SPRING IN HIERON 24: CLOSER TO KIN

Transcriber: Cole

Austin: It has been twelve hours since you first arrived at the gate outside of the peninsula of Alcyon. You have slept through most of the night, and I actually have a- a thing, a quick question here for Throndir.

Darcy: Oh, ok.

Austin: Which is uh, there's a move we didn't- we didn't take a look at, and I think it's important to look at it right now, as you rest outside of this-this- You make camp here. And you've made camp probably a lot during this trip because of it being a big journey. But we never once-

Darcy: Oh god. Yeah. Uh huh.

Austin: No, we never once looked at this thing here that says, 'The Blood is Life. When you make camp, spend one vigor or gain one hunger. You do not recover HP when you make camp or rest. You must spend blood.' Everybody else, when they make camp, actually gets to just heal up, so like, on that note, people should- and I'll just double check the- the specifics here, um, but I'm pretty sure everyone heals quite a bit of health when they- when you make camp. Um, but- but for you, Throndir, you can spend a vigor to get plus 1d4 on your next melee attack to heal yourself 2d4, to resist a weakness for a short time, or to reduce your hunger by one. Your current hunger is one. And hunger gives me the ability to make a set of moves-

Darcy: Uh hm.

Austin: -against you. So, I'm curious. Do you want to spend any vigor here?

Darcy: You know what's- you know what's real cool?

Austin: What's that?

Darcy: I ain't- I ain't got any.

Austin: No. You don't have any.

Darcy: Nope.

Austin: At all.

Darcy: I gotta eat somebody to get vigor.

Austin: Oh, and that hasn't happened yet?

Darcy: Uh un. No.

Austin: Mmm, I see. Ok. Everybody else, you can consume a ration, and if you- if you have enough XP, you can level up at this point. And you can also heal half of your max HP, so everybody else? Great night of sleep out here in front of the gates of Alcyon. Uh, Throndir, I- I guess you're gonna- I guess if you don't do this, you gain another hunger, which brings you up to two hunger.

Darcy: Uh hm.

Austin: Um, and I'm gonna just- You know, don't even bother writing it down, Throndir, cause I'm just immediately gonna spend it.

Darcy: Yay!

Austin: So, in the morning, all throughout Alcyon, bells ring to welcome the new day as the sun rises over the eastern shore, which you can't see. Like, you can't see into the peninsula from here. All you can see is the grey walls and the other camps of anchor and you know, the occasional pala-din, who are all waiting for entry here. But you hear the bells ringing, and they- they ring out a song. And somewhere in there, there are a set of three um, three notes that you've never heard in person, as far as I know. But they are one of your weaknesses. One of your weaknesses as you've written down here is a set of- of musical notes played in a certain order- a set of three musi- a certain three musical notes. And those play here. And I'm gonna spend one of uh, one of my hunger that- that I have here, one of your hunger-

Darcy: Uh hm.

Austin: -to make you run in terror from a weakness. What's this look like? [**Darcy** laughs] As everyone else yawns in the morning bells.

Darcy: Uh, I mean, Throndir hasn't slept all night.

Austin: [light laugh] Great.

Darcy: So, yeah, I think it probably is just like- [sighs] Yeah, everybody's rolling out of bed, and then you just hear like, this nice, probably very like- I don't know, is it like, nice, calming music, **Austin**? Or is it just-? Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. It's, of course, yeah. Totally. I think that- So, this is- Um, it's a tune- it's an old tune that's supposed to send fishers on their way. It's like- it's actually the bell that- that is for when fishing boats leave the dock. But for those who aren't going out to fish in any given day, it is like, their wake-up bell, you know?

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: So, like, a nautical vibe to it.

Keith: It's my day off, I'm not- [**Austin** laughs] waking up.

Darcy: Uh hm.

Keith: What?

Darcy: Um, there is a very loud banging noise, as Throndir's grabbing two pots to put over his head to try and cover his ears and run away from the camp. [**Austin** laughs lightly]

> **Austin** (as **Kodiak**): Rrrr. Rrrr! Rrr!

Austin: And Kodiak is chasing after you and trying to calm you down, but I think like, bits of your terror gets into Kodiak here. At hearing the dog bark, at hearing the banging, Safewater starts making noise, Fero. Benjamin, in your- in your family's tent, like instinctively puts mage armor around himself. Summons like, a glowing shield around- around himself, Hadrian. And the- the- before you can even move, Ephrim, your two bodyguards are up and like, have surrounded you to protect you, as- as this clanging happens very nearby. What- [exhales] What- what's happening? Where do you go, Throndir?

Darcy: Oh, where are we, and what is around?

Austin: You're in the middle of a camp-

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: -at the very edge of this- this peninsula. This- Like, on the map right now, it looks like a set of islands, but in reality they're all connected. And there's the jungle back behind you, and- and you know, like a- kind of a long road, and then forward, there is a wall, and then around you is some water.

Darcy: Uh, I- I'm gonna dive into the water and just-

Austin: Great.

Darcy: -go as deep as I can.

Austin: And you can- Like, the music stops eventually, but we do get like, you underwater, your hair on-end, and like, you can still hear bits of it over and over inside of like- distorted by the- the depth of the water.

Darcy: Yeah. Good thing I don't need to breath. At least got that going for me.

Austin: Yeah. That is good. That is a help. [exhales] Everybody else, how's camp life?

Art: Was- it was better a few minutes ago.

Keith: Loud now.

Art: Yeah. [light laugh]

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And we just get the shot of everyone looking around at each other and like, trying to figure out what the hell just happened.

Keith: Yeah, like the- the animals- or a lot of the animals were instinctively scared, and then some of the more prepared people were also prepared. And then like, everyone else is just like, 'Are we in danger? Or are we cool? [**Austin** laughs lightly] Like, 'Was that a weird thing that Throndir did? Or do we have to run and get ready?'

Art: Yeah, it's like, Hadrian running out in like, his- his sleep clothes with like, a sword and like, not quite understanding what is going on, right? Like, no one's- no one's attacking. No one's- nothing is- Yeah.

Keith: This- all this reminds me of is my- my cat gets really scared if you shuffle your foot across a hardwood floor [**Austin** laughs] in a very specific way. [**Darcy** laughs] And it- he'll just be like, walking around, and you'll make a [foley] 'shhh' noise on the hardwood floor, and he'll just leap into the air [light laugh] and run. It's like, 'Yeah, that's what happened.' [**Sylvia** laughs]

Austin: 'That's Throndir for ya.' [laughs]

Keith: 'That's Throndir.' [laughs]

Art: Whereas like, for me, the- the pull I'm- I'm coming up with is like, it's like waking up to an earthquake.

Austin: Right.

Art: Because like, you're- you're like, suddenly very uneasy, but like, it's usually over by the time you're aware that it happened.

Austin: Right.

Art: But you're still like, 'Are we ok? Is everything ok?'

Austin: I mean, I think-

Keith: 'Was that an earthquake?'

Austin: Right. Seeing- in seeing that response in you, I think Rosana puts her hand on the small of your back and like, looks out into the sea where Throndir ran and- and dove into.

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

> And she like, quietly whispers to you,
>
> **Austin** (as **Rosana**): [whispering] We need to talk to Throndir.
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): [whispering] O- Ok.

Art: [still whispering] I'm less good at stage-whispering into microphone, I think. Did that come through?

Austin: [laughing] It did. It's fine. Everything's fine.

[Music plays out to end]

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical world-building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker. And joining me today, Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hey, how's it goin'? You can find me on Twitter @atebbel. Feel free to follow, even though it's a locked account. It's really just for search engine optimization purposes.

Austin: Mmm.

Art: And uh, check out One Song Only which we actually talked about recording this week. We didn't-

Austin: [laughs] We did talk about it.

Art: But we talked about it.

Austin: We didn't do it. It's not a great week for- we almost did. We put down a time, and then like, 'eh, no.' Also joining me, Keith J Carberry.

Keith: Hi, my name is Keith Carberry. You can find me on Twitter @keithjcarberry. You can find the Let's Plays that I do at youtube.com/runbutton. We just started a new mini-series with Gundam games.

Austin: You did. With Gundam games.

Keith: The O- The O8-MS games.

Austin: The O8-MS games.

Keith: 08-Mobile Suit games.

Austin: That's great. Fantastic. What a goofy-

Keith: What does blocking your twitter account have to do with search engine optimization?

Art: Um, Jessica is trying to get hired, and until I locked my twitter, if you googled her name, you came up with my twitter, which-

Keith: Ohhhh, ok.

Art: -while not having anything like, awful on it, is a lot of you know, just stupid garbage and isn't what we want-

Keith: Sure.

Art: -people who want to hire her-

Austin: Art is afraid that- that his wife will not get hired because of his goofy bullshit.

Art: Uh hm.

Austin: Fair. Fair. Darcy Swan is here.[1]

Darcy: Hey, you can find me on Twitter at [username removed].

Austin: And Sylvia Clare.[2]

Sylvia: Hey, you can find me on Twitter @captaintrash, and you can find my other show on there @emojidrome which we just did episode fifty of. So, yeah.

Austin: Wow. Fifty episodes? That's a real lot of episodes.

Sylvia: Already.

Keith: Nice.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Hell yeah. I also want to say welcome to the podcast, a new member. Craig, the bot that is now recording our backups. The discord bot. Find out more about Craig at Craig.chat. [laughs] Craig's very shy.

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[1] The name/username in the audio recording are no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancies.
[2] The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

Sylvia: Shout outs to Craig.

Austin: Shout outs- shout outs to Craig.

Keith: Yeah, thanks Craig.

Austin: Thanks Craig. Thank you, Craig.

Art: And like, I salute Craig for getting Craig.chat as like-

Austin: Right?

Art: -a way of trying to open a little more. That's a-

Keith: Hm.

Austin: Me, too. Me, too.

Keith: And for diversifying away from his list.

Austin: [laughs] Fuck off.

Keith: Bye. Ok. Bye. [Keith, **Sylvia**, and **Darcy** all laugh hard]

Austin: Have a good one! Thanks for joining us. Um, also here, I want to take a moment to shout out the transcription team, which I did on a previous recording, but I want to do again at the top of this one. You can find out more about the fan transcription team over at transcript_fatt, F-A-T-T on twitter or tinyurl.com/fatttranscripts. F-A-T-T transcripts. There is a discord server that you can- you can go join them at. It is a paid transcription effort. We- we do payments like, once a quarter or something like that. And uh, they've done a ton of work.

So, if you are interested in there being more transcripts, and if you want to read along, if you want to share it with a friend who is hard of hearing, like, if you just want to, like me, look through stuff to reference stuff to be like, 'is that what the fuck happened? What happened last time?', the transcripts are a fantastic resource. And just about all of Spring is transcribed at this point. Past seasons, not all the way caught up, but Spring has like, episode zero, thirteen, and fifteen are not finished, but- oh, and twenty-three, but everything else is finished. So, it's like a lot of this season, so, it's all there for people.

Art: Well, and- and this episode. If you're listening to this when it comes out, not this one.

Austin: Will probably not be there. Yeah, exactly. Fair. Um, but everything is- is out there. And there's a good mix of stuff from past- from past seasons, including some like, fan-favorite episodes and me-favorite episodes, also. So, definitely go check that out. Any other- and as always, if you want to support us and-and you know, the way I'm able to pay the transcribers is because you support us, you can do that at friendsatthetable.cash. Which uh- which is- I've said

this on a recent patreon recording, but there's a lot of great stuff there. We are about to- we're thinking about adding or changing- we're thinking about changing one of the reward tiers that's upcoming.

We're about to hit a new like, um- what do you call that? Stretch goal? We're probably gonna change that tier. We have some ideas for what that looks like, but nothing to announce yet. But- but be aware of that. We are not going to, if we hit 20k start doing two Bluff City episodes a month. There is no way that we would be able to keep up with that without all of us quitting our regular jobs. [light laugh] And we are not a place where we can do that yet. Um, we are continuing our game today of Dungeon World. As always, my agenda- uh, a game by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel. My agenda is to portray a fantastic world, to fill the character's lives with adventures- uh, adventure, and to play to find out what happens.

So, I'm actually gonna bring us over onto a new map today. Uh… this is the peninsula of Albion- er not Albion. Albion is from Fable. Alcyon. [laughs] You may have to zoom out because I was very zoomed in before. Um, and right now you're in that northwest part pa- that says entry gate. Does everyone see that ok?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Ok. Cool. Except for Throndir who is soaking wet at- in the water. [light laugh] Um- do you- What do you- what's your- what's your- Once you- once you kind of recover from this, what do you do? How do you feel?

[0:15:00]

Darcy: Uh, confused?

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: I don't- I don't think I knew about this.

Austin: Right. You think this is the first time this response has happened.

Darcy: Uh hm.

Austin: Does the hunger feel a certain way? Like, is it a different type of hunger than you felt before?

Darcy: Yeah, I mean it's- I don't- I don't think it's the same thing as like, 'Oh, I just need to eat a sandwich.' Uh-

Austin: Right, no. But I'm- I'm curious because like, you've lived as a decade- uh, with this for a decade now, right? Does Throndir in- in his head feel like he understands why it's striking him now versus when it used to strike him?

Darcy: In terms of-

Austin: Or didn't.

Darcy: -the hunger?

Austin: Or d- or yeah, the hunger specifically.

Darcy: I don't think it-

Austin: Not even this response to this-

Darcy: Yeah, I don't think it did.

Austin: -to this trigger.

Darcy: Maybe there was something about being around the other-

Austin: Like lots of people?

Darcy: -lots of people, or even just like, the older members of the Golden Lance that kind of-

Austin: Uh hm.

Darcy: -like kept this in check. I mean, this is-

Austin: Sure.

Darcy: -the first time that's he's left the Last University in like-

Austin: Right.

Darcy: -ten plus years.

Austin: Right. [louder] Right. Wow, right. You never- you didn't go out on that first expedition, right?

Darcy: Uh hm.

Austin: You've not left- This is the furthest you've gone, and it's certainly the longest you've spent in nature in that long of a time. That's really interesting to think about because we think about Throndir as the Ranger, but has now spent ten straight years in civilization, you know?

Darcy: Uh hm.

Austin: Art, to your question in the chat, no, making camp does not clear conditions. Conditions clear after you get a couple of days of rest, basically.

Art: Cool.

Austin: So, like- of like, full rest and recovery, I believe. Um, everybody else, what's the morning look like in this camp? Is this just like, you're eatin'- Is this just Red Dead Redemption 2, morning camp, eatin' some eggs over a fire, and you know, singing a song?

Darcy: It's gonna real embarrassing if I took the good egg pan. [**Keith** laughs]

Austin: Aw, it'd be real bad if you took the- oh, now it's all covered in salt water.

Darcy: Hm.

Austin: Ugh.

Keith: The other one has those vertical sides, you can't flip it. You can't get in there with a spatula. You can't flip it.

Austin: Why do they even make those?

Keith: For sauce.

Austin: I guess that makes sense. But-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: -you're not lookin' for a sauce right now. You're lookin' for eggs.

Keith: We all lookin' for eggs.

Austin: Lookin' for eggs.

Keith: I'm not lookin' for anything. I don't have to eat. But I bet the- one big difference from like, a Red Dead 2 camp is that there's a lot of other camps around.

Austin: True. That is a big difference, right? Yeah.

Art: But are they all- do they all eat? What do- what's the food situation?

Austin: No. No. None of them eat, in fact. Um, because they're pal-din- I guess, you know what? There's probably some other organic beings here also waiting for entry. But by and large, the anchor, who are the Ordennan metal pala-din and the pala-din who are here- and there's only a handful of those other pala-din- What I'll say is like, so there are- there are kind of three

camps- er or there are a bunch of categories of people outside. There are two clear camps. One of which is Ordennan anchor, who are in the Ordennan black and- and gold. And those are um, waiting in a- in a group.

And then there's also the Fel anchor, which is the group that we saw at the end of Winter in Hieron that were modeled off of Iduna Fel. And Hadrian, you- you saw that you were- when you were talking to Hisam who was the- the guard- like, attendant who- or gate attendant who talked to you. They had previously been talking to- to one of the Fel anchor who had identified herself as Iduna Fel. As the Iduna Fel, who is the person who you ratted out back during the Rosemerrow game. But they are in their own separate camp, it seems. Like, they are not- they are not mingling too often with the regular anchor. Then there are a handful of pala-din who are not necessarily- It's not like they are camping together because they arrived together, unlike the an- the various anchor.

Um, they seem to have arrived independently, but are still kind of sticking together because they recognize each other. Sometimes very- very literally, and sometimes in a more, just like, 'oh yes. You are like me.' sort of way. And then there are, I'd say, probably a handful of other people. You'd met- you'd met Vilda and Berk out- like, further outside the gate. And you know, there's probably a few other organic, humanoid type things. Organic is a weird word, but you know what the fuck I'm talkin' about, right? Humans and elves and dwarves and etcetera. Um, and right now, you're just kind of waiting, I guess. Does anyone have anything they want to do while they wait? [pauses] 'No' is a viable answer.

Art: I mean, I guess medium term, I want to have the- the Throndir conversation mentioned in the intro. But like-

Austin: Sure.

Art: - that doesn't have to be this morning. And it probably doesn't have to be like, right now. It can you know- it's whenever is my point.

Austin: Great. Ephrim, do you have like- have you started putting together a plan of action for once you- you go through this gate and like- What are your goals once you get into Alcyon proper?

Sylvia: I think the first one is like, [sighs] trying to find like someone to do diplomacy with. Like, somebody that I can negotiate with about what we're for and like, talk to them about it.

Austin: Totally.

Sylvia: Uh, but like, back of my mind, the other idea is just you know, we can at least scope the place out while we're talking to people because there's a mission we gotta do here, and I'm ok with going back to pre-Lord methods for that.

Austin: Gotcha. While we- before we really kick off, let's quickly go over alignments and bonds before I forget. Let's start with Fero for that. What is your alignment and what are your relevant bonds for this- for this adventure?

Keith: Yeah, sure. So, my alignment is neutral. 'I have been pulled in every direction by every person around me, but I will find my path.'

Austin: Hm.

Keith: Uh, right now I have one blank bond because I think that I cleared one with-

Austin: Someone.

Keith: -Throndir.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: I cleared one with Throndir that I have not yet replaced.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: So, I'll be thinking about that, but I have Ephrim. 'Lord Ephrim thinks helping be- means being in charge.' [**Austin** laughs lightly] Uh, I guess that's the only one relevant for this- for today.

Austin: Alright, if you think of another one during play, feel free to write it down.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And ping me and let me know. Throndir? What are you alignments- er what is your alignment and your bonds?

Darcy: Uh, let me see. This is one time where popping out my character sheet made it harder to get to. [**Austin** laughs lightly] Ok, my alignment is good. 'Put yourself at risk to help someone else's life.' Um, my bonds are Ephrim. 'Ephrim never wavered during the Last- during the worst years of the Last University, so I'm happy to follow his lead.' Uh, 'Fero is brash, but he was spot-on with how we should treat Addleton. I should see how some of his ideas play out.' Um, Hadrian. ' I was upset with Hadrian, but no one deserves to pay for their mistakes this deeply. I must help him keep Benjamin safe.'

Austin: Mm. Interesting. Ok. And uh, Ephrim, how about you?

Sylvia: Right. Uh, so my alignment is neutral. 'Increase the prestige of yourself or your stronghold.' And my bonds are for Hadrian. 'I will help Hadrian's family, but the University's safety comes first.' Uh, Throndir. 'Throndir helped me get where I am today, and I owe him for it.'

Austin: Uh hm.

Sylvia: And Fero is, 'If Fero wants to act like a child, then I'll treat him like one.'

Austin: Great. And Hadrian.

Keith: Those two match up so good. [laughs]

Sylvia: Uh hm.

Austin: Uh huh. They really do.

Art: Um, I will not read my- my un- my- my not active bonds. Um, like other people are doing. For Fero, which I really need to get past is 'Fun is fun, but Fero would let my family die. Never trust him.'

Austin: Maybe make that a focus of this episode.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Hopefully see if there's a way to- to get past that.

Art: Um, and I have a fresh Throndir bond.

Austin: Yeah?

Art: 'Throndir has great influence on my family. I must make sure I have an eye on the path ahead.'

Austin: Mm.

Art: Um, which is funny cause I think I've always failed every um, path making roll.

Austin: Uh huh. And your alignment?

Art: Is good. 'Suffer under a hardship so that someone else does not have to.'

Austin: Ok, very in line with Throndir, in- in some ways. Um, alright. So, I think if no one else has any morning business, which again, I'm leaving this open if anyone has any other morning business, now is the time. [pauses] Alright, uh, Hisam comes back to greet you. And bring you to the gate. And they say,

> **Austin** (as **Hisam**): Alright everyone. If you could just pack up your things in twenty minutes, meet me at the gate, we will- we will-

Austin: What's the word I'm looking for? Uh… uh, what happens when a boat goes somewhere?

Art: Would it- it embarks?

Darcy: Departs?

Austin: Embarks, yeah.

Keith: [quietly in back] Embarks? Oh-

Austin: Yes, embark. Embark. Embark. Um-

> **Austin** (as **Hisam**): We will embark for-

Keith: What's the difference between a- What is it- what is disembarking then? Is that getting off a boat?

Austin: Getting- getting off a boat, yeah.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: You disembark. Um, so yeah. So they say,

> **Austin** (as **Hisam**): We will embark for- for the main dock.

Austin: And leaves.

Art: A camp with this many people is gonna be impossible to assemble in twenty minutes.

Austin: It's hell, right? It's yeah. Well, you only stayed for a night, so I bet you didn't unpack like, everything, you know?

Art: Sure, I still think this is a shitty twenty minutes.

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah, I bet. Uh, but you do, and you make your way to this big gate. And the gate opens, and some room is made so that you can- your group can enter. You get some- I don't know. Like, how do you read the looks of- I- The posture that these pala-din and these anchor have as you walk in is like, pretty frustrated, especially from Iduna Fel's group who clearly has been waiting here for quite some time. Um, you are given- you are given some- some dirty looks is what I will say. But not because the faces, right? The faces still don't emote. Um, I don't think they do anyway…. No, I don't think that they do.

Keith: I think that you said that they- that they don't last time.

Austin: Yeah, I'm pretty sure they don't. But they still- you know, there are ways to- to communicate intention through body language, and that is one those ways. And- or- or one of the things they do with this is basically- it's clear that you're cutting in line. Because of who you are and because of a connection that you have with Tabard, who has not really been explained to you what- what his deal is here or why he is here or what this place is in general. And so maybe that's part of why walking through this gate is kind of magnificent. You step through this big grey gate and behind it, you finally can see you know, the- the peninsula.

And it is green and beautiful. And there are low hills, and there are you know- you know, orchards and um, vineyards and groves of- of what look like fruit trees. And in the distance, there is a kind of like, um, low cities that have- that have kind of a brownish-tan color with lots of vines hanging down from their roofs. It's like, gorgeous here. And also, it's just a beautiful day, you know? It's like a sixty-seven, sixty-eight degree day. Um, there's a very, very light breeze, but the breeze isn't like, too chilly. It's- it's like, perfect. And Hisam begins to walk you over to- I don't know if you see this, but right past the gate there's a little dock, and begins to bring you over there to a little boat. Or not a little boat. There's too many of you for that. But starts to bring you to a boat, and they're like,

Austin (as **Hisam**): Alright. Right this way. Everybody aboard.

Austin: And everyone boards this boat? Fero, no boat problems this time?

Keith: It's- I mean, it seems like it's gonna be a quick journey.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: And it seems like you know, not- we're not being given a choice. It's not-

Austin: No.

Keith: Yeah. Um-

Art: This would be such a cool trick.

Darcy: Am I here?

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: Ok. Alright.

Austin: Yeah, you came back, right?

Darcy: Yeah. No, I-

Keith: Yeah, you came out of the water?

Darcy: I did, but-

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: I just wanted to make sure. [laughs]

Austin: Totally. Totally. I think there's a- there's a point at which there's like, an afternoon bell is rung. Uh, but it does not contain those same notes. But I'm guessing you probably tense up a little bit here.

Darcy: Uh huh. Yeah.

Austin: Alright.

Keith: How- What kind of boat is this? How safe does it look?

Austin: You know, it seems-

Keith: Maybe I am getting gunshy- boatshy.

Austin: I'm glad all I needed was twenty-five seconds of you thinking about this.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Uh, it- it's like a fishing boat. It's a- it's fishing boat that- where all the fishing nets have been replaced- or have been taken off and all like, the fishing equipment has been removed to make a little more space-

Keith: Hmm.

Austin: -to be a kind of short-run, shallow water vessel.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: It's not gonna go out into the deep sea. You're pretty sure.

Keith: Ok. And like, Hella's not secretly piloting it.

Austin: No, Hella's inside like, 'Haha! I got it. Don't worry about it.' [**Keith** laughs] Um, no. Oh, you do see other- other pala-din and anchor just walking- instead of getting on boats and going places, just walking through all of these uh, the vineyards and- and kind of agri- you know, agricultural land. It's big. This is like- If you go back to the main map really quick um, you know, Alcyon is- is bigger than Velas is. You know, all said.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Or about like, if you think about- they're- they're comparable if you kind of combined everything. So, it's kind of like, going a- down the entire outskirts of Velas or something, but you all get in the boat, and the boat trip is beautiful. Like, I- I am not- I think for those of you… I guess, just for- for Hadrian, there is something of Aubade about this place.

Art: Hm.

Austin: Um, there is like- I don't know the last time you felt that things were at peace in this way. Like, once you pass through this gate, there is something idyllic here. And you take a nice boat journey along the coast, and it's beautiful. I will say, there's a moment where- who would notice this? Highwater maybe? Um, Highwater gets a sniff of something and comes over to you, Ephrim, and says,

> **Austin** (as **Highwater**): Lord.

Austin: And like, gestures for you to kneel down.

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Yeah, uh, what's wrong?
>
> **Austin** (as **Highwater**): [whispering] I think those- I think those plants are poisonous. I can smell it.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Poisonous in a way that we're familiar with or poisonous in the way that the new plants are?

Austin: She shakes her head.

> **Austin** (as **Highwater**): They're new.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Alright.
>
> **Austin** (as **Highwater**): Be careful. We need to be careful.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): We will. Thank you.

Austin: I think she produces a- a small mask from a bag and puts it on. Everyone else, there is a cobbin with you, and she has put a mask on her face. [light laugh]

Art: Cool.

Darcy: Who am I to judge?

[0:30:00]

Keith: Like a- like, just like a plain, white no- face, like mouth and nose mask or-?

Austin: I don't- What's a cobbin mask look like? [light laugh]

Sylvia: Probably elongated cause the snout.

Austin: Yeah, right?

Keith: Oh yeah, cause it's gotta go around the snout.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: It has to go around the snout.

Art: Is this one of those like, 'how does this thing wear pants' things? [**Keith** laughs]

Austin: It is like that. I've searched for kobold masks since cobbins are kobold-esque, but this is just giving me masks that you would wear [laughing lightly] if you wanted to look like a kobold. [**Darcy** laughs] How does a horse wear a mask? [typing]

Art: Like a disaster horse.

Keith: I think you're gonna get a lot of masks-

Austin: Oh.

Keith: -that look like horses.

Austin: No, I got like, lots of masks- I got lots of like, blinders is what I got, you know? Um, but some of these are just like style masks.

Art: What about like a feed bag?

Keith: Oh, yeah. I bet it looks like a feed bag.

Austin: Yeah. Like a feed bag. [typing] Um, it is like a feed bag. So, I think that's what it's like for Highwater. Highwater puts what looks like a feed bag [**Keith** and Austin laugh lightly] around her- her mouth.

Keith: [laughing still] We just had breakfast.

Austin: Well, ye- [laughs]

Art: Like a surgical feed bag.

Austin: Like a sur- a surgical-

Keith: Yeah, I mean, I guess Throndir took the good egg pan, so- [**Darcy** laughs]

Austin: God. It's true.

Keith: Really hungry.

Austin: It's true. Um, the small boat comes into port right at- Do you see in between this kind of like, first landmass and the second landmass where there's like, a little bay? And there's like, a road that begins?

Keith: Uh hm.

Austin: You kind of pull in past all these little estates and- and villas and to this larger dock that- that connects to a sort of- a big road. Big, beautiful kind of imperial road. It's like an- it's a road from the old world. Sort of like the one that you traveled on to begin with, but it's- it's been upkept a little bit better- kept up a little bit better. And it cuts right between these two kind of agricultural um, areas, right? There's like, big farmland- all this farmland, rolling hills, vineyards, orchids- or orchards- also, probably some orchids. I don't know. I don't know if this is the right temperature for it.

Keith: Is- is the farmland where the poisonous were? Or is that- was that not-

Austin: That is what- that is what-

Keith: Ok.

Austin: She is smelling it from somewhere nearby, but-

Keith: Got it.

Austin: -what you can see is just like, 'oh, ok. This road- this road cuts between these two, and there is some distance, so hopefully you'll be safe', you know? Um, or at least that's what Highwater is hoping. Um, Ephrim, you don't share that information, I'm guessing?

Sylvia: Oh no. I was- I was waiting for a moment-

Austin: Oh ok.

Sylvia: -to interject-

Austin: Go ahead.

Sylvia: -actually.

Austin: Please. Please.

Sylvia: I just- Yeah, I just want to pull them aside and like, be like- specifically like, Throndir, Ephrim and- ugh. Throndir, Fero, and Hadrian first, just so they can like, tell you know, the pe- like, it's easier to spread information when more people have it.

Austin: Uh hm.

Sylvia: And just tell them like,

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Hey, those plants over there, they're like the trees that have been sprouting up, specifically the one we've had on the university. And we need to be careful around them. Hadrian, I'm assuming you should probably let your family know about that, too.
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): Um, do we- do we have more surgical masks?

Darcy: Wait.

Austin: Good question.

Sylvia: Uh, that is a good question.

Austin: Do people have like, adventuring gear?

Sylvia: Uh, I think I do.

Austin: Cause you could spend an adventuring gear for- for some sort of mask here.

Sylvia: Uh, I have adventuring gear that I still have some uses for, I think.

Austin: Cool.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Um, you can spend one use for one- one mask here.

Sylvia: Alright. Um, so I'll spend it for myself now, and then when we can check and see if people don't have them, I can use that more-

Austin: Cool.

Sylvia: -for the others.

Austin: Um, I'm gonna go over who we all have right now, just so we- just so we know. Hadrian, Benjamin, Rosana, Ephrim, Highwater, Marigold, Throndir, Fero, Kodiak.

Art: Yeah, I don't have adventuring gear. Um, I'm gonna hope that- that Benjamin has some sort of magic solution to this problem.

Austin: Oh, you're such a good dad. Oh my god.

Art: Uh-

Sylvia: [overlapped] I can even- Do you want-

Darcy: Alright, I've got adventuring gear.

Austin: I think Rosana has adventuring gear. I'm gonna spend it- or in fact, wait. We- we went over this, didn't we? Did we go over this?

Art: I think have more gear than is on my character sheet, which I think is a migration issue.

Austin: Uh, maybe.

Art: Cause I also have zero coin-

Austin: I brought over that shit.

Art: -which I don't think is right.

Austin: Mmm.

Keith: Yeah, I- I- At some point, I had to go re-add some stuff-

Austin: You could check.

Keith: -that I knew that I had, but didn't. But-

Art: Where are the old-?

Austin: It's in a different- it's in a different like, Roll20, but I can pull them up as PDFs in a second.

Art: Oh, alright.

Austin: If you give me a second to look at my mapmaker stuff.

Keith: Um, can I uh- I have a couple things that I want to do. I might be able to roll it into one move.

Austin: Ok, what do you want to do?

Keith: Um, I- I- I want to you know- everybody's out getting masks. I want to try to see if I can figure out something about the plants. Um, are we- are we certain that they're like the new kinds of plants?

Austin: You haven't investigated them certainly. Hadrian-

Keith: Um, I think I'm gonna try to like- to like, listen to them.

Austin: Oh, interesting. Ok.

Keith: Specifically I want to- I want to use that- I want to try to roll that into also doing a Discern Realities.

Art: Keith, are you interested in like a- in like a little bit of a brainstorm right now?

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Art: You should make a new animal that eats the poison. Some sort of poison control animal.

Keith: Oh, I need to spend time doing that.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: But something to think about.

Keith: Yeah. I mean, I definitely have thought of 'what if I made a animal that kil- that just ate all the bad stuff.' That definitely has crossed my mind.

Art: [laughs lightly] I see no bad, undue consequences with that. [**Darcy** laughs]

Keith: Right? Yeah, I mean, it seems like- that was- that was something that I was thinking of for- for the next time I'm at um- next time we're at the university.

Austin: Uh, Hadrian, the thing that you're missing here, eighteen silken coins, which are moth coins.

Art: Oh, great.

Austin: Maybe you've- you've exchanged those for eighteen coins by now. Uh, you had a bunch of dungeon rations. I don't know why you have eleven dungeon rations, but you do.

Art: I think I came with a lot of them. We got them at some point. And because of the quest, I never used them.

Austin: Fair. You have a suspicious torch, which [**Keith** laughs] I have no fucking clue [**Darcy** and Austin laugh] what that torch is or why it's suspicious. [laughing throughout] I'm gonna have to check a lot of transcripts to try to figure out what's up with your suspicious torch.

Keith: It was- Well, it was- it was in a torch holder, and right underneath it said, 'Don't ask.' [**Austin** and **Sylvia** laugh]

Austin: Don't. Don't. Do not.

Keith: Don't. Do not ask.

Art: Well, I assure you that through all these adventures, Hadrian is a hundred percent still carrying this suspicious torch. [laughs]

Austin: [laughing] Fantastic.

Art: Brings it everywhere.

Keith: Ancient fire epic?

Art: Even when he's not- doesn't have his adventuring gear. No. That- In fact, go on- go on the internet, search for some fanart-

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: -and just in your mind, know- picture, picture in the suspicious torch into all the drawings of Hadrian out there.

Austin: God. So funny.

Art: I'm sorry. How many rations did you say?

Austin: Eleven.

Art: Uh, any adventuring gear on there?

Austin: Which doesn't come up that often. None. No, you did not have any adventuring gear is an important thing to know.

Art: Uh, bet I could have bought some with eighteen coins. [**Austin** laughs]

Keith: It says that you made a deal with someone. 'You carry all the inventory and gear, and I'll carry all the dungeon rations.' [**Darcy** laughs]

Austin: [laughing] And I'll carry all of the suspicious torches.

Art: Unfortunately, I- I have to imagine it was Fantasmo, so it's a- [laughs]

Austin: It's gone now, huh? Yeah. Cool. Yeah, it didn't-

Art: 'This torch has Arrell on it. It didn't mean anything at the time, but-' [**Austin** and **Darcy** laugh] 'Arrell's torch. Do not use.'

Austin: Don't use. Definitely not a conduit. Um-

Art: Oh my god. It was the torch the whole time. [**Austin** laughs] It was never Benjamin.

Austin: 'Everyone, my family is safe.'

Art: It was the torch.

Austin: God. Alright, so, Fero, what are you doing? You're- you're trying to-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You're trying to do-

Keith: I- I'm- I want to listen to the- I want to see-

Austin: So, you're-

Keith: -if I can hear the plants.

Austin: But you're not doing Communion of Whispers. You're literally just trying to like, talk to the plants using the thing that lets you talk to the plants.

Keith: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Right? Ok.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Um, so and- and then the thing you're actually doing is Discern Realities.

Keith: Yes. Yeah.

Austin: Ok, so go ahead and roll Discern Realities. We'll see how this goes. Given what-

Keith: Eight.

Austin: Alright, so you get to ask one of these things. ‘What happened here recently? What’s about to happen? What should I be on the lookout for? What here is useful or valuable to me? Who’s really in control here? What here is not what it appears to be?’

Keith: Uh-

Austin: So, you like, walking up to these plants and talking to them? What’s this look like?

Keith: Well, we’ve- we’ve established that- uh, that Fero can hear the plants from at least a distance.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: Um, cause they’re kind of just shouting their intent to the- to the sky.

Austin: Uh hm. At least those are the ones you’ve- you’ve heard, yeah.

Keith: Right. Yeah. So, I- I’m- I want to know what should I be on the lookout for? I want to see, is there some- is like-

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Are these plants dangerous to just be around? Is there something that I need to be careful of specifically?

Austin: Yeah. So, I think that thing that you- it’s an absence. It’s an absence that keys you in here. There aren’t- there aren’t non-plant animals around them. There aren’t insects. There are not birds. They are being pollinated- The pol- the pollination is happening through some other means. Maybe there are plant birds. Maybe there are plant you know, pollination devices or beings that are doing stuff, but you don’t hear- Normally, when you’re around stuff this like, even when you’re in the areas that are mixed use, old plants and new plants, you get the- you get that mix of like, ok, hey, here is this plant saying, ‘grow grow, grow’, but you also just get like, a bird that’s flying around and like, getting some nectar or whatever, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Or- or you get a bug. You don’t get any of that here. Uh, and- I mean, I’ll give you one other little thing here which is that- [exhales] the- It’s like- You don't- This is the first time… you might not understand them. It’s like you’re- it’s like you know- Have you learned another language- You’ve learned- Yeah, no- You- you grew up doing French immersion, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You know how- how many languages have different forms of verbs- or of words in general, but also of verbs? Different tenses. Different declensions. I guess declension isn't- That's conjugation, not declension.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Uh, you know what the fuck I'm saying, right?

Keith: Uh hm.

Austin: Different versions. [sighs] It strikes you that they're saying 'grow', but in a different conjugation that like, the- the person being used is different. Like maybe they're in a collective 'we'. Maybe there's a 'we' instead of an 'I' here.

Keith: Uh hm.

Austin: But you don't know. And it's also the- maybe the first time that it's struck you that- [exhales] So, I guess what I will say is that is- that is the thing that is happening. They are saying, 'we grow' whereas previously it was just 'Grow. I want to grow. Let me grow.'

Keith: Uh hm.

Austin: 'I need to consume so I can grow.'

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: This is a collective, and it's a little lower. They are not shouting. It's like, they have been tamed a little bit. But the 'we' is also broader. The 'we' is like, includes the people tending.

Keith: Huh.

Austin: And the 'grow' is not as violent. Um, but also there is part of this that's like, making you wonder if you missed something before. Because there's other-

Keith: About the other plants?

Austin: Yeah, but- or- you start to recognize there's other sounds happening. Or other um- there's other communication happening through not just the like, listening to what their interiority traditionally says. There is something about the way that they move in the sun and wind. There's something about the colors of the- of the- of the flowers. Something about the way the branches break. Like, the directions that they grow that communicate other things to each other, and you can't read it. You cannot. It's a different- it's a new type of language. It's a new way that these plants are communicating to each other, and you don't know it yet. And it- again, it just- it makes you wonder if a lot of what you heard previously, there may have been something else going on there, too. Not that they were lying or that like- You know, that dryad was attacking you, right?

That dryad was someone who wanted to do you harm because they wanted the land that you were staying on, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And they absolutely- that land had not been theirs previously. Like- But is there also even deeper- I don't want to say sapient thought, but… post-human, post- you know, or- or truly alternative to what you think of human consciousness, or humanoid consciousness is happening here in a way that you don't comprehend yet. And I think that there's just like- there is this moment of almost sublime, where you're like, up on this hill, listening to all these plants, and you can sense that there is a system of interwoven connections here and life. And it washes over you, and you won- I- I don't know. I can't say that you wonder this, but I can say that that is a moment that regular people have had with nature. People who are not the druid have had with nature before in Hieron. The sort of like, immensity of it, but distance from it because they're not what it is. And I don't think that Fero has ever had that- that particular relationship before because you've always been able to, at least study and learn the thing pretty quickly, you know?

Keith: Uh hm.

Austin: So, that is- that is the situation here. It's poisonous. Don't walk in there unprotected. [light laugh]

Keith: Ok. Don't walk in there.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: As long as you keep your distance and you have these masks on, you should be fine.

Keith: Alright.

Austin: And even if- without the masks, it wouldn't be deadly unless you walked in there, basically.

Keith: Ok. Got it.

Austin: So yeah, maybe that's part of it is like, on the- on the outskirts is where you can still see- you hear a bee or two, you know? They- they've learned not to go in. They can- they can go to the outskirts. They can actually even fuck around with like, one or two flowers near the very edges of these- of these vineyards or whatever. Or there are regular old school plants that are still growing up through the cracks in the- in the road. And you still see insects crawling there. But by and large, the- the depth of these areas would be very dangerous for you.

Keith: Got it.

[0:45:00]

Austin: Anything else hop- uh, popping off during this long walk?

Sylvia: Um, I just want to make sure really quick that we all have- Are we all- do we all have masks?

Austin: Yeah, did- did people mask up?

Darcy: So, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, I mask- I masked up.

Austin: And write- Make sure to write this down.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: That you have a mask cause it'll- it may come up again.

Sylvia: Well, I guess-

Keith: I- I am also gonna communicate that um- that the- that even despite being poisonous, these plants don't seem as dangerous as the other plants that we've seen.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: Again beyond being deadly poisonous.

Art: And you're saying this-

Darcy: I'm gonna use two charges of my adventuring gear to mask up myself and Kodiak.

Austin: What's Kodiak's mask look like?

Darcy: Um, fuck man. I don't know. I don't know if it's more adorable if he has like, a dog-shaped mask or if he's just wearing a human-shaped mask on his giant head.

Art: Are- are you- are you open to- to an idea?

Darcy: Please.

Art: Horse feed bag. [**Austin** and **Keith** laugh]

Darcy: Yeah, no. Nailed it in one.

Art: Just a-

Darcy: There we go.

Austin: Wow.

Art: [laughs] A full-sized horse- [**Darcy** laughs]

Austin: That would have been like a-

Art: I don't know why that was in your adventuring gear.

Austin: Is there such a thing as a bear feed bag?

Darcy: Yeah. [laughs]

Keith: Fer- Fero goes,

> **Keith** (as **Fero**): I've gotta get one of those. [Keith and **Austin** laugh]

Austin: Um, Marigold tells you, Ephrim, that she probably doesn't need a mask because she is unstill.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Um, you don't know that that's true. But she is like,

> **Austin** (as **Marigold**): I'll be fine.

Sylvia: I'm gonna burn one of my uses anyway just to give her one.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: Just in case though. Cause-

Austin: [overlapping] Um, and we know that- Go ahead.

Sylvia: Oh, no. I just think it's better to make sure that if she needs it, she needs it. Cause-

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: -something that I didn't mention earlier, from last session, I'm still sick, too.

Austin: Oh, you are still sick.

Sylvia: Ephrim's still sick. So, at least I've got an excuse for the mask. Yeah.

Austin: Does anyone else have conditions worth- worth noting?

Keith: Uh no.

Art: Uh, yeah. Hadrian is shaky.

Austin: Love it. And Ephrim is sick. Great.

Sylvia: Yeah, which gives me minus one to my constitution.

Austin: Bring-

Darcy: Hey, don't google face masks for dogs.

Austin: Ok. I won't. Good catch. Um-

Art: How did I lose- Uh, what are we saying about Rosana had enough gear for- for everyone?

Austin: I think Rosana has spent- has spent her- her adventuring gear to produce enough masks for the three of you. I think at this point, everyone is masked up, as long as you've consumed the right amount of adventuring gear, rest of the party. Unless, Fero, are you- are you masking up also?

Keith: Uh, yeah. Yeah. I'll mask up.

Austin: Cool.

Keith: Better to play it safe.

Art: I don't mean to be too in character- oh, there it is ok.

Austin: But- [lightly laughs] Um, alright. Eventually you get through the vineyards. It's a beautiful walk. It's a nice day. And uh, Hisam is- is helping you carry part of the load. You come to this like, crossroads, and you can see to the south, there is this beautiful city called Coraline [ko-rah-leen]- Coraline [ko-rah-lie-n]. Coraline [ko-rah-lie-n]. Uh, past this big villa that you're kind of near. And then to the east, there's like, more homes. It's not as dense as Coraline is. Buildings, kind of smaller towns that kind of go on through the countryside. Um, and Hisam says,

> **Austin** (as **Hisam**): If we just wait right here, you should be approached by the governor soon. I need to run into the nearby villa to take care of some things. Hopefully, I will see you soon.

Austin: And they head into this little um- this little- ah, not little at all, this big villa that's overlooking all of these- these vineyards. Um, and so just y'all sittin' outside under you know,- it's like 3PM or something, 4PM. It feels like the end of a good beach day. Do you know what I mean? Like that vibe of like, 'You know what? I had a good day.' It's just kind of like, warm out, but not too hot. You got to you know- you got to hang out in nature. That felt good. Um, and before too long, you hear the- the sound of- of hoof beats as a group of people arrive wearing kind of- [exhales] I gue- They're- they are all pala-din, except that one of them looks like uh, a human, but part of his face has been revealed to be pala-din underneath. Like a terminator, but inside is a statue instead of a- [light laugh] a metal skull. Um, and that is-

Art: Oh, that's a- that's an unsettling thought. Thanks, Austin.

Austin: Uh huh. Totally. And this is Tabard Alon with a group of- with his retinue. The governor of Alcyon. He is- All of their colors are- If you actually look up um- [typing] Alcy- Alcyonium. A-L-C-Y-O-N-I-U-M, it's like a soft coral that has this really nice kind of like, nice red and white. And that's kind of like the- and pink, and like that's the coloring of- of this place. Like, they've kind of adopted this Coraline color scheme, both in their banners and everything else. But I will say again, there is a feeling of Aubade about this place for you, Hadrian, in- in the kind of basic structure of it and in there- the sort of peace that people move through their day here.

Everyone seems to move very slowly. Everyone is here kind of- Like, they don't know the world is ending is how it feels, you know? And it's just like, the slow crashes of the ocean waves nearby and the sound of the wind and- and now the hoof beats, and finally this- this group kind of comes up to you, and Tabard Alon gets off. And I think takes a few beats before he recognizes Hadrian and Throndir. Um, I guess he was told who you were, and so he says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): I did not think I would see you again. Welcome to Alcyon.
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): [enthusiastically] Thank you.

Austin: [laughs] Why is Hadrian so stupid? Ugh. [**Art** laughs]

Darcy: I think Throndir's just kind of like looking back and forth between Hadrian and this man-

Austin: Uh, it's great.

Darcy: -that he saw Hadrian murder once.

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh.

Art: Well, the thing is like, the-

Austin: And held you captive once, too.

Art: -the question that I really want to ask is like- like, the thing I want to know, and I can't like, just- it can't be the first thing I ask, and maybe it's a thing I can never ask is like, 'What happened between us from your point of view?'

Austin: Uh hm.

Art: Because I know what it looked like to everyone else.

Keith: I mean, you could just ask that.

Art: Well, it's not like, 'Hey, how's it going? What happened the last time we met for you?' It's not like- it's not like a first question. You have to like- you have to like, slow build to that.

Austin: That's true. That's- You kind of- you have to at least be in like a nice room.

Keith: You're right, yeah.

Art: Like-

Austin: You know?

Keith: Like the things that Fero might ask as a first question aren't the things that other characters might ask as a first question.

Art: Like, 'do you know that you won, and then a god made you lose our last fight?' is like not just the first thing you say to someone you haven't seen in eleven years.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Um, for people who don't remember, Tabard has kind of dark skin with black hair. It was closer cropped at the time. I think like, in a much more military cut. Here he has kind of like, um- Like, he's black, right? So, he has like, tight curly hair. And I think he has like, an undercut with like, a poofy like, broader um, section at the top. Kind of like a mohawk, but really broad. And he has a big, bushy beard. But here, I think it's- it's maybe- it's still big, but it's less bushy.

It's a little bit more in order, and I think actually comes to a kind of a clear point. But he also has the same posture he used to carry which is, even as he gets off his horse, his right arm, which is now also all a stone arm, is just like, hanging onto this long blade that's sling-slung through his belt. And he now has a new left arm, and you can see it's an anchor arm. It's like a metallic arm that is like, bolted on and into his pala-din chest. His like- His statue like, um, marble chest. And it looks just like, an armored- It looks just like an armored arm. It looks like, uh- I guess it looks like- What's it called in Fullmetal Alchemist?

Darcy: Uh, the-

Austin: Automail. Is that what they-?

Darcy: Automail? Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. It looks like automail or something, right? Um, and he has that attached. And you can see like, it's bolted in place and stapled and like, all these other various- There's almost like, a plaster over bits of it, but it- it's chipped away to reveal where it's been attached. He has this like, prosthetic on, basically. And he looks over to you, too, Throndir. And he says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): You, as well. I don't know your many friends, but it is a pleasure to meet you all. We will have to see about housing. Um… there are two places you can stay. I have room for four in the governor's house. And then here in Hisam's estate-

Austin: Or not in- He actually wouldn't say Hisam's estate. He would say um- cause Hisam is- Hisam is staying here with other people. One second. He would say,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): In uh- in Omera's villa, the rest of you could stay.
>
> **Darcy** (as **Throndir**): Uh, if I could- I could ask just a quick question.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Of course.
>
> **Darcy** (as **Throndir**): Last- last time we saw you, you wanted to kill us.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): That's not exactly true.
>
> **Darcy** (as **Throndir**): Ok. You're right. Uh, we didn't get along great. Let's put it that way.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Fair.
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): We had a couple tense conversations.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): And a sword fight. [**Sylvia** laughs]
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): Yeah, what was up with that?

Austin: He grins.

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): We have time. We have time. We'll talk. [exhales] Nothing, but time in Alcyon. Um, we're fine, Throndir. No one here-

Austin: -and like, is gesturing- At- at the point at which you were like, [light laugh] 'We fought each- You wanted to kill us', there was definitely a reaction among the group here that was like, 'uh oh. Who is this person now?' Um, and so he is now kind of like, hands up like,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Alcyon is a peaceful place. There has not been a fight of any kind since I started this new community. That was a decade ago. And uh, for all it is worth, I

apologize for ever causing any of you any harm. And I hope to make your stay here as easy and productive as I can.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Well, that's a relief.

Sylvia: And uh, Ephrim's gonna step forward and put his hand out to shake Tabard's. Cause they haven't introduced themselves properly.

Austin: Yeah. Um, he-

Sylvia: So, like uh, I-

Austin: -he shakes your hand.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Lord Ephrim, Steward of the Last University. Thank you for welcoming us here.

Austin (as **Tabard**): The Last University. Fantastic. I'd wondered where your group had uh, departed from. I've heard great things about the work being done there.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Oh, well. Thank you.

Keith (as **Fero**): [clears throat loudly]

Austin: Um, and the rest-

Austin (as **Tabard**): Excu- Excuse me?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): This is Fero. Um- Fero, do you want to take it away?

Keith (as **Fero**): Hi, no. No, I'm just clearin' my throat. Hi.

Austin (as **Tabard**): Hello, Fero.

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

Austin (as **Tabard**): Um, welcome to you also. [**Art** laughs]

Keith (as **Fero**): Thanks. No. Sorry. I wa- I didn't mean to stop everything. I just-

Austin (as **Tabard**): Are you a- also a lord of uh- a baron of some sort? Or a king?

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

Austin (as **Tabard**): I wasn't sure why the formal introduction was-

Darcy (as **Throndir**): [in background] Yes? [**Sylvia** laughs]

Keith (as **Fero**): I'm a lord baron.

Austin (as **Tabard**): A lord baron. I see.

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

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): He- [exhales]

Art: A Chrysler Lord Baron.

Darcy: Yep. [Everyone laughs hard]

Austin: [imitating Tabard] 'I see. I see. Very luxurious.' [laughs]

Keith: Yeah. Um-

Keith (as **Fero**): Yeah, I'm a lor- I'm a lord baron. I'm Lord Baron of the Outhouse. [**Sylvia** and **Art** laughs]

Darcy (as **Throndir**): Good. Good.

Austin (as **Tabard**): I see. Well-

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

Austin (as **Tabard**): -welcome to you, as well.

Keith (as **Fero**): Thank you.

Austin: Benjamin is like,

Austin (as **Benjamin**): I'm Benjamin. I'm- I'm gonna be a wizard. And this is my mom, Rosana.

Austin: And Rosana's like,

Austin (as **Rosana**): Hi. I'm Rosana.

Austin: And Benjamin- Benjamin says wizard, and- and I think, Tabard is like,

Austin (as **Tabard**): A wizard? Well, I met a wizard once. My friend-

Austin: Or he say- uh, he says um, [exhales]

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): My own Lord was friends with a wizard, I believe.

Art: Oh shit.

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Anyway, in any case-

Art: Hadrian like, inches in front of Benjamin, like- [light laugh]

Austin: Uh huh. Um, I think Marisol- not Marisol, sorry. Uh, what is her name? Marigold?

Sylvia: Uh, yeah. Marigold.

Austin: Marigold and- and um, and Highwater are just like, behind you, Ephrim.

Sylvia: Yeah, I- I think Ephrim's just like,

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): These are my retainers. Highwater and Marigold. The trip here was, you know, a bit more arduous than we'd like, so it always helps to have a few helping hands, but uh-

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Of course. Of course. I have my own.

Austin: You'll note that the- there are four pala-din. There's actually- Let's say there's two pala-din and two anchor with him. The two anchor move the way the rest of the anchor that you saw outside do. The way people do with small ticks and um, you know, small gestures and- and micro-communications between each other. But the two pala-din do not. The pala-din with him seem like pala-din in the traditional sense. In the un- in the less-sapient sense. Um, and he says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Very well. Well, who will be staying where? We can, of course, all walk to the governor's house for a meal now, and split up the party later, but um, if you know where you'd like to stay, now would be a good time as ever to drop off your things.

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Ooo.

> **Keith** (as **Fero**): Did you have any ocean view?

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Of- of course. It's hard not to see the sea from here. Both- both places will let you keep view of the- of the blue.

> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): This is-

> **Keith** (as **Fero**): Yes, I require a blue view. [**Austin** laughs lightly]

Austin: What was that gonna be, Hadrian?

Art: Oh, I was just trying to figure out like- cause there's four in the main.

Austin: In the governor's house, yeah.

Art: I mean, assuming that- that Kodiak doesn't need a person bed.

Austin: Kodiak does not need a person bed.

Darcy: Kodiak could be a person bed.

Austin: Could True. Could add one person bed.

Art: Um, I was just- that- that Ephrim plus retainers plus Throndir makes- makes some sense. Or- or plus Fero. But like, I don't think Hadrian plus family should be in the main house.

[1:00:00]

And if we're keeping all the groups together, we have a group of three and-

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense. I mean, I guess also is it- It's- How many bedrooms is it? I guess he said four people, right? Which could be about more than just bedrooms. Um, it could be about like, food and service and etcetera. But I bet what he means is bedrooms, right? So, that could be Hadrian and Rosana in one. Throndir and Kodiak in one. Could Benjamin stay with Highwater and Marigold in- in a room? I guess you still have break up the party, right?

Art: That seems weird, doesn't it?

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. I mean, Benjamin could stay with the two of you and just sleep on like, the floor, but that seems rude.

Art: Yeah. He'd probably just sleep on the bed that Kodiak becomes. [**Austin**, **Darcy**, and **Sylvia** laugh]

Sylvia: Can't believe you're gonna make your son sleep on a dog.

Art: Oh, don't pretend that sleeping on the dog wouldn't be everyone on this call's first choice.

Austin: Uh huh. [**Austin** and **Keith** laugh] Welcome to our new podcast, 'Sleeping on the Dog'.

Sylvia: [overlapped] I've got allergies.

Keith: [overlapped] I have allergy- a dog allergy, so-

Sylvia: [overlapped] Yeah.

Austin: Uh, fair. Alright, so it sounds like, Fero- It sounds like, wait. Who does it sound like? Now I've lost it.

Keith: Well, I need a blue- blue view.

Austin: Both of them have blue views. You're good. You're good on either.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: They both have different blue views.

Sylvia: Uh, Ephrim would definitely prefer to be at the governor's house.

Austin: Oh yeah, of course.

Sylvia: Just ease of access to Tabard, you know?

Austin: Right. So, it is sounds like, Ephrim, Ephrim's guard, and Fero in the governor's house. Throndir, Kodiak, Hadrian, Hadrian's fam, Benjamin, and Rosana, in uh, the- the villa. In Omera's villa. You don't know who Omera is yet, but it's this villa right here, at the kind of crossroads between Coraline city to the south and then the conservatory and the governor's house to the east. But for now, I think- So, it's like, you know, Tabard orders his guards to bring your stuff inside, uh Throndir and Hadrian and Rosana and Benjamin.

But then tells you to follow- follow him for a late lunch, early supper and begins walking you past some more houses and hills and everything else. And towards the far eastern end of this island- and I think at this point, one, you can really clearly begin to see this giant statue of Galenica to the southeast. Um, who is you know, a giant stone figure made of- So, who- who was here? Who was in the party? Fero was in the party. Um, Throndir was not, I don't think. Ephrim, you were in the party when you-

Sylvia: Uh, yeah.

Austin: -went into that book that time.

Sylvia: Yes, I was there.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Ok. Throndir was not. That was-

Keith: You mean when we walked through the door into the book?

Austin: Into- into a book, yeah. Totally.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Right, yeah, I think it was just Lem was the other person there. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Um, so you- someone at that point did a Spout Lore, and then Devar offered some more- some more info. What you had learned then-

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Or what- what you had- The story you had heard was that a long time ago- I think maybe this was- Ephrim, you- you were the one who did the Spout Lore maybe.

Sylvia: I think- yeah.

Austin: Because you were the one who was like, when you were growing up, blah, blah, blah. What you had heard was that there was a really bad storm years and years ago that was so powerful that it broke apart this peninsula, the eastern shore. And it was torn apart into a bunch of islands. And it happened in the middle of the night. It happened like- you would wake up and the island you were on would suddenly be two islands. And it terrified people so much that they um, the will of that- that- of those people kind of took on divine shape.

And Galenica, who was this being made of the ground and rock and gravel and sand, pulled itself- uh, pulled themselves out of the ground and became a protector for that part of the world and gave them a safe place.That- it- it allowed the- the community to like, literally rejoin, for the islands to continue to live as the storms continued to- to hit against them over and over again. And at this point in the story, Galenica's barely even understood as a person. There's- there is this feeling that is just like, 'they are the collective will of the people.'

But then one day, you were- you remember being told as a kid, Galenica left. And they left behind one of their legs, and that over three hundred years, people brought out little stones and buckets of sand and mortar and added them to that leg and rebuilt Galenica until they stood at a massive scale. And that statue- that new statue replicated the divine power of the Galenica that left and continued to protect the- the shore as the shield of our will. And that is also where we got the information that Galenica joined the Grand Tour, and also we understood that Galenica is the same person as Samaantine. How much of that true?

And also, the other thing you saw was that Galenica was not protecting the islands from some like, big sea monsters inside of the book that you were inside of slash door you had walked through. Um, so you don't really know exactly what happened here, but there is that statue that you saw. But now it is not moving around, but it does have these giant opaline eyes, bright and orange. They almost- that almost makes them like, a giant living lighthouse. They have their own light in them. And it's not nighttime, so you're not seeing them shine, but you

imagine that they would produce some degree of light for the direction that- that their face is- er that their head is facing.

Um, the other thing that you see as you walk down this long walkway slash road is a giant conservatory. And then, it's like- it's like a single building that has like, a big glass dome over part of it. And again, there's all these vines with flowers on them. And then to the south, there's the giant governor's house. And between the two is this massive, and I'm- Like, it's- it's massive like, it's city- city blocks large, fountain across the ground that is shooting water up into the air. And you see like, pala-din and anchor walking between the various sprouts of water, kind of, not ducking or dodging between them actively, but it's as if they're walking a path that they know they will not be hit by the water.

And as you kind of come over the hill and look down into this little valley, this little coastal valley, you can see that there's like, forty or fifty of them, of these pala-din in the very middle of the- the fountain, where they are like, all in a circle. And there's you know, three of them in the middle, clearly orating or debating or something. And others are sitting on stone benches. Maybe it's even more- maybe it's a few hundred in the middle here. It's a very, very, very big place. It's almost like an amphitheater. It's like, lower in the center than it is in the sides. Um, and they're kind of protected in some sense by this fountain. And you know, that's- Tabard like, says- like, points at it or nods at it with his head as he kind of walks past down towards the governor's house, along a side- a side road. Is just like,

Austin (as **Tabard**): The debate is fierce. It is another day in Alcyon.

Austin: And leads you down further to his house. When you arrive, what you see is a really nice, kind of three story mansion. Inside it's… I- I imagine those of you who who have been in rich spaces before have a sort of in- intrinsic understanding of how that space is used, which is normally that like, 'Oh, this is our room for sitting with a pipe. And this is our room for sitting with a cigar.' [light laugh] Rich people don't know how to use space efficiently. Or don't want to because they're rich, and that means they get a lot of it and can very- you know, can cut things down in ways that are like, very purpose driven and also very flashy. But this is not that.

There are big rooms that just have like, dozens of cushions lining the walls and floor. And where you- There are- there are like people in repose there. The pala-din use a lot of cushions for when they sit. They don't use a lot of chairs. Chairs are easily broken. They use like, stone stools and stone benches, but on the ground- if they want to sit on the ground, there's just these like, very dense cushion material that- or cushions filled with material that can support their weight. Um, there's lots of those in these big rooms. There's a degree to which it feels like these used to be old school rich people houses that have been taken over and repurposed.

So, part of the reason why there are only four bedrooms here for you as guests is, there aren't that many bedrooms here. Most of those bedrooms have been converted into like- into rooms where people are doing- doing paintings or into rooms where people are reading and writing poetry or into- There's a degree of which like, even this governor's home has been taken

over and turned into a place of study and self-improvement and community. But eventually, those of you who are staying here, are shown to your home. And yes, Fero, you get a blue view. You look east over the- the ocean that leads to the edge of Hieron itself. How's everybody find their- I think- I think uh- Tabard says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): For those of you staying here, I hope you find your rooms comfortable. Everyone else? There will be a meal served. Our uh- We have someone very excited to cook for people like you, and it doesn't happen very often. We have some fresh fish, as well as some locally grown vegetables. They are safe, I promise. If there's anything else you need-
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): This is very exciting. I haven't eaten in weeks. [**Austin** laughs lightly]
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Of- of course. Weeks. Of course. I haven't- I haven't eaten in over a decade, so.

Austin: Um, and uh, he says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): I have some things to attend to, but please make yourselves at home. And I will be around shortly for when the meal is served.

Austin: What do you all get up to in this house?

Art: Wait, just for clarification, cause Hieron isn't a globe, right?

Austin: No.

Art: So, is it like a view of the end of the world?

Austin: You can see the horizon. Um, if you sailed out that way, we would have to see what happens.

Art: Ok. So, it's not like if you were to like look out for a while, and then just like, 'Oh, there's the inky nothingness.'

Austin: No, you would see- I think you would see the night sky, if it was nighttime. Do you know what I mean? You see the atmosphere. You see the edge of the atmosphere. It still looks like- it still looks like the sky out there, you know? But beyond the sky is the inky nothingness. And- and you know, maybe if we were a more coastal game and you weren't here where we know that Alcyon- the thing about Alcyon is it hasn't started falling to the dark yet, I bet the view from Velas looking west or from Ordenna looking west is really fucked up.

I bet you there are holes in the atmosphere where you just see darkness, you know? But Alcyon, for whatever reason is being held in place and is being pinned to- to Hieron. Has not been threatened by the Heat and the Dark. I mean, that's the other thing. You don't see star stuff

here. You don't see the Heat and the Dark here. The Spring, you see, but the Spring has seemingly been corralled at worst, you know?

Keith: That- This is- I- You know, if there's other like, stuff that people want to do first, um, I can wait. I would like to try to talk to someone who's in charge of or knows a lot about the farming here.

Austin: Sure. Um, let's- let's get a list of what people want to be doing here while we- and what your like, goals are in general. So, investigating farming, Fero. What else? What else do people want to get done?

Sylvia: Uh, my main stuff comes from talking to Tabard, but I would like to use Lore of the Forge on some of the plants they're growing here.

Austin: Sure.

Sylvia: They um- Just because it is the same type of fauna- or flora-

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: -that we've seen.

Austin: Totally.

Keith: What does Lore of the Forge do again in this context?

Sylvia: It's like- um, it's- Do you remember my old Lore of the Flame move where I could look into fire, and it would give me a vision, basically-

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: -from Samothes?

Keith: Uh huh.

Sylvia: This is that, except it's for anything that comes from Alyosha's forge. Any of the flowers that come from it.

Keith: Oh, cool.

Sylvia: And it's basically is a direct line to that-

Austin: Uh hm.

Sylvia: -in the same way.

Austin: Um, cool. What else did you-

Art: Oh, real quick. Anything here evil?

Austin: No.

Art: Great.

Darcy: Shit.

Austin: Mmm. .. is that true?

Darcy: I hope not. I gotta eat somebody.

Austin: [laughs lightly] Um… evil, no. Not here. Not right now. No. And if you've been like, asking consistently, no. You haven't passed anyone who's like, 'ah, that's the evil one.'

Keith: 'Ah, found them.'

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: 'Every place has got one.' [**Darcy** and **Sylvia** laugh]

Austin: Uh hm. Yeah. And so, Throndir, you were hoping that like, a video game, be like, 'I have to find the one person who it's ok to kill.'

Darcy: Yeah, no. Totally. Listen.

Austin: I mean, that's not your-

Darcy: I don't want my uh-

Austin: Your- your move-

Darcy: I don't want my morality meter to- to tip the wrong way.

Austin: Your move doesn't necessarily kill anyone, right?

Darcy: No, it doesn't.

Austin: Only when you fuck it up, right?

Darcy: Only when I fuck it up or if I want to.

Austin: If you want to. Yeah.

Darcy: Yeah.

Keith: Um, do you have a way to give yourself like a forward for that? Like, is there a way to like-

Austin: Not really, no.

Darcy: No, I don't think so.

Keith: Nah, he just- it's just a- just a roll of the dice?

Darcy: I mean, the good news is if I'm doing it stealthily, which is what I would be doing if I'm like, you know… [laughing] having to do it to someone not willingly.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Isn't this some sort- isn't there a bird you could get that could help you with this roll? [**Austin** , **Sylvia**, and **Darcy** laugh]

Darcy: Ugh. If only. Uh, I was also wanting to talk to Tabard about the morning music.

Austin: Right. Right. Um, so I think-

Sylvia: Oh.

Austin: Go ahead. What was that?

Sylvia: Sorry, I just remembered- I remembered the compass, the daisy compass-

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: -that I got from- That um, I guess this is more just like, confirm suspicions, but it points to- It- it always- It- One of the things we have here that is warns of dangerous flora from the forge.

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: So, I guess Ephrim just wanted to check that for like- Be like, a hundred percent-

Austin: A hundred percent.

Sylvia: -this is where I got to go. Yeah.

Austin: That stuff is dangerous, you can stay-

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: -You can stay out of it. That's-

Sylvia: Alright.

Austin: I forgot you had that. That would be very useful here, yeah.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: Um, so yeah. And I mean, so here's one of the things that was- There is stuff even here that is dangerous for you. The um- the vines that are like, on these houses are dangerous if you got too close and breathed in their pollen at- at you know, too great a um, a density.

Sylvia: Alright. That is very good to know.

[1:15:00]

Austin: Um, let's see. Let's- let's do the- I think the agricultural thing is pretty easy. I think you just go meet with someone at the- Actually, you know what? I think- I think this can happen partially over- over this lunch. Um, because I think Hisam shows up with two other pala-din. Hisam again is- Hisam, I think, looks pretty plain. Is a statue pala-din. Is like, an old school pala-din. I'm just gonna say pala-din when I mean pala-din.

And I'm gonna say anchor when I mean anchor. And- but they are- they arrive with two other people. One of them is the person whose name I've said before, Omera, who is another statue pala-din. Um, and her- her body looks- her body has been like, covered in- not covered, but has graffiti on it, as if it were a statue that had been like, vandalized. But she not only seems chill with it, like it's… it's- it's her makeup. Or it's her- it's her visual styling. Um, I suspect actually she probably paid someone or- or you know, asked someone to do it cause it's really cool.

I think that it is like, effectively like, tattoo lines down her left arm in like, cool spiral shapes. And then- but so part of it looks- part of the- the way that the pala-din mark themselves here is in line with like, what their- their tra- their attributes and features already look like. So, for instance, she also has something on her face that like, looks like it cuts her face in half. Half of her face is- has this like, blue face paint that goes like around her eyes and her mouth and like, leaves her lips unadorned, but because there's blue paint like around that half of the lip, it really makes her- the grey of her- of her pala-din lips pop.

But there's other parts where it's just- it literally looks like someone scrawled something like, literally on her back. There is just like, the word um, you know, 'afternoon' written or something, right like? Uh, and maybe that's the name of the- of the artist. Who could say? But, so yeah, sometimes it- it's as if it is painted. Like a painted structure. And other times the art is as if it is just someone has- has scrawled or vandalized this body. And that is like- You see that

all throughout the entire city and- and the entire- the peninsula. That is part of what fashion looks like here.

The other woman with- with Omera is Tanyel. And she is an anchor and has, as I said last time, is like, very kit-bashed. A lot of the anchor combine parts from different bodies to create a new body or a new shape or like, an extra you know- an extra pauldron here or like, a double- you know, a double uh, dip into the chest plate or like, kind of things that look like wings. Um, and I think actually, that's what Tanyel has. Tanyel has used extra metal plates to build herself something that look at least like wings.

You don't know if they function or not. Um, and so Hisam arrives with them. They own the estate that the rest of you are gonna stay at. And they've been invited to this lunch with the governor and you, as part of this- as like, as a reward or a- an exchange for housing you. That's like, part of a- I mean, you know, 'Come over for dinner. Come over for lunch. It's cool. Don't- don't worry about it. That'll be a- we'll have lunch. You'll take care of these people for a few days. No big deal.'

And the three of them are a family. I think maybe even Hisam explains it. Hisam says- You're at like, a nice table. A nice long table. And they have- I think that Tanyel has some sort of gauntlet- not gauntlet, uh goblet with some sort of liquid in it. You don't know what. Um, but some sort of liquid that her body will be able to use. And so she has that. And that's like what her meal is. And Omera and Hisam, who are both pala-din, have like, um, flavor chips. I'm imagining them almost like, pantone color chips. But they're things that they put in their mouths and turn their mouths colors and presumably produce some sort of flavor effect. It's the only time you see them open their mouth- I guess no, cause they talk. Do they- do they talk with their mouth? Did Castile move her mouth? Does anyone remember if Castille moved her mouth? She must have, right?

Art: I don't know.

Sylvia: I don't remember.

Darcy: Yeah, I don't remember.

Austin: I think we would have remembered if Castille never opened her lips. Castille kisses Maelgwyn. So, they- Castile has lips.

Art: Well, I mean-

Austin: Um, so that's a definite thing. You gotta- you know, you- sometimes you just gotta think through things. So yeah. That is- that is like what the food experience is for them. And Hisam says,

> **Austin** (as **Hisam**): Thank you so much, Tabard for- for bringing me and my parents here. For this meal. We're happy to answer any questions any of- any of your guests have.

Austin: And so Hisam is- is like, the child of Omera and Tanyel, and you don't know about how pala-din culture is set up. They all look adults to you [light laugh] because they're all you know, six feet tall and look like they could kick anyone's ass. Um, but- but that's the group that's here. It's the three of them plus Tabard plus the um- your whole group. And everyone has- has good food, and if you have questions or want to talk about things like agriculture or anything else. Now's a good time because those- the two moms here, Tanyel and Omera run at least some of these- these vineyards.

Keith: Yeah, I mean, yeah. I want to- I really- I need- I want to know about this.

Austin: So, what do you say?

> **Keith** (as **Fero**): So, those plants- those plants, I don't know if you know, they are very poisonous.

Austin: Omera says,

> **Austin** (as **Omera**): To your kind, yes. Yes.
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): Right.
>
> **Austin** (as **Omera**): We've- we learned that the hard way, and we've done our best to make sure that people like you don't go near them for your own safety at this point.
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): Yeah.
>
> **Austin** (as **Omera**): And I promise, we've made sure that there's you know, not much in the way of pollen or residue in any of the rooms you'll be staying in. And that your food, again, is completely safe.
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): Great. The problem is I would love to get near them. [**Austin** exhales a small laugh] Uh, those- [Keith exhales a small laugh] those plants seem to be related to some plants back where I live that are really aggressive.

Austin: Tanyel says, with a kind of metallic voice, because she is an anchor,

> **Austin** (as **Tanyel**): They were aggressive here, too, when we first arrived. It took some doing to shape them. A decade of doing.
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): Wow.

Austin: And Tabard says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): That's about right. When we first arrived, there was just pala-din like me. Honestly it wasn't even until some of those anchor started showin' up years later that uh, we even thought about using the plants for anything. But-
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): What do you use them for?

Austin: I think Tanyel lifts up the goblet and says,

> **Austin** (as **Tanyel**): Drink.
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): Mm

Austin: And like, rolls one of her shoulders,

> **Austin** (as **Tanyel**): Maintenance fluid.

Austin: Omera points to the blue on her face and says,

> **Austin** (as **Omera**): Paints. Decoration.
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): Lots of stuff.

Austin: And Ta- and Tabard says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): And trade with those communities who can eat the fruit or drink the wine.
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): How did you tame them?
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Hard work. There is no… If you're looking for a simple agricultural tip, if you're thinking what if we- you planted them in rows instead of-
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): No, no. Like, process. Like, what is the- How would you even start? They are- I mean, I don't know if you've seen this. I've seen these plants become-
>
> **Austin** (as **Omera**): Attention.
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): -moving monsters.

Austin: Omera cuts you off and says,

> **Austin** (as **Omera**): Attention. Slow, constant attention. I was never a farmer in my old life. Like everyone else here, I was a soldier. But-

Austin: I think Hisam actually looks a little awkward at that. Which suggests that maybe they are- they were not a soldier in a previous life-

Keith: Uh hm.

Austin: -in the same way. Or maybe at all. Um, and Omera says,

> **Austin** (as **Omera**): With all of the time we have now, we attend to the crops daily. Carefully. Not only weeding, but trimming away. For hours. It is meditative work, but it keeps them in check. And eventually like, hair, they hold shape.

Austin: Uh, I think Tabard almost like- Everyone here's heart is on their sleeve. Like, you know, like rubs his fade just a little bit at the notion of hair, because he's one of very few pala-din here who has hair.

> **Keith** (as **Fero**): Ok. I would- I would very much like to get as close as I safely can get.
>
> **Austin** (as **Omera**): Of course.
>
> **Keith** (as **Fero**): I've got a mask.

Austin: Omera nods and says,

> **Austin** (as **Omera**): Tomorrow morning, come- come to the villa. We'll- we'll bring you as close to the- the vineyard as you wish to study.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Um, you know [exhales] it's great to hear that someone has a use for these. We- we've been trying to deal with it in our settlement, and because we can't get too close to it, tending to it is difficult. But-

Sylvia: And then Ephrim's like, turning to Tabard,

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): If you ever wanted to send an envoy to come help or to collect some, take it off our hands if you could use it, it's always welcome.

Austin: He grins. Um, I think here we get the human part of his face grinning very, very clearly. And the- the statue side of it being a little less obvious. But it's- it's still whole- it's still like there's a fullness in his expression regardless. And he says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): To agree to something like that… I apologize, but it'll take a year. We have another dozen things tabled already that need debate, and before I get approval, I worry any solution I could offer would be long past its use.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Hm.

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Things move slow in Alcyon. It is why we are safe, and it is also why those outside the gates are not always happy with the degree of service we can offer, let's say.

Austin: Um, Tan- you see Tanyel reach out and grab Omera's hand at that- at that line. As if there is like- this is- this is clearly a contentious point of debate right now in Alcyon, whatever's happening at the gate.

Sylvia: I mean, I'm gonna- I'm gonna keep pushing then.

Austin: Uh hm.

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Has there been much trouble at the gate then? Have you had to deal with much?
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): [exhales]

Austin: A sigh. And before I think Tabard can even speak, Hisam tries to summarize it for you, as a guard from the gate. They say,

> **Austin** (as **Hisam**): There are two factions here. Um, some wish to let the Fel anchor in, as soon as possible. And others are worried about what the extra drain on resources and what extra danger there might be.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Fair enough. Fair enough.
>
> **Austin** (as **Hisam**): It's been a matter of months. They've been waiting a long time.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Months. Well, thank you for letting us in so quickly. I know it's obviously not a permanent situation, but still the expedience is really appreciated.

Austin: Tabard nods and says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Believe me. Even getting the- the others to agree to a short visit for you was no easy task, but sometimes you cash in enough promises when an old friend is around.

Sylvia: I- I think Ephrim gives like a look to Hadrian and Throndir, cause I still haven't really had that whole situation explained to me.

Austin: No.

Sylvia: So, I'm just like, 'Oh, well. I'm glad I know these guys, even though Throndir mentioned something about killing.'

Austin: Uh hm.

Sylvia: That's not me actually saying that, but you know.

Austin: Yeah, I think Rosana and Benjamin definitely give you a little bit of a look at that, Hadrian, by the way. Have you told them- have you told them that story? Is Hadrian a story-teller in terms of like, relating what his experiences are?

Art: I'm sure like, things like that, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I'm- I bet.

Keith: Benjamin also seems like a question asker.

Austin: Uh hm. And in fact, I think maybe it's a- it's a good prompt, Keith. Cause Benjamin is like- Benjamin is the one who's gonna be rude here probably, right? By mistake, but like, out of excitement. I don't think he would be- He's not like, defensive because he recognizes that this is a safer space. This isn't like- he's not like, mad at Tabard. But he says- and he's not a fool, right? But he is Hadrian's son, and so- [Keith laughs]

Art: Well, kids are stupid, right? Like-

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh. I mean, he's a- he's eighteen. But eighteen year olds, still stupid. Still kids.

Art: I think they're- I think like, kids are stupid applies like, well into your twenties. I think-

Austin: Well into your forties, honestly. Uh-

Art: Yeah, well it's not kids are stupid at that point. That's just like-

Austin: People are-

Art: -people are stupid.

Austin: Yeah. Uh, I think Benjamin says,

> **Austin** (as **Benjamin**): I didn't know that you and my dad were friends. I thought you fought each other.

Austin: And Tabard's eyebrows go up. [light laugh] And like, kind of looks down and goes,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Well, friends fight each other sometimes. Maybe friends is the wrong word. Maybe we're- we're closer to kin, in some ways.

> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): That's a great word for it.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): We served our lords, and now we are serving others.

Austin: On that note, really quick, who is your ward right now, Hadrian?

Art: Benjamin.

Austin: Ok.

Art: Benjamin is I think the last ward I said out loud.

Austin: Cool.

Art: I don't think it like, lapses.

Austin: Yeah, I don't think so either. Um-

Sylvia: Actua- At the mention of the lord, I want to interject really quickly.

Austin: Yeah.

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Yeah, you mentioned something about serving a lord earlier. Uh, may I ask who specifically? I'm assuming, I mean, from the statue you may be referring to Galenica, but I don't want to overstep any boundaries here and make an assumption.

[1:30:00]

Austin: Um, [exhales] no, I think he's pretty up front with it. I think he says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Oh. [light laugh] The good king, Samot.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Oh!
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): I spent near a decade in service before I realized exactly what my situation was. [exhales] I miss some of that authority. Some of the clarity that being so close to one like him offered. But there is no price too high for freedom.

Sylvia: I think Ephrim's gonna like, clink his glass to Tabard's or whatever Tabard has there.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Like,

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Yeah, agreed.

Austin: Yeah. Um, yeah. I think maybe they all also have goblets, just in their goblets are these pantone paint chips [laughs] that they can take out and almost eat like crackers. The 'their' being the various pala-din here. So, yeah. Clinks to that. Um, it's-

> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): We've got him if you're ever interested in a visit.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): You've got him?
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): He's visiting. He-
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): From Marield- er from the City of First Light. Still? Now?
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Did he- Are you aware of the situation to the south at all?
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Situation to the- Has something happened to the city?
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): It's been attacked.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): I see.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): And I-
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): We believe it's fallen.

Art: Or do we believe that? Do I just know that?

Austin: You believe- you- you be- I-

Sylvia: We believe that, yeah.

Austin: You believe it, yeah.

Darcy: Yeah.

Sylvia: Um-

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): To who? Who would dare?
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): The Ordennans actually. [**Austin**/Tabard exhales] At least that's what we've been led to believe. When Samot was coming to visit us, he was uh, accosted on the way. And um-
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Who would- [exhales sharply] Whoever would dare attack Samot, I'm sure would be dealt with instantly.

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Things are very different to how they were in the past, Tabard. And while Samot is fine, I assure you there's still a threat out there to him.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): This is senseless. This is- [exhales] A threat. [sighs] I admit that I have a troubled relationship with my lord given how he hid my nature from me for so long. But the idea that the city would come under Ordennan control- We've heard things about the jungles and I believe the star stuff, strange fire. I knew things beyond the walls were not ideal, but when have they been? But this sounds truly troublesome.
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): Oh.
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Yeah.
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): I mean, while we're talking about celestial gossip [**Austin** laughs lightly] Samot's father gave his life to- to save his son.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): The old man.
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): Mm.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): Troublesome indeed.
>
> **Art** (as **Hadrian**): Yeah, it's bad out there.

Austin: Hisam is young and foolish and says,

> **Austin** (as **Hisam**): I'm so glad none of that has come to Alcyon.

Austin: And I- I think we get both of their moms turning to look at them like, 'Don't- don't- you can't brag about being in the safe place when everyone else is on fire.' Um, they just kind of like-

Sylvia: I think Ephrim-

Austin: -sink in their- sink lower onto the bench.

Sylvia: I think in response to that, Ephrim's gonna very casually say, while like, cutting part of his dinner, just,

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Yeah. You never know with the way things are- Things may be moving slow inside Alcyon, but outside of it, it's a breakneck speed. I just figured it would be courtesy to warn you that moves are happening with the Ordennans and that [exhales] things on the outside are bit more turbulent than they may seem from here.

Austin: Um, I think at that point, the- the anchor at the table, Tanyel, says,

Austin (as **Tanyel**): As soon as they understand that Alcyon is safe, they will come here, too. They will want our strength just as they wished the City of First Light. I served. I know.

Austin: And Omera again, pats her hand and says,

Austin (as **Omera**): Please understand-

Austin: This is Omera speaking.

Austin (as **Omera**): Though we may be troubled by your words, we do appreciate them. There is not much cause for us to leave our land yet. But-

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Of course.

Austin (as **Omera**): -knowing that these dangers lurk outside, we will- we will advocate for caution and cooperation, obviously. With you, not with Ordenna.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): As I'd hope. Of course, I apologize for bringing up such heavy topics during a lovely dinner such as this, but I figured it would become- it would be more of a courtesy to let you know immediately what the situation was and let you know that we're coming here as a gesture of friendship during these rough times. As opposed to demanding anything.

Austin: Tabard nods and smiles and says,

Austin (as **Tabard**): Well, it's funny because I was wondering.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Well-

Austin (as **Tabard**): What is it you are here for because I- I cannot imagine a group of nine would travel so very far simply to remind us that the world outside our gates is not as peaceful as that inside.

Sylvia: Ok, out of character really quick.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Do we- which foot do we want to drop here? [**Austin** laughs] The one where I'm looking for the way to make pala-din or where Benjamin does magic and this is the last place with magic?

Art: Oh, you weren't even talking about the foot where we brought a conduit of the wizard Arrell here.

Sylvia: No, we're- That- that foot is staying off the ground.

Art: Ok, yeah. I just-

Sylvia: That- Yeah.

Art: That third foot is keepin' up. [**Austin** and **Darcy** laugh quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah. Cause I'm fine- I'm fine with Ephrim mentioning Samot. I like- I can try and get it to- We can do that in character, but I can- I'm fine with Ephrim mentioning it, but I just want to make sure that like, you don't want to get that out to Tabard yet.

Art: No, I think- I think we should go with foot one here. And I think we should sort of like, count on Benjamin, the- the young scamp that he is- er you know, eighteen year old scamp that he is [**Austin** laughs lightly] advocating for his own interest there. I think- I think- I think we're gonna get there for him.

Sylvia: Ok. So, I should just mention the pala-din blueprints then? That's what- that was foot one? Just to clarify.

Art: Yeah, and I mean, if it- that's- if that's like, unsatisfi- And if that's like, unsatisfying we can- we can-

Sylvia: No, that's perfect. I just wanted to make sure. Uh, I think Ephrim goes- turns to Tabard then and is like,

> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): Well, it's a bt delicate, and uh might be preferable to talk just a bit privately in a more secure situation, but Samot mentioned uh, that there could be some knowledge of use here to us to help protect ourselves from the Ordennan threat. Um, and in theory, possibly take back the city. But of course, that all depends on if what he told me is even true and we can- we can discuss.
>
> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): What did he tell you?
>
> **Sylvia** (as **Ephrim**): There is a way to bolster our forces using… and apologies if this is uncouth, um because I know that this is not at all what you- your people here are, but pal- the pala-din of old almost [**Austin**/Tabard exhales briefly] to uh- Soldiers to help protect us and to hopefully stop what is going on with Ordenna.

Austin: There are some glances at the table. And Tabard says,

> **Austin** (as **Tabard**): I think you misunderstand. We are the pala-din of old. You cannot put a being into a world like this and expect it to never develop a voice its own.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Oh. Uh… That was not what I was implying at all. Um, the fact of the matter even being that if these plans are um, to- are able to sustain pala-din life, I think we'd- it would be a boon just to have some in our community to help that even.

Austin (as **Tabard**): Would you be prepare- would you be prepared to take care of them once they developed their voice? How many would you build?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): [overlapped] We-

Austin (as **Tabard**): What would you build them from? These are questions that I do not ask because out of defensiveness, but because these are the same questions we ask ourselves. Hisam here is damn near the first of their kind. One we built with the resources here. From the stone below us. There in the statue of Galenica, in the forgeworks there. There we- we create new limbs like mine.

Austin: And lifts up the prosthetic.

Austin (as **Tabard**): We create and repair the bodies of the anchor. We do our best to introduce new life into our small community, but we know that with each new life, you are not getting a servant or a soldier. You're getting a person. This is…

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): First of all, I'd just like to apologize. Uh, especially if I've said anything insulting out of my ignorance. Samot only gave me part of the picture to go off of here and just told me that I would be able to find the knowledge I sought. And uh, I- I do not mean to trivialize the lives of you and your people.

Austin (as **Tabard**): Of course. Of course. Of course. Listen.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): And many of those questions you've asked me, I- I will admit I did not consider because I did not know they were questions that were to be answered with this.

Austin (as **Tabard**): Samot and his kind are very knowledgeable, and I do not regret my years in service, nor have I lost some degree of loyalty or admiration for the man. But we were disposable. I sometimes wondered if those who used us even had the dignity to hope we would die before we were confronted with the terror of being. Mostly they used us until- until we were us and sent us on our way, or we would wander. This did not happen with me because of you, Hadrian, and because of the situation in that hallway.

But there are many here who awoke one night standing among statues, the only in the grouping who knew what it was to be. And fled in terror. Centuries. Millenia of statues wandering into the woods. And now the Ordennans send them, too, to rust in the rain and die. This is… a matter of propriety, but it is also a matter of morals. You wish to study the works we have here, learn how the pala-din are built. I will not say no out of

hand. But I will need assurance. I will need commitment that you do not [exhales lightly] move in haste.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): I can give you my word on that.

Austin (as **Tabard**): What about the Lord of the Outhouse? Do I have your word? Sorry. Baron Lord of the Outhouse.

Art (as **Hadrian**): [quietly] It was Lord Baron.

Keith (as **Fero**): Uh, yes. Yeah, you have my word.

Austin (as **Tabard**): Well then tomorrow you can send some of your people to begin the study.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Thank you. And uh, again, apologies for not understanding the full breadth of the situation… That sounds like a very- Obviously I don't understand what it is like to awaken like the pala-din have, but uh, as someone who's been isolated like that, it's a terrible experience, and I uh, I don't want to add to that plate. So.

Austin: Um, Tanyel, who is the anchor, speaks up here, and she says- again in her kind of metallic drawl,

Austin (as **Tanyel**): I do imagine a world where people like us are… everywhere. No longer kept to barracks. No longer always holding spears. I love to work the farm in the morning. I hope that on this journey we can aid each other, and perhaps [exhales] build a new idea of what beings like us are capable of.

Austin: I think and then Omera kind of butts in and says, looking out the window back towards the vineyards,

Austin (as **Omera**): If the world goes the way it is, those with bodies and hearts like ours, well, I suspect we will- we will find ourselves in positions we could never have dreamt when we were mere servants.

[1:45:00]

Austin: And there's like, just the slightest tinge of pride in that. Not quite a threat, but like, 'Hey, the new world might be built for us, not you.'

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

Um, and that's a thing to consider. The like, post-dinner bell chimes. And Throndir, don't worry, it does not chime for you. But it sounds like it might. I think we get two of the three notes.

Darcy: Ahhh.

Austin: And then a third doesn't come. And I actually think Kodiak goes like,

Austin (as **Kodiak**): Grrr.

[Music plays out to end]