

Episode 43: Return to Vasselheim

<https://youtu.be/zr2n1fLVasU> | [Editing Instructions](#)

MATT: Hello, everyone, and welcome to tonight's episode of Critical Role, where a bunch of us nerdy-ass voice actors roll dice, play Dungeons and Dragons, and Liam once again throws curses at me before we start the stream. It's good, it's good.

LIAM: Love you.

MATT: I love you too. Sam's on his way, he'll be here shortly.

LIAM: Lies.

MATT: Hopefully. Possibly lies. He's a good liar, as we know. But we've got a couple announcements we want to get done before the show. First and foremost, as a reminder, we're all flying out to Portland tomorrow for Wizard World.

(cheering)

MARISHA: Getting on a plane!

TALIESIN: I gotta pack a bag!

MARISHA: Never unpacked it.

MATT: Looking forward to seeing you guys there tomorrow. We have a panel tomorrow and on Sunday-- Saturday. My week, it's been a long week. Saturday panel at 2PM, which will be--

LAURA: On the main gaming stage.

MATT: Yup. Main gaming stage. Also available online at twitch.tv/wizardworld during our panel. It will be hosted there for you guys to watch, who can't be there in person.

LAURA: And in case you forget, you can always follow Critical Role on Twitter, @criticalrole, and the panels will be posted there, I mean, the schedule, so you guys can find us. Or follow any of us at our individual sign.

LIAM: We have a team of hundreds that man the Twitter handle with information.

LAURA: Hundreds of twos, of threes.

TALIESIN: Like Bond villains.

LIAM: It's Marisha and I.

(laughter)

MARISHA: Mainly Liam. Mainly Liam.

MATT: Good use of henchmen, it works out well. So look forward to that. Also, we have going up, it should be on the store tonight--

TRAVIS: Sam's here!

MATT: Sam's here. On the store tonight, Sam's here! He almost fell over. He made his dex save. Everything's through the filter nowadays. It's really bad. I have a serious problem. We have going up on the store tonight, Geek & Sundry, we have prints--our Critical Role poster prints with characters. We also have--

LAURA: A very limited run. It's very, very limited, signed by the cast, so those are--I don't even know how many, but once they're gone, they're gone, so yeah, those will be available for a short amount of time.

LAURA: Buy it right now!

MARISHA: Right now, on geekandsundry.com.

LAURA: Sam, you look different tonight.

SAM: I do?

LIAM: You look handsomer.

SAM: That is impossible.

MARISHA: I do like your shirt.

TALIESIN: It is a very nice shirt.

SAM: Hi guys, welcome to Critical Role, where we nerdy-ass voice actors get to roll dice and play Dungeons & Dragons. Oh, and Liam just threw some curses at me right before we started.

(laughter)

MATT: We already-- we already covered all this.

SAM: Oh, sorry.

MATT: It's okay, it's good. Redundancy is good in this industry. So, in that regard, also, we may be, I think we're supposed to have more "How do you want to do this?" shirts up. Supposed to be up soon?

LAURA: Potentially soon. We're working on it. There's some really cool stuff coming. Really cool stuff.

SAM: We don't know what's coming, do we?

MATT: And also just a reminder to all of our friends over in Europe area, me and Marisha will be guests at Kaizoku Con the first weekend of March, in Cork, Ireland, so we're excited to go and meet a bunch of Critters out there. Kaizoku. A Gaelic mythological creature, the Kaizoku. So, those are my base announcements, do you have anything else you want to mention on the stream?

TALIESIN: We have a thing. We got to announce a thing this week.

MATT: What did we get to announce?

TALIESIN: We got to announce "Black Butler."

MATT: That's right! We have "Black Butler: Book of Circus," they announced the cast, where Taliesin, you play--

TALIESIN: Well, I'm in "Book of Murder," two completely different butlers.

MATT: Right, it's a thing.

TALIESIN: I'm buttlng in "Book of Murder" as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, so that's exciting. It's the weirdest accent I've ever done. It is all over the place.

LIAM: "Oh, hallo"--

(laughter)

TRAVIS: Might do that one.

MATT: In "Book of Circus," I play Joker. I'm excited to jump into that little realm there, so look forward to that.

LIAM: We are in an intimate relationship with Wyrnwood Gaming and if you go to wyrnwoodgaming.com and use the code "critrole," "critrole," you will get free shipping on these beautiful boxes. They hold dice.

LAURA: They hold dice, they are magnetic, so they stay closed, they hold your dice so well-- oh--

LIAM: Enchanted by wizards.

MATT: (laughs) It's a beautiful presentation, guys.

LAURA: Thank you.

MATT: I'm proud of each and every one of you.

LIAM: I went to NYU.

MATT: Hey, see.

MARISHA: I dropped out.

MATT: Anything else? Cool. We're good? All right, let's dive into tonight's episode proper. So, last we left off, the party Vox Machina, having recently suffered their main city of Emon and one of their initial towns where they began their adventures in Westruun under attack from an entity called the Chroma Conclave, a collection of allied chromatic dragons, extremely powerful, ancient across the board, it seems, is wreaking havoc across all of Tal'Dorei. They managed to save a few allies, make a few current, tenuous relationships with the Clasp, and moved all of the refugees that they had been keeping within Greyskull Keep to Whitestone to keep them safe for the time being, as that town had seemingly been passed over by the dragons that are still heading east across the continent. After that, the party made their way to Vasselheim. Vasselheim, the distant city known as the Cradle of Faith, the oldest living beacon of civilization in the world that is currently known. After making their way there, the party made their way into the Guild of the Slayer's Take, where they had previously signed on after a trial and are members of, to seek more allies throughout the city of Vasselheim in hopes of preparing themselves to retake Emon, possibly Tal'Dorei at some point in the near future. That is where we left off. As you guys have spent some time resting within the actual-- some whispering going around here already, and we haven't started.

MARISHA: Do you want to say?

SAM: No.

MARISHA: No thank you, keep going.

MATT: Okay. Two can play at that game. So, as you guys take a little bit of time, getting reacquainted with the Guild Hall of the Slayer's Take, setting your stuff down, you need to prepare for a short period of time staying in the city or longer if need be. You ran briefly into Mertin Cyndrial, the husband of Vanessa, who's the Huntmaster of the entire Guild, and had a brief conversation with Aldor, who was beating Thorbir at cards.

LAURA: What a dick.

LIAM: Love that guy.

MATT: He's a nice fella.

LAURA: Not Thorbir, he's great.

MATT: There you go. Not very good with dice. So, that being the case, what would you guys like to do at this point in time?

LAURA: I don't know, I'm just asking you guys.

MARISHA: So we slept and we woke up?

MATT: You just arrived now, it's mid-dayish at this point. Early morning to mid-day.

LIAM: Yeah, we slept at the Slayer's Take, we talked to Aldor for a minute, right?

MATT: You haven't slept, you've arrived, it's like morning, mid-day now. You've just situated yourselves in the Guild. You've had an evening's rest before you came here. But you have used your 7th-level spell to get here.

MARISHA: Yes. Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MATT: So what is the plan?

LIAM: Is there one?

TALIESIN: I'm, at this point, prepared for some decompression of some kind. No one can be expected to move at the speed we've been moving at for the past week. Perhaps grab an early-morning drink and find out how much news has actually reached this town about what's happening out in the world right now.

LIAM: That's a good idea, Percy.

LAURA: We need to find Lady Kima.

TALIESIN: That's actually an even better idea.

SAM: That's a fantastic idea.

TALIESIN: Perhaps she will go to breakfast.

LAURA: She's at the Temple of Bahamut?

LIAM: Yes.

TALIESIN: That sounds right.

SAM: Percy.

TALIESIN: Yes?

SAM: Can I just remind you, for no other reasons than to be helpful to you in the game and no other reason, that the black powder salesman lives here. Just throwing it out there, you might need some supplies.

TALIESIN: It's interesting, because I sleep at night and these voices from nowhere consistently remind me that there's a black powder merchant in this--

LIAM: What game are you talking about? We don't have time for games, there are dragons that need dealing with.

SAM: You're right. How silly of me.

LIAM: Stick to music, please. We don't need games.

TALIESIN: Kima, I think, is an excellent idea.

SAM: Kima is a great idea.

MATT: Last I heard, Victor was blown apart.

LAURA: We also need--oh.

MATT: You don't know.

LAURA: We also need supplies.

SAM: Oh, yes. Hell yes. I don't have anything.

LAURA: We need lots of potions, health potions.

SAM: Yeah, but they sell those here?

LAURA: They sell health potions here. Yeah.

MATT: You've purchased them in the past.

LAURA: Yeah, they sell them here.

MATT: Remember, that's where Grog had his fantastic bartering skills last time to acquire a few potions.

TRAVIS: Yeah. I'm an investment banker.

LAURA: That's right. Oh, that merchant might be here still. We have so many things to catch up on.

MARISHA: We can also talk to the Slayer's Take as well.

LAURA: We're just waiting for Vanessa and Zahra to get back from their hunt. Am I right?

MATT: Yeah.

SAM: Who? Oh, the wife?

LIAM: Yeah, Merkel's wife.

MARISHA: I didn't meet Zahra.

LAURA: No, you didn't.

TRAVIS: She's got a tail!

LAURA: She's quite wonderful.

SAM: She's very powerful.

LAURA: She's actually related to-- well, Percy, you would know.

SAM: She's related to Percy? I don't see the resemblance.

TALIESIN: No, she's related to Lillith. They actually are, they are related, that is true. Our friend from previously.

LAURA: Yes, our friend. From previously.

TALIESIN: With that, let's find Kima, perhaps. That would be the best course of action.

MATT: So you guys are going to head towards the--

LIAM: Do you think Kima wants to go potion-shopping? Maybe we should go get some shit and then see Kima? I think Kima would be a little impatient.

TALIESIN: That may actually be a good point.

LAURA: All right, all right, all right, all right. Let's go really fast. There's dragons in the world, we don't have time to shop.

TRAVIS: Can you slap down an hourglass for shopping?

LIAM: Sister, dear, how much coin do we have at the moment?

LAURA: Well, not a ton.

LIAM: How many Pop-Tarts do we have?

LAURA: We have a lot of Pop-Tarts, but not very many gold pieces.

LIAM: In the party, if anyone is holding coin, because I don't have much at all. I don't need much, but we do need healing potions.

LAURA: I have enough in the party funds to buy some healing potions, so I think--

TALIESIN: Is that including what we got from my sister?

LAURA: Yes, it is.

TALIESIN: Let's buy some potions.

LIAM: You're in charge, let's go.

MATT: All right, as you guys heads towards the front door of the Slayer's Take Guild Hall, you're but feet from it before the door slams open as the cold winter wind comes pouring in.

TALIESIN: Oh, that's right.

MATT: There, standing in the doorway, you see the outer frame of a strong female form, dark brownish-black leathers, you can see tousled dark hair, piercing pupil-less eyes, and there stands Huntmaster Vanessa, clutching a bag that's seemingly dampened at its base in her right hand as she steps into the main foyer, looking about all of you gathered in the front area. "Well, isn't this a nice surprise in the middle of the morning? Ah."

LAURA: Welcome back.

MATT: "A pleasure to see you all. Ah, hold on. The rest of you, inside, where it's warmer." And as she steps inside, you see two individuals step out of the shadows behind her. One of which is another tiefling female, white hair, red in skin, and another individual, familiar to some of you: human, short brown shoulder-length hair, series of scars across his arm, carrying a shield and spear, as Kashaw and Zahra come in to accompany--

TRAVIS: Get your ass in here!

MARY: Look what the bear brought in. Hello, darling.

SAM: Where do I go?

WILL: I'm going to sneak through.

MARY: Hello. Have you gotten bigger?

TRAVIS: Yeah. I've been lifting lots of horses and mules and stuff.

MARY: Oh, my goodness. Hello, darling.

LAURA: Good to see you.

MARY: It's good to see you, too.

LAURA: How are things?

MARY: I'm all right.

TALIESIN: Once you're in, you're stuck.

WILL: Hello.

TALIESIN: Hello.

SAM: You said your name is Ka-SHAW?

WILL: It's KASH-aw.

LAURA: KASH-aw. Like cash. I like it.

MARISHA: Hi.

WILL: How are you?

MARISHA: What are you doing here?

WILL: This is kind of where I live. What are you doing here?

MARISHA: Just you know, rolling through. Passing by. Not much.

WILL: Okay, who're--?

MARY: Kash, is that--?

WILL: This is her, Z.

LAURA: This is the guy?

MARISHA: Vex, Vex, Vex! Vex, Vex, Vex, Vex, Vex!

LAURA: What?

MARISHA: I push Vex out of the way.

LAURA: (laughs) You called me over to push me.

MARISHA: Yes.

WILL: You're Vex.

LAURA: I am Vex.

WILL: Oh, thank the gods. Yeah, he said you guys looked very similar and thankfully it's not too much, or I felt bad for you.

MARY: Yes, you do look very similar. Does that mean you're--?

LAURA: He's my twin brother.

MARY: It's so lovely to meet you. I whack him with my tail.

LIAM: Oh, jeez!

LAURA: She does that.

LIAM: You are impressive.

WILL: You are a big-- I recognize you. Wait a second. I won 75 gold pieces at the Crucible when I bet on Kern the Hammer.

TRAVIS: You did?! That was money well spent, my friend.

WILL: Thank you for that night, by the way.

TRAVIS: You're very welcome. These are my lackeys, I have a band of--you know, wandering--

MARISHA: Lackeys?

LAURA: He doesn't realize that you bet against him.

LIAM: I would not bring-- good to see you again-- I wouldn't bring that up.

WILL: It was a wonderful fight, did you see it?

TRAVIS: It was, did you see me power-bomb him at the end?

MARY: Hello Percy.

TALIESIN: Lovely to see you again. It's been a complicated month, we'll get into it.

MARY: How are the weapons holding up?

TALIESIN: Quite-- well, hmm. Liquefied, but mostly real and functioning.

TALIESIN: Hello, I don't think we've met. Percy Fredrickstein Von Musel Klossowski de Rolo III. And you are?

WILL: Wh-what? Confused. Can you say that again?

TALIESIN: Just call me Percy.

WILL: Okay, hello. Kashaw Vesh.

SAM: Scanlan Shorthalt.

WILL: How are you?

SAM: It's nice to meet you. I've heard many a tale of your wit and bravery.

TALIESIN: *That* Kashaw, oh! Yes, that one! Yes, of course.

LAURA: We've heard so many things about you, Kash.

WILL: Hopefully all good, thank you.

TRAVIS: (laughs, then coughs)

WILL: Are you choking?

TRAVIS: I'm good.

MARISHA: And you must be Zahra!

MARY: I am. And you are Keyleth, is that right?

MARISHA: That's right, yeah, yeah.

MARY: You are beautiful, aren't you?

MARISHA: (stutters)

MARY: Sorry.

SAM: I told her, I told her.

MARY: Yes.

MATT: At which point, Vanessa groans, staring at this display.

SAM: Oh, sorry.

LAURA: Sorry.

MATT: "I hope this has worked out well for all of you, I however, have a bit of business of ours to finish, okay?"

MARY: Yes, we do.

LIAM: Hey, what's in that bag?

TRAVIS: Yeah, what'd you catch?

MATT: She walks up to the table where Mertin's standing, he reaches out to greet her, with arms extended. She throws it into his arms, he catches it, pulls it open. You see within there is a head of what looks like a humanoid head, but the skin is greyish and featureless. The eyes are whitish and milky. What hair is there, in wisps, is white in color. Who here is trained in arcana?

MARY: I think I am.

SAM: I am.

MATT: You know what this is.

MARY: I already know.

MATT: Roll an Arcana check.

LAURA: Why don't we ask you, then?

SAM: 21.

MATT: 21. This is the head of a Doppelganger. This is a creature that spends a lot of its time infiltrating society, being able to take the form and shape of other individuals to assume their position, to take their wealth, to do all sorts of sometimes interesting or dastardly things.

WILL: Made him a bitch to find.

MARY: Yeah.

SAM: It's a shapeshifter?

MATT: Yep.

SAM: What can you do with the head?

MATT: "Well, turn it in for the money it's worth. Spread the change and forget about it."

TALIESIN: How do you know when you have one?

SAM: It's true.

TRAVIS: And what was it posing as?

TALIESIN: And at that point, don't you just already have one at that point?

MATT: "Well, this is for me to worry about. Not for you to care."

LAURA: Vanessa, I have a question.

MATT: "Yes, please."

LAURA: Do you ever hunt creatures just because they're evil and they're killing people?

MATT: "Generally, somebody will eventually be paying for such a creature to be hunted, so I do not feel the necessity to do it, without--"

LAURA: What if lots of people are dying and you might be at risk as well?

MATT: "Then I think it should be very easy to convince someone to pay for it."

LAURA: Okay.

MARISHA: What if the cost is the end of the world?

MATT: "Well, I imagine that would be quite a terrible thing."

MARISHA: Sure. That's what we're looking at here.

MARY: Really?

LAURA: Okay, so. Vasselheim is unaware of what's going on, but a lot of cities have been destroyed.

WILL: Cities. Multiple, cities? Have been destroyed?

LAURA: Multiple cities. Emon was the first one hit.

WILL: It's *gone*?

LAURA: Well, it's still there technically, just crumbled.

TALIESIN: And flat.

MARISHA: And under rule by an ancient red dragon.

MARY: So much has changed since Lillith was there.

LAURA: So much.

MARY: How did this happen?

LAURA: He escaped. He'd been trapped in the fire plane, and--

TALIESIN: We're not entirely sure what happened, but he escaped the fire plane and somehow created a coalition of chromatic dragons and they are ravaging the countryside.

LAURA: Yes. Which is very strange.

MARY: What color?

WILL: How many?

LAURA: Red, white, green, black, blue was one of them at a time.

MARISHA: They call themselves the Chroma Conclave.

TRAVIS: Eight total.

MARY: The Chroma Concl-- there were eight?

LAURA: There's four of them. There's four of them.

MARISHA: No, you're-- you don't double them by city. It's just one city-- No, never mind. Just one dragon.

TRAVIS: One, three, five, eight.

MATT: Vanessa's crossed her arms and thinks for a second and she goes, "Ah, if what you say is true, this is very unfortunate. And a bit larger than what our simple guild could even hope to really help. This would be something to take to the various temples."

LAURA: Yes, and we plan on it, but we know that the Slayer's Take is full of very strong, very qualified fighters and we were hoping to have you at our side as well.

MATT: "Well. Let me put it this way. If what you say is true, multiple incredibly powerful ancient dragons roaming, destroying-- this is not something you can throw yourself at until eventually one or the other falls. You have to find a weakness, you have to find the way to be on their level. Ask around. See what other allies you can find."

LIAM: Yes

LAURA: A metallic dragon.

TALIESIN: Temple of Bahamut

LIAM: What you say is correct. These are the first moments after us finding out, this is a first step. But being members here and seeing what your people can do [no audio] I know this is just a first step, and we're about to enter Vasselheim proper, but--

MARISHA: It should speak pretty loudly that we came to you first. That's how much we trust you.

LIAM: Can we count on you?

MATT: (sighs) "I am Huntmaster of the Slayer's Take. I deal in contracts, I deal in business, I deal in the hunting of relatively unorganized creatures. This-- this is beyond me. That is not to say I will not be willing to help, but there are many things to consider first. Perhaps you should speak with Osysa."

SAM: What, who?

MATT: "Osysa."

SAM: Osysa?

LIAM: The sphinx.

MATT: "Our patron of Ioun."

LAURA: Okay.

MATT: "She would have a better mind for this than me, this is..."

LAURA: How do we talk to her?

MATT: "The same way you did last time."

LAURA: Yes.

MATT: "Follow me."

MARY: Before we go, I believe we have a little settling-up to do?

WILL: I'm cold and I still haven't been paid.

MATT: "My apologies. Mertin!"

He's over there, he's currently putting the head into a small casing and closing up and he goes, "Aye, not to worry I'll be more than happy to get this for you." And he leaves for a second, comes back, goes through the contract, reads a couple things. Pulls out a large chest and begins divvying up coin and throws a satchel to each of you that contains, for both of you divided for this contract that would come to 2,250 gold pieces.

MARY: Pleasure, as always.

SAM: They have more than we do.

LAURA: No, they don't.

MARY: Thank you very much

MATT: "Of course, that's what I'm here for!"

MARY: It was an interesting challenge, thank you. We had a rather good time with that one.

WILL: Interesting trying to track it down, that's for damn sure.

TRAVIS: What was it hiding as, by the way?

MARY: A plethora of different entities and beings, it was running around town changing at will.

LAURA: Isn't it like that rakshasa you were talking about?

MARISHA: It seems familiar, actually.

WILL: Does sound familiar. That was interesting and bloody!

MARISHA: Yup!

MATT: "Regardless... Shall we? Very well." And she begins walking further to the back of the guild hall, where you come to the same doorway that you previously entered with her before. The chains in the side, that sets up a large slab that leads to a staircase that leads to the subterranean area right beneath the Slayer's Take. You may have noticed it previously, but there is a structure above where the subterranean area is, behind the Slayer's Take. And it's-- it looks like a very simple temple. You haven't really gone into it, but as you step down into this dark area underneath you can see the scones lighting along with you as you step into this dark cavern. As it opens up once again, you can see the remnants of this hidden temple to Ioun, the Goddess of Knowledge. And what's curious about this temple is Ioun is a goddess of knowledge and openness. One of her main astute pushes is the fact that knowledge is to be shared and spread, so it's curious to see that something of hers is hidden. There's probably a purpose to that. Pushing up the steps again, Vanessa puts her hand up and tells you all to stop and calls out again. "Osya! I apologize to bother you, but we have a predicament that I believe requires your attention."

As a moment passes, where once again you hear the low, rumbling growl in the shadows. (growls) You hear slams of giant footfalls across stone as what little bit of light torches begin to spark to life around the top of this platform, this stone platform. And at the very top of this staircase that leads to the top of where this platform ends, you can see standing above it a very large female sphinx with a lion body, a female head adorned with golden jewels around the neck, eyes that are light sky blue and white in color. Proud as these giant griffin-like wings stretch out and the entity comes to rest at the top, paws folded over the edge. "Yes, I recall. So what do you need of me?"

LAURA: Well.

TRAVIS: Yeah, go for it, Vex.

LAURA: Your help, potentially. The world is under attack.

MATT: The head sinks for a moment. "I have been watching by the heartstone, naught but this past day I have been keeping tabs in hopes that such a cataclysm would not find its way to my mate. It has not. So. Being aware of this, what do you ask?"

LAURA: Is there anything that you know of that could help us defeat these ancient beings?

MATT: She thinks for a second, steps up and closes her eyes. As her muscles tense, her eyes open again, that color flashing with this luminescent blue color. And her voice falls even deeper into her register, and almost has this monotone informative projection that says: "The Vestiges of Divergence, relics wielded when the gods walked and fought alongside their creations." The light fades from the eyes, for a second she catches herself and steps back.

MARY: May I ask, what are the Vestiges of Divergence?

MATT: She shakes her head. "I am a channel for this knowledge, but the best I can understand, they are old relics of the War of the Divergence. Leading into the penance, the Second Spark. These were armaments. Objects of great power that were used in these wars against the gods, good and dark. Many have been buried, entombed, lost, forgotten. The few that are recovered are passed on through blood lines, through symbols of power and of seats of great political importance. But the actual information is lost to me."

LAURA: Do you know of any one in particular?

MATT: She concentrates for a second. "Not within my field of vision. Objects of this powerful enchantment are also prone to want to keep themselves hidden."

LAURA: That's convenient.

MARISHA: Osysa. If you are aware of this knowledge, then you know that Vasselheim is one of the only remaining cities still left standing. Are there any other services you can offer to help us fight this?

MATT: "The danger that you run here is that Vasselheim has stood the test of time and survived two possible ends of civilization as we know it. But it has survived both of these events because those who guard it, stayed to guard it.

"You may be hard-pressed to convince others to step beyond the walls knowing that such a danger could use that to their advantage and destroy the greatest city that we know of. You are welcome to ask, but it will be a difficult journey. What I can offer, though: My mate is a keeper of much hidden knowledge, over on his side of Tal'Dorei. I may be able to send you to him to seek this information."

LAURA: Much hidden knowledge?

SAM: About these Vestiges, perhaps?

LAURA: Does he serve your same god? Or another?

MATT: "I am one of the chosen of Ioun. He does not serve her directly."

LIAM: Information is welcome and we are thankful. And we have been impressed by your wisdom, very much so. The people you employ are chosen very carefully and very well and we all have been impressed. In addition to information, you provide a service with the Slayer's Take to Vasselheim. Do you have any interest in spreading that influence to Emon, if we can save it?

MATT: Her large paws cross once again, and she looks at you with a stern expression. "There is great danger and darkness in this world, and there are many fools who stand up in hopes that they could keep it at bay. If we were to lend our power to you, I would ask that you prove yourselves the ones that could carry this torch."

LIAM: How so?

MATT: "Perhaps find these relics. Gather other allies. Prove to me that I would not be sending my people to their doom. Then return. Perhaps then, when you think you are ready, we could lend our guild to your service."

LAURA: All right.

MARISHA: And where does your partner reside?

MATT: She closes her eyes and concentrates for a moment. "South of the Frostweald, the mountain range that guards it." Her eyes open again. "Understand that it is our nature to present challenges. Part of his journey to seek him is to find him yourself. That is the first step."

MARISHA: Does he have a name?

MATT: "It is his name to give."

LAURA: One small question, Osysa, I'm sorry.

LIAM: No, no.

LAURA: You serve the goddess of knowledge, of openness.

MATT: And she steps back and you see the crystal sphere, the heartstone that she once helped you look through before to look back at the world, glows beneath framing light under her form. "Yes."

LAURA: Does that mean you would know anything of the god of secrets: Vecna?

MATT: As you say that name, she snarls. (roars) "It would do you right to not mention that name in this place."

LAURA: I apologize.

MATT: "Yes, I know of him."

TALIESIN: His touch has been felt in the north.

LAURA: Very close to here, actually. Would you know of a way to rid ourselves of his weapon, of his tool?

MATT: "If I did, we would have done so long ago. This creature is one of the few entities that shrouds my vision. The limits of our sight, of the things we seek to discover and unveil, are constantly balked by the veil of darkness he throws over the world. He may have been held at bay beneath or destroyed hundreds of years ago, but no, he stays. And he squeezes a stranglehold on everything we seek to accomplish."

LIAM: Well then, allow us to do you a service. We have had dealings with his underlings. We have knowledge, which we freely give. Freely. If it does anything to help our case, winning your aid. And we will seek your partner and we will find your partner. We're not trying to score points, we are trying to do right. Percival?

MATT: "What do you know?"

TALIESIN: Dark creatures attempted to, as best that we can surmise, open a gate beneath the castle of Whitestone.

MATT: "Whitestone." She steps back for a second, her eyes flare up with energy again. You can see the hearthstone embedded in the floor of the stone glow even brighter and brighter as she puts her paws in the side and peers into it. She begins to mutter beneath her breath. "I can see the snowy north of Tal'Dorei, the castle, beneath one of our corrupted temples, forgotten long ago."

TALIESIN: Your temples?

MATT: "The ziggurats were not of his construction. But he took them." Her eyes wince for a moment. Her head turns for a minute. Her vision and face staring in the distance. "I look out to follow the anger, the swath of death and hatred. Those who took Emon, they draw my gaze. Something is happening."

LAURA: Right now?

TALIESIN: What do you see?

MATT: "The path to Westruun, eastward."

LAURA: What's east of Westruun? Who has the map?

MATT: "Parts smoldering and left behind, the path continues over the Lucidian Ocean, eastward beyond the shores of Wildemount." Her head looks up, still staring off into the distance. "Into the Drimaulth Ravine.

"I see the floating islands of Draconia falling. Crumbling. Gone."

"An army sundered. People ruined. The Conclave sated, returns towards your land once more." You can see blood pouring out of one of her nostrils now. The light dulls in her eyes and the hearthstone fades for a moment. She gathers herself. "I peered too far beyond the veil that contains me, I'm sorry. My (pained grunt)--" She plops down and is breathing a little heavy.

WILL: Can I heal you?

MATT: She takes a few steps down towards you. "Brother Kashaw. It would be appreciated."

WILL: Puts his hand around the medallion. Closes his eyes. Puts his hand out, touches her.

MATT: "Thank you." She steps up and bows her head to you. She steps to the top of the temple once again. "I've seen this darkness you speak of under Whitestone, and I shall speak out to our brethren of Ioun in hopes of discovering the nature of this shadow. I'm sorry, I must rest."

TALIESIN: Of course.

LIAM: We thank you for your time. We are your willing allies.

MATT: "Return when you have proven yourself."

MARY: We shall.

MATT: "When you think this Conclave could possibly be felled beneath your weapons and might and will." She whips around the wings (whoosh) as the torches atop the temple flare out and you can see the edge of Osysa's form as she dives into the shadow to the back of the temple. You can hear the impact of giant footfalls against sand and then silence.

LIAM: Zahra.

MARY: Yes?

LIAM: You said, "We shall." Have we convinced you?

MARY: Knowing that there are four dragons, at least--

LAURA: At least.

MARY: Four to eight dragons, according to Grog, out there. And after our dealings with Rimefang, I cannot let this go. You know I cannot, Kash.

WILL: Z, this is fucking happy fun bunch over here. They bring death with them everywhere they go. This isn't our fight.

MARY: Not all of them.

SAM: I don't kill very much at all.

WILL: Good to know.

TALIESIN: Didn't you kill the king of--?

WILL: Except for kings, all right.

MARISHA: We just had a third-party perspective.

SAM: Yeah, I mean, she gave us a lot to "sphinx" about.

(groaning)

TRAVIS: Wow.

SAM: No? No?

MARY: It's nice to know Burt Reynolds is still around.

MATT: There's a very slow clap echoing into the temple, as Vanessa goes--

(laughter)

MATT: "And to think, I might have briefly missed you."

(laughter)

LAURA: We should leave the temple.

SAM: Wait, did Osysa just tell us she could possibly send us to her partner?

LAURA: She told us where he is, and we have to find him.

SAM: Oh, *we* have to make our way.

WILL: You have to find the no-name guy who's going to help you find the stuff that's hidden that nobody knows where it is.

LAURA: I thought we were finding the stuff that's hidden while we're finding him.

MARY: We will find her mate, he who is not named.

WILL: Well, as long as it's not convoluted.

MARISHA: He is south of the Frostweald, in the mountains.

LAURA: I hate to say this--

LIAM: Yeth?

MARY: Speak freely.

LAURA: So, these Vestiges are ancient, right? Spread across the land. Wasn't Tiberius looking for a bunch of objects of magic that his people had sent him to find? Perhaps that's the reason Draconia was hit. Maybe they were trying to hide these items.

TALIESIN: It's possible.

SAM: That's a big "what if?"

LIAM: Would the Mending Wheel, though, help us against Thordak?

MARISHA: I feel like we'll know if it's an ancient Vestige of Divergence.

TALIESIN: This is good. This is a path for us to walk.

MARY: So, Draconia is gone. Is that my understanding?

TALIESIN: Well, most likely, yes.

MARY: What else is left?

LAURA: Vasselheim. Whitestone.

MARISHA: Zahra, Kash?

LAURA: Potentially Syngorn, even though it's hidden.

MARY: Well, we can either stay here or we can--

LIAM: They're opting out of the conversation.

MARISHA: Have either of you been near Pyrah, in the mountains east of here? Have any of you been where the Fire Ashari reside?

MARY: I have not.

WILL: No.

TALIESIN: Going to have to make our way there, eventually.

SAM: A lot to do.

LAURA: It's a lot to do.

SAM: Maybe we should split up into eight groups.

TALIESIN: Actually, eleven groups.

MARY: That would be twelve.

LAURA: How many is that, Grog?

TRAVIS: Four.

(laughter)

MARISHA: Do we know how far away the Frostweald is from here?

MATT: The Frostweald is back in--

LAURA: By Westruun.

MATT: South of Westruun.

MARISHA: Like where we started, right? In Stillben.

MATT: That is where you got the heart of the nymph.

MARISHA: That's not far from the Air Ashari, correct?

LIAM: Do you think she's still there, Grog?

TRAVIS: Oh yeah, trust me. When you have Grog-- you never leave?

LIAM: Yeah, that's the expression, I'm pretty sure that's the expression.

LAURA: We need to find Kima, we need to go to the Temple of Bahamut.

SAM: Yes, you're right, yes.

LAURA: Talk to people that are capable of helping us.

LIAM: We need Kima. Potions first. I don't want to bore Kima, then Kima. Yes?

LAURA: Hey, does the Slayer's Take have potions we can just have? Don't they have like a supply room?

LIAM: It would be welcome.

MATT: "We have things we can provide, as you are members."

LAURA: Oh good, yes.

MATT: "You are not extremely active members as of late, but..."

LAURA: But we will be. Think about the giant amount of claws and teeth and eyes and leather wings and scales.

LIAM: We're about to get really fucking active.

LAURA: We're going to be so fucking rich.

MARY: Think of the armor I can forge you from a red dragon. Make a persuasion check.

LIAM: Can I give advantage if I go like this the whole time?

MATT: No. That's closer to disadvantage.

(laughter)

LAURA: Oh, how about 12?

MATT: "Yes, I'll provide you with what you need. Come with me."

MARISHA: Aw, she likes us.

LAURA: No, I could have gotten something really badass if I had rolled better.

MATT: So, you guys step up and you lead back to the Slayer's Take guildhall. She snaps at Mertin, whispers something in his ear, and he comes and offers a small chest to you guys that contains two potions of healing and one potion of greater healing.

LAURA: Oh good, two potions! Vanessa--

LIAM: It's welcome, it's very welcome. Which way is the potion shop from here?

MATT: "Go to the Quadroads."

SAM: Quadroads, of course.

LIAM: Yeah, we haven't been here--

LAURA: In quite a while--

TALIESIN: As you know.

MATT: "I'm afraid your symbols have been getting dusty."

LAURA: Grog.

TRAVIS: Hm?

LAURA: You don't have any potions left?

TRAVIS: No, I've got like, three potions.

LAURA: Who doesn't have any potions?

SAM: None.

LIAM: None.

MARISHA: Yeah, I have a couple.

LIAM: Hey, I'm squishy as hell, can I have one?

LAURA: You get the greater one. You get one, and you get one.

TALIESIN: All right.

MARY: May I speak with Vanessa very quickly?

MATT: "Zahra, what can I do for you?"

MARY: Kash, come with.

WILL: Kash walks over there with her.

MARY: Vanessa, we've done many jobs together. And I think we've been very loyal to you. We've brought in a lot of money for you. My only request is, is there anything extra? Are there any spare potions, any amulets of protection, anything? You know this is going to come to us.

MATT: "And there is a lot of great money that you've made that could pay for these things."

LIAM: (whispers) But her voice is so deep!

MATT: "I've given you already more than I needed to. You can afford it. If you were broke and asking me, maybe I'd be happy to ask, but I just paid you quite a sum of money."

MARY: I know you did.

MATT: "I feel like I'm being taken advantage of."

WILL: That's not what we mean, you know that, come on. Just give us free stuff.

(laughter)

MARY: I meant no offense whatsoever. I mean you no offense.

MATT: "And none is taken. However, I would say, there is business to be had deeper in the city. You wish potions, there are those that purchase them. I've already given you what I have and what you've earned."

MARY: And we thank you for that.

MATT: "Very well."

LAURA: Thank you, Vanessa.

LIAM: Vanessa, hey. I'm not asking anything. We're going to get you into Emon. That's a promise.

MATT: "I look forward to you coming back and proving me wrong."

LIAM: We're going to double your fucking business.

LAURA: Mm, we're going to bring you so many scales. You just wait.

MATT: (deadpan) "I've never heard this before."

(laughter)

MATT: "I've never been disappointed by it, either. In all sincerity..."

SAM: ... leave.

(laughter)

MATT: "The gnome speaks because I do not have to. But good luck, and don't stray too far. Stay safe, please? I put a lot of faith in you."

SAM: All right, to the potion shop. To the Quadroads.

LAURA: Wait, oh, wait! One thing. I know where we're going.

LIAM: Mirrors.

MARY: (laughs) No! (clears her throat)

SAM: I attempt to read lips.

LAURA: Is Lyra around? Anywhere?

MATT: As you say that, you hear a voice back there go, "What, is she?!" You see Aldor in the back table, he's already up with his bag, ready to run.

(laughter)

MATT: "Aldor, sit down, it's okay. Ah, not at the moment, she's currently helping her uncle."

LAURA: At the place where he is.

LIAM: In town?

SAM: The place where we got a lot of stuff.

MARY: We got the horses last time.

MATT: "He's the ambassador."

LAURA: Cool. Thank you.

WILL: As they're leaving, can Kash pull Zahra aside really quickly? Are you going with them? Seriously?

MARY: What do you want to do, do you want to stay here while the world burns?

WILL: Yes.

MARY: Why?

WILL: Because we're here. It's warm, we make money.

MARY: Not if nothing's left to protect. Not if there are no monsters left. If these things get out, if they spread their fire across the globe, what's left for us?

WILL: If, if, if. If any of the monsters we miss went out and spread-- the world's always ending, baby!

MARY: They just took out Draconia, darling. All of it. Gone.

WILL: I'll follow you. Anywhere. You know that.

MARY: I know. And I'll follow you.

WILL: Tell me what you want to do and I'm there.

MARY: For a while.

WILL: Let's go.

MARY: If we don't like it, we'll leave. If we find something better.

WILL: We'll leave. Okay. Leave half the gold here. They don't need to know everything that we have.

MARY: Fuck that.

WILL: All right.

MARY: We might need it.

WILL: Then hide half the gold. I don't trust the twins as far as I can throw them.

LAURA: I can read your fucking lips.

WILL: Apparently she reads lips.

(laughter)

MARY: Oh yes, I'd forgotten that. All right. She knows how much we have. We're going for a while.

WILL: Was I wrong, by the way? Did you see how hot Keyleth is?

MARY: She's fucking hot.

WILL: That's what I'm saying. Let's go, we should go.

LIAM: We're so nice!

LAURA: We're *so* nice!

LIAM: What the fuck is that about?!

MATT: All right, so you guys head out of the Slayer's Take guildhall into Vasselheim, which is now a little more bustling than it was when you arrived. It's about midday. The sun is still not visible. There's enough cloud cover where you can see where it would be in the sky, but it's still pretty grey. No rain, and there is still relatively recent snow that covers most of the city streets, some of which has been pushed to the sides to make walkways easier. It's been snowing here in the winter rather often, as you two are both very aware. You have multiple things you want: the potion shop, there's the Platinum Sanctuary, I think last time you mentioned the Trial Forge.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

MATT: What do you guys want to do?

LAURA: Potions first.

MATT: All right. So you make your way to the Quadroads.

LAURA: Can I pull him aside as we're walking there?

MATT: Yeah.

LAURA: And ask, so, I thought you were interested in Keyleth. Am I wrong? I mean, you're interested in Keyleth. Right? I mean, I know you don't want to tell me. I know you don't tell me anything like this, but-- is it weird that he's here?

LIAM: No, he's fine. And I am.

LAURA: Okay. Should I take him out?

LIAM: No!

LAURA: Because I can.

LIAM: No, he's--

LAURA: Destroy him.

LIAM: He's useful. And I don't hold anything against him, and she's-- why wouldn't he want her? Of course he does.

LAURA: Yes, yes, yes, Keyleth is *so*! *Fucking!* *Beautiful!* I get it.

LIAM: Well, so are you, but what the fuck am I going to do with that? Jeez, you're fucking weird. And I walk off.

(laughter)

TALIESIN: Now we're getting somewhere.

MATT: Coming back to the center of the Quadroads, you guys have been here before. This is where the center of the city's trade happens. Imagine the central Abdar's Promenade of Emon,

as it once was, but condensed. And it is just hovels and tents and all these open shops that are crammed in this heavy space. It looks like the-- what's it, from "Hellboy II"--

LIAM: Underground mall. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

LAURA: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MATT: Wall to wall buildings, but people, not weird creatures. People shouting, people are-- get some proper audio for this, one second.

LAURA: Fresh fish!

MARY: Fresh fish!

MATT: Exactly. So as you guys are walking around, you eventually find your way up to the same area where you found the potions from before. You can see him there, he's wearing an open red vest that falls to the ground behind him, arms are revealed, he has these thick bracers on that are really finely scrolled with brass. He's got a fine Van Dyke beard going on now. He's currently speaking with someone off to the side. "Yes, of course, I'm more than happy to, yes. You! I remember you. Oh, it's been quite some time--"

LAURA: You!

MATT: "Step on over here, yes, I would love having more--"

LAURA: I push Grog out of the way.

TRAVIS: What, hey! What?

LAURA: *You*.

MATT: "Yes, can I help you?"

LAURA: You sneaky mother-- Is he the one?

TRAVIS: What?

LAURA: Is he the one haggled with you? The one you traded all of our--?

TRAVIS: I got a really great deal!

MATT: "He got a fantastic deal the last time. He's a grade A customer. I'm sorry, is there a problem?"

TRAVIS: Nope, no problem at all, you'll be doing business with me.

(laughter)

TRAVIS: Sit back, love, and watch a pro work.

MARY: Have we all walked into the store?

LAURA: He's a cart-- he's a stupid cart salesman.

TALIESIN: We're all going to learn something very valuable right now.

TRAVIS: I don't know if you've noticed, but these twats below me need healing potions. Mm, whatever. Do you have anything like that on you?

MATT: "Hoo, hoo, hoo, do I? Do not worry, sir. Hold on just a moment." He disappears into the small tent opening behind him.

LAURA: Keyleth, Hold Person or something to shut him up!

LIAM: Yeah, I mean, it's funny, but we don't have that much gold.

LAURA: I don't have any.

TRAVIS: (calls out) I've got 6,500 gold to spend and I mean to spend quite a bit of it.

MATT: "Music to my ears!" You hear from inside the tent, as he comes out with this long, very well-carved wooden-- looks like a test tube set, almost. There are all various potions of different sizes and colors. He sets it down. "So, potions of healing, you say." He pulls out a few of them. "This here I have, two superior healing potions..."

SAM: Ooh, nice.

MATT: "Three greater healing potions and ten regular potions of healing, at your disposal, should you require them. Mm, yes."

LIAM: Grog, what about this? You are **really** strong and really good at killing things and my left-- left? Yeah. Nut still has a dent in it. You are really fucking strong.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

LIAM: You are the best there is at what you do.

MATT: "And by far a handsome and intelligent salesman."

LIAM: Please shut up.

LIAM: My sister is very good at-- do you know what math is?

TRAVIS: Mathis?

(laughter)

LIAM: Vex'ahlia is very good at--

LAURA: I don't even want to deal with this now!

LIAM: She is an excellent shopper. I'm telling you, you know how you take things' skulls and turn them into like raspberry jam?

TRAVIS: Yeah, like a paste.

LIAM: Yeah, that's what she does with money. And I'm saying, we've had our differences, and I know you're stronger than me and I'm saying as strong as you are, that's as good as she is with shiny.

MATT: "And yet she was so abrasive when she arrived."

LIAM: I say, Shut up!

MATT: "Fine, hmph!"

LAURA: Darling. You're lucky I don't--Trinket? Have you seen my pet bear?

MATT: Trinket stumbles inside.

LAURA: Quite adorable. He loves potion salesmen.

TRAVIS: You know, I'm not sure if you're aware of this, but I'm actually the current reigning champion of the Crucible. And with that title comes many things, like people that manage your shinies. I would like to introduce you to my shiny manager, Vex.

MATT: "This one, really?"

WILL: Why was he holding your nut?

LAURA: (laughs) No pressure now--

LIAM: It was a little bit of pressure.

TRAVIS: I didn't really hold it, it was like a flick.

MARY: A flick?

LAURA: Look, I'm willing to trade you some very powerful magical items for some schmeasley little potions that heal people.

MATT: "How many do you like? What do you want?"

LAURA: I want them all. How much?

MATT: "All of them?"

LIAM: Bulk.

MATT: (chuckles) "Well, then. Let me do my math here." He looks through it. "All right, um..."

WILL: By the way, as you're adding that up, I'd like to say you should tread lightly or I'm going to tell Vanessa and you'll have trouble getting anything from the Take ever again.

MATT: "The Take? Are you with the Take?"

LAURA: Oh! Do you not see these-- These amazing--

MARISHA: It's like we get union discounts.

MATT: "Yes, there is indeed a discount with the Take (nervous laugh). They've been great representatives in the past, yes."

LAURA: I like you more and more, Kashaw, every time you speak.

WILL: Most people do. Ask Keyleth.

MARISHA: (nervous laughter) What?

MATT: "With friendship discount, let me total this up a bit here."

MARY: I walk outside, and I--

MATT: "That will be 6,500 gold pieces for the lot."

LAURA: I'm sorry, how much?

MATT: "6,500 gold pieces for the lot, with the discount."

LAURA: Right.

SAM: So coincidental. That's exactly what Grog offered.

TRAVIS: That's what I have!

LAURA: How about, instead of that, I trade you--

TRAVIS: (loud whisper) 7,000!

LAURA: Thank you, Grog.

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LIAM: (whispers) Stick to the killing!

LAURA: These magical items. And I pull out the knickknacks that I took from I don't fucking know where. It's knickknacks. But they're magic.

TALIESIN: Is knickknack a candy bar?

SAM: Vex, no. You can't, you can't possibly trade that. It's too valuable. What are you doing?

LAURA: Well, I know, but where else are we going to find a vendor--?

SAM: Those are the Knickknacks of Kaa.

LAURA: I know, and they're quite valuable. But he said six thousand, six hundred and (mumbles) and we know this will cover that.

SAM: I can't. Please sir, please don't take advantage of us by taking these things from us. They're too valuable, please, I beg of you.

TALIESIN: What have you pulled out?

SAM: The Knickknacks of Kaa.

TALIESIN: The Knickknacks of Kaa?! No, not the Knickknacks of Kaa!

LAURA: (worried sigh) Now I'm doubting-- No, you know what, maybe I shouldn't trade these.

LIAM: Put them away, put them away.

MATT: Make a Deception check. Make a Deception check. I would say, you know, if you wanted to--

SAM: Am I assisting?

MATT: You can assist on this, yeah.

TRAVIS: Oh, that's good!

MARY: I'll take some too, as well.

LAURA: What is the assist?

MATT: That gives you advantage on the roll.

SAM: Oh wait, I don't get to roll?

MATT: Huh?

SAM: I don't get to roll anything?

MATT: No, it just gives her advantage.

LAURA: 27.

SAM: (sighs) Oh, that's good.

TALIESIN: That was a really good roll.

WILL: (laughs) That was good.

MATT: He goes, "No, no, no, no. Put them on the table, please. I would like to have a look. Just in casies."

LAURA: I'll put one of them down so you can look.

MARISHA: As she places it down, can I do a little Gust cantrip and do a little poof of air?

MATT: Sure. Make a sleight of hand check.

MARISHA: Fuck.

LAURA: Aw, man. All the time, Keyleth!

MARISHA: I know. Oh, that's good though, that's good. I'm good, I'm good. Hang on, let me make sure, make a sleight of hand--18.

MATT: 18? Okay. As you sit down (poof), this little like--all the dust on the front, a little of the dampness is (poof).

LAURA: I take my hand away, trembling, like I don't want to give it up.

MATT: "Hmm." He pulls out a little glass eyepiece, inspects. "The craftsmanship is decent."

MARY: And as he's doing this, I cast Thaumaturgy and cause the table to start vibrating.

MATT: What are the components on that?

MARY: It says I can cause minor tremors.

MATT: On the spell. What does it say under components?

LAURA: Oh.

LIAM: Knickknacks.

LAURA: Knickknacks is probably the components.

WILL: Components is "V."

MATT: Visual. Yeah, you don't have to actually do anything to it. It just happens.

SAM: Why did you even--

WILL: Why not, is the question I want to ask.

TALIESIN: Really quickly, while the Thaumaturgy is happening, I'm going to cast Minor Illusion, just go for it.

LAURA: What is happening right now?!

MARISHA: We're stacking the deck, man. We're stacking it.

SAM: Any one of these could fail.

MARISHA: If they all succeed, it's going to be dope.

TALIESIN: I'm going to make a-- the image of a beautiful woman briefly appear in the reflection of the object and then vanish. Just a gleam.

MARISHA: That's hot. That's hot.

TALIESIN: Thank you.

MATT: You need to make a sleight of hand check.

TALIESIN: I need to make a sleight of hand check?

LAURA: Don't you fucking fail at this.

LIAM: Roll that Snitch!

LAURA: Natural 20.

TALIESIN: No, but it is a 19.

LIAM: Yeah, gang.

MATT: Okay. So you set down which one of the knickknacks now?

LAURA: Just one of them.

MATT: Which one?

LAURA: Are you asking me as Matt?

MATT: These things that you pulled out of the--

WILL: She puts down knick and holds knack.

MATT: There you go.

LAURA: You literally said, I gathered up a bunch of knickknacks worth 750 gold.

MATT: Oh, from that. I'm sorry.

(laughter)

MATT: I thought you were talking about the tea set and the dominoes.

LAURA: No, no, no, literally shitty-ass knickknacks.

MATT: Got you.

MARISHA: No, we wouldn't be handing that shit over.

MATT: I'm sorry, I misunderstood.

LIAM: This is like matryoshka nesting dolls.

(laughter)

MARISHA: Faberge eggs.

MATT: So what this is, it's like really, really intricate inkwell that has been made out of gold and bronze. It's stuff you find in a SkyMall, essentially.

SAM: The Pocket Fisherman!

TALIESIN: This is Sting, from "Lord of the Rings."

MARY: The One Ring to rule them all.

LIAM: That bass is singing!

MATT: All right, so. As the gust of wind fades, the table begins to shake, and he glances in across the outside of this inkwell amongst a bunch of other random knickknacks scattered around it. He looks at it for a second, this flash in his eyes. He goes, "Hmm. It seems fair enough. I would say, include these in the transaction, I would be willing to drop the cost by about 500 gold pieces? An even 6,000."

LAURA: Darling. I snatch it away and say, "Do you have any idea how much these are worth?"

MATT: "I do, actually, I'm quite the appraiser. It's kind of my business."

LAURA: I know when somebody's trying to swindle me, darling.

MATT: "Well then, step away. You don't need my business, obviously. Is this how your 'Shiny Manager' deals with your shinies? Or would you wish to deal with this face to face?"

LAURA: Tell you what. Take two thousand off your asking price and we have a deal.

MATT: "That is ridiculous! No."

WILL: How's your family?

MATT: "What does that mean?"

WILL: Just curious how everybody's doing? Everybody healthy, happy?

TRAVIS: Yeah, are they well? In one piece?

MARY: Have you seen your wife?

MATT: Make an Intimidation check. (laughing) With advantage because she's helping.

(laughter)

WILL: Is that a 20?

MATT: Roll a d20 twice and take the higher of the two. Add your intimidation.

TALIESIN: Roll again.

WILL: 19.

TALIESIN: Yay! Wait, wait, no. What's your--?

WILL: Plus intimi--18.

SAM: Negative one Intimidation.

WILL: He's a human cleric, I'm doing my best.

LIAM: Laughter during a game, what a novelty!

MATT: "Um. They're fine. Uh, quite fine. Yes. A thousand gold? Off the asking price?"

LAURA: Two thousand gold off the asking price.

MATT: "That-- that's ridiculous. It's not even-- what are you--"

WILL: Have you heard him talk about paste?

MATT: "I-- 1,300 hundred off the asking price. Nothing more."

LIAM: I take one of my daggers.

SAM: Oh, Jesus.

LIAM: And looking at him, I stick it in Grog's arm and I drag it down and I never take my eyes off him.

TRAVIS: Neither do I.

TALIESIN: He has a lip collection.

MATT: He's looking, like, over you guys now, towards the thoroughfare.

LAURA: Looking for guards.

MATT: "Ah, um. Perhaps, uh--"

TRAVIS: Keep your voice down.

MATT: "I would need..."

LIAM: There's no magic here, friend.

MATT: "Um."

LAURA: Fifteen hundred off the asking price.

TALIESIN: Seems fair.

SAM: That seems fair.

WILL: Completely fair.

MATT: "Five thousand gold, knickknacks and ah, we're all good? Yes?"

LAURA: Yes. Five thousand gold.

MATT: "All right, here you are. Please now, it would be wondrous after we complete this transaction that we never meet again."

LAURA: Oh dear. I'm afraid I've already Hunter's Marked you.

MATT: "I don't even know what that means."

(laughter)

MATT: There's a person waiting behind you. "Um, excuse me--"

"We're closed!"

(laughter)

LAURA: Oh, right, of course, let me count up this little amount right here.

SAM: Kash, Zahra, you should probably contribute.

LAURA: No, that's all right, dear. Five thousand gold.

MATT: "Thank you."

LAURA: Oh, and here, these very valuable--

MATT: "Good day! Good day."

WILL: It's been a pleasure.

MARISHA: I Druidcraft a little tulip and give it to her.

MATT: To him?

MARISHA: Him.

WILL: Her now.

MARY: Her now. Kash does have an effect, doesn't he?

MARISHA: Debateable.

MATT: He takes it, confused, and goes--.

LAURA: Wait, what potions did we just take?

MATT: You grab the potions that are on the table that he pushed towards you. There is one superior healing--

LAURA: You said there was two superior.

TRAVIS: One superior, two greater, and ten--

MATT: Yes. One superior, two greater, ten regular.

LAURA: That's a good amount.

MARISHA: That's pretty good. I didn't realize there was ten in there.

LAURA: Yeah, it's a lot. Okay, cool.

TALIESIN: And we only had to threaten a shopkeeper with bodily harm to get it.

WILL: I was gonna say, it was the first time I've ever intimidated anyone in my life. It was fun.

(laughter)

WILL: That was fun, I have to admit.

LAURA: You guys-- I'm sorry, but we make a pretty good team.

WILL: That wasn't bad. I could get used to this.

TRAVIS: Not that it's like, not for nothing, will you take this fucking dagger out of my arm?

MARISHA: Does this mean we're a terrible influence?

LAURA: I cast Cure Wounds on Grog.

TALIESIN: It means you're a good influence or we're a terrible influence on you.

MATT: It would only have been like two points of damage to you, so that would have healed up fine.

SAM: Vex.

LAURA: Yeah?

SAM: He said two superior.

LAURA: He **did** say two superior. I knew he said two superior! Matt!

MARISHA: Oh, look at that, look at that, look at that!

LAURA: I chase after him.

SAM: I'm coming too.

(laughter)

TALIESIN: No! No! No?

MATT: So you come into the tent after him?

LAURA: Yeah.

LIAM: No, no, it's brilliant. Let it play. Let it play.

LAURA: Actually, dear. Dear? I believe you left one of your potions off the table.

MATT: He turns around. "The superior potions are five thousand gold apiece, baseline."

LAURA: But you said you had two superior and you said all the potions for the amount we said.

MATT: "I said all the ones I placed on the table before you."

LIAM: Ah, there's so much blood on this fucking dagger. Ugh.

LAURA: Are you going back on your word?

MATT: "You've made a grand deal with what we said. If you continue to push this, I'm afraid I'm going to have to get the guards."

LAURA: Eh. Superior's a superior.

WILL: My guess is he couldn't get to the front of the tent by the time we got to him. But that's up to you. We're just guests here.

LAURA: No, it's all right. I know they're expensive. And we've already taken enough advantage.

TRAVIS: Yeah, if they're what they say they are.

LAURA: No!

TRAVIS: That's what I'd do.

LIAM: Cross your fingers.

LAURA: Can I sniff and make sure it's actually a real potion that he gave us? Did he give us fucking fake potions?

MATT: You can go back and take a moment and sniff, yeah. Go ahead and make a perception check.

LAURA: Is it like watered-down gasoline?

MATT: Make a perception check.

LAURA: 23.

MATT: You take it and uncork and sniff. Yeah, it's a very familiar pungent herbal smell of--

WILL: Watered-down gasoline.

MATT: Yeah.

(laughter)

LAURA: Fine. Okay.

TALIESIN: You did very well and there are other things that we should think about purchasing.

LAURA: You're right, you're right, you're right.

SAM: That lady was the worst.

(laughter)

TRAVIS: That lady's the worst.

MARY: Do you need to get gunpowder?

TALIESIN: I could use a bit of a top-up just because who knows when the next time we're going to be in this direction.

SAM: To a pub?

MARY: No, let's go to the gunpowder. Let's get you some.

TALIESIN: And perhaps, considering that we're going to be very mobile, a map would not be the worst purchase.

LAURA: I thought we have a good map of the world.

MATT: You have a fair map of Tal'Dorei and you have what is a basic layout of the continents.

TALIESIN: Don't we have a mapmaker?

MARISHA: We do have a mapmaker. Wasn't he here? Or was he in Emon?

MATT: You met Tyriok here.

MARISHA: Tyriok, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MATT: Though you haven't seen him. He mentioned to you previously he's currently traveling to finish his--

MARISHA: Yeah, that's right. We caught him in the tavern, correct?

MATT: Yes.

MARY: Don't you think the Slayer's Take-- should I run back and talk to Vanessa?

WILL: Vanessa has to have maps somewhere.

MARY: She's got to have one somewhere. You need a basic map of Vasselheim, is that what you're speaking of?

TALIESIN: It would not be a terrible thing to have, considering we're going to be traveling.

MARISHA: Of Vasselheim? Or of--?

SAM: The world.

MATT: Othanzia is the larger country set around. The continent is Issylra. Issylra is a very large continent. It's almost the equivalent of Asia and Russia, like that whole-- it's very wide and a lot of it is wild and untamed land and wilderness.

TALIESIN: Let me top up a bit on what I need.

LAURA: All right.

TALIESIN: I'll need you as well because you hold the purse strings.

LIAM: Who's got the potions?

MATT: Hmm?

LIAM: Who's got the potions?

LAURA: I have the potions.

SAM: Could you give those out, please?

LIAM: Ah, I'm so fast, but I'm really weak. Can I have another one?

LAURA: I already gave you a greater.

LIAM: I know you did. But I get fucked up really easily. Could I have another one?

LAURA: I give-- wait, how many people are there? Eight of us.

LIAM: Yeah.

MARISHA: So there was a few regulars, yeah?

LIAM: Just another, one more.

LAURA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll give you two normies.

LIAM: Thank you.

LAURA: And everybody else gets a normie as well.

TALIESIN: I'll take a normie.

WILL: Thank you.

SAM: Who gets the supe? And the great?

LAURA: Who's our weakest?

SAM: (clears throat)

LAURA: Yeah, you're pretty weak. Take a greater, Scanlan.

SAM: Yes!

TALIESIN: The two poor decision makers, I imagine.

LIAM: What's that, Smoke Man?

LAURA: Grog, do you want the other greater? Yeah, take the other greater. And then I have one superior. How many hit points does a superior heal?

MATT: A superior heals 8d4 plus eight.

LIAM: That's low.

LAURA: That's not that many. It's 5,000 gold?

MARISHA: Yeah, no. No, healing potions are generally a rip off.

LAURA: What a waste.

MARISHA: I know.

MATT: Oh my god! I just buy healing to save my life! Such a waste?

(laughter)

MATT: Oh my god, there's like a whole trade of really talented magical practitioners that spend their time crafting and brewing up these potions in the hopes they can save your life in the future.

LIAM: What's this character called? What's this character called?

MARISHA: It's true, I did buy a book to learn alchemy, and I just haven't had time to do it.

MARY: It's a great read, trust me.

MARISHA: The alchemy book? Yes?

TRAVIS: Are we fucking buying anything else or what are we doing now?

LAURA: Black powder.

LIAM: He needs the Bang Bang Man.

TALIESIN: Let's go get some powder. Let's get some black powder and whatever else we might--

MARY: Boomstick needs the bang.

SAM: While they're buying powder, I'm going to go get a fucking drink somewhere.

TRAVIS: Ooh! Yeah!

TALIESIN: We'll meet you in the pub.

MARISHA: I'll go with Scanlan and Grog.

WILL: I'm going to go to the pub as well.

LAURA: I'm going with Percy. Go get a drink.

WILL: Okay, I'm going to go to the pub.

TRAVIS: Yeah, you are, you bad, intimidating motherfucker!

SAM: The Abundant Terrace area.

MATT: Yep.

MARISHA: Okay. Are you coming to the pub?

LIAM: No, I'm going to help-- no, I'll see you in a bit.

WILL: I'll take care of her. We'll be fine. Don't worry about it.

SAM: Dagon is the owner.

MATT: Correct, yes. The two taverns you've been to is that of the Bellows' Respite Inn, which is in the Braving Grounds. So yeah, you can go to either one of those.

SAM: Oh. Grog, would you rather go to the one near the Braving Grounds?

TRAVIS: Yeah, sure.

SAM: Or this one?

MATT: Up to you.

LAURA: Don't start any fights, we have a dragon to kill.

TRAVIS: Come on, shot-caller, pick one.

SAM: Yeah, whatever's closer.

MATT: Closer would be the Bellows' Respite, that's also where the Crucible was, the one that was on the outside of it.

SAM: Let's go.

WILL: Better ale.

MARISHA: Old stomping grounds, Grog.

MATT: So you guys go get drinks. Who's going--?

TALIESIN: Vex and I are going and-- are you coming as well?

MARY: How far away are we from the Slayer's Take, and is there any other place in town that I personally would know of from being here about three months, to find a map?

MATT: You can go back and ask the Slayer's Take. They have basic maps of the nearby countryside. A lot of the contracts require you to travel across this side of Othanzia. You go back and you talk to Vanessa and you procure one of the maps there that are usually supplied for one of your missions.

MARY: All right, and then I go to the bar to get a fucking drink.

TRAVIS: Yes!

MATT: All right, so most of them are drinking. Vex and Percival head-- you guys are all heading actually in the same area, to the Braving Grounds outside the Trial Forge, since that's where the bar is and that's also where Victor's little powder-covered hovel is.

LIAM: Bring him out. Bring him out!

MATT: So (laughs) as you approach the same area, you can see that the building is the same as it was before, other than it's missing half a roof.

TALIESIN: He might be a bit low on powder.

MATT: It appears to be haphazardly covered with a series of boards that were nailed to keep things closed, but there is definitely, with the snow and the rain, it's probably not the best place to be staying or living.

TALIESIN: I'm going to remove my coat. As I've learned.

LAURA: Yes?

TALIESIN: Do we have Trinket with us?

LAURA: Yes, of course.

TALIESIN: I'm going to put my coat on Trinket for a moment, just to keep it clean.

LAURA: A walking coat rack, that's what Trinket is.

LIAM: Percy, that's not a good idea.

MATT: Trinket's trying to get the coat off.

TALIESIN: Thank you, Trinket (knocking sound). Hello?

MATT: Some movement, and you hear the shattering of glass and you hear a (frustrated noise).

TALIESIN: Victor, are you in there?

MATT: "Just a moment!" Suddenly the door, whoosh!, slams open and before you, you see Victor, half covered in soot, has a big old thick pair of glasses on his face, one of which is cracked. You can see his chin now has this puffed out, partially burnt and curled bit of a goatee at the very tip of his chin. He looks up at you with these giant eyes that are projected and magnified by his eyewear. "Can I help you?!"

(laughter)

TALIESIN: Yes, it's Percival. Do you remember me?

MATT: "No!"

(laughter)

TALIESIN: Excellent.

MATT: "Is that all?!"

TALIESIN: I was hoping to procure some black powder again. We had a-- we made a deal last time--

MATT: "Yes, yes, come in, please come in!"

TALIESIN: Do I have to? Okay.

MATT: He turns around and heads back inside.

LAURA: I'm going to stand out here.

TALIESIN: That's quite wise. Please keep my jacket clean.

MATT: As you enter, indeed, a good half of the roof is missing and you see now a lot of things have been moved away because currently there is a pile of burnt and destroyed wood splinters that are also soaked through, and there's a little bit of mold and rotten mildew that is gathered in that far corner as well, from the weather.

LIAM: I'm going to stand over here and fail to stay in character, okay?

(laughter)

TALIESIN: You should roll for that. You're looking well.

MATT: "Heh, heh! Mostly." He turns around and you can see now, what you failed to notice when you first started this is where once there was five, there is now three fingers.

MARISHA: Yes, he has character progression!

(laughter)

TALIESIN: That's impressive.

MATT: "Learn from my mistakes!"

(laughter)

TALIESIN: You can learn three more times, easily.

MATT: "I can. Three, four-- yes!" He runs off and starts rummaging through a bunch of stuff.

TALIESIN: Victor, I was hoping you would have some black powder for sale.

MATT: "I'm on it, I'm on it! Hold on!" He whips around with this metallic cylinder that is very well sealed. "See, I learn from my mistakes!"

TALIESIN: That's very impressive. Oh--

MATT: He walks very carefully, very gingerly place it on the table. "Okay. Carefully." He pulls out (fwoosh) a small torch. "I have to unseal the metal."

TALIESIN: Let's not do that! And I make a quick... I'm going to try and bap the thing down as quickly as I can.

MATT: Okay. You smack it out of his hand.

TALIESIN: Let's... I trust you implicitly.

MATT: "Heh heh heh heh. It's coffee."

(laughter)

MATT: "Black powder (cackles)."

(laughter)

TALIESIN: I think you've had enough. I'm going to smell the coffee. It's really coffee?

MATT: Yeah.

MATT: "Sorry, trying to host. It's been a while since I've had a guest. Would you like some?"

TALIESIN: Just one spoonful would be quite--

MATT: He goes over to a small kettle and begins straining it through. He's got this little coffee brew on the side. "So, real black powder. Wait! I do know you."

TALIESIN: Yes!

MATT: "You've purchased before."

TALIESIN: I have.

MATT: "Return customer. Not many of those."

TALIESIN: Not many? Have there been others?

MATT: He pours a couple of cups for you, pulls it over to you. "Oh, one. Months ago."

TALIESIN: Really? Who would--?

MATT: "Nice woman. Young, good outfit, well dressed, heh."

TALIESIN: Excellent. She didn't happen to say where she was going, did she? By any chance?

MATT: "No, no. Weeks, not months. Time-- strange."

TALIESIN: Weeks? Very good to know. Thank you, that's so helpful. Did you talk about anything else with this nice young woman, at all?

MATT: "No! She paid well!"

TALIESIN: I'm sure she did.

MATT: "Kept her distance."

TALIESIN: I'm sure she did as well.

(laughter)

TALIESIN: That's-- I'm curious, how have your own experiments been going? Going well?

(laughter)

TALIESIN: You should get that looked at some point. Three more, three more.

MATT: "Three."

LAURA: Percival?

TALIESIN: Yes! So any black powder that you have, I would be happy to--

MATT: "Yes."

TALIESIN: Help you pay for a new roof, maybe.

MATT: "Oh, I have to fix that."

TALIESIN: You do. Money can help.

MATT: "Explains the cold." He smears black right across the front of his face.

TALIESIN: Doesn't it, though?

MATT: It's like gelled in with whatever mucus had been captured in there as well, streaked across.

TALIESIN: Oh, that's not a mustache. That's so-- ugh.

MATT: He comes back and he's now keeping, previously it was out in the open, he's learned his lesson. He has these glass vials, similar to what they put potions in, but now he's filling them with powder. And he brings out about four of them. "This is as much as I will spare. I already sold a lot recently to the lady. I have my own tinkering to do, but if you wish to buy these?"

TALIESIN: Yes.

MATT: "I would be happy to sell."

TALIESIN: That would be lovely.

MATT: "Okay. Process of distilling, drying, preparing, 250 gold!"

TALIESIN: I think that's very fair.

MATT: "Wondrous! Deal, deal."

TALIESIN: Vex?

LAURA: Yes?

TALIESIN: 250 gold, if you'd be so kind.

LAURA: That much?

TALIESIN: I'm going to make you something lovely.

LAURA: (singsong) I love you!

TALIESIN: You're welcome.

MATT: "Hiiii!"

LAURA: H-hi. I give the money to Percy to give to him.

TALIESIN: And I hand it out.

(laughter)

MATT: Would you like some coffee?

TALIESIN: Victor! Thank you, you're so kind. And if you would be so lovely as to not mention us to my friend if she should happen back.

MATT: "50 gold."

SAM: Oh, shit!

LAURA: Tell you what, Victor. I don't think you want to tell her anything.

MATT: Make a persuasion roll.

LIAM: All you need is a five.

LAURA: Wait, wait, wait. 12.

MATT: (laughs) Given the circumstance, he has a really low DC on this, so I'm glad this is the one you rolled a 12 on. He goes, "For you? I saw nothing!"

(laughter)

TALIESIN: I love you, darling.

MATT: He catches it and he grabs a glass vial and puts it in and caps it up.

LAURA: Okay. Keep it safe, dear.

TALIESIN: Until we meet again. All of us. Until we all meet again. Always a pleasure. Ah, keep safe and--

MATT: "Yes?"

TALIESIN: Keep safe.

MATT: "Will do."

TALIESIN: Yes.

MATT: "Bye!" He waves with his three fingers. "Close the door when you're done!"

LIAM: If I may--

(cheering)

TALIESIN: You're welcome, Internet. You're welcome.

LAURA: That was amazing.

LIAM: Oh, man. Hire that fucking fool!

(laughter)

MATT: The rest of you find your way back at the Bellows' Respite Inn where the rest of the party has been drinking.

(cheering)

MARISHA: How'd it go?

MARY: (drunkenly) Wait, wait, wait, wait-- okay-- okay.

MATT: Wow, you've been drinking.

MARY: Grog, Grog.

TRAVIS: Yeah?

MARY: The first time I ever saw you, you were fighting... the Hammer? Who were you fighting?

TRAVIS: Yep, yep, Hammer, Hammer.

MARY: You were fighting the Hammer. So I went away and I made you... a hammer. And I'm gonna give you the hammer.

TRAVIS: You made me a hammer?!

MARY: I did! That's what I do. I like to forge things.

TRAVIS: Really?

MARY: I do. So I made you a hammer.

LAURA: She didn't drink very much.

WILL: Not very much at all.

TRAVIS: That is amazing! I love hammers!

MARY: And I put my crest on it. It's a moon. It's a full moon.

LIAM: You said she was lush, you didn't say she was a lush.

TRAVIS: Is it like a moon hammer?

MARY: A lovely moon hammer. I want you to have it. I want you to have it.

WILL: Z, you gotta slow down.

MARISHA: No, never!

TRAVIS: You don't-- you don't have it now?

MARY: I'll give it to you before we go.

TRAVIS: Oh, okay.

LAURA: I go and I sit next to Kashaw.

LIAM: Keek.

MARISHA: What? Hi.

LIAM: How many of those have you had?

MARISHA: What?

LIAM: Less than five?

WILL: Two or three.

MARISHA: Three? Two, three?

WILL: Enough to where it's fun.

MARISHA: It's blurry. You should join us! You all have to catch up. Come on! Life has been hard! Come on.

MARY: Come on, Burt!

MATT: A barkeep comes by, a human gentleman you recognize from before, is Once-Lucky Ned, who had originally given you some information. Comes by, puts the drinks down. "I thought it was you!"

TRAVIS: Yep.

MATT: "Heh, heh. Phillip! Phillip! It's good to see you."

TRAVIS: No, no, it was-- it was Philip before, and now it's Grog.

MATT: "Oh, he beat the name out of you. That's harsh."

TRAVIS: No, no, no. That was the first time, and then I came back and won my vengeance. Right?

MATT: "Right, right."

TRAVIS: Yeah.

MATT: "You want to be known as... I see (clicks tongue). I got you."

TRAVIS: Grog, Grog.

MATT: "Grog the Philip is in town! Should anyone wish to take the title of the Crucible, this would be the one to talk to. Heh heh."

MARY: Woo!

MATT: Faces turn, then go back to business.

MARISHA: Is Zahra the only one that claps?

MARY: Woo! Ooh!

(laughter)

WILL: Oh, Z. Oh, Z.

MARY: Shut up, Kash.

MARISHA: I have missed you guys. I've never met you! But I missed you guys.

MARY: I've missed... you.

TALIESIN: I think we need to catch up a bit. Vax, Vex, let's all have a toast to the inevitability of the universe, please. And cheers.

LIAM: Which one of us? What was that?

TALIESIN: Vex and Vax. We're having a toast to the inevitability of the cosmos.

LAURA: A toast? We're toasting? At a time like this?

TALIESIN: We are.

MARISHA: Look, there's never not a good time to toast.

WILL: Is there a better time to toast than when the world is gonna end?

MARISHA: Exactly.

MARY: We're about to lose everything, we might as well celebrate what we've got.

MARISHA: I toast to celebrating the end of the world with the best friends we could possibly have.

TALIESIN: I'm, I'm, I have something to say to this.

SAM: Oh, Percy, well.

TALIESIN: I have something to say.

MARISHA: All right, Percy, come on.

TALIESIN: When one is born into gentry, one is born with an innate sense of destiny.

(groaning)

TALIESIN: An innate sense that the world is moving in a direction--

SAM: Fuck the dragons!

(laughter)

TALIESIN: We have been given a direction to move to actually defeat our foes. We have been given a sign, we have been given something to move for. There is an inevitability to the goodness of the universe--

TRAVIS: (slurred) Inevitability.

MARISHA: There is something to fight for, damn it!

SAM, TALIESIN, and MARISHA: Fuck the dragons!

MARY: Here's to fighting for something more than just money.

TRAVIS: (slurred) Inevitability.

LIAM: I would rather be with you all than the finest people in the world.

MARISHA: Cheers to that, because God knows we're not the finest.

MARY: When you find them, let us know.

WILL: I agree with you about the inevitability of the universe. The inevitability that it's always shit.

TALIESIN: There's stones that are thrown into the river. There are stones that are thrown upon the river. The river always moves.

WILL: It's true, but you're not talking about the fish that's killed by the stones that's thrown into the river.

TRAVIS: Can I go and find the barkeep?

MATT: Yeah, Once-Lucky Ned is there.

TRAVIS: Remember, right? It's just Grog. It's not like "Grog the Phillip." It's just Grog.

MATT: "Oh, I apologize."

TRAVIS: No, it's all right, it's okay. So, does Earthbreaker Groon, does he ever come in here? Big guy, muscly, long, like, stringy--

MATT: "I know of him. He doesn't come in and drink, no. He spends most of his days over there in that big Trial Forge Temple of Kord."

TRAVIS: He never comes out?

MATT: "He'll go into the city on occasion. But he's one of them, how do I put it? 'Medititive' types."

TRAVIS: "Medititive"?

MATT: "Yes. Spends a lot of time--thinking. Sleeping while standing up. It's weird."

TRAVIS: What? I don't understand. How do you do that?

MATT: "You'll have to ask him."

TRAVIS: "Medititive."

MATT: "Yes."

LIAM: Meeting of the minds.

TRAVIS: All right. Is he like--? All right. Thank you.

MATT: "No worries. I mean, if I recall, he actually come and saw your last bout."

TRAVIS: Yeah, he did! And I want to like go see him, but I don't know anything about "medititiveness," like sleeping standing up.

MATT: "Go over there to the Trial Forge! He's seen you once, maybe he'll say hello again."

TRAVIS: What should I, like, bring him a gift?

MATT: "I don't know. I don't ever talk to him."

TRAVIS: Is anybody here, like, in the room right now behind me? Are they present at the Trial Forge very often? Hey, don't be so obvious.

(laughter)

MATT: "No clue."

TRAVIS: All right. And I flip him a silver. Bing.

LIAM: That's like half a penny.

(laughter)

TRAVIS: We're just talking (laughs). All right.

SAM: (sighs) What is it, like, noon right now?

(laughter)

TALIESIN: It's like (singing) day-drinking!

MATT: Well, no, it's probably about 1:30, 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

MARY: (slurring) Kash and I just got back from frikkin' and it's time to drinkin'!

WILL: We haven't even eaten yet.

MARISHA: Well, (laughs) I lost a fourth of my civilization!

WILL: That is funny.

TRAVIS: Wow. That went dark.

LIAM: I raise the bottom of Keyleth's glass and keep it going.

(laughter)

SAM: Should we find Kima next, or should we spend the day here?

MARISHA: Oh, that's right, we still have work to do.

LAURA: Well, we do have some very inebriated--

LIAM: Yeah, I think we've accidentally gotten shit-faced.

MARY: I can just walk and not do anything.

TRAVIS: Yeah, no, she can manage.

MARISHA: Maybe if we hang here long enough Kima will show up.

LIAM: No. We're drunk. Here's what we should do.

LAURA: I'm not drunk.

LIAM: You ready?

SAM: I'm not drunk.

TALIESIN: I'm not either.

LIAM: We should go watch Grog fight.

LAURA: What? There are dragons in the world, right now! And we're fighting? We're going to watch a fight?

LIAM: We need-- listen to me. We need Kima with us, but Kima doesn't have the time for fucking drunkards. You might not be, but some of us are a little drunk. So, while that's going on, we wait a day, right? And while that day is going on, we watch Grog pummel some person's face in.

MARISHA: Plus, when I was a little girl, we used to be taught that if you were ever lost in the forest, to stay and hug a tree.

LAURA: Don't hug him, Keyleth.

MARISHA: And someone will come and find you.

WILL: I like this plan.

MARISHA: So if we stay in one place and this ale is like our tree, okay? We hug the ale and Kima will show up. That's my theory.

MATT: While this is happening, Vex, you glance over her shoulder to the entryway to this bar, and you see stepping in, a familiar, burly looking half-orc gentleman.

MARISHA: Damn it, I was hoping it was Kima!

TALIESIN: That would have been hilarious.

MATT: He walks in, wiping his hands from dirt in the mines, stops, looks over at your table. Slowly backs out of the tavern and steps back out into the thoroughfare.

LIAM: Hey, look at that guy who went out the door! He looked like that guy you fought in that ring.

TRAVIS: Really?

LIAM: That guy, yeah. Go get (stammering) do it again.

TRAVIS: Hold on a second. And I run out the door. I run after him, out the door.

MATT: Yeah. Make a perception check.

LIAM: Oh, come on, Grog.

TRAVIS: 18.

MATT: 18. You step out in the front of the tavern, and immediately to the left, you see him ducking into the alleyway.

TRAVIS: Wait! Kern! Kern! And I take off running after him.

MATT: Okay. You turn around the corner and you see his back is against the wall and he has sweat dripping down his brow. "Hi."

TRAVIS: Hey. Funny seeing you here.

LAURA: I run up behind Grog.

MARISHA: Why are they acting like they fucked?

TRAVIS: Things been good?

MATT: At this point--

WILL: Did you guys date?

MARISHA: They're ex-lovers!

MATT: He looks down. "Still a little sore."

TRAVIS: Right. Yeah.

MATT: "How about you?"

TRAVIS: When I chew, my jaw goes to one side. It's fucking weird.

MATT: "Yeah."

TRAVIS: Yeah.

LAURA: Are you guys all right, then? Everything's fine?

TRAVIS: Yeah.

LAURA: All right, I'm going to go, grab a drink.

TRAVIS: So, I meant to ask you, that big, muscly, like long stringy white-haired guy that was watching our last fight.

MATT: "Yeah, yeah. The Earthbreaker."

TRAVIS: Yeah. Who is he to you?

MATT: "I've seen him around. Haven't really... I've talked to him once. I'll level with you. Went to him for a little training after our first fight."

TRAVIS: Yeah.

MATT: "Um. Says I'm a little too angry to pursue his path."

TRAVIS: Angry?

MATT: "I got a lot of pent-up rage the way I was raised."

(laughter)

TRAVIS: Family issues? Tell me about it.

MATT: "Tell me about it. (chuckles) Well, half my folks are bloodthirsty, wandering barbarians in the Northern Wastes."

TRAVIS: No way!

(laughter)

MATT: "Yeah. What, you think being a half-orc's great? No! It's bullshit!"

TRAVIS: I know! You think goliath is any better? It's the same fucking thing!

MATT: "At least you're made for this weather! It's cold out here!"

TRAVIS: That's true, it is fucking cold out here.

MATT: "Yeah, it is."

TRAVIS: I can only imagine. I'm really sorry I took your lip off, by the way.

MATT: "Sorry I took yours off, too."

TRAVIS: That's true. Mine healed better.

MATT: "Yeah."

TRAVIS: Hey, so. When you trained with him, because you were doing all that yoga pilates stuff. Did it help you out?

MATT: "Well, obviously not, really."

TRAVIS: Right. What did he ask you in exchange for the tutorial?

MATT: "He didn't ask for any pay. He--"

WILL: Oh god, what did he ask for?

MATT: "He told me I had--"

SAM: (mutters) Pretty eyes.

MATT: "-- to help someone."

(laughter)

TRAVIS: Help someone.

MATT: "He still hasn't given me the proper details yet and he hasn't called in the debt, but he told me one day, I was to help him test someone, when he trained me."

TRAVIS: In that Trial Forge, are there like, more of him, like a bunch of big, jacked-out guys in there?

MATT: "Not as big as him, no. But there's plenty of others that train under him. All sorts of warriors. Weapons of all kinds. It's Kord!" He looks over, and you see in the distance, the giant statue of Kord that sits atop the Trial Forge. He looks over and with a look of reverence, gives a nod, and you can see that this man, a glimmer of faith in his eyes. He himself probably a follower of Kord as well. "He's a great man. I'm not the right temperament, it seems. But that's fine. He's getting along okay."

TRAVIS: Right. I won't take up too much more of your time, but if I could ask you one last thing. Aside from the Slayer's Take and the Trial Forge, if you had to find men at arms, men to attack a very large foe, possibly quite dangerous, where would you go?

MATT: "I'd go to the Platinum Sanctuary. Between them and the Trial Forge, that's most of the actual army. Most of it's Trial Forge. It's part of what the Braving Grounds are about. They train the armies here, it's where they breed warriors."

TRAVIS: Yeah.

MATT: "Most of the Bastions that look over the city are trained here, so it's-- those are my best bets, at least. Not much of a political man."

TRAVIS: Well, it's been good seeing you. No one hit quite as hard as you did.

MATT: "You too. Um. The medal was a joke. I was in a sore place. Literally, a very, very sore place."

TRAVIS: Uh-huh.

MATT: "I wanted to apologize for that."

TRAVIS: Uh-huh.

MATT: "I should go." He starts walking past you, out into the main street.

TRAVIS: Kern. Kord's strength to you, my friend.

MATT: He doesn't even look back to you. "Uh, you too!" and keeps walking.

(laughter)

TALIESIN: Wow. Wow.

TRAVIS: I go back into the tavern.

MATT: Okay.

SAM: Did you kill him, Grog?

TRAVIS: Yep, yep, there's a lot of pieces of him all over the alley!

SAM: That's my boy.

TRAVIS: Yeah, I like, left nothing to find. It's great.

SAM: All right.

LAURA: I walked out and they were making out.

TRAVIS: Shut the-- that is *not* what we were doing.

LAURA: Mugging down in the alleyway.

MARISHA: Ooh, Grog! I didn't know you swung that way.

TRAVIS: Swung what way?

MARISHA: Toward-- never mind.

SAM: Swung your axe.

MARY: Could I have another cup of coffee here?

MATT: "Of course, coming your way."

LIAM: No man's-- you know-- goes straight on. Goes a little bit to the left, a bit of--

WILL: Some men go straight on.

LIAM: I go sit down next to Kash.

LAURA: I sit down next to the other side of Kash, in between him and Keyleth.

TALIESIN: I'm going to sit and watch right next to you.

MATT: All right.

MARISHA: (yelling) Another drink!

LAURA: How about, Keyleth, not another drink.

MARISHA: What?

LAURA: How about you have some water, dear.

MARISHA: Mm, it's been a long--

MARY: Come here, Keyleth darling, we'll get some coffee.

TALIESIN: No coffee for me, thank you.

LIAM: Excuse me, if I may. All I want to say is that you are a very impressive man in many ways. You are handsome and capable.

LAURA: Your eyes are two different colors, which is very interesting.

LIAM: That's a little creepy, but other than that, you are very, very capable-- Percival, I'm having trouble focusing, so if you could sort of go behind Kash.

WILL: I don't know what's happening. I don't know what's happening. Is he hitting on me? What's happening?

LIAM: No, no. No, no, no, no. There's only one man for me.

WILL: What?

LIAM: All I'm saying is--

MARY: What man is that?

LIAM: (slurring) We could use your help, all right? I know you're a bit of a mercenary, but you are a very capable man and there is a lot at stake. There is a lot at stake. There are dragons, they killed-- I'm not going to get into it. But I implore you to look past yourself and please try to think of the greater world. (stuttering) I'm an admirer--

WILL: You've said several times that you're an admirer of mine.

LIAM: Yes.

WILL: Very sweet.

LIAM: Also, one last thing.

WILL: Mm-hm?

LIAM: You know what, never mind. I don't want to talk about that. And I wander off into the other side of the room.

WILL: I have literally no idea what just happened.

SAM: (laughs) He's a complicated man. He goes to dark places.

LAURA: Keyleth.

LAURA: Maybe you should go see what's happening?

LIAM: (muffled) It's dark in this closet!

MARISHA: What?

LAURA: Go, maybe you should go see what is going on with my brother? Maybe you should go find out what's happening with my brother.

LIAM: How do you get this closet door open? I can't get back out here.

LAURA: He's stuck in a closet.

MARY: It's all right. Girl talk. So, Keyleth.

MARISHA: What. What. What?

MARY: I heard a little. I wasn't sure and I then saw you and I thought oh, all right, well, you know, yeah, all right. So, what, you know? With the what? (whispers) What happened? With him?

MARISHA: I literally never even had this experience in high school, it's throwing me.

MARY: (whispers) Come on.

MARISHA: I don't know how to react to any of this.

LIAM: What is high school?

LAURA: Keyleth. She's talking about you kissing Kash.

MARY: Yeah.

MARISHA: Oh! Right! Oh!

MARY: He told me. He told me a little bit.

MARISHA: Funny you mention that, yeah, you know--

LAURA: Wasn't he your first kiss?

MARY: Do you like him?

LAURA: Isn't that so wonderful?

MARY: I know, it's wonderful. Do you like him?

MARISHA: I, um, you know, okay, I'm kind of new to all of this. I don't really know what's going on?

MARY: What, to talking? You're doing very well.

MARISHA: Thank you. I'm new to that as well.

MARY: No!

MARISHA: Um--

LAURA: I'll give you a helpful hint.

MARISHA: Okay. Yes.

LAURA: If you're interested in someone, make sure they know.

MARISHA: (breathless) Oh.

LAURA: And if you're not, then stop fucking dragging them along, because it's not fair.

MARY: What if she doesn't know? What if she can't decide?

MARISHA: Oh, you think I'm dragging Kash along? Oh no no no no no.

LAURA: Sure. You're dragging Kash along.

MARISHA: I mean, he was just, I only spent a day with him.

LAURA: Mmm.

MARISHA: It was just a day.

LIAM: Vex! I can't get out of this closet.

WILL: Jesus.

LAURA: Is he really, truly stuck in a closet? Right now?

MARISHA: I thought he was a lockpick.

LAURA: (laughing) I go, I walk away.

LIAM: (mournfully) I rolled a one.

MARISHA: This is literally the only thing Vax is good at. He really can't get out of the closet?

TALIESIN: I just want to say, I don't think the dragons stand a chance.

(laughter)

TALIESIN: We've got them now!

LIAM: I can't get out of this closet as hard as I try.

LAURA: What are you doing? Stop it.

MARISHA: Seriously though (quietly) I'm really confused.

MARY: You know, don't hurt him. He's wonderful.

MARISHA: Kash?

MARISHA: Okay.

MARY: He's wonderful.

MARISHA: Okay.

MARY: If you do-- he's wonderful.

TALIESIN: My god, I love other people's problems.

SAM: This is amazing. Sorry about this, Kash.

WILL: No, this has been wonderful.

SAM: When our party gets--

WILL: I have men and women telling me I'm incredible.

TALIESIN: You are very attractive.

WILL: That's, wow, that's two.

SAM: I just met you, and I don't know much about you, but are you more of a Vax man or a Vex man? Like, how do you roll? How do you--?

WILL: I don't, again, I don't know what that means.

(laughter)

SAM: Would you be interested in the rogue or the ranger?

LIAM: We're identical.

WILL: Oh. Oh! I see what you're saying. All right, I get it. I go taco, not hot dog.

SAM: Okay.

TRAVIS: Yes! I love taco!

SAM: High five it.

TRAVIS: Respect. Respect.

LAURA: Are we sober yet? Can we go find Kima?

MARY: Yes, we're sober!

LIAM: I think we need to go to bed.

MARY: Yes. Let's get a break.

MATT: After a brief time of coffee and a bit of sobering, you find yourselves of sound enough mind.

LIAM: 17 hours later?!

(laughter)

TALIESIN: Coffee, coffee.

MARY: I metabolize things very quickly, you'd be surprised.

MATT: A few hours, two hours, let's say. It's four, five o'clock in the afternoon.

MARISHA: Five o'clock?

TALIESIN: Or four o'clock. Four o'clock.

MATT: As you, sobering up, the coffee's helped. You find yourself clear of mind to continue onto your intended events for the day. With that, we're going to go ahead and take a break. We'll be back here--

(cheering)

WILL: (laughs) Dragons don't stand a chance!

(laughter)

WILL: (laughs) That was awesome.

MATT: All right, guys, we'll see you here in a few minutes. Thank you.

(laughter)

WILL: That was great. Man.

[break]

MATT: Welcome back, everyone. So, before we get back into this, a couple quick announcements. One, if we get to 15,000 subscribers tonight, tomorrow's crew will be celebrating 15k and a Cosplay Day. All of our crew will be dressing up as their favorite characters all night. So you guys should go ahead and see if we can hit that number, because that would be awesome and hilarious and awesome.

LAURA: I might have heard what some people are going to be dressing up as and I'm very excited about it.

MATT: I heard a couple, too. You guys would enjoy it, so make it happen, please. I want to see it. Also, a reminder, that if you want to help support the channel, check out the Geek and Sundry Amazon Wish List. You can find the list in chat if you type "!Wishlist" there and that will give you access to it and you can see if there's any way you want to help build the channel and make it more awesome. So, there's that. Liam will join us when he can. But we're going to jump in for the time being. So, as you guys exit the tavern, you look out into the Braving Fields.

TALIESIN: I suddenly remember to go back and open the closet.

MARISHA: Oh shit, we need to get the rogue out of the closet.

MATT: There is that, yeah. So you're in the center of the Braving Grounds--we traded Liam for Travis.

LAURA: Yeah. I don't know.

MATT: Exactly.

LIAM: Grog, can you get this door open?

(laughter)

MARY: It is open, darling. Come on.

SAM: Are we going to Kima now, or are we going to go see Grog fight?

LIAM: Is Grog fighting?

MATT: To your left, around the Heaven's Stair, the giant mountain that bisects the northern portion of Vasselheim, around that way, a little bit of travel, but that heads towards the Bahamut section of the city, where the Platinum Sanctuary is. To your vision, immediately outside the tavern, you can see the giant statue of Kord, where the Trial Forge is. And to the south of you is where the Quadroads are, in the southern regions. What do you guys want to do?

TRAVIS: I don't really feel like fighting. I just want to go talk to Master Splinter at the Trial Forge.

SAM: Sure, sure. All right, we can do that another day, maybe? Or do you want to--?

TRAVIS: I'm not in a rush.

LIAM: Should we go to the Platinum Sanctuary? Where Kima is, right?

TALIESIN: Let's go talk to Kima.

LIAM: Yeah, right now.

LAURA: Oh, should we wait until some people are more sober?

MARY: No, I'm all right, walking helps. Walking helps.

LAURA: Walking will help.

MARY: Walking and coffee.

SAM: Maybe we should-- they can wait outside or something.

MARISHA: But I miss Kima.

TRAVIS: Oh Jesus.

MATT: It's been a few hours, and you guys have had some coffee, so you're still a little tipsy, but you're not-- useless.

(laughter)

MATT: To put it nicely. All right, so where do you guys want to head into--?

LAURA: The Platinum Sanctuary.

MATT: All right, you guys make your way south, southwest around the curvature of the base of the Heaven's Stair. You can see up along the mountain itself, large, ominous, this monolith of earth that looks over the entirety of Vasselheim. You can see embedded in the rock itself, there are various homesteads toward the base. As you look up, you can see there's a number of stairways that just spiral around in different directions. You can see small cliffs and precipices that are built on the outside and look to be either various places of individual worship where statues are just barely visible, cresting on the edge. There's a number of constructs, just built into this mountain that are probably as old as the city itself.

You make your way around the south portion of it back into the actual area of Vasselheim, the Silver Talon's Reach, which is where largely the Bahamut worship occurs. You make your way past the scattered temples, all the different huts and hovels that build the central residential real estate to this territory. There are a few homes here that look a little bit like-- this town is built on existing in hardship and difficulty, so a lot of people here are just stern folk that live amongst terrible weather and money and wealth isn't really presented or flaunted in this city. It's considered in very poor taste as everyone here is in some way, shape or form, to some level, is pious to some degree to one of the deities that are worshipped here. You find your way to the base of the stair that you recall, following when you first arrived here in Vasselheim, that leads up to the Platinum Sanctuary where you were delivering the Horn of Orcus originally.

SAM: Oh, that's right.

MATT: You follow it up the side and it is an extended staircase that curves up to these three silver spires that are pushing out from the side of the mountain, quite a ways up. After about almost 20 minutes of stair climbing, your legs start to cramp a bit, but you manage to make your way towards the top, the outside of the large stone doors. There you can see there are two Scalebearers of Vord, in their silver armor, blue cloaks at their back, weapons at the ready, just looking out. And as soon as you guys approach the top of the stairway, they change their stance to be a little more prepared.

MARISHA: (panting) Guys, this is hard to do this with alcohol in your system.

WILL: Hard to do at all.

LIAM: A lot of horses and chickens around here, too.

WILL: I noticed that as well.

LIAM: Everywhere.

MARISHA: I didn't know this was a farming industry.

SAM: Hello there. Excuse us. We are of the Slayer's Take-- Is that a good thing?

LAURA: Yes.

SAM: We are of the Slayer's Take and we ask for entry into your Platinum Temple.

MATT: "Your business is with whom?"

LAURA: Lady Kima.

MATT: Turns, nods to the other guy. They both grab these small handles and give a tug, and the door opens slightly and one of the guys disappears between the two doors. About 30 seconds pass to a minute, before he steps back out. "Your presence has been accepted by the Highbearer Vord, the Silvertouched. He will greet you in the central chamber, please."

SAM: Thank you. How do we address him?

MATT: "Highbearer would suffice."

SAM: All right.

MATT: "Please enter."

LIAM: Will Kima be there?

MATT: He doesn't answer. The doors open even wider.

LIAM: Hey!

MATT: So as you guys enter the chamber once more, this is close to where you flew in in bird form and almost got arrested by the Highbearers.

MARISHA: Uh-huh, right, those guys.

MATT: So, as you enter the chamber, you see a number of the guards have already assembled and they're giving you a walkway path, both as a presentory arrival vigil, but also making sure that you don't wander off the predestined path to the main central meeting chamber.

WILL: But it doesn't seem antagonistic in any way.

MATT: No. Just-- they're protecting their temple.

SAM: We'll make it that, though.

MATT: You guys continue inward, towards the central chamber, the high stone ceiling before you. You can see there are holes carved throughout the ceiling and the stonework that cause beams of light to come shooting through from the sky. What catches your interest in here is that the sky is cloudy. There is no specific source of direct sunlight, yet there are beams of light within the temple itself that form a pattern across the stone marble floor of the central chamber.

MARISHA: Can I do a nature check?

MATT: Certainly.

LAURA: What's the pattern look like?

MATT: The pattern resembles a large shield, when you look at it. It's pointed toward the base of where you guys are walking in and fills most of the chamber in an oval fashion, before coming together in a line towards the back.

MARISHA: 17.

MATT: 17? Okay, this definitely isn't a natural occurrence. The sunlight should not be projecting this way, which leads you to believe that there's something about the temple's enchantment or its construction that can either dissipate the veil of clouds to the sunlight or produce their own light to mimic it during all hours.

MARISHA: Cool.

WILL: Do any of us recognize the symbol on the floor?

MATT: You've seen-- the shield itself is akin to the symbol of Bahamut, which is a shield with a silver dragon head on it. You've seen Kima use it previously when you guys were looking after her in the Underdark.

LAURA: We never got that stuff back.

SAM: Her stuff?

LAURA: Yeah.

MATT: As you guys push to the central chamber, you can see there's a line of three heavily armored Knights of Bahamut that are all there, standing shields at the ready, big tower shields that almost touch the ground. Two of them separate to one side and one separates to the other, and in the center, arriving before you, is Highbearer Vord, the Silvertouched, who some of you are seeing for the first time. Long, light brown hair that crests down past his shoulders, his

features are very elven, very soft and ageless, but there is a very faint bluish hue to his skin. His eyes have no irises, no pupils. Steps forward and extends his hands. "It is good to see such friends, so I ask you once again to join me in this chamber. Can I help you?"

LIAM: (whispers) Yes.

LAURA: You can, actually. Well, we hope that you can, as it concerns dragon matters. We know that you serve Bahamut, the great, the wonderful, the very metallic. These very terrible colored--chromatic red, green, lots of different dragons, they've attacked--

SAM: How much do you know about the dragon attacks that have been raging across the world?

MATT: He looks about the rest of you, with a discerning glance, just spending a beat on each of you, almost like you're being judged and read in that instant. You feel as if someone is prying into your personality with but a glance, and it's unsettling at first, but nothing too invasive, just enough to catch you off guard. As he finishes the sweep of the party at hand: "I was given a vision in the night of a far city of nan, swathed in ice and flame, of colors bonded and unleashed. And I feared it was the work of our lord's nemesis."

LAURA: Straight-up nemesis?

MARISHA: Yes, can you elaborate?

MATT: He puts his hand up.

MARISHA: Sorry.

MATT: "However, with much prayer of mine and my acolytes, we find no tremor of the Dragon Queen, nor the stench of Baator, on this business."

MARISHA: Dragon Queen Baator? Is that what he said? Baator?

MATT: Baator. B-a-a-t-o-r.

MARY: Is the Queen-- I'm sorry-- are the Queen and Baator the same?

MATT: Make a Religion check.

LAURA: All of us or just--?

MATT: All of you, sure. Make a Religion check.

LAURA: 20!

MARISHA: Ten.

LAURA: 12.

MARY: 15.

TRAVIS: 18!

WILL: 24.

LIAM: 13.

TALIESIN: 13.

WILL: 24.

MATT: Okay. None of these ring a bell, except for you, Kashaw. The Dragon Queen is indeed the nemesis of the Platinum Dragon, Bahamut. It is an entity known as Tiamat and is essentially the patron of most chromatic dragons. She resides in Baator, which is one of the Nine Hells.

LAURA: Eugh.

MATT: However, it seems that Vord is speaking in a way that, through much disturbed interest and prayer into this matter, there doesn't seem to be the scent of Tiamat's doing in this matter. And strangely, you see a bit of the tension in his face relax as he tells you this.

LAURA: So, if it's not the nemesis, the big nemesis, then you guys could probably take out these dragons, like, no problem, since they're not the Big Bads, they're just really bad.

MATT: "While these entities do concern us, there is the alternate vow that we've spoken, and that is to protect Vasselheim. The city has stood as long as it has because we have not left our post. And the moment that we were to attempt to move even a minority of our people in the city to be of aid to you in this endeavor, this would be the moment that the Dragon Queen will be waiting for to attack our citadel. There are many more forces beyond these dragons that you speak of in this world, bent against the destruction of this city. And we stand because we hold vigil here."

MARISHA: But, sir, you should understand how close this destruction came from your doorstep.

MATT: "And yet it avoided our city. Do you know why? Because even such creatures know better than to lend their talons against us."

MARISHA: But how do you know that will happen the next time? Is that always where you're going to place your bet?

MATT: "Do you think this will be the first time that ancient dragons have attempted to attack our fair city?"

MARISHA: How about four?

MATT: "I can guarantee you, should they mount an attack on us, four or not, they will fall."

LAURA: Wow, then I guess everyone in the world can just move here.

WILL: Wait a second, you said dragons have attacked before and they were defeated. How?

MATT: "Well, we had the aid of Bahamut with us at that time." And he glances up and you look up and you can see the rays of sun that have come through here, from your current position, you can see actually form a matching symbol. Not of a shield, but of a giant winged dragon outstretched across the curved roof of this temple.

LIAM: But let's talk about--

LAURA: He's saying something.

MARY: Please continue, I'm so sorry.

LIAM: My bad.

WILL: We've been drinking.

MATT: "Drinking?"

WILL: No. Water. Long walk up.

MATT: "Well, understand. I hear your plight. And I understand that we must aid you in this endeavor, best that we can. But we cannot swear to you our army."

LAURA: What sort of aid can you offer then?

MATT: "Well, now, while you seek out whatever your plot is to tear these creatures from their summit, we will grant to you, from our place in the Dawn City, our finest champion. While I have no resources to offer at this time, this champion shall come to your aid to help in any way that

they can. And once they can report their certainty that victory can be had, perhaps we may be able to send a little more of our power your way."

SAM: Will we know the presence of this champion or will it be a silent one?

MATT: "The champion is here." And he steps aside and puts his hand out. And one of the armored knights steps forward, full armor, this tall, wide-chested masculine form. You can't see the face, the helmet protects it, and the shield comes out and slams the ground and goes to kneel on one knee.

"Your charge, Platinum Knight Udire, one of our finest warriors, whom has had time and time again--" At which point you hear a loud (clang) sound as all of a sudden, Udire's thrown off of his feet, his shield bent in and skittering across the ground. You see stepping up behind, a female halfling, scar across the face--

LAURA: Fuck yeah!

MATT: -- gold-trimmed armor, blue cloak behind her, shouting out, "Oh no, you don't! This is my home turf! I'm going."

LAURA: Kima!

MARISHA: Yeah, Kima!

TALIESIN: We'll take that one.

MARISHA: We want that one.

MATT: Highbearer Vord rolls his eyes and sighs loudly. (growls) "Kima, you are in need of discipline and guidance. More than most who walk the Warrior's Path! Your foolish impulses will get you killed!"

MARISHA: I think her foolish impulses are **exactly** what Vox Machina's looking for.

MATT: She grins as she swings her maul, slams it onto the stone ground, a little bit of a rumble as you see a flash of divine energy from that. And a beam from the sky comes down and frames her form as she stands there clutching the top of it. "Better to die a fool for something than live in regret for doing nothing."

TRAVIS: Church!

(laughter)

MATT: An awkward pause as Udire gets back up on his feet and pulls up the front of his helmet. You can see there's a very thin pencil 'stache underneath. A chiseled jaw and a man who looks like probably an intense, chivalrous-type knight gentleman, except there's a look of complete disdain and frustration. He gets up and goes, "Really, her?!" Vord raises his hand and grumbles. "Very well. Your new charge is Lady Kima, whom you are already affiliated. Please keep her from doing anything stupid."

SAM: I think we want her to do her stupidest. Udire, it would have been a swell adventure with you, maybe next time. Sir, thank you for granting us this aid that we will definitely need in our journey. We also are new to this dragon-slaying business and would love your advice and any information you might have, especially about some specific items. Something called the Vestiges of Divergence?

MATT: His eyes squint for a moment as he puts his hands in front of his face. "Hmm. To step against such powerful dragons is indeed a death sentence. It's true that you need to prepare, arm yourselves against this doom. While we are meant to stay here in the most holiest of places, these relics you speak of from before the Second Spark still lie forgotten. Hmph, these elements even bought the Primordials of old, blades that slew the Children of the Dark. Where these relics lie, only story and tome can tell, unfortunately. Know that at any given time, you are not the only ones seeking this power. Consider things of such great strength are perpetually in the minds of those who would make their riches off of them or intend to take their own townships and peasantry under their own boot and gauntlet. Well..."

MARY: Do these Vestiges help you control the dragons? Do you become their leader if you find them?

MATT: "I don't believe any of that such capability, but I also am not a scholar of ancient magics, not that. I have merely come across their whispers in books and various classes I took as a child."

LAURA: What sort of books? Fairy books?

MATT: "There are tomes scattered throughout the city. And there is the Cobalt Reserve."

LAURA: Cobalt Reserve is gone. The dragons took it out.

MATT: "That is unfortunate."

MARISHA: You said these tomes might still be in Vasselheim?

MATT: "Perhaps."

MARISHA: Where?

MATT: "I wish I could tell you. We had one such entrusted to us long ago, but that was destroyed as part of the last assault on Vasselheim that we withstood."

LAURA: Do you remember the description of any of the items from your stories?

SAM: Or how many there were?

MATT: "The stories say of at least a dozen. I can't be certain. I wish I could be of more aid in this, but this is not a path that I chose to learn much on."

MARISHA: And are all artifacts necessary to defeating these dragons?

MATT: "I have no idea."

LAURA: We should probably have asked--

MARISHA: Osysa.

MATT: "Though the warriors that once wielded these in the battles of old only seemed to have carried one or two each."

MARY: How did you defeat them? The dragons that came to your doorstep?

MATT: "That was before my time, my dear."

MARY: There are no legends, there are no scrolls that might recount the tale of how that happened, that you might still have somewhere?

MATT: "Depends. The Second Spark. Hmm." He takes a moment to gather his thoughts as I take a moment to gather my notes.

(laughter)

WILL: While you're doing that, Udire's stuck in his armor over there.

TRAVIS: Dented in.

WILL: He's just dented in, he can't get out.

MATT: He's not happy at all about that.

MATT: Hold on. Got it.

LAURA: Sorry. One moment please.

MARY: Right here, hold on.

LIAM: I've got all my dragon lore over here. Just give me a second.

MATT: "It's a long tale, and I recommend you research the history yourself, but during the times of creation, when the gods first came upon this world, it was a place of chaotic energies, elements clashing. The very landscape itself was in eternal turmoil, wrestling for no purpose other than the destruction of the others. There were no boundaries. Yet the gods still came, and they created us, the various beings and entities. As they came to understand what their purpose was, as they themselves were still uncertain as to why they came to be, they hoped that through their creations, they could learn more about themselves. They began to watch the first burgeoning elves, dwarves, people. Within a short time, a very short time, the very chaotic nature of this landscape consumed and destroyed most of what remained. The only city that stood, the first city: Vasselheim. The titans that walked across these lands, great, primordial elemental kings, beings of no noble mind, sought to destroy any light or beauty. Thus the first war began. The people rose up, the gods' feet touched the ground, and alongside their creations they slew the titans, with the first of these Vestiges. Laying them to rest within the dirt, within the sky, casting the elements away from this plane, and separate to their own, where now they remain, amidst fire, earth, air, water, and their muddy boundaries between.

"Thus came a time of great privilege and prosperity. And it also came to be discovered that some of the gods, as part of creation during this bout with the titans, began to question the purpose of creation, to embrace the chaos that they fought in this battle, and they distanced themselves from the ones that guide us to this day. They began to take the children of the gods, to corrupt them, teach them the wonders of arcana, magics beyond the divine, the gifts of the gods, and for the first time, the creations began to find power separate from the creators. The arrogance to think that perhaps, now, they were gods themselves. Now, they were the gods' creations and they loved them very much, so they did not see this as a threat. But as the second expansion of civilization spread across the world, we saw rise great, new towns and cities and civilizations and cultures, as well as a new wave of insolence and selfishness. And these new dark gods began to prey upon this, and build a force to take those who still stay true to the first. This terrible war, this is what we knew as the Divergence. This is when people were split in two. The gods were divided as well. Bloody battles ensued. And it looked as though, that all other cities fell into ruin, even Vasselheim would fall. But in this time, these Vestiges were expanded upon, those first few weapons, many more were created. And the Champions fought alongside the gods once more. And victory was had, the dark gods banished to various planes, far from this plane. But it was then the gods also decided that perhaps their delving had caused this, and they receded, leaving the mortals to find their own way, to rebuild a second time, with the warning of the dangers of arcane, which Vasselheim still to this day holds in its prime oaths. Many of these Vestiges that you seek were destroyed, but some were kept, some were lost,

some were entombed, some were re-found and rediscovered and used as symbols of power. But since this Second Spark of civilization, the gods felt that the true penance was the destruction of all their people had built, and the gods leaving us to our own. Thus started the Penance, where to this day, we still make up for the infractions and sins of our arrogant brothers and sisters of that day. So, since then, we've had other new civilizations spring up: Wildemount, Tal'Dorei, Syngorn, Marquet. These are the newer cities of the Third Age."

LIAM: May I ask-- Vestiges, the word in these legends, it seems vague. Does no one know anything about what they were? Is that a stand-in for things we don't understand or know about? What are these Vestiges?

MATT: "We know of them. Understand, artifacts and relics of this power are very dangerous. And what better way to hide things of such power than to destroy the knowledge of where they may be or even if they exist?"

MARISHA: Sir, I come from the Ashari people.

MATT: "Yes."

MARISHA: We are here to protect those boundaries that we set several thousand years ago. Do you think that some of this knowledge might still be within my people?

MATT: "It is possible. I am not a practitioner of the history of the Ashari people."

WILL: Objects with that much power have to leave some trace somewhere. Anything you can think of, a place to start.

MATT: "Cobalt Reserve. There the monks keep some of the most ancient of texts. We here at Vasselheim keep a watchful eye on things that relate to the wars of old, the history of our deities, of our temples, to not repeat the mistakes we have. The monks have the more eclectic of collections. Perhaps they can be of more aid."

LAURA: Maybe not all of the Reserve was destroyed. Maybe they have secret rooms underground, where they keep the most ancient texts. We should at least check.

TALIESIN: It would be worth looking, at the very least.

LAURA: Allura was on her way there.

SAM: Highbearer. These dragons who are running rampant across the world, them being chromatic dragons, do you think they have pledged their loyalty to the Queen?

MATT: "If they have, it's a very-- no, they would not be able to shroud the sight of the Platinum Dragon himself."

LAURA: Isn't it very strange for the dragons to pledge their allegiance to any other dragon?

MATT: "For chromatics, it is."

LAURA: Then why are they serving the red one?

MATT: "The red one?"

TRAVIS: The Cinder King.

LAURA: Thordak.

MARISHA: That's what he calls himself.

LAURA: He's ancient. He was in the Fire Realm-- the Fire Plane and broke free. And now he has other dragons serving him.

MATT: "Chromatic dragons respond to a few things: gold, dominance, and strength. If this red dragon is as ancient and as powerful as you say, perhaps he, even he, could bully lesser dragons."

MARISHA: Or do you think it is possible he is offering any one of those rewards?

MATT: "There are many possibilities. You would have to ask one of them yourself."

TALIESIN: I get the distinct feeling we will get that chance.

MARISHA: So, if this is the Third Age, does that mean the Fourth is upon us?

MATT: "I hope not."

MARISHA: As do I.

MATT: "But if it does, we will do everything we can to see that this city stands. It is the only link we have to the past. Should Vasselheim fall, I dare say all is lost."

MARY: At the cost of everything else, Vasselheim stands? That's my only question.

MATT: "That is your question?"

MARY: Yes.

MATT: "From here, civilization could spring anew. People could defend themselves and thrive thereafter. The rest of the world is scattered. Petty squabbles, selfish personal endeavors that lead to foolishness and treachery. Should this city fall, and one of those remain, that is a breeding ground for the dark powers that lie beyond the Veil. It is only here that those who are the most devout could truly have the hearts and minds to guide us, Bahamut forbid, into a Fourth Age."

SAM: Well, thank you for all your help. One more question before we leave you to your--

MATT: Which you see, Kima slams her hammer on the ground. "Oh my god! Can we just go? I'm sick of hearing him rattle on."

Vord puts his hand out. "Kima!"

SAM: On our journey, we may have to travel long distances quite often. Is there any means of quick travel to other parts of the continent from Vasselheim?

LAURA: Perhaps any flying carpets that you have lying around?

SAM: Airships, teleportation circles, any means that you know.

MATT: "We do not deal in such teleportation magics beyond the divine, provided ones are those I assume are beyond most of you. However, there is still the Skyport, which I believe you arrived in when you first came to us? Other than that, if none among you are able to achieve any sort of distance translocation, then I highly doubt you have the ability to stand up against these dragons you seek to destroy."

MARISHA: We got it. It's fine. It's handled.

LAURA: Thank you for the vote of confidence.

TALIESIN: I think we have everything we need here.

LAURA: Yes, unless you have any amulets or magical things lying around?

SAM: How's that Horn of Orcus going, by the way?

MARISHA: Good question, actually.

MATT: "Shh!"

SAM: Oh, sorry.

TALIESIN: Ix-nay on the orn-hay.

SAM: Sorry.

MATT: "And with that--"

LAURA: So no on the magic items? Of protection?

MATT: "I have business for the day."

LAURA: Cool.

WILL: I'm not going to ask him how his family is.

SAM: No, don't do that.

MATT: "Show our guests out, please."

"With pleasure." Slings her maul up on her shoulder. "Let's step outside first."

MARISHA: Yeah.

MATT: And she leads you all outside, the temple doors close. As soon as the doors close, she tells the two guards, "Shove off, please. We have to have a conversation." The guards kind of, frustratingly, turn around and go back and close the door. As soon as the doors close behind them, she goes, "Oh my god, guys!"

(cheering)

MATT: She rushes out, gives hugs to everyone that she knows. She skips you, asks to be introduced to-- "And--"

LAURA: Zahra. Kima.

MARY: I'm Zahra.

MATT: "Zahra, nice to meet you."

MARY: Nice to meet you, Kima.

MATT: "Kima. Lady Kima."

MARY: Lady Kima. Lady. All right.

MARISHA: And have you met Kash? Kashaw.

WILL: Kashaw. Vesh.

MATT: "Hmph."

WILL: All right then.

MATT: "You're brooding."

WILL: Don't mean to be. It's been a rough-- yes. Thank you.

(laughter)

MATT: "All right, so. I caught some of that discussion. Dragons? What are we after here?"

SAM: Big scary dragons.

MATT: "I tend to glaze over when he's talking."

LAURA: Emon's gone, Kima.

TRAVIS: Yeah, basically four big fuck-off Chromatic dragons destroyed Emon and then Westruun and-- Allura was there, she was very upset.

MATT: "Is she all right? Is Allie all right?"

TALIESIN: She's fine.

TRAVIS: Yeah, Allie is fine.

LIAM: We just parted ways with her--(groans) I have such a headache.

TALIESIN: Two days ago.

MATT: "My home temple's in Westruun."

TRAVIS: Oh.

LAURA: We should definitely go there. We need to look at the Cobalt Reserve as well. We need to meet up with Allura, though. She was-- (sighs).

MATT: "All right, well. I'm with you. Wherever you need me."

MARISHA: I just pass Vax my water canteen on the sly.

LIAM: And I very obviously chug the entire thing.

MATT: "A few of you started early. I'm jealous."

MARISHA: Kima, it's been very hard since we last saw you.

MATT: "I can see it on your faces. You all look a bit harrowed.

TRAVIS: Hairy?

MATT: "You surprise me day after day, Grog."

TRAVIS: Why, thank you. Don't have to hide it around me, it's okay.

MATT: "All right, where are we off to?"

LAURA: That's a good question.

MARISHA: Where are we going?

WILL: Cobalt Reserve, you said twice.

LAURA: Yes, but that's in Westruun.

SAM: It's been destroyed.

LAURA: Not necessarily, I mean yes, it's fucked up.

TRAVIS: We still need to go talk to Earthbearer Groon and see what kind of lesson was there.

MARISHA: I also really need to check out the Fire Ashari.

TALIESIN: Fire Ashari are on the way.

LIAM: Let's count out the things that we want to do. Not what we're going to choose, just what we have to do, and then we'll choose something. We've got the Cobalt Reserve, which may or may not be totally fucked, right?

MARY: It could give us information about these dragons.

MARISHA: We need to go by there regardless. We need to stop by Westruun.

LIAM: Okay. So there's Osysa's mate.

LAURA: That's down by Westruun.

LIAM: Down by Westruun, in the mountains.

MARISHA: That's on the way.

LIAM: Yeah. We've got your people.

MARISHA: Also on the way out the door.

LAURA: It is?

MARISHA: It's not far from here.

MATT: It's roughly three days' travel, southwest outside Vasselheim.

LAURA: But there's trees.

MARISHA: There are trees. I can also pop through a tree. I can pop through a tree through most places. Pop through a tree and get us to Westruun, as long as we go take a nap.

LIAM: Three options. Are we forgetting anything?

LAURA: And Grog wants to talk to--

TRAVIS: Earthbearer Master Splinter.

MARISHA: Earthbreaker.

TALIESIN: While we charter a ship.

MARISHA: Percy really wants an airship. Dear gods, does he want an airship.

TALIESIN: What a perfect way to make our way quickly and efficiently.

LIAM: Let's just talk--

MARISHA: Quickly? Efficiently?

WILL: You can go through trees?

MARISHA: I can.

SAM: Only trees she's seen and knows very well.

TRAVIS: But the Earthbreaker is here.

MARISHA: Luckily, all places that we are going, we've been to.

LIAM: I mean, if we're spiraling out, right? Earthbreaker's here, Ashari are close by, and then we're talking about in and around Westruun.

LAURA: Yeah. So let's go to the Earthbreaker.

TRAVIS: Yeah, let's go to the Earthbreaker.

TALIESIN: Followed by the Ashari.

SAM: Followed by the airship.

TALIESIN: Followed by the airship.

MATT: "Earthbreaker. As in Dawn Marshal? The great Dawn Marshal who--? (chuckles) I've only seen him from a distance. He's a rough-looking fella."

TRAVIS: Yeah, right. He's got a pair of arms on him, doesn't he?

MATT: "I'm excited to see this." Puts it over her shoulder and she's walking down, her little legs (clanging) with her armor down the stairs.

TRAVIS: Hold up, Kima. Hold up. What do you mean? Have you spoken with him before?

MATT: "I've seen him punch someone's head clear off."

LAURA: Off of his body?

SAM: That is so cool.

WILL: You only turn them into paste.

LIAM: Level up.

TRAVIS: I'm excited.

MARY: Oh! Oh dear.

MATT: "Ha ha ha ha! You're not the only one!" And she continues rushing ahead. You get the feeling that Kima's been locked up and been doing temple stuff for quite some time and is very happy to get out of her general duties.

LIAM: Lead the way, shitkicker!

MATT: You guys head back down the outside of the Heaven's Stair, making your way back down to the outside of the Trial Forge. You can still see now it's middle of the afternoon, all the forges throughout the town are in full steam. You see big plumes of black smoke pouring out of the various steelworks.

MARISHA: On our way there, I pace next to Kash. So, do you-- have you met Kima?

WILL: No.

MARISHA: I get the feeling that you guys knew each other.

WILL: No. Never met Kima in my life. She didn't seem to like me very much, which is odd, because everyone else seems to think I'm an amazing guy. Vax and Vex, everyone telling me they love my eyes, they love this-- I don't know, it's weird. Bunch of your friends are just very weird.

MARISHA: You seem really put off by it. I didn't know it was so--

WILL: I'm not used to being around people all the time. I have one real friend, and that's Z. I'm only with her because she saved my life. I'd do anything for her. Everybody else is odd for me.

MARISHA: Yeah, I feel that.

WILL: There is one thing I wanted to say to you, though, about our kiss. I'm very happy that it happened. But I shouldn't have stolen it. And for that, I apologize.

MARISHA: You don't need to apologize. I also don't ever want to hurt anyone.

WILL: Of course.

MARISHA: Physically or emotionally.

WILL: Nor me.

MARISHA: Okay.

WILL: Well, I'm glad we got that cleared up.

(laughter)

MATT: So as you guys approach the outside steps leading up to the doors of the Trial Forge, you can see the large rust red-colored monument, Temple to Kord. Very rigid and very much a temple built to withstand. It's a fortress more than a temple. And you see above it still, across the lip at the very top at the front walkway, a little bit of the Kord statue, looking over the entirety of this section of Vasselheim.

TRAVIS: Oh boy.

MATT: The doors are actually ajar, they're open.

TRAVIS: Oh!

MATT: There are two Dawn Marshals there in their armor with the colors of Kord. As you approach, they step out of the way.

LAURA: Ooh.

TRAVIS: Yes, clearly my presence is recognized in this great hall. Good day, good day.

(laughter)

TRAVIS: Wouldst thou care to follow me inside?

SAM: Let's do this.

LIAM: Verily, verily.

LAURA: Huzzah, I say, my Lord.

MARISHA: My liege.

MATT: As you walk in, the two Dawn Marshals that are out there put their arms together and they lower their head and bow. And as you enter, they close the doors behind you guys. The doors slam behind you and you feel the stone shift from the impact of the thud. 20-, 30-foot-tall doors that mark the front of this.

TRAVIS: It's all right. Pucker up, we're okay.

MATT: The echo of the stone slam down the long hall. You can see there are large pillars that mark the run to the central chamber. You've been here before, and as you walk across the smooth, very, very simple stonework ahead, you can see there is the central portion. It's almost like a giant cross, like both sides of the temple meet in the center. And there is a circular dip in the ground. Not really a pit, it's only about four feet down. But it's filled with a coarse sand, and as you guys walk up to that edge, each monk acknowledging you as you pass quietly, you can hear the gentle chanting in the distance of low, rumbling Gregorian voices, (chanting). And there, sitting in the center of this open circular sand patch, is the Earthbreaker himself. He is sitting there, legs crossed, arms resting at the edge of his knees, eyes closed. You can see, even from here for those who haven't seen him before, he wears simple free-flowing pants of a dark reddish color with a gold trim on the sides, but they're tattered towards the bottom. He has a one-shoulder wrap across the front there and these large prayer beads that hang around his neck. His skin is very dark and weathered by sun and training, and he is probably the most muscular human being you have seen for his proportional form, he is a human being built for discipline and physical martial training and battle. Older though, still you can see his long grey beard that rests about middle to his chest, the balding on the front a little bit, the rest of his grey hair rests to his mid-back, and he just sits there quietly in the center. The rest of the monks have gathered up and begun to form around the circle.

TRAVIS: How many monks, would you say?

MATT: Right now, about 15?

TRAVIS: One-five.

MATT: Yeah.

LAURA: Are they talking at all or are they all super-quiet?

MATT: Super-quiet.

TRAVIS: I walk up to within 20 feet of Earthbreaker Groon.

MATT: Okay, so you leap down into the sandpit?

TRAVIS: Yeah.

MATT: Okay, so, you guys on the side. Grog, you leap off.

TRAVIS: How deep is it lowered?

MATT: You don't know how deep it is, but it's, it's not, it's hard sand, it's packed, so you just kind of--

TRAVIS: Yeah, but I meant the depression, is it like a couple feet?

MATT: Right, the depression's like an inch.

TRAVIS: Okay, cool.

MATT: Oh, you mean the depression into the actual ground?

TRAVIS: Yeah.

MATT: About four feet.

TRAVIS: Oh, shit. Yeah. So.

MATT: So you vault into it in a bound.

TRAVIS: Does he move at all?

MATT: No. He's still facing a little bit away from you in the far corner.

TRAVIS: I put my fist in my hand and I bow slightly. Does he move at all?

MATT: The silence is broken immediately by a low, rumbling voice that seems to have no particular source in the vicinity where you stand. It says, "You come because your lands now harbor a terrible conflagration. How do you think Groon can assist?" Still facing away from you.

TRAVIS: We have traveled near and far, great Grood.

MARISHA: It's like Sesame Street.

TRAVIS: And we would like to request upon you a moment of your time?

WILL: Why is he doing the talking? Why is he doing the talking?

MATT: As most of you noticed this time, his name is Groon.

(laughter)

MATT: At which point he stands up, and, you know, would only come to about your sternum, height-wise, but he's just this tense, every muscle is seemingly, there's not an ounce of fat on this body and--

TRAVIS: Like a protein shake.

MATT: Yeah.

SAM: Paleo.

MATT: Turns around towards you and says, "You stray from the darkness that I warned you, but this current distraction is too great. Even your blood is drawn to the flames of promise and power. This shall be a test to see if you will break against the shadow."

SAM: What shall be a test?

LAURA: What's the test?

MATT: "I know many things, Grog Strongjaw."

TRAVIS: He said my full name.

MATT: "But such knowledge is earned, not given."

MARISHA: (whispers) Shit, you might have to fight this motherfucker.

MATT: "Where do you find your strength?"

LIAM: (whispers) What's he talking about, Grog?

MATT: As you're thinking, in a blinding instant you see a flash of movement and, like a dagger in your stomach, his elbow is (impact sound).

(groaning)

MATT: Three feet in an instant and has slammed you right in the center of your abdomen. The breath just escapes you as you fall back, unable to really catch yourself, and just land flat on your back in the sand.

TRAVIS: (wheezing sounds)

MARISHA: We're all hanging back.

MATT: Puts his arm down.

MARISHA: Just watching.

MATT: "Strongjaw. Where do you find your strength?"

TRAVIS: In my anger.

MATT: "You walk between worlds. Weakness in mind or weakness in conviction. What do you stand for? Where do you find your strength?" At which point, as you're getting up, there's another blinding flash for a second and your feet are left out from under you. Go ahead and make an athletics check, because you're now prepared for this one.

WILL: Jeez.

TALIESIN: Gonna get smackdown.

TRAVIS: 19.

MATT: Your feet go out from under you as you slam onto your back, you just barely caught your breath before it's almost knocked out again. He's looking down at you this time, once again, his eyes just white. "Choose. Choose the two here who would save you."

TRAVIS: (whispers) Pike's not here.

MATT: "Who would push you to your potential. Choose your bloody muses."

SAM: Does he mean us, or?

TRAVIS: Do they have to be here?

MATT: He looks over to the rest of you on the side of the pit. "Choose."

TRAVIS: (sighs) I choose my buddy Pike.

SAM: She's not here.

TRAVIS: I don't care, I just say it anyway. I choose Vax and I choose Scanlan.

SAM: We give him his strength, sir.

MATT: As you finish that sentence, two monks that you failed to notice were behind you shove both of you into the bit. Make acrobatics checks, both of you guys.

SAM: (laughing nervously) Not my kind of fight! Oh, I got a ten.

LIAM: 34.

MATT: Okay.

(laughter)

MATT: You tumble, catch Grog's arm, and lift him onto his feet as you land yourself at his side.

MATT: Scanlan is face-down in the sand.

SAM: Are we talking still?

LIAM: I would just like to point out that I am mostly sober.

MATT: Groon takes two steps back and just closes his eyes and puts his arms at his sides. "Now. Show me your conviction."

MARISHA: Oh snap!

MATT: I need you three to roll initiative.

ALL: Oh!

LIAM: Natural 20! 25 off a natural 20!

WILL: Oh snap! Shit's getting real.

MATT: The statues that're set at the edge of this, we're gonna put you, Grog, there--

LAURA: Look at the coolness that's been created on this map!

MATT: And boom.

LAURA: So cool! This is awesome, Matt!

MARY: Look how little they are!

MATT: I'll just move it this way a little bit, just so you guys can see, there we go.

LIAM: I'm peeing just a little bit.

MARY: Oh my goodness.

LAURA: Hey you guys, don't die!

MATT: All right, so. Let me get Groon's sheet out here.

SAM: Is it just us against one person?

TRAVIS: Yep.

LAURA: He's really strong.

MARISHA: He's gonna kick your guys's asses.

WILL: Can you see, do you want to switch seats so you can see? Okay.

SAM: No, I can see on the screen.

MATT: Okay, so. 25 to 20?

LIAM: 25 off a natural 20.

MATT: All right. 20 to 15?

TRAVIS: 19.

SAM: 16.

MATT: 16, Scanlan. All right, perfect. First up's first. You, Vax. Just standing with his arm up.

LIAM: Click my Boots of Haste.

(laughter)

MARY: Click 'em hard!

LIAM: And use my bonus action to hide behind Grog's thigh and hold my turn.

MATT: Until what, what's your trigger?

LIAM: Until Grog moves towards the Earthbreaker.

MATT: Okay.

LIAM: When he does it I'm gonna go with him and hit him if I can.

MATT: Well, your movement is in your turn, it's your action you have to hold.

LIAM: Oh boy. Oh boy.

MATT: So. Are you gonna wait behind him?

LIAM: Well, let me just think for ten seconds only.

MATT: Can't, you've got-- dude.

LIAM: Yeah, okay, so, I use my bonus action to hide. Do I need to roll for that?

MATT: Yes, you do.

LIAM: Yeah. That's a--

LAURA: Ohh.

LIAM: No, that's fine, because remember, I'm me. So that is, that's a twenty-five.

MATT: Okay.

LIAM: I guess behind Grog.

MATT: He has no idea where you are.

LIAM: No, I'm going to throw fucking daggers at this guy!

MATT: Go for it.

LIAM: Because I'm first. Oh my god. I am. First is 24?

MATT: 24 hits.

LIAM: And then, so I used my bonus action to hide, which means I can do two, right? So the second is not that great.

TRAVIS: I don't know what you're so worried about.

LIAM: Using Luck. Better. Second is a 30.

MATT: Yeah, both hit.

LIAM: Okay, now. This is, I'm the first to attack, which means that it is-- Ooh, it's a 19.

MATT: What's the range increment on this?

LIAM: I'm Sharpshooter, man.

MATT: Right, but what's the max range?

LIAM: Sixty.

MATT: Yeah, you're fine.

LIAM: Okay, so. I'm hidden behind Grog so it should be sneak attack, and I'm the first to go so it's a crit.

MATT: You're the first to go, it is a crit. It is not a sneak attack.

LIAM: It's not a sneak attack? Even though I used my bonus to hide behind Grog's big fat leg?

MATT: Where could you possibly be, Vax?

LIAM: He's huge! All right, okay.

MATT: Where could you have possibly hidden from his sight in the middle of this giant open sandy arena?

WILL: He's disappeared!

LIAM: I'm drunk and fighting in a pit!

MATT: It's okay. But it is double damage.

LIAM: All right, all right. So there is no sneak attack, but it is crit, right? Because I'm the first to attack?

LAURA: Yeah.

MATT: Well no, it's surprise, not the first to attack. He is not surprised.

LIAM: He's not surprised.

MATT: No. It's not first, it's just surprised.

LIAM: Oh god. I'm drunk, tell me what's going on.

MATT: You hit him twice, roll damage.

MARISHA: I know, I'm so confused.

LIAM: One plus seven's eight, and then eight. Eight and eight.

LAURA: (laughs) That's almost as good as all those other things you did today.

MATT: The first one, he deflects with his hand and it cuts the arm and you can see the little slash of damage it dealt. The second one, he's gonna use his reaction to do deflect missiles.

MARISHA: That's cool. That's some Bruce Lee shit.

MATT: (laughs) Yeah. He reduces the damage entirely, spends one of his ki points, he catches the dagger and throws it right back at you.

LIAM: Okay, I'm gonna use Uncanny Dodge.

MATT: Not back at you, though. Because you're currently behind Grog.

SAM: Hi!

(laughter)

LAURA: Are you still face-down in the sand?

SAM: What's going on?

MATT: That's 18 to hit.

SAM: That hits.

MATT: Okay. So you take 12 points of piercing damage. As he chucks Vax's dagger back at you, it sinks into your shoulder suddenly before it vanishes and returns to your belt.

LIAM: Oh, I'm sorry.

SAM: All I've heard was "Scanlan."

(laughter)

SAM: "My buddy Scanlan."

MARISHA: (laughs) That's true, that is all you heard.

MATT: All right. Now it is Groon's turn.

MATT: Groon is going to rush up to the front of Grog-- actually no, to the side here so you're both in combat, technically, and is going to make a flurry of blows attack using another one of his ki points. So that's gonna be four attacks, all against you, Grog.

TRAVIS: Okay.

MATT: So that's a 27, hits, I'm pretty sure. Cocked. 26

TRAVIS: (laughing) 27, 26?

MATT: 16?

TRAVIS: Oh, it misses!

(laughter)

MATT: And 28.

TRAVIS: Yeah, that hits too.

MARISHA: What the fuck is this guy's base? What?

WILL: This is when you want to be fighting Wil Wheaton.

(laughter)

MATT: Okay, you take--

TALIESIN: He's doing a lot of math.

MATT: 31 points of bludgeoning damage. And his kick just-- whack!-- right across the jaw. You haven't even raged yet, and the pain is intense, your vision goes white for a second. And go ahead and make a dex saving throw.

LAURA: Oh man!

TRAVIS: Seven.

MATT: As his fourth action, sweeps your feet out from under you and you are knocked prone on the ground.

MARISHA: Oh, shit. This guy's a badass.

LAURA: He gets four actions?

MARISHA: Monks, man.

MATT: That's his turn. Grog, you're up now.

WILL: And we can't do anything?

TALIESIN: Well, if you want to get involved.

TRAVIS: (panting) I. Would like. To rage. I'd like to stand up, please.

(laughter)

TRAVIS: Do I have to roll for that?

MATT: No no no, you just use half your movement for that.

TRAVIS: I take out Craven Edge, and I'd like to swing twice against him.

MATT: Go for it.

TRAVIS: That's a 25?

MATT: 25 hits.

TRAVIS: 25 hits, that's good. And a 17.

MATT: Misses.

TRAVIS: Misses. 18. 21 points of damage.

MATT: 21 points of damage. All righty.

TRAVIS: And roll for the DC.

MATT: Yeah, he makes it.

TRAVIS: Son of a bitch.

MATT: (laughs) Sorry. All right, so.

TRAVIS: Can I move, or is getting up my movement?

MATT: You can move, yeah.

TRAVIS: I want to move around, just stay right next to him, but move around behind him.

MATT: Right there, you mean?

TRAVIS: Yeah.

MATT: Vax is there, then that would be your flanking potential there. Okay. Cool. That ends your turn. Scanlan, you're up.

SAM: Did Grog moving activate Vax? Didn't you hold your turn or something?

LAURA: No, he didn't.

WILL: He chucked knives.

SAM: I'm gonna stand up out of the sand. And I will, eeeee, I will--

(laughter)

SAM: I will look extremely weak and I will sing a song to him.

(laughter)

SAM: I will attempt to cast, with the horn, Eyebite on him, and I'll sing, (singing) My my my, eye bitten twice shy.

(laughter)

WILL: Wow. Best fight ever.

MATT: All righty, and that is Eyebite. All right, so it's a-- you said wisdom save?

SAM: It's a wisdom save.

MATT: All right. What's the DC?

SAM: It's 19.

MATT: No, he fails it. So what are you doing?

SAM: This is a good question. I don't know what to do. Should I make him fall asleep? I think no. Because we want this fight to continue, that would sort of end it, won't it?

LAURA: Do whatever you want, I dunno.

WILL: That's a great look.

TALIESIN: Do something funny.

SAM: Yeah, I want him to go to sleep in the sand.

MATT: (laughs) Okay.

SAM: Just curl up in the fetal position.

MATT: Okay. Okay, what happens is, as soon as you move around, Grog, and you sing at him? He glances over at you for a second and his eyes roll back and he (impact sound) and just falls back in the sand, unconscious.

LIAM: Scanlan Shorthalt.

MARY: Ladies and gentlemen.

SAM: That was a quick fight.

MATT: At which point, all the monks currently are gasping in immediate reaction.

(laughter)

MATT: As he's currently unconscious and affected by Eyebite. All right, do you want to move or are you staying where you are on your turn? Bonus action?

SAM: I mean, he can't swipe at me if I walk away, so I'm gonna get away from him. Although he can move super fast. I'll get a little bit away.

TRAVIS: Now in the middle of the room.

SAM: And I'll inspire Grog, in case this fight continues, and I will sing--

MATT: Actually, you know what? No, go ahead. I forgot to read something. Go ahead. My own fault.

SAM: I will sing: (singing) Hail to the goliaths, hail victory, blood on the warpath, fight for Vax and me.

(laughter)

TRAVIS: That's the best.

MATT: Take your d10.

SAM: (whispers) That's the Redskins' fight song.

(yelling)

LIAM: That is amazing!

TALIESIN: Thank you, that was genius.

TRAVIS: I ain't using it.

(yelling)

MARY: As the worlds collide.

MATT: That ends Scanlan's turn. Vax, you're up.

LIAM: Grog, Grog, Grog, do we really want to do this? He's down, he's asleep!

SAM: What do we do?

LIAM: Are we doing this, are we really doing this? He's asleep.

TRAVIS: What, like, so if we hit him, does he wake up?

SAM: He will, but you get, you'll get a few licks in.

LIAM: We're not trying to kill him, we want him to work with us.

TRAVIS: You fucking end him and you end him now.

SAM: Yeah, kill him.

LIAM: Excuse me? All right, so, I use disen-- no, I don't have to.

SAM: No, he's asleep.

LIAM: Yeah, okay. So I got two daggers in my hands, and they spin around in my hand, and I just start beating him in the head.

MATT: All right, go for it.

SAM: I assume this is a sneak attack since he can't see it.

LIAM: Yes, it is, because Grog's right there.

SAM: He will wake up after this.

LIAM: 21.

TRAVIS: Yeah, but he might not hit him anyway, he rolls for it.

SAM: I don't know, actually.

MATT: As you go and attempt to strike him-- You had advantage on the attacks, by the way, because he's on the ground.

LIAM: Oh, well then it is a 32.

MATT: Okay. Good. That hits.

LIAM: And then the second one is a 27 and the third one is a 17.

MATT: First two hit.

LIAM: First two hit, and the first one is sneak attack with the blunt edge.

MATT: Right. Which is doubled because he's unconscious.

LIAM: Yeah it is.

MATT: Melee attack within five feet.

LIAM: Oh, I'm so sorry! Nine. Plus-- Whoa. That is ten, 16, 22, 23, 25, is 50? Plus the-- 59. 59 for the first.

MATT: 59. Hoo.

LIAM: Ooh, that's the wrong one. And then the second dagger does ten.

MATT: Ten. So as you-- whack!-- hit him in the head, he immediately comes back to consciousness.

LIAM: And I'm gonna use my movement to run around and to roll around behind Grog's buttocks.

MATT: Okay. As you move aside, even on the ground, prone, he swings his leg out to try and catch you as you're running past.

LIAM: Acrobatics?

MATT: He has disadvantage on this anyway. That is still a 24 to hit.

LIAM: To hit? Oh, that's an attack. Even when he was unconscious?

MATT: Well, he woke up after you slammed him, second attack hits, and in reaction as he sees you rush off, he kicks his leg up and manages to catch you.

LIAM: Yeah, I'm feeling that.

MATT: It doesn't manage to trip you, but it does deal--

LIAM: Uncanny dodge.

MATT: So you deal half the damage on that. All right. So you take-- It would be twelve points of damage, you take six points of bludgeoning damage.

LIAM: Ah, fucking ankle. Come on.

WILL: It was still uncanny.

MATT: It was quite uncanny. All right, that ends your turn?

LIAM: Yes.

MATT: All right. It's now his turn. All right, so.

LIAM: I'm so acrobatic.

TRAVIS: We're waiting to see if he's awake or not.

MATT: So yeah, until the spell ends, you can use your action every turn to try and give him another effect if you wanted to, Scanlan. So he still has Eyebite, but he's conscious.

SAM: Can I change the effect, or does it always have to be--

MATT: You can if you want to, when it comes to your next turn, but it has to be on your turn to use your action to do it. He gets up using half his movement. Which is fine. He's going to, as he looks over and you can see him glance to the side of Grog and see where you are, as the giant crack in the side of his head and the blood that's trickling down the side of his face, he just rushes around, still in melee with you so he doesn't get an attack of opportunity, and he's gonna go unarmed attacks on you for three. Natural 20. That's gonna be 17.

LIAM: No.

MATT: With your haste, yeah, you get a bonus, so that's a miss. And that is a 25.

LIAM: That hits. Two of those hit.

MATT: All right. So the crit, 28 points of bludgeoning damage. And the last one is gonna be 14 points of bludgeoning damage. And he's going to use three ki points. As he comes around, elbows you to the side of the face, you just weren't expecting it and it cracks you and you feel like a tooth crack and the pain sears through your jaw and you're like, ugh! And then he brings his lower hand and (impact) hits you right in the center of the abdomen, and it hits you, and it hurts, but it's not as impactful as you thought it would be for the force, but you feel like this strange, like, quivering vibration in your midsection, like almost like the muscles are spasming uncontrollably and you don't quite understand why. That is going to end his turn. Grog, you're up.

TRAVIS: No! And I go into a frenzied rage. If it's gonna be an ass-beating we take, we might as well just get on with it. And I'll use reckless attack and great weapon master against him.

MATT: Okay, go for it.

TRAVIS: Which means he gets advantage on everything against me, but fuck it, he's hitting anyway. Oh, 19, so close. 28.

MATT: 28 hits.

TRAVIS: 23?

MATT: 23 hits.

TRAVIS: 16.

MATT: Misses.

TRAVIS: Damn it. Those were high. Okay.

LAURA: You could've used your inspiration.

SAM: It's true.

TRAVIS: I'm not listening to any of you.

(laughter)

TRAVIS: 32 on the first one.

MATT: Nice.

WILL: That's hysterical. RG3 could've helped.

TRAVIS: Four, nine, 17, 27 on the second one, and the third one missed.

MATT: Third missed, all right. Succeeds on the first save with an 18-- and a 19, yeah. Saves both hits from Craven Edge. As you slam the blade into him twice, he's trying to parry them, and he's catching the blade off to the side, but the strength is too strong and you end up jamming it into his forearm. As you pull away, the blood streaks out. Each hit, he's still focused on you, and he's not showing any pain, he's not grimacing. You're just seeing the wounds being had and he's just still intent on moving and his expression focused on you.

TRAVIS: He made both those checks okay?

MATT: Yeah. And at that moment he looks at you and says, "You carry such a dark weapon with you." That's all he says. Is that the end of your turn?

TRAVIS: Yeah.

MATT: All right. Scanlan.

SAM: He's still eyebitten.

MATT: Correct, yes. Actually, let's see, he has to save at the end of his turn. Which, he rolled a one, so no.

SAM: All right. Instead of sleeping this time, I would like him to just get sick. Be sick. I want him to be sick now.

MARY: What kind of sick?

LAURA: Like, pukey or like the other one?

SAM: Oh, he has like diarrhea.

MARISHA: That's the worst.

LAURA: Oh man. That's so embarrassing.

MATT: All righty. Yeah. As you keep focusing, you can see his form shifts a little bit, and you swear you hear the cramping of someone's abdominals in the distance, like an unhappy digestive tract.

SAM: You didn't sleep well, did you? No?

LIAM: Like a tree cracking in the wind from this guy.

SAM: And I will turn to Vax this time and inspire him, and I will say, (singing) Kill that monk-y douchebag, white boy. Kill that monk-y douchebag right. Take out your daggers and kill that monk-y douchebag 'til he dies.

(laughter)

MATT: Take your d10 inspiration.

LIAM: Okay, got it, got it, got it.

MATT: Okay, that brings us to the top. Is that the end of your turn, are you gonna move or anything else--

SAM: I'll move a little further away, it won't really help.

MATT: All right. You're up.

LIAM: He's still pressed up against Grog, right?

MATT: Correct.

LIAM: All right, I'm gonna use disengage and pivot around Grog, right, run all around the circle and get behind Scanlan.

SAM: Oh shit. I was trying to get away from him!

MATT: Like that?

LIAM: Yeah. And I'm gonna throw two daggers at him, yeah. The first one's, okay, natural 20! Wait, it's natural 20 on top of a sneak attack, what happens?

MATT: Yeah, you double the sneak-attack damage.

LIAM: You double the sneak-attack?

MATT: It's a critical hit, all the dice you roll for a critical hit you double.

TRAVIS: Picked you for a reason, add that shit up, man.

MATT: And then you add the ability modifier at the end. So yes.

LIAM: Let me take a moment.

(laughter)

MATT: Rogues, baby.

MARISHA: Get the blood back in your head.

LIAM: Okay, that's a nine. Okay. Think I want to savor this.

WILL: He looks giddy, he looks giddy, it's great.

LIAM: All right. So. Oh my god. (counting)

TRAVIS: It's so juicy, so savory.

LIAM: 23 doubled, quadrupled--

MATT: Not quadrupled. Doubled.

LIAM: 23. 28.

MATT: It's doubled, not quadrupled.

LIAM: Not quadrupled, oh! So sneak attack is not doubled, then on top-- All right.

MARISHA: But that's what you said. That's not what you said!

MATT: It's not a surprise attack.

LIAM: So it doesn't stack.

MATT: No.

LIAM: Yeah, but he's, he's up against Grog. So I get--

MATT: Which is meaning you get sneak attack. So you're doing sneak-attack damage on him, you critically hit, so you just double your sneak attack damage.

SAM: Just take your 80 points of damage, not your 160 points.

LIAM: So I double sneak-attack damage.

MATT: Yeah. You said quadruple, it's not quadruple, it's just times two.

LIAM: 23, the sneak-attack damage is--

LAURA: That's 28. Times two.

LIAM: 56. All right. Yeah.

MARY: That's good, there's no disappointment there.

TALIESIN: And now you add your knife.

LIAM: 68.

MATT: Oh, total of 68? Gotcha.

LIAM: Critical hit on a sneak attack. Got it, got it, got it.

MATT: He is going to use a ki point to deflect missiles.

LIAM: I'm gonna use my last bit of Luck so that he has to roll again.

MATT: Okay. All right. It's not an attack roll on this yet, just so you're aware.

LIAM: Okay.

MATT: This is him just reducing the damage he takes from it.

LIAM: Oh, all right.

MATT: So that is a total of, he reduces the damage by 13, he still takes the impact, but he manages to slow the blade with his hands before it finds itself in his chest and he rips it out, you can see the spray of blood that hits in the sand across the front before the dagger disappears from his grip.

LIAM: And I duck behind Scanlan.

MATT: All right.

SAM: Don't hide behind me!

LIAM: Yeah, sure. It's, that was a four, ten.

MATT: Nope. This one--

LIAM: No, I rolled, I rolled a bunch of times. Didn't I roll a bunch of times? Okay, all right, well. She rolled a 20.

MATT: For nothing.

LIAM: I rolled a, oh that did fine. It's a 27.

MATT: Wait, so you did a total of 60-something damage on him from the one attack?

LAURA: Yeah.

MATT: Yeah, got you, yes, the second one does--

LIAM: Second one is ten.

MATT: Yeah. So the second one attack hits. Go ahead and roll for it. Or roll for damage.

LIAM: Nine.

MATT: Nine, okay. Cool. Cool.

LIAM: I'm scared to death, which is why the math is so bad.

MATT: That's good. Well, as it comes back to Groon's turn, Groon, you can see the blood is just pouring out of the wound that you left, he takes one hand and just (impact sound) slams it really hard, and it just kind of, the impact sears the wound. Cauterizing it.

LIAM: Don't want to be fighting you.

MATT: Still looking at you. He puts his hand out and does this, and that quivering in your stomach you felt earlier begins to shake and the vibrations begin to spread through your entire body. I need you to make a constitution saving throw? Yeah.

SAM: You've got inspiration still.

LAURA: Does that work on saves?

LIAM: Plus inspiration.

MATT: Yeah.

LIAM: It's a 23.

MATT: 23. That is a success. You manage to just stave it off as you can feel it about to tear your insides apart, and you just tense real fast and the vibrations slowly fade. No effect.

SAM: No effect!

MATT: Would've been 10d10 necrotic damage.

SAM: 10d10!

MARISHA: What happened, like a chestburster, like came out of him?

MATT: It's called Quivering Palm, it's a monk ability.

LIAM: It's Uma Thurman, it's fucking Kill Bill.

MARISHA and WILL: The five-point exploding palm technique.

MATT: He's going to use another ki point, a bonus action, as he goes into defensive stance, a familiar one that you've seen before.

TRAVIS: Before I whooped somebody's ass.

MATT: Yeah. But into this fully defensive, looking about and keeping his eyes aware of the entirety of his surroundings. And is going to stay right there. That brings us to Grog.

TRAVIS: Piece of shit, I know what that stance is-- I chop at him some more with Craven Edge! I don't know, can I do one great weapon master and the other two just regular?

MATT: Yeah.

TRAVIS: Okay. I'm gonna do that.

MATT: Are you doing reckless attacks or not?

TRAVIS: Yeah, reckless.

MATT: Okay. His patient defense gives you disadvantage on all attacks-- He just nullifies it, so you just have one roll per attack.

TRAVIS: 16?

MATT: Misses. Just knocks the blade out with his own hand, you hear it (impact) off to the side.

TRAVIS: 16.

MATT: This time he actually catches with the two sides of his hand and throws it back towards you.

SAM: You could be inspired, god damn it!

MARY: It's right there.

TRAVIS: I'm gonna use my other d10 that's not tainted, so not this one.

SAM: All you have to do is pledge allegiance to the Washington football team.

(laughter)

WILL: Wow.

TRAVIS: 27.

MATT: 27. He goes to try and catch it, but you change the direction of the blade at the last minute and find the side of his flesh, go ahead and roll damage.

TRAVIS: Okay. So 12. 19.

MATT: He does make his save on that.

TRAVIS: 29. Damn it, he does?

MATT: 29 damage.

TRAVIS: 29. All that.

MATT: He's got a decent constitution.

TRAVIS: Yeah, you think?

MATT: All right, so the third blade finally sinks in about two inches into his clavicle area and probably would snap the clavicle bone if he hadn't put his hands up and caught as much of the impact as he could, and then throws it back again and just kicks you away to get a little bit of distance.

TRAVIS: Shit, really? Little distance, or?

MATT: It's just like a foot, just away from being clenched up.

TRAVIS: Okay. Can I move opposite of where my two lads are so I stay behind him again?

MATT: Right there? Yeah, you can do that. Go for it. All right, that ends your turn?

TRAVIS: Yep.

MATT: Scanlan, you're up. Well, let me see actually if he resists the-- Nope.

SAM: Still sick.

MATT: Actually, actually no, remembering this, because I kept forgetting to do it before, but that's fine, he's gonna use his legendary resistance to automatically succeed, so he no longer has Eyebite.

SAM: Oh, so he's done.

LAURA: He's not shitting himself anymore.

MARY: No. But the stench is great.

MATT: So sickness fades. He spent last round not doing any actual physical attacks for that reason.

SAM: All right. Well. I'm far away from him, but Grog's right next to him, so I probably shouldn't do anything too terrible.

TRAVIS: Do it! Do it!

LIAM: But he's a sponge!

TRAVIS: Do it! If you don't do it, he will, do it.

MARISHA: That's why we have Grog around.

SAM: I'll join in the bludgeon-fest, and I will cast (sings) Bigby's Hand! And I will, I'll make it come right next to him, sort of between him and Grog? I can't get between him and Grog.

MATT: There you go. Not between them, no, but you can put it like next to him or behind him.

SAM: Okay. To the side, to the side would be good. And just punch! Just a couple punches. Just throwing some punches.

TALIESIN: Stop hitting yourself. Stop hitting yourself. Stop hitting yourself.

MATT: Make a melee spell attack.

SAM: Melee spell attack.

MATT: Got it, melee spell attack.

SAM: What do I add?

MATT: You add your spell attack modifier, which should be on your spell page.

LIAM: On your same page, your spell page.

SAM: Spell attack bonus-- Okay. 27.

MATT: 27, that's a hit. As the hand appears to his right, he's still focusing on Grog and glances over for a second and tries to do a deflection, technically he's still in his defense stance, though. So roll twice, because he does have disadvantage for attacks on him.

TALIESIN: Yeah, that's good.

SAM: That was a natural 20.

MATT: Yeah.

SAM: But the disadvantage, so the 27. Yes. Oh wait, now I roll for damage.

MATT: Yep.

SAM: With Bigby's Hand. I rarely do this.

TRAVIS: That's true, yeah.

MATT: 4d8 force damage.

SAM: 4d8.

LAURA: You need to do that more, that's pretty good.

LIAM: Come on, Scanbo.

SAM: I'll just roll this one four times, it's fine. 17?

MATT: 17 damage.

SAM: 4d8, right?

MATT: Yep. So as Bigby's Hand pulls back with a giant fist, the fingers cracking in an arcane echo, whack! Slams into his side, he holds himself strong and actually slides about seven

inches in the sand from the impact. And you can see him shake off his arm from the hit. Yeah, that hurt.

SAM: Decent, decent. And I will inspire Grog again, with a little ditty, I will say, (singing) You're a psycho killer, with a bearded face, Grog Grog Grog Grog Grog Grog Grog Grog Grog. Run r-- That's fine.

MATT: All right, take your d10.

(laughter)

MATT: All right. Vax, you're up.

LIAM: I just drop to my knees so I can aim better and right over Scanlan's shoulder, dagger, dagger, dagger.

MATT: Go for it.

LIAM: Okay, first one is a one. So that misses. Second one is a 23.

MATT: 23. You're rolling disadvantage on all these, right?

LIAM: Disadvantage? For what?

MATT: For all these attacks, because he's still in his patient defense stance.

LIAM: Oh shite.

MATT: So what was this roll you just got--

LIAM: Well, the first one was a one and a--

MATT: Yeah, first one missed. The second one was a 23 and what did you roll?

LIAM: I don't remember what it was. Sorry.

MATT: Roll again, it's fine.

LIAM: All right, so this is the second attack. That is a 17.

MATT: Misses.

LIAM: Third attack is a 21.

MATT: 21 misses.

(groaning)

MATT: So all three daggers come at him and he just dodges one right off the head, another one he parries out of the way, and the third one he does a crescent kick-- whack!-- and knocks the dagger out of the air that spins off to the side before it returns to your belt.

LIAM: And just under my breath I say, "So fucking cool."

(laughter)

MATT: At the end of your turn before it's his turn he's gonna go ahead and use one action point to use Like the Wind, where he can move his speed without taking attacks of opportunity. He turns and rushes up to Scanlan.

SAM: I'm a little boy!

MATT: Starting his turn, now, he's gonna come for you, Scanlan, he's gonna go ahead and do a flurry of blows against you.

LAURA: Oh no, Scanlan!

MATT: So. Scanlan. First attack is 29.

SAM: Yeah.

MATT: Natural one, fails on the second one.

SAM: Okay, I'll use cutting words on the last one.

MATT: Okay, well the third one is a 20. And the fourth one is a 31.

TRAVIS: Jesus.

MATT: So three hits.

SAM: But I'm using cutting words on the third one to try to--

LIAM: You said the last one.

SAM: No, I said the third one.

MARISHA: It doesn't matter, they all suck.

MATT: Whichever one you want. So the first one hits, cutting words to reduce the attack on the--

SAM: On the one that was a 20.

MATT: Yeah. So go ahead and roll your d10..

SAM: Okay. Six.

MATT: Six. What's your AC?

SAM: 17.

MATT: Yeah, no, so you manage to, what do you shout at him as he's doing these punches against you?

SAM: I sing, (singing) No no no no, don't phunk with my heart!

(laughter)

MATT: He cocks his head like a confused puppy for a second and the fist just hits air above your head.

TRAVIS: You've gotta be kidding me, man.

MATT: However, you do take 14 points of bludgeoning damage from the first strike, and another 14 points of bludgeoning damage, so a total of 28 points of bludgeoning damage from two hits. Go ahead and make a dex saving throw, if you could.

SAM: Dex, dex, dex.

TALIESIN: Four.

SAM: 16. Oh, plus four? Really? Okay. Oh, yeah. Saw that for some reason there's a plus four there. 20.

MATT: 20's what you need. His last hit, he's trying to kick you square in the chest and knock you off your feet, and while it hits you, it actually forces you back into Vax, and Vax holds you up and you manage to keep on your feet.

LIAM: Whoa, buddy.

SAM: Oh, hi. I'm between two strong men.

LIAM: Debatable.

SAM: I'm lucky Pierre.

MATT: Or no, it's Grog's turn, it's Grog's turn, because you just took yours, yeah.

TRAVIS: It's my turn? Yeah, I just keep swinging away.

MATT: So you're gonna move up to him?

TRAVIS: Yes, please.

MATT: Oh, and as a note, I need you to make a concentration check for both of those hits, they were 14 damage each, so, and you have Warcaster, right?

SAM: Oh, yes. Oh yes.

MATT: So go ahead and make constitution checks. Constitution. Let me look at this.

SAM: That's 11 plus two is 13, right? Not great, not great. And 14. 13 and 14.

MATT: Okay, yeah, that's gonna end concentration, Bigby's Hand off the table.

SAM: (gasps) Bigby's Hand is gone.

MATT: Too much damage for you on that one. So from the impact of the blows you just managed, the spell just fizzles from your mind and dissipates into the distance. All right, now, Grog.

TRAVIS: At the end of his turn, did he go back into his defensive pose?

MATT: No.

TRAVIS: Okay, great. Okay, so, reckless attack. That's, let's make it great weapon master with the inspiration. 24.

MATT: 24 hits.

TRAVIS: Thank you.

MATT: You've gotta say great weapon master before you roll, by the way.

TRAVIS: Should I do it for the next one, then?

MATT: Yeah.

TRAVIS: Okay. So that one didn't.

MATT: Because it can't be like, oh, that doesn't hit, I'm not gonna do great weapon master yet, you have to get the penalty before you roll.

TRAVIS: Right, that makes sense. Right. So it was a 29, no, I mean it wasn't. What?

MATT: You said it was a 24, for that one it would've been a twenty--- it hit regardless.

TRAVIS: Okay. Hit regardless.

MATT: So yeah. So the first one was just a regular hit.

TRAVIS: So we'll do the third one will be great weapon master. This is disadvantage. Come on, where are the damn crits? 20.

MATT: 20 misses.

TRAVIS: Yep, okay, this is great weapon master. With adva-- with the inspiraton.

MATT: Yeah. So.

TRAVIS: 28? No, minus five. 23.

MATT: 23 just hits.

(cheering)

MATT: So a regular hit, and then a great weapon master hit.

TRAVIS: Okay. Six, 11, 19 damage is the first one.

MATT: 19 damage, all right.

TRAVIS: Fuck. Nine, 17, 27.

MATT: 27, got it. Both of the strikes, makes his save, makes his save.

TRAVIS: (sputters) Not once?

MATT: It's a 12 DC, it's not a very hard DC for--

TRAVIS: Yeah, but he's gotta roll shitty sometimes.

MATT: He probably will eventually. So anyway. As you're striking the blades at him, the pain, he's just taking the pain to his back, now, because he's facing Scanlan, and both times hack into the back of his shoulderblades and the exposed muscle you can see as the blade draws back you can see the muscle and the the blood arcing after each draw of the weapon. However, he glances over his shoulder at you as you finish your second blow and at the end of your turn he's gonna use two action points to use Whirlwind of Blows--

TRAVIS: Can I move? Oh, I already moved.

MATT: You already moved, yeah. I mean, you can keep moving if you wanted to move away.

TRAVIS: I wanted to move in between him and Scanlan, just wrap around.

MATT: You can't move between, but you can get there if you want.

TRAVIS: Okay, that'd be good.

MATT: Okay. So he's gonna get an attack on everyone within range of his punches, which would be you and Scanlan. That is gonna be a 26 against you.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

MATT: And a natural 20 against Scanlan.

SAM: That doesn't hit. That doesn't hit.

(laughter)

MATT: First to you, Grog, that is 18 points of bludgeoning damage. Halved to nine. And Scanlan, that is six, no, sorry-- 24 points of bludgeoning damage.

SAM: Ah, that's not bad. I'll be fine.

MATT: All right. Now it's Scanlan's turn.

SAM: Oh, shit, I get to do more shit?

TRAVIS: Where you at?

SAM: I'm fine.

TALIESIN: Looking a little rough.

SAM: Fine. Monk's got nothing on me.

MATT: So last turn you missed all three on him, remember?

LIAM: Oh, thanks.

SAM: So he's right next to me, he's right next to all of us. Okay. Well, I will-- he's right next to me?

MATT: Yep.

SAM: And no one's behind him. So I will just Lightning Bolt him. From right there. Can I do that?

MATT: You can, yeah. So as you're there in front, you just reach back--

SAM: Oh, I've got something in my pocket, (yells).

(laughter)

MATT: All right.

TALIESIN: You let the lightning out of the bottle.

MATT: What's the DC? I imagine this was out of your--

SAM: Is this my spell DC? So 19.

MATT: 19 with the hand cone, so you were like, hup, yaaaa!

SAM: Yeah, yeah.

MATT: 19.

TALIESIN: Need some d6's, man?

MATT: He's going to use another of his legendary resistances to make the save. And he has evasion, which means dex save for half, he gets no damage on his success, so as you do Lightning Bolt, he literally just goes into the splits as the bolt streaks over his head.

LIAM: He Van Damme'd it!

MATT: Slams one of the nearby pillars, and as you realize that you look down at him as he squeezes his legs back together and lands right back on his feet.

WILL: Oh, god. He took no Van Damme-age.

(laughter)

SAM: He's fast as lightning. Damn it.

MATT: Is that your turn?

SAM: I mean, that's all I can do. You know what, I'll use my bonus action to heal myself a bit.

MATT: Okay, go for it.

SAM: I'll use healing word on myself at 3rd level. So that's two, 3d4 plus five, right? Ten, ten plus five. Ten plus five. Okay, 15. Yeah, that's good. Yeah, I'll take that.

MATT: Sure, go for it. All right, that ends your turn, Vax, you're up.

LIAM: You might already know this, but I'm wearing my cloak of displacement, so he should be at disadvantage to hit me.

MATT: Good to know going forward.

LIAM: Yeah, thanks. I want to use one action to grab Scanlan by his purple shirt and rip him and pull him away.

MATT: That's gonna be your action.

LIAM: Sure.

MATT: So you won't have any attacks this round.

LIAM: With boots of haste on?

MATT: In order to get the additional, well, no, actually, you would get one attack from the haste.

You would. Your offhand attack you don't get unless you're doing an attack action, so you get one attack.

LIAM: That's fine, that's fine, I rip him, I yank him away and throw the little bugger.

SAM: As I fly through the air, I'm looking up to see if Kashaw's putting any moves on Keyleth or anything.

WILL: Great fight, yeah?

MARISHA: (screaming)

WILL: Great fight!

MARISHA: Oh god!

LIAM: And then throw a dagger past Grog at him. For-- not that great. 19.

MATT: 19?

LIAM: 19, that's it.

MATT: Misses, yeah.

LIAM: Okay, so I threw him, I threw a dagger and missed, and I just juke to the right and get behind Grog.

MATT: Okay. So move there. At the end of your turn, he's gonna use his last action point to do an unarmed attack against Grog. That's gonna be a 21?

TRAVIS: Pretty sure.

MATT: It hits? Okay.

MARISHA: Yeah, pretty sure.

MATT: You take ten points of bludgeoning damage.

TRAVIS: Halved to five.

MATT: Half. He's gonna use another ki point to, I need you to make a constitution save.

TRAVIS: Okay. 17.

MATT: 17. As he turns back and slams his fist right in the center of your clavicle, you feel a crack in the sternum and your whole body, all your muscles just seize up and you are currently stunned from a stunning strike until the end of his next turn.

LIAM: We got this, guys.

MATT: However, it's now his next turn.

LAURA: Oh no.

MATT: But you're still stunned. He is now going to, since you don't have a threat to him, he's going to swing around, jump between the two of them, and he's gonna do a flurry of blows, two punches against each of you. Against Scanlan, that's a 17?

SAM: That's my armor class, 17.

MATT: That hits, okay. Second one is a 17 again.

SAM: Can I use my cutting words on that one?

MATT: Do you have any more uses of your bardic inspiration?

SAM: It's once per turn.

MATT: You have a limited number of bardic inspirations per short rest that you can use, and you've used quite a few this battle.

SAM: Oh, that's considered a bardic inspiration, my cutting words?

MATT: Yeah, you use one of those dice to reduce the damage. You've inspired at least--

LIAM: Me once, Grog once--

MATT: Grog twice now.

SAM: It says, bardic inspiration, no that's not it, is it? 1d10, is that, five?

TALIESIN: Five, you have five of those.

MATT: So this would be your last one.

SAM: Okay, I'm using it.

MATT: All right, go for it.

SAM: It's a d10, yeah?

TALIESIN: Yeah. Although to be fair, it doesn't matter what you roll.

MATT: It doesn't matter what you roll, you're still.

SAM: Hey, I rolled a six.

MATT: Okay, so one of the attacks, as he's coming for you, he hits you once, and as he rears back for another kick to the side of your head, you shout--

SAM: Don't hit me, I'm a little boy!

(laughter)

MATT: Just enough pause for you to duck out of the way. However, he uses that inertia to spin back on Vax for a 27.

LIAM: Uncanny dodge.

MATT: And a 21.

LIAM: That hits.

MATT: Okay.

LIAM: So first one uncanny dodge, second one full brunt.

MATT: So Scanlan, you take nine points of bludgeoning damage.

SAM: Not bad.

MATT: Vex, you take, ah--

LIAM: I'm Vax.

MATT: Sorry, Vax. Every now and then.

LIAM: Every time.

MATT: 14 points of bludgeoning damage, reduced to half.

LIAM: Seven. Yeah.

MATT: And the other one is nine points.

LIAM: Nine points.

MATT: Yep.

LIAM: Okay.

MATT: So a total of 16 points of damage. He's going to use a ki point again, I need you to make a constitution saving throw.

LIAM: Okay. It's gonna be great. 14.

MATT: 14. Towards the end of his turn, Grog's stun shifts off of him, you feel your muscles tense up and you almost fall to your knees, your whole body seizes, the muscles just lock in place. All righty. Grog, it's your turn.

TRAVIS: I'm gonna take Craven Edge and I'm gonna stab him into the sand. And I'm gonna take out the Firebrand Warhammer instead.

MATT: Okay. So you drop the weapon for free, you pull out the fire hammer and it bursts into flame in your hands as you wield it. As you drop Craven Edge, you hear this voice scream in the back of your head, "You fool! This fight is ours!" As the hammer lights up, you just feel this cold dread run down your spine. I need you to make a will saving throw. A wisdom saving throw.

TRAVIS: Ten?

MATT: Ten? You can't possibly let that blade go away, and you drop the hammer and pick up Craven Edge once more. This is the true weapon of a warrior.

TRAVIS: You're right, it is.

(laughter)

MATT: And you are not gonna relinquish it. There is no way you could let go of this blade.

TRAVIS: No way at all. Reckless attack on all three swings.

MATT: Okay. The process of picking it up, we'll say would take away your bonus action. So you get two attacks.

TRAVIS: 14. That sucks. That's better. 27.

MATT: Second one hits.

TRAVIS: Okay. Ow. Six, 11, 19.

MATT: 19, all righty. This time as the hammer falls to the ground the flames go out and Craven Edge streaks again, no, makes his saving throw. As it hits him, he stops for a second, puts his hands together. I need you to make another wisdom saving throw.

(dramatic music cue)

WILL: Ooh, we're Star Trek fighting.

TRAVIS: 11.

MATT: Your vision goes dark as all the sight around you goes to black and the entire vicinity of this fades except for the Earthbreaker before you, just staring at you in this darkness. Then he steps towards you, one step, second step, and while his mouth doesn't move, you can hear his voice piercing into your head that just says, "Grog. You are stronger than this thing that binds you. Where do you find your strength?"

TRAVIS: In my friends.

MATT: The darkness around you immediately shatters and you can see now your friends off to the side, keeping their weapons ready. The entirety of Groon's posture has dropped, and he just bows before you.

(cheering)

MARY: Yes! Yes!

WILL: Wow.

MATT: At this point, he takes a moment and closes his eyes, and you can see there's this inner glow in his chest, and a bunch of his wounds heal up in but an instant. And as those wounds leave these scars, he looks across the body. "I will wear these with pride."

SAM: (strained) So will I.

(laughter)

SAM: Oh, fuck. Zahra! Did you see how awesome that was? I was really good.

MARY: That was wonder-- you still have a little sand right there.

MATT: At this point, he, Groon's not even looking at you guys, still looking at Grog, he goes, "You need not the strength of Vasselheim to aid you, nor is that strength any we have to give. What you need can be found, recovered, reborn. I can see in your face the path is already lying before you. I know of two. The rest you must find yourself.

"A gift from Kord himself to this mortal plane, carved from the corpse of the earth primordial titan that fell on this continent in the first war. These Titanstone Knuckles were a symbol of power and leadership for generations here in Vasselheim until the last known keeper was slain 200 years ago, the gauntlets taken. I know not of their whereabouts.

"The other, leathers adorned by the champion of the Raven Queen. This champion's tomb has since come to ruin, sunken beneath a lake to the west of here known as the Marrowglade Loch. Within that tomb lies the Deathwalker's Ward. Now go. You've found your strength. You know your path. I can help you no further."

He turns around, walks back to the center of the sand, and just sits back down in the same pose and position he was in when you entered.

LAURA: He's so fucking cool.

TRAVIS: Scanlan. Vax.

SAM and LIAM: Yes.

TRAVIS: Do as I do.

LIAM: Yep.

TRAVIS: And I bow.

LIAM: (strained noise)

SAM: I bow as well.

TRAVIS: And I walk backwards, still facing him to the edge of the pit, and I hoist Vax up.

LIAM: (garbled yell)

TRAVIS: And I throw Scanlan up.

SAM: Oh fuck!

TRAVIS: Climb out.

MATT: Okay.

MARISHA: Keyleth runs over to Vax and just hugs him super fast and gives him a peck on the mouth.

LIAM: Gently!

MARISHA: And says, That was incredible. That was incredible.

SAM: I look over at Zahra.

MARY: That was pretty good, darling. We'll talk later. It really was. It was very good.

MARISHA: Are you okay? Do you need healing?

LIAM: I'm okay.

LAURA: (whispers) Heal him.

MARISHA: I give him another hug and give him a Cure Wounds, level three.

MATT: All right.

MARY: Does it also make you sober?

MATT: No.

LIAM: No.

MARY: Potions have nothing to do with clearing alcohol away?

LAURA: No.

MATT: There's a difference between the healing and flushing one's system.

LIAM: Wait, wait, (vomiting noises) I'm ready.

LAURA: We should leave.

TRAVIS: I don't know about you, but I think we got all the answers we needed.

MATT: Make a dexterity save, Keyleth.

(laughter)

TALIESIN: You've had this coming. You so had this coming.

MARISHA: I heal you for 12 points. I heal you 12, and then that's actually not bad. Dexterity save?

MATT: Yeah.

MARISHA: 20 total.

MATT: As you see his cheeks fill with bile and liquid of your previous venture at the bar, you instinctually, as the mighty speed and reaction of an air-based Ashari druid, dodge out of the way as he spatters the stonework on the outside of this--

MARISHA: I hold his hair back a little bit. His long black hair.

MATT: Two of the monks immediately rush forward with towels out of seemingly nowhere and start quickly cleaning it up while staring at you very, very angrily.

LAURA: Sorry, we'll leave.

LIAM: Come on, it was their loincloths, come on.

TRAVIS: Apologies, apologies.

TRAVIS: We should leave now.

MARISHA: I just look at them and I'm like, he got hit in the gut a few times.

LAURA: He did, actually.

MARISHA: We're like a mile high, the oxygen's thin here, it's tough.

LAURA: We should go.

MARISHA: All right, we should go.

LIAM: And as Keyleth helps me away, I say to Kord, "It was an honor, thank you."

LAURA: Kord? Groon?

LIAM: Whatever his name is.

(laughter)

LAURA: Or to the god that is--

MATT: Hey, this is a place where I think either would work. All right. As you guys make your way outside of the Trial Forge, we'll go ahead and leave today's venture for now--

(yelling)

MATT: -- we'll return next week, return next week to pick up this next venture and see where you guys go from there. So, well done, guys. And thank you Will and Mary for joining us.

(cheering)

MARY: Thank you for having us!

MATT: For a couple episodes, yeah.

LIAM: What a fun episode.

MATT: Yeah guys, well done everyone.

WILL: Thank you.

MARISHA: I saw someone on twitter say that this was like our Cheers episode, and I agree.

(laughter)

MARISHA: I agree with whoever said that.

MARY: Keyleth!

WILL: Vasselheim: where everybody knows your name.

MARY: Actually, it would be Grog. Grog walks in the room, everybody goes Grog!

LAURA: Hey, come see us in Portland.

MATT: Yeah, come see us in Portland, we'll be there tomorrow, getting there tomorrow but we'll be there for Saturday and Sunday, come see us, come, y'know, bring your stories, we'd love to meet you.

LAURA: Come say hi. It looks like the posters are gone, but there's still some signed ones left if you want.

MATT: This means we'll just have to put more up.

TRAVIS: Come see us any time, we have a one-hour panel, we have a one-hour group signing, and we're at tables the rest of the time, so just come find us anytime during the day.

MARISHA: And if you can't make it to Portland, our panel will be on on Saturday on Wizard World's twitch.

MATT: Yes, it should be. All right, guys, we'll see you next week. Have a wonderful, wonderful weekend, and is it Thursday yet?

(cheering)