Lem and Hella.

ALI: Hi!

AUSTIN: You're going to the jail, right?

ALI: Is that where we're going? Right, yeah?

AUSTIN: You're going to confront Lenny Lenova, right? Is that not true?

ALI: Right, yes.

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay. So—

JACK: Yeah, can, can we assume we've had the information from the previous scene?

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: *[cross]* No, we can't get it until the end of this round.

JACK: *[cross]* Oh, no! Okay.

AUSTIN: At the end of this scene I'll say that you all. Because the whole thing here has been like, oh we're gonna pass through Rosemerrow— or Roseheart, and that's where information gets exchanged.

JACK: We didn't just swing by the others and they said "It's Fantasma!" really quickly?

AUSTIN: You're literally as far away as anything could be on this map, unfortunately.

JACK: *[cross]* Great, fantastic!

AUSTIN: You're in the furthest western place they're in the furthest eastern place.

JANINE: *[cross]* Also, like, this is happening concurrently, right? Like, you're not going to that place and waiting like "Okay they did their thing, let's go do our thing".

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yes, yes. Mhm!

JACK: Woof!

AUSTIN: Yeah, I thought about holding it until the very end of this scene, of this like, arc, but I wanted to get it in last night's recording.

[Ali giggles]

JACK: No, this is gonna be, this is gonna be fun, we can play a subgame called dramatic irony.

AUSTIN: *[laughing]* It's a good game! It's kind of the basis of everything we do. *[Ali and Janine laugh]* Maybe we should— you know what, maybe what we should do is, it's the beginning of the day. We just started this recording. Let's go— I just wanted to go over some key facts so that we all have them in our heads so that we can know questions that might be worth asking separate from the big stuff that happened at the end of the last game. So like, let's like, what's the rundown here?

JACK: So...

AUSTIN: Let's step through the events you know have happened and the suspects you are...

JACK: Chancellor Lutz was killed, was turned into a big pile of ash in his top floor room by seemingly two figures. There were a series of explosions, substantial explosions, enough to like, tear apart a big bed. And then a smaller explosion... and then nothing. Nobody seemed to, to enter or leave. Shortly afterwards, a gnoll, a very large gnoll that looked but didn't necessarily behave like Mother Glory was seen running through the Canyon, which is kind of like the bazaar. At the same time, Arrell, who is actually Fantasma... we've, we've broken into his kind

of like, place and found that he is trying to put or to steal people away to this kind of like, eternity prison as an attempt to save them from the Heat and the Dark?

AUSTIN: That all adds up.

ALI: But we—

ART: And he didn't think *we* were worth it.

AUSTIN: No... *[laughter]* Not yet, at least, right? And then, I'm just gonna go through the, the suspect list to remind you and the listeners of who these are. Victoria Solomon, with Dr. Gloria Lake who's being held as an accomplice, the Ordennan Justiciar Iduna Fel, who Hadrian sold out. Arinia Slayton, Chancellor Lutz's ex-wife, who no one has talked to yet, I believe? Blake Bromley, a semi-notorious halfling thief, who is, went down into the basement of the New Old Museum with you in a previous game. Mother Glory, Lenny Lenova, Isaac Addleton, all of which are names that we've said in the last minute, so I don't need to expand. Fire Monster, and then in brackets, The Bright One, flat and weird, from somewhere? *[Ali laughs]* And then Cult of the Dark Sun.

JACK: It's like a super Friends at the Table game when our suspects list range from like, political figure who was close, to a literal star.

[Ali and Dre laugh]

AUSTIN: Yes!.

JACK: Who could it be?

AUSTIN: Anyway. Lem and Hella, give me— one of you give me a roll. Two d6 plus two.

ALI: I'll do it.

AUSTIN: Well!

ALI: *[laughing]* No, that's not it! That's not!

JACK: Well, no, good news here! What happened here was Ali rolled two *d* plus two and got the result two!

[laughter]

ALI: Okay, that's a ten.

JACK: *[cross]* Okay, that's better!

AUSTIN: *[cross]* That's a ten!

KEITH: *[cross]* It's better.

AUSTIN: Alright. So, the prison... the prison in Westshore-upon-Sea is... I'm not convinced it was here last week. It's like, it's definitely a converted— like it was a mansion that was converted into a prison. Seized from some royal family— or some, some, you know, aristocratic family in Rosemerrow, and everything in it is like, really posh and nice. The cells are bigger than places you've stayed in the last couple of weeks. And Lenny Lenova has... somehow wound up in the only cell, which is really just a room with, with bars instead of a regular door, that has like a bare floor and concrete walls, and like, no windows. And he is like, as you walk in, hamming it up and like, yelling about his rights and how there's never been a more innocent halfling. *[Keith laughs]* And how, y'know, the, this has been a, a miscarriage of justice.

ALI: *[cross]* Oh my god.

AUSTIN: And how the chancellor's gonna hear about this. He's, he's a real good guy. So... I'm guessing you wanna like, speak with him?

JACK and ALI: Yeah.

JACK: *[cross]* You wanna take—

ALI: *[cross]* We were going to put some pressure on the dude.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, so I guess the officer who's like, *[stammering]* It's officer, who is like gonna lead you to it tells you "We arrested this guy the night that Lutz was killed, we're pretty sure he did it," or sorry, "we're pretty sure he didn't do it because by the time, we were there soon as it happened. It was like a simultaneous thing, but now he's making a whole big deal, he has his lawyer talking about how he's the, the true future of the, of Rosemerrow, and how, y'know, all of this is a conspiracy against him." And you kinda just get some information from the cop that way. And then you're taken to see... Addleton, who... again like I'm just going to narrate the opening bits of this conversation, because I don't wanna like get too into it, too into the muck but like, there's a turn in the conversation. At first he's kind of putting this on, he's like, playing up the injustice, and trying to like get pity from you, and it's clear this is all kind of a big spin game for him. But then you kind of realize, and this is what you're getting from that plus ten, is that like, he isn't just putting on the spin because, like, that was his plan. This wasn't like, "Oh, I know, I'm gonna get myself arrested, and then I'll," y'know, Lutz got killed, I'm gonna get myself arrested, say I was unfairly arrested and now I'm, I'm going to use that to get votes. He put himself in jail because he wanted to protect himself from someone. Someone that Isaac Addleton had introduced him to, a man named Arrell? And, and Lenny explains that he had put a little bit of pressure on Addleton to pay for the New Old Museum's reconstruction, or get his family, the Addleton family to pay from their coffers, and then he introduced Lenny to, to this guy Arrell, who was talkin' about all sorts of stuff.

AUSTIN (as Lenny): About how pitiful I was in the face of his great power, and how, even smaller than that I was in the face of some other thing like the, I dunno, the sun. The, the night and the sun, something like that I don't know, I was more scared if I'm being honest. But I'm safe here, so it worked out. I decided I figured out what I could do is, what's safer than a prison? And I got myself imprisoned. So, it all worked out in the end and now, I'm gonna be able to, y'know, friends in high places guess what, you wanna keep *me* your friend because I'm gonna be in a high place.

[beat]

JACK (as Lem): I hate this guy.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, this no, this, ugh.

AUSTIN (as Lenny): What's wrong? What do you— What's your problem? If you had a big like, uh, magic guy comin' after you, wouldn't you try to get protection?

ALI (as Hella): I... I am protection.

JACK (as Lem): Yeah, she's protection.

AUSTIN (as Lenny): Against like, magic guys?

ALI (as Hella): *[slowly]* Uh huh.

JACK (as Lem): Yeah, pretty much.

AUSTIN (as Lenny): What're your rates?

ALI (as Hella): *[laughs]* I'm all booked up.

JACK (as Lem): Besides, you're perfectly safe, aren't you?

ALI (as Hella): Yeah, you're in jail!

JACK (as Lem): Where's safer?

AUSTIN (as Lenny): Who let you in? Wh— how'd you get in?

JACK (as Lem): Look, what we've got here is a good, old-fashioned soft cop bad cop.

ALI (as Hella): Mhm.

DRE: *[laughing]* Soft cop!

AUSTIN (as Lenny): Wait, I— I don't think it— This might be better, actually, yeah okay, let me hear it out.

[Ali laughs]

JACK (as Lem): Do you wanna go first, Hella, or uh?

ALI (as Hella): Oh, soft doesn't start?

JACK (as Lem): Does soft not start?

AUSTIN (as Lenny): I'm not sure, this is all new to me, this is—

ALI (as Hella): *[cross]* Lenny, do you know—

JACK (as Lem): Lenny. I'm, I'm interested in why... You got anything, Hella?

ALI: I feel like I wanna know what like, like, what either Lenny's people, or like, maybe the like Rosemerrow government would know about Arrell, just to know if they were tracking him at all, or...

AUSTIN: So, you have that information from the, from a previous meeting with the...

ALI: *[cross]* Right.

AUSTIN: With one of the government agents. I forget which one gave that to you, someone in Roseheart... I think it was Kel. Kel Carolina? Told you that yes, they were tracking Arrell.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: But that there wasn't like, Arrell comes and goes at his will... they haven't gotten much on him, basically.

ALI: Right, okay.

AUSTIN: We can push to another scene and let you, let you two think about more questions if you'd like, and then we can wrap back around and do questions.

JACK: It's hard to start this one kind of cold, at the start of a recording.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fair. Let's go to Fero—

JANINE: *[cross]* You can use moves and stuff too, that's—

AUSTIN: You can use moves.

JACK: *[cross]* Yeah, yeah but like, I mean, I have Charming and Open where I can speak frankly with someone and ask a list of questions, and none of those seem to be... none of those seem to be particularly useful at this point. I mean...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: What Lem wants out of this situation is, is... He hates Lenny?

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Lenny is an opportunistic prick.

JACK: *[cross]* Like, fairly, fairly transparently. And so ideally something that could make things worse for him would be good for me right now.

ALI: Does he, did he speak that on the way here? Is the— are we just gonna, I don't know.

ART: Don't *[beat?]* this guy up!

ALI: I don't think that like, hurting this guy while he's in prison in a mansion is a good idea, but like...

JACK: I'm not saying we should like, kill him?

ALI: No.

JACK: I'm just, there's a, there's definitely a version of this I think where, if we don't, if we don't take some sort of particular action, it's like "Yay, hurray, Lenny is the chancellor. Hurray."

ALI: Right.

JACK: So if I can sort of root out some way to implicate him?

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: I'm trying to, I'm trying to work out what that is.

ALI: *[cross]* I mean—

KEITH: *[cross]* I think, I think that cause, yknow, part of the whole thing is, is that each of the places has their own weird justice system, so maybe the easiest way to do it is just to go to one of the guards and be like *[stage whisper]* "Hey, no matter what we say later, this guy never really did it."

ALI: No, that's not how that works.

JACK: *[cross]* No, he won't, he's Lenny, he's got friends in high places. Like, he— unless we—

KEITH: *[cross]* I don't know, I think the difference is that this isn't his district.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* This is his district.

JACK: *[cross]* Nah, dude. Do we know—

KEITH: *[cross]* Oh, this *is* his district.

ALI: *[cross]* He's in a mansion.

JACK: Do—

AUSTIN: Remember, he told these people to come arrest him so that—

JACK: So he would be safe, yeah.

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah, yeah yeah.

JACK: Do we, *[laughs]* I mean A, a thing we could do here that might work counter is to tell the people to release him? Say, "Oh there's no worries here, this guy's fine, you can let him out."

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* That would be something, yeah.

JACK: Yeah. Option B, do we know his alibi?

AUSTIN: For the what? For the— He was being arrested. For the, for the murder? He was being arrested like, he was at his house moments after the murder took place.

JACK: I'm gonna ask him to describe in as much detail as he can, the events of that night, please?

AUSTIN (as Lenny): Well I was having dinner, with a number of the great people of Westshore-upon Sea—

JACK (as Lem): Who?

AUSTIN (as Lenny): Well, sure—

AUSTIN: He can list these, like this is not a... He does know what he did that night, just to be clear, like...

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN (as Lenny): So, okay, I was—

AUSTIN: Okay, so I need the list now, who's in this town?

AUSTIN (as Lenny): It was me, it was the, the theater guy, whose name Austin can't remember right now but is lookin' for it.

[Jack laughs]

JANINE: Something Showman?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Showman!

ART:*[cross]* Oh, he had— yeah he had the worst name.

JANINE: *[cross]* Alan Showman or something?

JACK: *[cross]* Oh, Showman!

KEITH: *[cross]* Gordon Shumway.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* No, no, Alan Showman, thank you! He's from the Showman family, get his name right! *[laughter]* He happens to also be a showman.

ALI: Is this an episode of the Kroll Show? *[Austin laughs]*

AUSTIN (as Lenny): And a number of the actors and actresses who perform down on the Westshore-upon-Scene Community Theatre. They had done a beautiful rendition of *Rosemerrow*, *Oh My Rosemerrow*, and I'd decided, y'know, afterward they should come over for some drinks, some, some cocktail snacks, and that is where I was when finally I was unfortunately, and unjustly arrested.

JACK (as Lem): So you were just having dinner and then you were arrested?

AUSTIN (as Lenny): They knocked on my door, and they, they shouted, and they said "We know what you did!" and I said, "I didn't do anything! I was here with my friends."

ALI (as Hella): *[cross]* Oh relax, you literally just told us you set that up, it's fine.

AUSTIN (as Lenny): Okay, well that's, I was also having dinner with my friends. I'm telling you what happened, which is that I did this whole thing so that the people there would see it and see what a good victim I was!

JACK (as Lem): To see what a good victim you were?

ALI (as Hella): *[drily]* Mhm, wonderful.

ART: Yeah, what a weird...

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN (as Lenny): People will learn that— listen. I've fought a lot of things in my life, and frankly—

JACK (as Lem): Oh, what? You've *fought* a lot of things in your life?

AUSTIN (as Lenny): *[defensively]* Yes.

JACK (as Lem): I saw what you were like down there, below the museum, you've fought nothing in your life!

AUSTIN (as Lenny): I mean, I mean real things like new tax plans.

JACK (as Lem): Ah yes, new tax plans.

ALI (as Hella): Uh huh. Uh huh! *[sighs]*

AUSTIN (as Lenny): Please. There was a whole thing where you weren't supposed to have swimming pools, and I got that fixed real quick.

JANINE: Just in time for winter, that's good.

AUSTIN (as Lenny): Yeah, it didn't work out, I'm not gonna lie! I didn't know the whole winter thing was comin'.

JACK (as Lem): Mm. You know what happens when my friend here kills people with that sword?

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN (as Lenny): Okay, I feel like we're switching from soft cop to bad cop, but I thought it'd be a different person talking in that switch! I thought she would be bad cop, but you're both!

ALI: Uh huh, yeah, I was just gonna say we would teach him to be a better victim, but.

AUSTIN: *[laughing]* Oh my God!

JACK: Right, now that's bad cop.

KEITH: It's soft cop slash bad cop, bad cop.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. 2017, everybody's a switch.

[laughter]

JACK: Okay.

JACK (as Lem): So you've got one of those alibis, huh?

AUSTIN (as Lenny): It's really what happened. Like, I'm working on different levels here. I have an alibi for killing Lutz, I didn't kill Lutz. I don't have an alibi for... being an effective politician, that's just what I am. The thing is, I'm gonna be out of here in like, three days, and it's gonna be fine, and that Arrell guy will be gone, and everything will be fine.

JACK (as Lem): Okay.

ALI: Okay, so in my head I have two gameplans here, which is either we find a way to keep him in there longer, which would be pinning him, or whatever else. Second is... no, because nobody would come clean about that, which is like, making it, making people aware of the fact that he set this up. Because he confessed it.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Right, but that's information you all have that you could now give to other people.

ALI: Right, yeah.

KEITH: Yeah, you could just tell— you could just tell ‘em that you, they, you guys know that Arrell is gonna be in town for another week and a half.

JACK: You’d prefer to, to pin him in here, rather than let Arrell take a shot at him?

ALI: I mean, that’s just the two options, I would, I would like, let the newspapers know that he… framed himself.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Right, like there are, like—

JACK: We could go to Marisol Sweetwater, yeah!

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You could go to Sweetwater, you could go to the Major Crimes Division, like, there are— his political opponents would do great things with that information, he just told you who he was with at that time, y’know, so there’s—

JACK: I mean, to be honest, what we could—

ALI: Can I ask him who he hired? Like, the people in this jail, obviously, right?

AUSTIN: I think he wouldn’t tell you that, but you would be able to detect that somehow, right?

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or like, probably talking to the other guards, who are all like, totally good people, right. Who, like. Who’s this guy have, who’s this guy have on the tank here. And y’know, they rat out their friend who is a fucking crooked cop. Or not their friend, but somebody who’s in the kind of Westshore-upon-Sea constabulary who, who is tied to the Lenova family. It’s probably one of the names inside the Lenova family, frankly.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: I don’t have Lenny’s full name in front of me, unfortunately. But it’s probably one of those other names, it’s someone who’s been connected to his family for a long time.

JACK: *[cross]* Yeah I— I’d be up for trying to keep him here and then trying to dismantle him slowly elsewhere in the city.

ALI: Yeah, could I— I mean, could I Parley with the guards around here to try to be— to try to get that? Or, that would have to be somewhere else…

AUSTIN: *[cross]* That could just happen, I’m not gonna make that be a roll.

ALI: Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: Like yeah, totally, what do you, what’s the thing, just give me the convincing story as to why they should keep him in here for longer.

ALI: I mean, then he should stay in here while they’re investigating that, cause that’s like, a different crime?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah, sure.

ALI: Like, you wouldn’t want the leader of your city to be mishandling police, the police force right, like?

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You find like, the good halfling cop here who’s like, “No I’m gonna fucking turn Westshore-upon-Sea around! Like, I’m done with this corrupt bullshit, no one has, like, stepped in and stopped Sargent… Carver in a long time.”

ART: Ha!

AUSTIN: Like, Carver runs a fuckin', it's on, it was the one that I grabbed, Art, it was not intentional! And, and y'know someone has to, has to finally stand up to that guy, this is a good opportunity. Like, you convince one of the halflings here to step up and, like, basically face the shitty institutional corruption of the Westshore-upon-Sea police force. And to do that, by keeping Lenova in prison for longer. Like, internal affairs and, like internal affairs is taking over this case now.

ALI: Yeah, that's my second good deed of today!

JACK: What here is evil?

[Austin and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: A few— Lenny Lenova, Hella Varal.

ALI: Aw, out of everyone it's just me and Lenny?

AUSTIN: And probably that corrupt cop.

ALI: Ugh.

AUSTIN: Carver. Detective Carver.

ALI: Oh, and that other Ordennan.

JACK: Yeah, one of the paintings in the mansion.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, Iduna Fel was also, yeah. Lot of evil people this time. Alright.

JACK: Okay, well this feels like progress.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay, you've had your turn. You're like, we've figured it out, we've figured out what to do! *[Ali laughs]* Fero.

KEITH: Hello!

AUSTIN: Where are you going?

KEITH: I'm going to the Long Sands.

AUSTIN: Oh you're going to see the Sage, yeah. The Long Sand. Give me a, give me a roll. Two d6 plus one.

KEITH: Sure.

AUSTIN: Alright that's not too bad,

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: No plus one for that, sadly, because you already, you acted during the star thing, right?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah I did. What's the, what's the bonus that you get if it's a place that you're well suited to go to?

AUSTIN: This is not one of those places.

KEITH: No?

AUSTIN: It's a plus one but no.

KEITH: Okay. Can I—

AUSTIN: That's, that's about people, that's not about oh, I do something well in this location?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: This is about like, I have a connection to this person. You don't have a connection to this person here.

KEITH: *[cross]* Okay.

AUSTIN: This is like, I imagine like the scene in my head is like, Fero looking at a copy of the list of names and places that Gloria Lake wrote in her notes?

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: And it's just like, I forget what she even fucking said here, but it was not... she said she hates this place?

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Yeah, she says "I hate this place, Victoria says there's some sort of wise old sage out here, but I don't believe in that stuff." And it's just like, looking down at that, and then looking up at like, snow-covered sand dunes for miles? Just like, cool! Where do I even fucking start?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Like, it's dark, there's no moons in the sky anymore. Thankfully you can turn into an animal that can help you see, right? That's something, that's a little something.

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you eventually, in like, the middle of a bunch of sand dunes, find a guy who's just like sitting on, in the sand sipping something warm.

KEITH: Okay...

AUSTIN: You can see it's warm because there is, there is like, steam coming off of, out of the cup.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And he has like a little campfire set up, and—

KEITH: Aw, that's cute.

AUSTIN: Yeah, he seems okay. He's covered in like... his clothes look like they're made of carpet or something. They're very thick and like, not very comfortable looking—

KEITH: *[cross]* Right. Probably very warm.

AUSTIN: With ornate patterns, but probably very warm which he would need to be out here.

KEITH (as Fero): Hey, guy!

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Hey! *[Keith laughs]* Who are you?

KEITH (as Fero): I'm Fer- Hi, I'm Fero!

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Hey! Nice to meet you, Fero.

KEITH (as Fero): You too—

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Would you like some tea? Take a seat.

KEITH (as Fero): I would I— Oh, thank you! What kind of tea?

AUSTIN: Do you come down and take a seat?

KEITH: I do.

AUSTIN: So you get like, he's, he's a nice old man. He has like, very very kind eyes, and like—

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah?

AUSTIN: A big smile, and pours you, he like, starts mixing you some tea.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Ah, just a little bit of this, a little bit of that, I just got a bunch of different stuff, it tastes really good!

KEITH (as Fero): Oh, that's great.

KEITH: After I sip on some of the tea...

AUSTIN: It's, it's really bad.

KEITH: It's bad?

AUSTIN: It's *really* bad. But it's not like bad for you? You don't like, you're not poisoned.

KEITH: [*cross*] Right, it just doesn't taste good.

AUSTIN: But it's like... it's bad, okay, it's bad the way when you're like twelve, you're like I don't know how anybody could ever eat blank, and like...

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: But also you're a grown man. And like—

KEITH: Right. Eh, kind of.

AUSTIN: So it's been a while— okay yeah, fair, fair, fair. That's what it's like. It's a very, it's a very mature taste. It's a very like, complex palette. It would require a very complex palette to understand.

KEITH: It's, can I— If this might, this might not be an apt analogy, but there's a, in the Pokemon games you can, you can buy like roots that are—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: That will heal your Pokemon, but it says says specifically, like, your Pokemon will hate this! [*Austin laughs*] Like, it's cheaper, and it works better, but they don't like it.

AUSTIN: And also, I think this is not good, I don't think this is like, he doesn't make a show of this being like, mystical tea.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: He like, picks up his, he has like a long staff, and like taps on part of the snow to reveal that there is like, a little, carpet underneath snow.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Clear it off, take a seat!

KEITH (as Fero): Okay.

KEITH: I sit down.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Thanks for coming all the way out here!

KEITH (as Fero): Hey, yeah, no problem!

KEITH: I figure, I don't wanna, I don't wanna overdo this, but I figure I could probably take out my pipeleaf again. I have—

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Ah, I'm good.

KEITH (as Fero): You're good? Alright.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Got my own!

AUSTIN: And he like, taps his heart.

[*Keith laughs*]

ALI: Aw... he gets high off life.

[*Keith and Janine laugh*]

AUSTIN: It's true.

JACK: I don't know, this is Friends at the Table, like, he could have some sort of thing in his heart!

KEITH: He could, yeah.

AUSTIN: It's true!

JANINE: Weed heart?

KEITH: *[laughs]* Weed heart...

AUSTIN: *[laughing]* He's got a weed heart!

KEITH: Is there anything I notice about this guy besides him being a nice old man? Does he know about the, does he know about the murder?

AUSTIN: I think he says at like some point, and you probably just like, sit in quiet for... a few minutes?

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah...

AUSTIN: And if you try to say anything he goes,

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Shhh! Few more minutes.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay!

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Sip the tea.

KEITH: I think I can, I think I can definitely keep quiet, I don't think I can keep still.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: I do—

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Sit down. Please! Listen. Be like a, what's a thing that sits? You can be different things, right?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah. Hey, check it out!

KEITH: And then I'm sand. I'm the sand, I'm just sand.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): There it is. I'll do, wait, ready, I'm gonna do my sand impression too.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): *[beat]* Ffrah!!

AUSTIN: And he like, opens his hands up, he like goes like, bwah! And like, opens his body up.

KEITH (as Fero): That's a really good impression!

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Eh? I, I've been around a lot of sand.

KEITH (as Fero): I—

AUSTIN (as the Sage): This place used to be... When I grew up it was all woods here.

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah?

AUSTIN (as the Sage): I used to like, make treehouses. I, I got, I got *really* close with nature, I... Sand is pretty good.

KEITH (as Fero): Sand is pretty good. I like rocks.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): So, so what do you need? Everybody gets a question.

KEITH (as Fero): Oh, everybody gets one question from you?

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Some people get three, but you get one.

KEITH (as Fero): Dang. What's the difference between—

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Eh, come back next time.

KEITH (as Fero): What's the difference between the people who get three and get one?

AUSTIN (as the Sage): I don't really have an answer! *[Keith laughs]* There's not really a methodology, I just feel it in the heart.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay.

AUSTIN: And he taps his weed heart again.

[laughter]

KEITH (as Fero): Okay that's fair, I guess I have one third the heart that's fine.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): No, it's not your heart, it's my heart.

KEITH (as Fero): Oh, it's your heart? Okay.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Sometimes I don't have it in me.

KEITH (as Fero): Alright.... Okay, so...

AUSTIN (as the Sage): I have to give you a little warning.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay?

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Normally one of the methods I do use is I look at the stars.

KEITH (as Fero): Oh.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): And uh...

KEITH (as Fero): There's something happening with the stars, and that thing is they are screaming at us.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Oh, have they landed already?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah, yeah. It was bad.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): I saw them falling, I thought maybe they were just moving.

KEITH (as Fero): No they fell, and they were screaming.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): At you?

KEITH (as Fero): At everything.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): You're supposed to ask me questions!

KEITH (as Fero): I, it goes both ways.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Eh. So what is it?

KEITH (as Fero): Umm.... I don't really know your purview, I guess— that's the problem is that I don't— I came here, I was like, oh there's someone out here. And I have a bunch of questions I could ask, but I don't know—

AUSTIN (as the Sage): I'm like a, I'm like a... generalist.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay! You're, you're, okay.

KEITH: I wanna know if he, 'cause you know, this is a, some sort of wise old sage, apparently?

AUSTIN: So says Victoria.

KEITH: Right... Sages and mages rhymes and also are similar sorts of things... in a way. I wonder if I could con— If he could connect Isaac Addleton and the stars. Or uh, or...

AUSTIN: Arrell and the stars?

KEITH: Arrell and the stars.

AUSTIN: What's your specific question? Like I'm gonna answer that thing you just asked, but how does Fero phrase this? Even just the end of that. Like, I don't need him to set up wh Arrell is, and who Addleton and the stars.

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah, yeah. I...

KEITH (as Fero): We're chasing, we're cha— we're trying to find a murderer and there's a *lot* of other stuff going on in this city, but basically there's... Basically I wanna know if, if you can connect either of them to the stars that we were talking about that are screaming at us now?

AUSTIN (as the Sage): They're like cousins.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay...

AUSTIN (as the Sage): They're like... I met Arrell once, and he is... not a good person.

KEITH (as Fero): Huh.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): But he... *really* thinks that this is the way forward.

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): And I'm not saying the stars think so much, but they're working towards stopping the same thing.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay...

AUSTIN (as the Sage): I don't think they like each other.

KEITH (as Fero): No. No... Thanks for the tea though!

AUSTIN (as the Sage): You want some for the road? There's no roads, they got rid of the roads too. Do you want some for... the—

KEITH (as Fero): You know, I love the tea, but I'm going to be turning into a raccoon, so. I can't carry it.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): It's not gonna be very good for the snow! And the sand? What—

KEITH (as Fero): It's just to see.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Why don't you turn into the vole?

KEITH (as Fero): Voles don't have very good vision at all.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): But it's dark already.

KEITH (as Fero): But I don't wanna bump into anything.

AUSTIN (as the Sage): Just dig, Fero.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay. I still can't carry the tea, though, sorry.

AUSTIN: He just sips his, and, y'know. Oh, sorry, Janine in the chat says "voles aren't moles" yeah, sorry. You have to understand, Fero can turn into a giant, digging vole.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* That's an established fact.

JANINE: I know, I know, but I just think its eyesight would probably be fine.

AUSTIN: Oh, you're right.

KEITH: I don't know...

AUSTIN: That part is true.

JACK: I don't know, I don't know, what are, what is the vole eyesight?

AUSTIN: *[cross] [typing]* How is vole eyesight...

JANINE: *[cross]* A vole is just this, like a forest mouse and—

JACK: *[cross]* I just wanna check out animaleyeyesight.com.

KEITH: *[cross]* I just wanna make it clear to everyone, I said vole by accident, and everybody's being a jerk about it.

JACK: Ah. Its eyesight is not good, but it does have acute hearing.

AUSTIN: It does, but the field vole is—

ART: How would its eyesight be affected by being giant and digging?

JACK: Austin, are you looking at Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust?

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, is this where you're from?

JACK: No, I'm not from Nottinghamshire, but uh—

AUSTIN: *[laughing]* Or the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust?

JACK: Or from the Wildlife Trust, what I like is that this website has a, a useful sidebar which will let us know about lots of different animals to find out about now.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* I like, that the— Yeah, it has a list on the side that is just like, Animal Facts. And you would think that that would be categorized into like, sub things?

JACK: *[cross]* Nope!

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: Like mammals, lizards! And it's like, badger, bank vole, barn owl, bat. Black redstart, buzzard, field vole, fox, frog, grey squirrel, like, who picked *these* animals?

JACK: We go straight from kestrel to ladybird, which... *[laughter]* one of those is 500 times bigger than the other one.

AUSTIN: Oh... what's a waxwing?

JACK: I don't know, what is a waxwing? Let's see.

JANINE: It's either a bug or a bird, certainly.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* It's a bird. It's a Bohemian waxwing.

JACK: *[cross]* Oh, it's a bird. It's got a good hat.

AUSTIN: They love berries!

ALI: Ooh.

JANINE: Oh, it's Bohemian! That's trendy.

ALI: *[giggling]* Janine!

AUSTIN: They have masks around their eyes!

JANINE: *[cross]* Domino masks?

KEITH: Wait, so hold on, Jack, or, Austin, so one of you said that voles have acute *hearing* but poor vision.

AUSTIN: Oh boy.

JACK: Ah, Jesus Christ.

KEITH: What I'm seeing here, at unitedwildlife.com, is that the vole sense of touch makes up for their poor hearing *and* vision.

AUSTIN: Nottinghamshire has to get on their shit then, apparently.

KEITH: Well, well we've got two sources and they're conflicting.

ART: *[cross]* Maybe it's Brit— European and American voles.

JANINE: Maybe it's because some voles have better access to, to like universal healthcare than other voles.

AUSTIN: True, true.

JACK: What! "During the winter, waxwings can eat berries that have started to ferment and produce alcohol. If enough fermented berries are eaten, then the birds can get drunk."

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: *[cross]* It's about to be lit in here!

JANINE: That's, that's a nature thing, are you not— there's, there's like a lot of videos of like, especially like monkeys, baboons and stuff in Africa eating fermented fruit and getting wasted.

SYLVIA: *[cross]* Oh my God.

JACK: Oh, sure, but they're fairly similar to humans.

ALI: Yeah...

KEITH: Like, wait, have you guys seen the videos of like, the island monkeys that go and steal tourists' drinks?

SYLVIA: That sounds magical.

[Ali sighs]

JANINE: *[cross]* We can't— we can't be talking about drunk animals on our show, okay!

AUSTIN: *[cross]* We can't, do this, okay. Ending Fero's turn!

SYLVIA: *[cross]* Okay!

KEITH: I'll link it, I'll link it later, it's great.

AUSTIN: Adiare, it is your turn.

JANINE: Hey. It is.

AUSTIN: So.

ALI: Where are you?

AUSTIN: She is at...

JANINE: Card captor three.

ALI: Oh, you're meeting with Blake...

AUSTIN: Yes, you're meeting with Blake. So give me a roll, two d6 plus one.

JANINE: I think it's plus two for me because I haven't used my thing!

AUSTIN: Oh you're right, you do have it.

JANINE: I fought the thing, but you did not make me roll to fight the thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that wasn't a thing, you didn't need to roll to throw a flask at, at the ground.

JANINE: *[laughing]* At the fire.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's alright.

JANINE: So two d6 plus two?

AUSTIN: Yep, you got it.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: There it is, there's an eleven.

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Alright, so. Are you like— Just give me the, neither of these is gonna require a roll, I just wanna know like, what the color of this is, are you sneaking up to meet Blake, or are you like, being brazen to approach, um? They're, Blake is in a, is in a steel cage at the— on a dock, facing the water, right near like, kind of— on a dock that's between the river, the Creek Crescent river, and the ocean. And is like, theoretically guarded, like the dock is guarded, but their specific cage is not. Blake is asleep when you approach, curled up on some straw, and more straw made into a little pillow. And they have a blanket pulled up over them. And they are snoring loudly. *[Janine laughs]* Do you wake them up, do you like? How do you get their attention.

JANINE: Yeah. I like, walk up and sort of, rap a knuckle on a bar. I think, I think Adaire probably like, in her approach, she's got like a badge or a deputy thing, right?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: She probably just like, wouldn't she just use that?

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: Like, why have that and then sneak around when you're just doing law stuff anyways at a law place?

AUSTIN: Mhm, totally. Do you hide that before Blake wakes up?

JANINE: Oh yes.

AUSTIN: Okay, just wanna make sure—

JANINE: *[cross]* Yeah, yeah. For sure.

AUSTIN: Blake's first thing they see is like, oh the super cops are here, good! *[Janine laughs]* And my friend is one of them.

JANINE: *[cross]* She's probably very discreet about that, like even while, while presenting it.

AUSTIN: Cool.

AUSTIN (as Blake): *[mumbles]* What's up? Adaire... Uh... *[sigh]* Nice seeing someone like a friendly face.

AUSTIN: They do like a yawn, and a stretch and like, they actually do stretches, they do like, like aerobics style stretches as they're waking up?

AUSTIN (as Blake): Gimme a second, my warm up, my wake up set. Let me get my wake up set in.

[Ali giggles]

JANINE (as Adaire): Do you need me to like, pull an arm for you or anything?

AUSTIN (as Blake): Yeah, that'd be, here, give me a, can you give me a pull— *[grunts]* Oh, yeah, okay. That's better. Whoo.

JANINE (as Adaire): Pop those shoulders.

AUSTIN (as Blake): Hey, where'd all the stars go?

JANINE (as Adaire): I only really know where one of them went.

AUSTIN (as Blake): I wasn't expecting that answer! *[Janine laughs]* How can I help you, Adaire? You see, I got myself caught in a little bit of a pickle!

JANINE (as Adaire): Yeah, I was wondering a little bit about that pickle, to be honest.

AUSTIN (as Blake): I... Mmm. I know you.

JANINE (as Adaire): You too!

AUSTIN (as Blake): You know, sometimes...

AUSTIN: I like that in this world, "I know you" has become apparently a, a, like a nice thing you say to somebody else. *[Janine laughs]* It's like a compliment. It's like saying you love— it's the opposite of that Mariah Carey moment. I know her, yeah, I do know her!

AUSTIN (as Blake): You know how sometimes you get caught up in something a little bit bigger than you think?

JANINE (as Adaire): Oh yeah.

AUSTIN (as Blake): *[sigh]* And you know sometimes you— you see a play, and you think, I'm gonna make that play, and it's gonna work and then... I can take a couple like, extra weeks off.

JANINE (as Adaire): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Blake): Like, a big chance. So... There was this thing that a bunch of people wanted. I... It's like a... piece of metal, like, just. Iron. It looked kind of like a, I guess kind of like a hilt, like a sword hilt. And... A lot of people, all the sudden wanted to know how much it would cost them if I got it for them. And so, I got it for... them. For all of them.

JANINE (as Adaire): For all of— hm.

AUSTIN (as Blake): But then I was just... y'know, there was a kill fee, there's, I just paid them back a little bit. I almost got caught, it happens, professional, sometimes you have to, you have to end a job and give some bad, y'know, bad blood, but what's a little bad blood when you get to walk away with a lot of money?

JANINE (as Adaire): But you got it for all of them... cancelled it for most of them?

AUSTIN (as Blake): *[cross]* Three of them.

JANINE (as Adaire): Three of them.

AUSTIN (as Blake): Yeah. See, the fourth one was like... Here's the other thing that happened, you know, we have slightly different professions, you and me, Adaire. And.. I don't know how it is with you, but sometimes you learn to prioritize one client over the other because the fallout will be worse.

JANINE (as Adaire): Oh yeah.

AUSTIN (as Blake): There's this weird group... the Cult of the Dark Sun, I should've just never messed with them. But um—

JANINE (as Adaire): Cults can be like that.

AUSTIN (as Blake): Yeah, they have cult right in the title, right? Heh.

JANINE (as Adaire): Yeah... also, like, dark?

AUSTIN (as Blake): I dropped—

JANINE (as Adaire): Dark sun? That's not good.

AUSTIN (as Blake): I mean, what, the sun's been gone, right? People start new cults all the time.

[clang]

JANINE: I think a cult heard us!

AUSTIN: I know, uh oh! *[laughs]* Every time someone talks about cults, a cult gets its wings!
[laughter]

AUSTIN (as Blake): The... So I go into Lutz's place to get this hilt. It's just—

JANINE (as Adaire): Lutz had it?

AUSTIN (as Blake): He had it the way he has all that other shit. It's just like—

JANINE (as Adaire): Oh.

AUSTIN (as Blake): He probably has the, the I... I'm struggling to think of a thing that's worth a lot of money. But something we all know is worth a lot of money.

JANINE (as Adaire): Big cup.

AUSTIN (as Blake): He probably has the big cup in there. *[Keith laughs]* Just on the dresser underneath a bunch of diamonds, and he has no idea!

JANINE (as Adaire): It's full of peppermints!

AUSTIN (as Blake): If it was full of peppermints, I would've noticed, I love peppermints, you know that about me, Adaire. Ever since we went on our peppermint tour of Rosemerrow! *[Janine laughs]* I showed you all the best peppermint spots.

JANINE (as Adaire): I put them on a map, a peppermint map.

AUSTIN (as Blake): *[laughing]* A peppermint map tour, a guided tour.

JANINE (as Adaire): *[cross]* So Lutz had this— *[giggles]* So Lutz had this hilt.

AUSTIN (as Blake): And I went in and I got it. And then there was this weird guy there. And I got the fuck out. There was a lot of noise, and they saw me and I blinded them, and I got the hell out. And then they saw me running through the streets, and then one thing led to another, and I was trying to get to a boat that would get me out of here, and then they caught me on the boat.

JANINE (as Adaire): Right.

AUSTIN (as Blake): Anyway, I... I dropped off that hilt. There's a dead drop near the Westshore-upon-Scene Community Theatre? The cult I guess works in that neighborhood. And I mean, I've been busted, right? Maybe you could pick up the hilt and fence it, and we could split the proceeds! And I'll say oh well, they caught me, so I didn't get anything. And then you could use half of it to pay for my legal fees. *[Janine sighs]* I could— You get two thirds, I get one third.

JANINE (as Adaire): This is— Hm. It pains me to say this—

AUSTIN (as Blake): You get three fifths, I get two fifths.

JANINE (as Adaire): No, it pains me to say it, but at this point it's, it's not really like, you know the Chancellor's dead, right? Or... well.

AUSTIN (as Blake): What?

JANINE: Well, I mean at this stage I guess Adaire thinks he's dead.

AUSTIN: I guess yeah, so would, so would Lutz. Or so would, so would... Blake.

AUSTIN (as Blake): Yeah, I know, they think I did it.

JANINE (as Adaire): I mean...

AUSTIN (as Blake): But I didn't, Adaire! I'm not a killer.

JANINE (as Adaire): I know you're not a killer.

AUSTIN (as Blake): It's not very profitable.

JANINE (as Adaire): It's true.

AUSTIN (as Blake): Are they gonna kill me?

JANINE (as Adaire): I'm gonna do what I can to see that that doesn't happen. I just, I don't know that money is going to be the answer there.

AUSTIN (as Blake): Maybe you can get the hilt and that'll prove that's what I was there for. And then we can return it even, I don't care. I just can't— Adaire, I don't want them to *kill* me.

JANINE (as Adaire): I don't want them to kill you either. Okay. Here's what I'm gonna do. I'm going to... I'll see what I can do about the hilt. I'll see what I can do about figuring out what that cult would want with it, what their role is... Did, did you get a good—

AUSTIN: Yeah, you still have a question.

JANINE: *[cross]* Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I've just given you everything in this document so far.

JANINE: I guess the most important thing is like, did, did they get a good look at the weird guy that was in the, that was in Lutz's place? And like sort of half caught them.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* That's a good— They describe a tall, lean figure, but it was dark in there, so they didn't get a great look.

JANINE: And it was just, they just said like, just a loud sound?

AUSTIN: No, they would explain the scene of the crime lines up with what you've seen.

JANINE: *[cross]* Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: Which is like, blasts of fire. Lutz was scared. Lutz was supposed to be asleep. Really, Lutz wasn't even supposed to be there, Lutz was supposed to be meeting with Mother Glory. And that's when Blake was gonna break in and get the hilt.

JANINE: Hm. *[sighs]* Oh, I know what I want. I want Blake's client list for that job.

AUSTIN: Good call, sure. Alright, so... Blake was working for the— for Elgash Or, the Archivist. For a mysterious cloaked and masked figure from the Cult of the Dark Sun, who paid half up front, which is the only reason that they were willing to work with somebody that they didn't know.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: With... Obelday Adelbury, laybrother of the Church of Samoths, and... with, oh with, with Iduna Fel. Who is also investigating the Cult of the Dark Sun.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I wanna hold Blake's hand before I leave.

AUSTIN: They give you a little squeeze.

JANINE: That's good.

AUSTIN (as Blake): Please don't let me die.

JANINE (as Adaire): I will do everything in my power to not let you die.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Can we real quick, recap the... relationship between Arrell and Elgash? What we know of it?

AUSTIN: I don't know that you know... I think did it come up in Arrell's notes?

JACK: We know that they're linked in some way, yeah, his name is on a list.

AUSTIN: Elgash— well yeah, so you know that his name's on a list. His name is the third name on that list. That list was Lutz, Addleton, Elgash Or, Obelday Adelbury, Sol Cider-Brew, the Sage of the Sands, and Victoria Solomon. In that order. The other, I guess the only thing you know is that Elgash Or left the, left Velas with the Book of Life.

JACK: Yeah, from the, from the tower at Eventide.

AUSTIN: Right, originally from the tower at Eventide. The, the orcs had reclaimed that, and that—

JACK: All those years ago.

AUSTIN: *[laughing]* Yes, of play! But like three months ago of game time, right, like? *[Jack laughs]* Of, of narrative time.

JACK: It's very weird.

AUSTIN: It's very weird. It's very hard to think about that.

JACK: Yeah, we went to space in that time.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh! Okay. New turn. Let's look this list again... where did people wanna go?

KEITH: I'm gonna put out there from, from my turn... I feel like the Sage told Fero very pointedly to dig? I don't know what that means, or if that's a clue, I don't know if that's a clue, Sages are weird like that, Austin's also weird like that.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Weird.

[Sylvia and Dre laugh]

JACK: Yeah. *[cross]* I think I—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* I will say I think you're able to communicate with each other in between this round, like through messengers right, like. One person can't sprint across the entire city, but a messenger service can do that by handing off messages.

ART: So it's just like, it's like a telegram?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: Solved mystery, stop. Fantasma did it, stop.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

[Dre laughs]

ART: Has secret double life, trying to bring about apocalypse, stop.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* What! *[laughs]*

ART: How are you? Over and out.

KEITH: *[cross]* To be fair—

JACK: How about those stars, huh?

KEITH: To be fair, he's just trying to trade an apocalypse for a different sort of apocalypse.

ALI: *[cross]* Oh, fair.

AUSTIN: True. True!

JACK: That's a good point. I think based on the information that we've received, I might go check out the Westshore-upon-Scene theatre gang, based on what we, based on what we've heard about their links to the Dark Sun?

KEITH: Be careful, theatre gangs are *incredibly* dangerous. *[Sylvia and Dre laugh]* I don't know if you've seen the Warriors.

JACK: *[laughs]* It's okay, it's okay. It's okay, I play the violin.

KEITH: Adaire, have you been to Sid yet? Sid Half-Off?

AUSTIN: Oh, sorry right, I said— yeah you all have gone to Sid.

JANINE: *[cross]* Yeah we all talked— that was— yeah, we talked to Sid.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* That's been milked.

KEITH: I haven't talked to Sid, so maybe I'll go to Sid in Roseheart, you can do whatever in Roseheart, and then we can go to Sol, the both of us.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, is that the only thing—

JANINE: *[cross]* I think Hella wanted in on Sol too, didn't she?

AUSTIN: The only thing you haven't done in Roseheart is talked to— gone to talk to Victoria and Gloria.

ALI: Okay.

DRE: Which I mean, could be useful because she's on Arrell's list, Victoria is.

JANINE: Yeah.

KEITH: Well there's a bunch of us going back to Roseheart, I'm sure that one of us will go.

SYLVIA: I'll go to RH5, the criminal custody place.

DRE: I guess I will as well.

JANINE: I also didn't want to go to Roseheart five.

AUSTIN: You don't have to go to Roseheart. You still...

JANINE: No, I wanna go to Roseheart, but I don't, I don't like, I have this thing about this sword now, and the thing, like my— the thing that makes sense to do is to go to the house and be like, hey your sword's missing? Your sword hilt thing?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: What's up with your missing sword hilt, any info there? But...

AUSTIN: I, I think Adaire is adept enough to know that—

JANINE: To realize they just thought it was some valuable garbage?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That, that Lutz and, and his partner were not really attuned, to, yeah, it's worth some money and there's probably a document somewhere that says what it is buried in an archive across town, but like. They're not gonna have some like huge, like ah, the hilt of blah blah blah.

JANINE: *[cross]* Right.

KEITH: *[cross]* Right, when we asked— when we asked him if there was anything missing, he was like, ah all the stuff I know about, I know about.

AUSTIN: Right, right right.

JANINE: I may as well go to the criminal custody then.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Okay.

JANINE: At least to give a bonus on that roll, I don't know that I have anything really...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: We'll see, who knows.

AUSTIN: Fero, what were you doing? You were going back to Sid Half-Off?

KEITH: I'm gonna go to Sid Half-Off, I have not been to Sid Half-Off today.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Or, this game. Could you characterize Sid Half-Off? I know that he was in, he was in—

AUSTIN: He was, he was a businessman who gave you a deal in the first game, in the first holiday special and gave you some information. He's cousins with Sol Cider-Brew, but he seems just like, an entrepreneur. He isn't, he isn't—

KEITH: He's a little scummy though, right?

AUSTIN: Uh, he's like a *little* scummy, but only in the way like, to do business in Rosemerrow means you have to be a little bit scummy. But not like a, he is not, he is not his cousin, he is not a Lenny Lenova, he's a hardworking dude.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: He probably started with— I mean, yeah. We'll talk. He'll tell you his story.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH: Yeah, yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: We'll save that for your turn now. *[quietly]* One two three four five... *[normally]* So I still need... what do I need, I need one more. I need Hadrian, I think.

ALI: Me, I think.

AUSTIN: Oh, and Hella.

ART: *[cross]* Yeah, I'm working on it.

AUSTIN: Yeah wo more. Hadrian and Hella.

ART: Maybe I should just go with everyone else? Maybe I should just jam on up to RH5?

AUSTIN: Nothin' like a good bonus. Also, then you're just there to talk to two very important—

ART: *[cross]* New people, at least?

AUSTIN: Yeah, mhm.

JANINE: Yeah, and we get more questions and more help on that roll.

ALI: Okay yeah, I'll go with Fero to where he's...

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, let's actually start with Lem.

JACK: Okay. So what is this place?

[A chime sounds]

AUSTIN: It is a big—

JACK: Oh, a cult heard us!

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Give me a roll! Two d6 plus one!

JACK: Okay, two d6 plus one. *[typing]* Roll two d6 plus... one. That's a nine!

AUSTIN: That's a nine, oh that's a shame. Yeah. Okay. That's a... I'm trying to, I'm trying to see if I have a case for giving you the ten here because you know about the dead drop already.

JACK: Here's what I'll say.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah, okay.

JACK: If I didn't know about the dead drop, I'd be approaching this place thinking it was a theatre company.

AUSTIN: Correct, yes. And if you did, you're approaching this place thinking, "You know what I need? I need a little theatre." You would be first, you'd hear some theatre happening, there's the sound of piano, and there's some singing, there's a musical about the founding of Rosemerrow playing tonight. It's all about the good 'ol days, and, and sadly how they're all behind us. And now we're moving into a dark, it's probably like a variation on what is normally a very, very positive historical like, musical? That's like, about the good old days, and why it's good that we still have a connection to them, but now it's just like, and now the sun is gone!

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, it's, it's not, maybe the director's just not very positive. You probably speak, y'know as the show comes to a close, with Alan Showman, who is the director, who tells you, y'know, that, that... I guess you get to talking about the killing, which I guess you know isn't a killing, but do you still frame it as a killing?

JACK: Yeah, absolutely.

AUSTIN: Okay. You... he's like,

AUSTIN (as Alan): Oh yeah, it's, it's a terrible thing. Lutz was a good man and I... a good leader and a, a good husband from everything I've heard from Arinia.

AUSTIN: And he unfolds, of course, that he is currently... having a bit of an affair, well not an affair, a fling with Arinia, Lutz's ex-wife.

JACK: Huh.

AUSTIN: He explains of course that it's nothing *too* serious, they've both had their fair share of spills, and so at this point in their life, they are a little more interested in the step of the dance than the dip. And that would be it, if you didn't already know about the dead drop. And when you go to the dead drop—

JACK: What is the dead drop exactly?

AUSTIN: It is... like, a, a fake, it's like a... like a, what do you call, like a false bottom? It's a false, a false bottom of a kind of like, mail delivery, a mailbox, basically. And do you... let's see. Here's what I'll do 'cause you got a nine, which is... You go to where the dead drop is, but you see a figure approach it first. And they reach in, they like look around and you put your back up against the wall, like it's film noir, but you're an orc, which is pretty cool, and then you see them take a small, wrapped object, like wrapped in cloth out of the bottom of this mailbox.

JACK: Huh.

AUSTIN: And then they start walking away. And you follow them. They walk in a strange pattern through the streets that eventually leads you back to the Westshore-upon-scene Theatre and Acting School.

JACK: They left and then went— returned to it?

AUSTIN: Yeah, they did this sort of walk that's like... I don't know how well Lem follows the criminal like, methodologies, but they're definitely trying to lose any follo-- anybody who was

following them. And/Or, you're, maybe that's not true, maybe you're y'know, turns out that you know pattern magic, maybe they were trying to do some shit with the way that they were walking through the streets. Maybe they were writing some sort of language into the road itself, who knows.

JACK: Look, Austin, I mean, even if they weren't, they were.

AUSTIN: They were, that's right.

JACK: That's how the pattern works.

AUSTIN: That's how the pattern magic works! And they go back to the school, and go into the basement... and there is another, there's a false wall, there's like a, kind of follow them into what looks like the attic from the Sapienza map, or not the Sapienza map—

JACK: *[cross]* The Paris map.

AUSTIN: The Paris map of Hitman. Just like, lots of crates and, and old mannequins, and things with tarps over them, and no armed guards, thankfully, it's lots of props for the upstairs, for the theatre. And they walk past all of those and they find an old, an old bookcase and pull on one of the books, and you spot which book it is, and the wall turns, and they walk in past it. For the brief second when the wall turns you can see inside that there is a sort of... There's like the opposite of the thing that I was describing the star as? Right, which was the star was like, incredibly bright but also didn't produce any light of itself? When the wall turns inward, it feels as if you see something inside that is incredibly, that is the absence of light? But that is producing— but that is what is lighting the room. Like, looking into it is like looking into nothing at all. But it is emanating a sort of aura that is keeping the room lit.

JACK: Is this—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* And inside of that— Mhm?

JACK: This is a different visual from when Hitchcock encountered the Void Nun in the University, right?

AUSTIN: Let me finish talking.

JACK: Ah!

AUSTIN: And then, there are about four figures in the room, each of which are wearing robes with hoods. And above, and you're just kind of like peeking in at this point, above this orb of darkness in the center of this altar, that is, itself kind of caught inside of a sigil that's carved into the back wall, which, if Hadrian was there would recognize, or Ephrim, is the sigil of Samothēs. Under that is a statue which has a man with a hammer in one hand and an orb, the sun, in the other, and he's wearing a bit of a mischievous smirk. And then, above all of that, there is a message etched into the wall. In, in an older version of common, but it's just an older version of common, you totally understand it from your readings, and it says "Play in the dark and the heat will warm your bones." What do you do?

[1:00:00]

JACK: Oof. Have we... That wording rings a bell, have I encountered—

AUSTIN: That's a Mari— Not, not in this world you haven't.

JACK: Ah, no, where did I last encounter that wording?

ALI: The Ye—

AUSTIN: The Yellow House had a, had a phrasing which was "Play in the dark to avoid the heat", basically. Play in the dark, and the heat won't ever catch you.

JACK: That's a different saying.

AUSTIN: It is.

JACK: Can I... sneak in through the bookcase without being seen?

AUSTIN: Totally. It's a small, it's a small like, little temple inside, or chapel, it's really a chapel. It'd probably hold around forty, forty-five people. There will be a point at which you will have to take action.

JACK: Yeah. How many people are in here at the moment?

AUSTIN: Four, four people.

JACK: Four people. Do I... can I get an angle on any of them that would reveal their faces?

AUSTIN: Only one that would reveal you to them. Like, imagine you're succeeding on defy danger dexterity checks right not to have not been caught.

JACK: *[cross]* Yeah. Oof. How close could I get to the... If I were to reveal myself to them but learn about them, would I be close enough to the bookcase to make a run for it if need be, or would I be putting into a position where that's untenable?

AUSTIN: You would have to make a decision whether or not to hurt, to hurt these people. Or be, or be like, captured by them, basically.

JACK: Yeah, I'm gonna try and work out who these people are.

AUSTIN: Okay. So... How do you, like what's that look like? So there's four of them, they're spread out inside of pews, facing this dark sun that's hovering under this theatre.

JACK: So I think this is very Sherlock Holmes in the kind of.. Physical sense rather than the, the mental one, where y'know, where in all the Sherlock Holmes adaptations there's lots of like, "I can tell from your collar that you're a different person!" Or whatever.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah, yeah.

JACK: I think this is the other sort of Sherlock Holmes where it's just about like, using sight lines and using cover.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: I think Lem is just trying to be as quiet as...

AUSTIN: So you, you get that first sight line on them and they're all wearing masks.

JACK: Ah, brilliant.

AUSTIN: They are, so, but, but even that, there you can do some Sherlocking, which is that like—

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: These masks look super expensive... they're the sort of thing that someone who is of a noble house of Rosemerrow, or a, an aristocratic house of Rosemerrow, one of the familial dynasties would be able to afford, but probably not someone who lived, even in Westshore-upon-Sea. They look legit, they don't look like props, like they're, they are encrusted with jewels. Even the cloth of their robes feels very fancy to you?

JACK: Are they halflings?

AUSTIN: There is a mix. There are two halflings, and then two taller people who could be elves, or humans, or even a kind of a thinner orc. Or a half, half-orc, or a half-elf, or a half-human or whatever.

JACK: Oof. Okay, so, I mean, like... what do I want here?

AUSTIN: The hilt is on, the hilt, one of them at this point has put the hilt up on an altar to the side of that statue.

JACK: It's unfeasible for me to try and like, get it, right?

AUSTIN: They are— yes. Well, no you could get it, but you would have to hurt somebody.

JACK: Or be captured, which wouldn't count because they'd presumably just take it straight off me again.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Which, you wouldn't get the hilt, yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. This orb pulses as you get, like, even as you get— like with your awareness to it. And it might be hard to conceive of like... it's, it's... it's like someone threw a rock into a lake. But in the middle of the night? To where you can only, you can *just* make out the ripple. Do you know what I mean? Like, you understand that there should be, you *feel* the ripple more than that you see it. You understand that your presence has caused it to ripple. And you have— you basically have command of this scenario outside of, outside of like, you're not gonna talk them into being like, to telling you everything about the, their cult without hurting one of them.

Violence will have to happen if you want to know more about them here. You can learn out— you can learn all about them elsewhere, but like, none of them are just gonna turn around and be like, right, well, the Cult of the Dark Sun is blah blah blah.

JACK: Yeah. No. Is there any way I can approach the orb without being seen or would that reveal me?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* No.

JACK: No, okay.

AUSTIN: That would— this is a, this is a chapel. It is the altar, right? And they're all facing it.

JACK: Right, yeah. This isn't like, the Grand Budapest Hotel.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* No.

JACK: Where they're all monks.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Okay, I'm gonna try and... I'm gonna draw my sword and I'm gonna try and take one of these people hostage.

AUSTIN: Alright. You manage to do that. One of the taller ones or one of the shorter ones?

JACK: I think just in terms of ease, probably one of the shorter ones.

AUSTIN: Okay, do you lift them up?

JACK: No, I think I just put my sword to their throat from behind.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool.

JACK: *[cross]* And I announce my—

AUSTIN: They all turn...

JACK: Yeah, I announce my presence.

AUSTIN: By saying?

JACK: I think by saying that uh,

JACK (as Lem): I'm Lem King from the New Archives.

AUSTIN: Okay good, you gave them your name!

JACK: Look, I'm, I'm not saying I'm a—

KEITH: *[cross]* And your location!

JACK: I'm not saying I'm a good detective.

[Austin laughs]

AUSTIN: Is that, is that?

JACK: *[cross]* There's a version of this—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* I'm Sherlock Holmes of 221 Baker Street, that's where I live.

JACK: There's absolutely, there's absolutely a version of this where I introduce myself as Morbash, but that's not this one.

AUSTIN: Sure, no. God.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Ali in the chat says "I'm sorry I didn't go with you Lem, omg." *[Ali laughs]* No, like... I mean, the, again the thing that I'm gonna do here is just say one of them is going to try to attack you.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, this is their home territory, they are not— the one who has, the one that you have is scared, is shivering, is like... welling up? But like, they're not going to let you desecrate their temple or take something from it. And one of them reaches for a long candlestick. And like, grabs it like a staff. The candle falls. I guess the candle probably wasn't lit, there probably wasn't a candlestick, it was just a staff, it was just like a cool staff. And, and like, begins to circle you.

JACK: It's hard here because I could attack them, but that doesn't give me any information. I need to like, extract information from them.

AUSTIN: Yeah, mhm.

KEITH: Maybe you should've announced yourself louder.

JACK: No that doesn't, I don't think— *[Keith and Jack laugh]* I don't think that works. I'm just gonna check my... I might have some magic for this.

AUSTIN: You *do* have a question you can ask. Right?

JACK: Yeah, I, I absolutely do have a question I can ask. I think I can also... No, I can deafen people and I can make them attack each other and neither of that is useful to me right now.

[Austin laughs]

KEITH: You don't think making these guys attack each other would be useful?

JACK: I mean, not to get information from them.

KEITH: Well, you could ask a question first.

JACK: Adaire in the chat suggests, "Hello, my name is Lem, how do I join this fine institution?"

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Ahhh.

JACK: Which is some Dark Brotherhood shit. *[Austin laughs]* No, I'm going to, I'm going to... Ask them to tell me what their intention with the hilt is, or I guess I'm asking to find out the intention of the hilt with an ultimatum that somebody's gonna get hurt.

AUSTIN: They let you hurt the— They're gonna let you hurt that person.

JACK: Which one?

AUSTIN: The hilt is— The one you're holding hostage.

KEITH: Yeah, it's a cult.

JACK: So I'm just not— So I'm ba— I'm just not getting any information?

AUSTIN: No, they're gonna call your bluff, you have to give me a reason, a way for— give me a narrative reason that would lead to them telling you something. Like, this person might tell you something, the one who's whimpering, but like... they seem pretty steady about... They're sitting in a, in a hidden temple worshipping a weird black orb. And they have their reasons for that thing, they have like, a philosophy behind it, but none of these are— none of these are the priests of this thing, and they're not looking to convert you, they're looking to get you out before you like, they, no, they're not here to like, converse just from you asking them a question.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: I'm not saying like, torture isn't the answer here necessarily, but like roughing them up might be? Like, fighting them, finding something else here to read instead of going to look for them, stuff like that.

JACK: Yeah, yeah. Okay. ... Who was it who said they weren't going to... give me information?

AUSTIN: The one—

JACK: *[cross]* Unless...

AUSTIN: The one with the staff was like—

JACK: *[cross]* Okay.

AUSTIN: We're not going to give you— Get out.

JACK: Okay. I'm gonna try some pattern magic.

AUSTIN: He says "Leave now!" and you immediately recognize that it's Alan Showman. Like, he's not hiding his voice in any way.

JACK: Okay—

AUSTIN: Despite being an actor.

JACK: I'm gonna try some pattern magic on them, if possible.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: And what I'm gonna try and do, by, by whistling, I think? Is I'm gonna try and cause the staff in the man's hand to become very very hot.

AUSTIN: Does it work?

JACK: Yeah. I think it does. I mean, I don't think it's hot, I think he believes that it is.

AUSTIN: Okay. He like, screams and drops it.

JACK: Okay, same question.

AUSTIN: Another one of them moves forward at you and like, throws a punch. What do you do?

JACK: Can I just swing a punch at this guy, please?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally! Do you let go of the smaller person in this?

JACK: *[cross]* I, I kind of—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Or are you just holding them close with one arm?

JACK: Yeah, I think I'm holding them close with one arm. I'm a fairly big guy.

AUSTIN: You're big, you're a big boy.

JACK: Does that do anything?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you punch him. He like, backs off. But like, isn't— one of them goes and closes the door during all of this so you're locked in here with them.

JACK: Okay, alright, fine. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: I mean listen, there's still a way to get out of here just like... fuck 'em up for a little while, get the thing and run? I don't know that that'd get you information.

JACK: *[cross]* Yeah, I think— yeah, no, I'm gonna go for the thing. What I'm gonna do is, I'm gonna make it clear that if they don't give me the hilt right now, one of them is going to kill another one of them.

AUSTIN (as a Cultist): You don't have that power.

JACK (as Lem): I, I super do.

JACK: And I start playing the violin.

AUSTIN: The smallish halfling is, the one that you were holding you let go, and like is kicking at your shins while you do this. But like, it doesn't stop you.

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: It hurts, like take some damage, but like, you're able to like fend them off and you make... who do you make hurt somebody?

JACK: I make the guy who, who dropped the staff pick the staff back up again.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* It's Alan Showman.

JACK: And advance on one of the other people.

AUSTIN: One of the others is like,

AUSTIN (as other Cultist): What are you—

JACK (as Lem): I can stop this at any point as well.

AUSTIN (as other Cultist): *[cross]* Don't do this.

AUSTIN: No one asks you to stop it.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: And he kills this other guy with a big metal stick. The halfling that was like, kicking at you is now like, running for the exit, and is, has like, reached up to pull— Also, it's just like, really cramped down here. All of—

JACK: It's like a tiny chapel, right?

AUSTIN: Rose— Rosemerrow in general is this like weird exercise in contradictory scale? In that it is the biggest place in Hieron built for people who are not taller than four feet?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, and so like, there are skyscrapers, but also the floors of most of those skyscrapers are not that tall. Like they're tall enough for everyone to stand. They're, they are, they've build a world that could be, or a city that could be cosmopolitan. But like, it is— even this place you barely can stand up.

JACK: You're constantly like, ducking under doorways, and—

AUSTIN: Yes, and beams and stuff like that.

JACK: Like, descending stairs, smacking your head on the archways and things.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So that, that halfling and reaches up in tears now, pulls the, pulls down the, the lever, runs through the doorway, takes off the mask and throws it to the ground.

JACK: Do I recognize them?

AUSTIN: No, they do this while they're fleeing.

JACK: Oh, okay. Can I make it to the blade and take the blade?

AUSTIN: The hilt? Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Totally. At this point, yeah it's just the— the other halfling is now kneeling over the dead body and is like, trying to resuscitate, and the other one is still in your sway.

JACK: I think as I go and take the thing... I don't know. No, I can't have, I can't have my penny and my bun here. I'm gonna take the sword and just leave.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I don't know whether or not the spell has a—

AUSTIN: It's heavy.

JACK: How heavy. Can I carry it?

AUSTIN: Yeah, but it's heavier than it should be.

JACK: Hm. Okay.

AUSTIN: It's just, it's, it's... The thing that it reminds you of holding is the mask.

JACK: Which I also have.

AUSTIN: Yeah. But it's of that build, it's of that quality of build. And that like, density. And it, as you lift it, there's almost a magnetic pull into the strange orb that's floating in the, in the center, or at the altar. But you, you keep control of it.

JACK: Yeah. I'm gonna put it in my pack so I leave without like, holding it visibly, I suppose.

AUSTIN: Mhm. As you put it in your pack you can feel it like... pulling on the plant you have in there.

JACK: Huh. I was—

AUSTIN: I can't guarantee the safety of that plant if you put that in there.

JACK: To be honest, I... I don't, I don't know if at this point Lem particularly cares about what's in his, what's in his pack?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Is thinking of it. Okay, well, we will resolve that the next time that we're in a Dungeon World game, probably.

JACK: Okay. And to be clear, like, Lem doesn't really... understand this sort of pattern magic at all? So, leaving this room, Lem has no idea whether or not this thing is persistent or will, the effect will fade based on his presence?

AUSTIN: Right. Right.

JACK: This is the dog that has accidentally fired a gun. *[Austin laughs]* Multiple times.

AUSTIN: Yes. Okay.

KEITH: I met that dog.

JACK: He's an asshole.

AUSTIN: You *met* that dog?

KEITH: I met that dog, yeah.

AUSTIN: Jeez, okay!

KEITH: Never the same.

AUSTIN: So. Let's go to... Roseheart. Adaire, Hadrian, Ephrim, and Throndir. Give me a roll.

SYLVIA: That's plus four?

AUSTIN: Yep.

[click]

SYLVIA: Yeah, I...

AUSTIN: And look at that. Still only just a ten, so it's a good thing everybody went. Alright. The confinement center is... so, compared to the Westshore jail, this one is a lot more utilitarian. Y'know, people get caught stealing stuff in Roseheart all the time, and mostly just like, get like, held overnight and then let go once the goods are returned, like there's actually, the, the legal system here is really bad for really bad things. For things like, killing the, the chancellor? But for like, someone who steals twenty coins from somebody, as long as those twenty coins get back, it's kind of a slap on the wrist. There's this sort of laissez-faire system in Rosemerrow of just like, listen. That money gets spent in Rosemerrow. Like? Everybody has a, a shoplifter in their family, basically. And it's just like, ah, yeah, my fucking cousin. What're you gonna do, like? Fuckin, take the stuff away from them, slap them on the wrist, make them do some community service. But like, that's just gonna be the thing it is. We're not gonna, we're not gonna figure out a way to convince people not to steal stuff. By like making them serve— Also there's no place for like a prison, no one wants to build a real prison here, and the district system makes it such that it's hard to even get the money together to build a real prison? No one's invented for-profit prisons yet in this place, thank *Christ*, otherwise this would be the most depressing city? But it's still pretty utilitarian compared to the Westshore one.

And you're brought in to... I mean at first, like, at first, they tell you you're not allowed to see anybody, period. Like, the severity of the crime is such that, you know, Dr. Gloria and Victoria are both completely off limits to you. And then they kind of like, alright fine, you can see... Gloria Lake because she's just under charges of... what's the fucking, why are all of my words always gone these days?

KEITH: Aiding and abetting?

AUSTIN: Yeah, there's a different word, but abetting is, totally works.

DRE: Accessory?

AUSTIN: Yeah she's an accessory to the crime. You can see Gloria. Victoria is currently being... interrogated, and, and they will not let you see her. So, they take you to Gloria who sent with you to begin with, and she explains that they were sent here to... for a completely different thing, to look into the sect, or the Cult of the Dark Sun, which Lake believes is a perversion of the Creed of Samoths.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): Two fellow Lancers first saw them pop up in the south a few years ago, tied to a case they were working in Kanton, the dwarven settlement? And... then back in Velas, we caught a whiff of them, and that led us here.

AUSTIN: They have been trying to figure out what's up with this sect of the Dark Sun? And they believe that the sect has been trying to infiltrate not only the church, but also some of the higher rungs of, of government, maybe? She says like...

AUSTIN (as Gloria): Especially now, with the, the sun missing and everything, it's kind of a golden opportunity for a group that calls themselves the Cult of the Dark Sun.

AUSTIN: Questions. There's a push thing, but you won't get this until you leave. The ten plus bonus you'll get on the way out. She has a ton of notes on a lot of things, you should ask her good questions.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: She explains that she and, this is another thing that you just get, she and Victoria were maybe, they had maybe broken into a records office in Roseheart. On the night of the assassination. *[Dre laughs]* And believed that they are also being unfairly held because their technology happens to dissolve people into... energy and scorch marks.

SYLVIA: That'll do it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Actually, I actually don't know if it leaves scorch marks. I don't... when we describe Lucius being evaporated, and I don't think he left behind any scorch marks. Now that I think about it.

ALI: Yeah.

DRE: I mean, if you missed.

AUSTIN: Yeah, if you missed, maybe. *[Ali laughs]* But Victoria doesn't miss.

JANINE: I know what I wanna ask her.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: I wanna ask her if, wait, who are we talking to again?

AUSTIN: This is Gloria Lake, one of the two Golden Lancers.

JANINE: Okay, right, right, I was trying to remember if it was Gloria or Victoria.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Can we like, actually like, present her with a thing?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're basically here as her representation.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So yes.

JANINE: I wanna, I wanna like... ask her about the list of names from Arrell's books.

AUSTIN: Good call.

JANINE: And how Victoria's on there in particular, but...

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That worries her a lot.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): So you're telling me that, that Lutz was stolen by this guy, and then Addleton was stolen by this guy? Has anybody checked in on Elgash Or yet?

JANINE (as Adaire): ...No.

ART (as Hadrian): No, no, the transportation system is really inefficient.

JANINE (as Adaire): *[cross]* It's terrible.

[Dre laughs]

AUSTIN (as Gloria): I hate this city, I've said it in my notes three or four times!

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah, we saw.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): This is worrying. I... Don't like that Victoria's name is on here. Why did you right "Dibs —Adaire," next to Sol's name, Adaire? *[Janine giggles]* Also, who are you? I've never met you before.

JANINE (as Adaire): I'm Adaire! I mean, we have ample proof of that at this point.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): Wait, Adaire, I wish I had my stuff, I swear we have a— Hmm. Have you ever— *Hmm*.

AUSTIN: She's giving you a look.

JANINE: If she had a warrant, it probably wouldn't be for this name.

AUSTIN: Okay. *[Dre laughs]* Probably?

JANINE: I mean, look, lots of things happen.

AUSTIN: They're the Golden Lance, you know? If ever there was a group who knows what your fucking deal is. *[Janine laughs]* She might even just straight up like,

AUSTIN (as Gloria): You! Turn sideways!

JANINE: *[laughs]* Adaire probably like, fakes dropping something and like, "Oh, it rolled away, I need to check that!"

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh huh.

KEITH: Four questions.

AUSTIN: Questions.

JANINE: So she's just worried about the list of names? Just, "oh, bad."

AUSTIN: She's, I mean, I kind of, she believes that this is a list of names of people who are going to be stolen in that order by Arrell.

DRE: Mm. And Austin, you said the reason that Victoria is like, in, being interrogated is basically they think she pulled the trigger?

AUSTIN: Yes, yeah. Yes.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Well, at least, so, they told you that she was being interrogated and that's why you couldn't see her. You haven't seen her being interrogated. But also maybe she's being interrogated.

KEITH: *[cross]* Maybe she's already gone. And they're embarrassed.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): She wouldn't leave me behind.

DRE (as Throndir): Might not be her choice.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): She wouldn't. If she's here, it's because she's willing to— to work with them. If she didn't want to be here, if I didn't want to be here, we could get away.

DRE: Um, okay, I've got a question. What does the Cult of the Dark Sun want?

AUSTIN (as Gloria): *[sighs]* That's a big question. You know, any sort of religious group, people go to it for different reasons. There's— and even inside of it, you know the group that happened in Kanton, down in the south, is probably different than what the group here wants, but there's probably some overlap. I... I guess the easiest way to say it, and this makes more sense now than it did a few years ago. They think something really bad is coming. And they kind of just wanna get it over with. They think everything we're doing right now is fundamentally painful. These are people who live really painful lives. I feel

for them. And think maybe we're wasting our time. And that maybe the best answer is to rush forward into whatever comes next, I don't know. Have you heard of the Heat and the Dark? It's like a, it's like a, I don't know. It's more Victoria's thing than mine. I'm... a little more rational than she is, let's say. But...

DRE (as Throndir): Well, hey, you know, at least it's cold out.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): Yeah. A lot of people think that the Erasure was this thing called the Heat and the Dark, and that it reached into Hieron and burnt it up. That's why it's hard to make a map of that place, where it hit. And I don't know if that's true, who knows. But you know how the storm cycles? This thing that's all around us, and every few weeks it gets bad again? Victoria says that the Heat and the Dark work like that too, and that it's gonna come back. I don't know if that's true. I don't know if it ever was a thing, it sounds like a fairytale to me. But um, yeah. I guess facing that, I could kind of see confronting it instead of wasting your time waiting.

DRE (as Throndir): Or putting yourself in a separate place where you could be safe from it.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): Right. Right. I don't think that Arrell is caught up in all this though, for what it's worth. Or not, that part of all of this. The Dark Sun.

DRE (as Throndir): Yeah. Yeah, he seems to have a different kind of goal.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Other questions?

SYLVIA: I think Ephrim pushes past like, everybody else so he's standing in front of everyone before he talks.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Uh huh! Yeah.

SYLVIA (as Ephrim): You said that this cult, this Dark Sun group is a sect or some offshoot of the Creed of Samothres? Do you have anything on anyone who is involved with the church in Rosemerrow? I need names, anything, you said you've been to records.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): So we came here to investigate that. We thought maybe, originally, we thought that this... Exarch Alyosha was maybe connected, but he was gone by the time we got here. He went to Velas. We did the search in the records, and nothing really... I'll put it this way. He interacted with people down in the south that we're pretty sure are involved. But he never really... when he came to that branch, he went the other way. That said, we think that the layminister here, Obelday Adelbury might have some connection. We didn't get a chance to follow it up, but he's on the list. You got my list, right? Of all the people that we think might be involved in various things? But who knows, it's, it's... not exactly clear. Churches like this are— you know, someone like a company, you take someone like Sid Half-Off, I can tell you how many carts he has in Rosemerrow, how many carts he has in Twinbrook, how many carts he has on the road between Twinbrook and Velas, how many, you know, orders he has out with Ordenna right now? It's a lot. And that's very specific, and it can all get traced back up the line, but

you get into religion, and I don't know, it's just... It's all code names and prayers. We found one of their hymnals once. It's like the same stuff from the church. I don't get it.
SYLVIA (as Ephrim): Don't worry, Dr. Lake, it's not your job to get it, it's mine.

AUSTIN: *[under his breath]* Oh my fucking God. I can picture— I can picture Ephrim like, leaning on the side of the wall with one arm out, *[Dre laughs]* and another arm like, bent inwards. Flipping, flipping his hair back.

SYLVIA: Yeah! Oh yeah, and once he's done, he like, goes to the back of the room and basically does that. Like he's—

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: Almost looks like he's sulking?

AUSTIN: Okay, good.

SYLVIA: But he's just thinking really hard.

AUSTIN: This *fucking* guy. Hadrian.

ART: Um... He took my question...

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: First he took your longest titles, and now he took your question!

SYLVIA: Listen, it's what he does.

ART: What does she think of, of the Ordennan efforts in this region?

AUSTIN: Good question.

ART: Thanks!

AUSTIN (as Gloria): *[sighs]* That's a good question.

[laughter]

ART (as Hadrian): Thanks!

AUSTIN (as Gloria): We're so busy with, just trying to solve one case at a time that it's hard to think about the bigger picture, you know? I think they're bad at their jobs. You've been to these places, right? That they talk about, where the plague is?

ART (as Hadrian): Mm. Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): Don't get me wrong, it's bad. And it's... alright, this has to stay between us, okay?

ART (as Hadrian): You got it.

AUSTIN: She like, well, get closer. Everybody.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): So, we've dealt with people who are not alive before, and sometimes they're totally fine! Everybody knows that some of the refugees came from some place... Nacre. It's weird, none of us had ever been there before, and all of a sudden it's on the map and it's a big city, and they have fact— I... some of them are fine. And then you go to a little village somewhere, and you just find like, thirty people, slaughtered, and like, they say it's the plague, and that doesn't— I feel like we're missing something, I feel like we're missing something between... a ghost poured me tea two weeks ago, and he was *fine*. And then... we're near the, the New Archives? And we

found this little village where everyone had been just... like, not with malice? Like not like, like the way— the way a hungry wolf kills people, you know? Or like a confused animal. Not even a hungry one, one that's just like... like if you gave a shark legs and put it in the middle of Rosemerrow. So, I guess in the face of that, I get why Ordenna does the whole slash and burn thing, but I can't help but think that it's— we're very precise people, the Golden Lance. We hold nothing back when it is time to enact justice, but we are confident about everything we do. Ordenna acts like it doesn't have the luxury of confidence.

ART (as Hadrian): I don't, I don't know, have you met Hella? She does not act like...

[Austin and Dre laugh]

AUSTIN (as Gloria): Yeah, well. I've met Hella.

ART (as Hadrian): Yeah. Confidence is like water.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): I don't like their weird metal people. It's weird.

ART (as Hadrian): Oh, tell me about it!

AUSTIN (as Gloria): I hate it. It's bad.

ART (as Hadrian): Oh man, it's the worst! Oh, we should do something about that.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): *[shudders]* How is their whole thing that they don't like magic, and then they have weird metal people!!

ART (as Hadrian): Yeah, and then they have weird metal people!!

AUSTIN (as Gloria): I don't know...

ART (as Hadrian): It's, it's really hypocritical.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): They say it's like a different type of technology or something that we just don't understand, but I know technology really well, and I've never heard of anybody making a metal person.

ALI (as Hella): *[cross]* Well, we did!

ART (as Hadrian): Oh, it's just lies, I can tell you just straight up that's not true.

AUSTIN (as Gloria): Well, what is it?

ART (as Hadrian): Definitely magic, a hundred percent magic. Oh, they're—

JACK: Ah, jeez.

DRE: *Oh*, hey. You know what I do while we're talking about anchors?

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

DRE: I give Dr. Gloria Lake that control plate that I still have.

AUSTIN: Oh word, nice!

DRE (as Throndir): Here, take a look—

JACK: What? Where'd you get this from?

DRE: Um, so—

AUSTIN: Oh, you haven't heard that episode yet!

ALI: Yeah, you'll find out in three weeks.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* You'll find out in a few weeks!

[Janine laughs]

JACK: Oh, okay.

DRE: Yeah. Yeah.

JACK: So Dre has a control plate.

DRE: Wait, I— I killed a guy.

JACK: Wait, like a Marielda control plate?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* No.

DRE: *[cross]* No, it's one of the anchor control plates.

JACK: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: It controls the anchors, yeah. It— It's like copper, and when you hand it to her, you only notice this because you're handing it to her, but like, it loses some of the saturation of color. Like, it's a little less red when she touches it. Cool. I think that's everybody's question?

ART: That was great because you let me not answer her question, good work, Dre.

AUSTIN: Nice.

DRE: I'm here to help.

AUSTIN: Um, on your way out, you're led past the interrogation room. And you don't hear anything at all. In fact, it just kind of feels like... like you all get kind of sluggish and cold as you walk past. Like there's a bit of you, like maybe because you've been up all night, like, trying to solve this weird mystery? You just wanna sit down, and just like, sit here. For... ever. But you push through and get out.

JACK: That's weird.

DRE: *[cross]* That's not good. That's bad.

JACK: Uh...

AUSTIN: Fero and Hella.

JACK: Yeah. *[Ali laughs]* That reminds me of somebody.

AUSTIN: Fero and Hella. Give me your roll.

KEITH: We are going to Sid Half-Off.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You are. Give me a roll. Two d6 plus two. I mean, actually just take a plus ten here, you've been here once before.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: The party has been here once before.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: You're basically getting questions, he doesn't have anything new to give. But feel free to ask him questions.

KEITH: Right. Yeah, I wanna know what the fuck he knows about Cider-man's cider shit with his—

AUSTIN: Cider-man's cider shit. That's not gonna sell well, that's a bad product.

KEITH: *[giggles]* No, that is a bad product.

JACK: *[cross]* The jingle is amazing, though.

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah, you know, we brought it from Nacre, it was supposed to be apples, it weighed all wrong—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Bribe them to put it— to get it through. I wanna know something like that, 'cause I'm starting to think that I don't have time to see Sol later, so I wanna.

AUSTIN: Alright, fine. So here's the thing I just realized, that I don't think you got the ten plus on Sid before, I think you only got the seven to nine. I'm pretty sure that that's true?

KEITH: So what's the bonus, then? The bonus info?

AUSTIN: The bonus *is* that... he's like,

AUSTIN (as Sid): [*exasperated*] Oh my God. You guys, okay. I fired, I fired Sol! I fired Sol. I told him he's not gonna be in charge of the shipping anymore, I try to work inside the family, I try to give the family good business, but you know, he was supposed to help me ship— Not only his apples but my goods, and he traded out his apples and pears and my goods, for like a bunch of books and stuff for some—

KEITH (as Fero): Books and stuff!

AUSTIN (as Sid): For some rich guy, from Wistful Peaks. I will—

KEITH (as Fero): Rich guy!

AUSTIN (as Sid): Yeah. A bunch of stuff, he said it was like a... a personal item delivery service he was trying out, new thing, I don't know, but you know what, here, take a— give me a second. S'all done through me, you gotta make sure if you ever start a business, Fero, you gotta make sure at the end of the day, *you* get the books. Okay? Because they'll rip you off.

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Sid): Somebody'll come in and they'll say like, "Oh, hey, just let me take care of this." Don't let them take care of it!

ALI (as Hella): Uh huh.

KEITH (as Fero): Well that's the rich— the rich guy's gotta be Jean Ondal, right?

AUSTIN (as Sid): I don't know what that means, what's— who's Jean Ondal?

KEITH (as Fero): The Velasian ambassador?

AUSTIN (as Sid): No.

KEITH (as Fero): No?

AUSTIN (as Sid): I don't have that down here anywhere. I've worked with that guy. That guy seems okay.

KEITH (as Fero): Okay. Alright.

AUSTIN (as Sid): So look, it says here—

AUSTIN: And he pulls out this huge book and opens it up.

AUSTIN (as Sid): Alright look. There's uh... okay, dadada, date, dadada, Tesday, whatever the months are in this world, the seventeenth, okay. Right here, it says, this whole thing, you're seeing this with me, right?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah, I'm looking.

AUSTIN: And he points at your eyes, he points at his eyes, he points down at the paper.

AUSTIN (as Sid): Over and over again, he's working with this guy A. Hyphen A, hyphen A, hyphen A. And again and again, and again and again, and again and again, he's, you know, he works with somebody, he sells 'em this, he sells 'em that, apparently this guy really liked his perry, I don't know—

KEITH (as Fero): Well that's gotta be Slayton's ex-wife, then.

AUSTIN: Okay, I—

ALI: *[sighs]* Just calm down.

KEITH (as Fero): The socialite.

AUSTIN (as Sid): Could be. And— she loves books I guess, I don't know, A, A, A. And it's like, a two column— It's like a credit column and a goods traded column, right? Like oh looks, he ordered two bottles of the perry, and then here's the, here's the 300 coins or whatever, it's *very* expensive perry, he's very good at his job. And then it goes down, but this one, this last one, it says just, it says, it's the other way around. Instead of having the goods in the goods column, it just says like, "personal effects" in the payment column, and then in the goods column, it says a transportation fee. I don't, whats?

KEITH (as Fero): What? What?

AUSTIN (as Sid): Yeah, I don't know!

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah.

ALI: Hm. Hmmm.

KEITH: Hmmm!!

JANINE: There you go.

ALI: Uh huh.

KEITH: Okay so. Hold on. Pause.

[Dre laughs]

JACK: You've got this, Fero.

KEITH: We've— so we've got—

ALI: *[laughing]* Hella taps him on the back.

AUSTIN: Three times!

KEITH: We've got Sol, and Arinia Slayton.

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

KEITH: We've got Arinia Slayton and the cult... that's something!

ALI: Colder.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Colder... Right.

AUSTIN: I... Who, who has questions?

ALI: Um, oh man, I have a lot of questions, I don't know which one to ask. Like I'm curious— I'm curious about when he was planning on taking Sol, 'cause that might narrow down how much the — time the other two have, but I don't know if I want that to be my...

AUSTIN: I also don't know if that's the sort of thing he could give you...

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: *He* could give you an answer to.

ALI: Right, right. Um... *[sigh]*

AUSTIN: Um, Hm. Yeah, you know what, I'm just gonna give you— There is like, you look through his paperwork—

ALI: *[cross]* Cause that would maybe be on the chart, yeah.

AUSTIN: Totally, I'm gonna— I can give that to you. Like, it is, it is, right now, I actually should've set this up, this is what turn? Four, right?

JANINE: I think this is turn four.

AUSTIN: Right. Okay. The... the moon, the stars are like— there are still some stars in the sky, there still *are* stars in the sky, but it's like the stars that would appear when you live in a city and look up, not the stars that would appear when you live in the country and look up, and there's just like a billion stars, like? It's spotty up there now. There's a lot of light— there's already lots of light pollution, but a lot of them seem to have literally fallen from the sky. So... but you still know what time it is, basically, right? Basically on— let's say this is the equivalent of midnight, right. He is supposed to go at two am, or three am, like two to three am, basically. The hours are completely fucked now because of the weird 36 hour clock system in this world, but. So actually I guess it would be... I'm not gonna break these turns down into hours, but it's basically three hours from now, two to three hours from now.

ALI: Okay. But that gives— that might mean that Elgash is already gone? Or..

AUSTIN: Yes. That would mean that Elgash Or is already gone. If that's what this— if that's how this adds up.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: And that Obelday Adelbury is about to be gone.

ALI: Right, okay. I'm just confused like what our endgame is at this point, now.

AUSTIN: So at the end of this thing, the districts are going to move forward on—

ALI: No, I mean I— I don't know, are we trying to capture [Arrell], like that's not gonna happen or—

AUSTIN: It might, I don't know.

ALI: Or save people from this list, or like yeah, I don't know, okay. But that answers some stuff.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Did Fero ask a question yet, no.

KEITH: No, um... Yeah, I don't know. 'Cause I guess if I had to plan out my next move, I probably have to go to Mother Glory and someone else is probably gonna have to go to Sol.

ALI: Right.

KEITH: And who's— Who else have we not seen at all, is it just Slayton?

AUSTIN: Of the suspects?

KEITH: Yeah, for suspects?

AUSTIN: Mother Glory.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Slayton. Ariana Slayton. Iduna Fel— Oh, no, you met Iduna Fel. You did meet Iduna Fel.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Reminder that like, Arrell wasn't on this list to begin with. I guess he still isn't, no one added him to this list!

[Ali giggles]

KEITH: Yeah, well.

ART: The list is kind of outdated, if we're being honest.

ALI: Mhm!

AUSTIN: Yeah, a little bit!

KEITH: Yeah, so, what— so, for— has someone seen Obelday?

AUSTIN: No.

DRE: No. I think that's where Ephrim and Hadrian wanted to go next.

KEITH: Okay, but we know, we know where he is.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Okay.

ART: I mean, maybe.

AUSTIN: Well.

KEITH: We know where we think he is.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Alright, uh—

AUSTIN: He resides in that church.

KEITH: Right. Y'know, I guess there's no sense in double checking about Obelday, like hey, does he know where Obelday is, is he gonna be at the church if we go there looking for him?

AUSTIN: Do you wanna ask that question?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Sid): Yeah, he should be. He does a late Mass. It's one of those things where people have been nervous about the sun being gone? Which is fair, so—

KEITH (as Fero): Is that, is that bothering people?

AUSTIN (as Sid): A lot! It's bad for business! We're actually doing okay comparatively, but like, I don't know, I got a lot of cousins, I know you've got a lot of cousins, Fero, you work a farm, what do you do? You're a writer what do you do, there's no sunlight! Oil costs a lot of money. Right now... I mean now that Lutz is gone, I don't fucking know...

Lutz was gonna pass this thing that was gonna be like, emergency fund, put money in people's pockets for a little while, pull from the old coffers, you know turn around some of the jewels and all that into money, so that we could start importing stuff? We had an exploratory group going out all over the place just to find out if, hey, maybe the sun isn't gone somewhere! I don't know if he expected it imported or what, but like, he was doing things. And now, I don't know. It's easy to want to give up, frankly.

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Sid): I worked real hard, Fero. I worked *real* hard. You know, when you were a little kid, you probably don't even remember me, but when you came up to my stand once, and you just stole some ice cream from me. *[Keith cackles]* Yeah, that was the sound you made, actually, you were like six.

ALI (as Hella): *[sighs]* Sounds like him.

AUSTIN (as Sid): And I let it happen, 'cause it's Rosemerrow. Right? This place is fucked up, but we're all family. And that was my only cart. And now I am 52, and I have four carts in Rosemerrow, I have a cart in Twinbrook, I have a cart in Velas. I got a traveling cart, or I had one before the snow, that goes between all of them. You could walk the place, and on the way, stop and get yourself a little treat. Get a toy for your kid. You know. I know what I'm doing here isn't the Ordennan Impetus. But I like to think that I get to make people's lives better. And now there's no sun, so. I don't know. Can't sell that for a dollar.

ALI (as Hella): We need stuff like that more now than ever.

AUSTIN (as Sid): I hope so.

KEITH (as Fero): Can I get some ice cream, though?

[MUSIC: Outside]

AUSTIN (as Sid): Yeah, I've got some ice cream. What, what flavor?

KEITH (as Fero): What do you got?

AUSTIN (as Sid): We're all out of strawberry, we're all out of macadamia nut. We got this new apple stuff? It's bad, I don't know why anyone likes this.

ALI (as Hella): Yeah...

KEITH (as Fero): Oh...

AUSTIN (as Sid): We've got coffee?

ALI (as Hella): Ooh!

KEITH (as Fero): Ooh..

AUSTIN (as Sid): You want some coffee, some coffee ice cream?

KEITH (as Fero): Yeah!

AUSTIN (as Sid): Coffee ice cream coffee float?

ALI (as Hella): I've been feeling a little tired...

[conversation fades]

[MUSIC: Outside fades]