

Autumn in Hieron 22: Closing the Window

Transcribed by Max (pine#6681)

AUSTIN: Bottom on the twos, with Art Tebbel.

NICK: Yeah. As long as you didn't get all the way —

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: — then that's perfect.

AUSTIN: Then you're golden.

ART: I mean, at peak scream, I did— I did bottom out.

AUSTIN: Well then just don't— don't peak.

NICK: Well yeah, just don't— Just don't peak scream.

DRE: You gotta— This is like the Kama Sutra of [AUSTIN: It is.] podcast streaming.

AUSTIN: It is.

[ART laughs]

DRE: You gotta just let it ride.

AUSTIN: Just let it ride. Never peak.

DRE: Mood. Be Sting.

AUSTIN: It's like a mantra. Be Sting. Be Sting. Be Sting.

ART: Do I have to be Sting. Can I be someone else?

AUSTIN: (laughing) No. You have to be—

DRE: But you can choose— You can choose which Sting you want to be.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can be WCW Sting.

DRE: Yeah. Or you can choose like...

ART: I want to be NWO Wolfpack Sting.

AUSTIN: Mmm.

NICK: I call Sting from Dune.

AUSTIN: *Mmm.*

ART: Oh that's a good one.

AUSTIN: That's a good Sting.

DRE: I want to be Sting, after the Police when he wrote Desert Rose and was doing weird car commercials.

AUSTIN: So you *do* want to be tantric Sting?

DRE: Yeah, totally. Why not?

AUSTIN: I, you know, that's fine. I'm not judging.

DRE: [laughs] Gosh darn.

AUSTIN: I want to be Sting from Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels where he's that dude's dad and just like disappointed in him all the time.

[DRE, NICK laugh]

NICK: Is that...

AUSTIN: That's my favorite Sting.

NICK: So you're Lock Stock Sting and we're the son— [AUSTIN laughs] All of us, collectively...

AUSTIN: It's just Lock Stock Sting shaking his goddamn head —

[DRE laughs]

NICK: Yup.

AUSTIN: — at the other moments in Sting's life. Yeah. Yup.

[DRE sighs]

AUSTIN: Okay. Let's time.is.

DRE: Okay.

[MUSIC - "Autumn Not Winter" by Jack de Quidt fades in]

[four separate claps]

AUSTIN: Nope.

ART: Nope.

DRE: (laughing) Nope.

AUSTIN: Let's do it at 10.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Hey everyone welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical world building, smart characterization and fun interaction between good friends. We are as always presented by StreamFriends.tv and by RunButton.net. We are continuing our actual play of Dungeon World, focusing on the campaign that we have internally started to call Ice Party, even though now they're out of the ice. We've been calling it Ice Party for awhile. [DRE: Yeah.] This is just a little peek behind the curtain.

ART: It's always going to be Ice Party in our hearts.

AUSTIN: Right. Because of how cold our hearts are. Dungeon World is of course a game by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel, based on a— It's a hack of a game called Apocalypse World by D. Vincent Baker. As *a/ways* our agenda is to portray a fantastic world, to fill the characters' lives with adventure and to play to find out what happens. In a weird way, we already know the answer to bits of that last one, [NICK laughs] because this is our first recording after recording the Holiday Special, which you've heard by now. Presumably. If you haven't heard that, then I don't know, like... I don't know what you're doing.

NICK: Actually. I— I haven't heard it yet.

DRE: Maybe—

AUSTIN: I'm

NICK: I haven't listened...

DRE: Maybe they're purists and they're waiting for the chronological order.

AUSTIN: Well, that's—

ART: Yeah, I could— I could see a chronological purist.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: You know, like someone who's watching Fast and Furious for the first time. You want to see Tokyo Drift, last.

AUSTIN: Right, right. That is canonically, the last one.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I'm waiting for the machete cut of Friends at the Table which I think is— [DRE, NICK laugh] Is like the first episode, and then like episode six, seven, eight, and then, two, three, four, and then the holiday special, and then some shit we haven't even recorded yet, I'm pretty sure. [DRE laughs] The last time we played, I'm just gonna— We have to jump into it because I know time is as always a— of great uh, value to all of us and I have like a million things to do today after we're done recording because I very poorly scheduled my weekend out. Um, so I just want to like really quickly, let's just us into this. Let's just get, you know, get rolling. Just get going. We're just gonna kick it off. We're gonna get ready and then we're gonna— Okay.

So the last time you arrive finally at the fallen tower in the center of the mark of the Erasure, where you were headed for the last like couple weeks of game. And when you got there, you met up with Sunder Havelton and Uklan Tel who were both working with the New Archives to come and kind of map this place out and explore it. Uh, you then, you know, kind of warmed up a little bit and took some early looks into this big fallen tower. It's massive, it overshadows you, completely. And it's split into—if you look at the map, again—a ton of little parts.

Um, we deployed a new set of rules for the exploration of this place, that I'm just going to go over again, really quick, um because I want to make sure that we like, remember exactly how this works. So one, every time you go to one of the squares or any of the spots on this map, that will—that and returning to camp—takes up a day of travel. And everyday takes up a ration. When you... When you go to a place, you can go to it and get like a basic level of information about what's there with no big deal and there's no risk and it's just like, "Oh, that's just what this place is." And then you can decide to Search and Scavenge it, where you can roll 2d6 + Wisdom to explore the ruins. And you open yourself up to harm if you fail, but you potentially find something useful. On a 10, you get to choose three things, on a 7 - 9, you get to choose

one. Something to eat, which is a +2 Rations. A useful tool or weapon. Useful information or long lost knowledge. Or medical supplies.

So, in your first move, you went to the part of the throne room that's marked here, just to the north of the campsite where you heard a story about Samot passing through this valley, years and years and years and years ago, before he even— It seems, before he ascended to any sort of position of authority. And there he encountered a weird wolf and that wolf was coming after him for various reasons. You should go listen to that episode, it was a cool story. The second thing you did, uh...

NICK: It was a cool story.

AUSTIN: While fleeing from that throne room, Teclan— Uh, sorry, Uklan Tel got caught with a strange arrow that poisoned him in some way, and Hadrian sucked the poison out of him using— using his holy Lay on Hands ability. And then finally, uh I hope he's okay, we'll see. But finally, you went into a big chunk towards the north of this tower. The tower kind of lays northwest, uh sorry. South— From south-east to northwest. And you went to the kind of third from the top of the— of the straight tower shape.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: There if you recall, you found a weird amalgam of spaces. There were spaces that looked like they were in caves. That they were mines. There were spaces that were filled with clanking machinery. Automated machinery, machinery like you've never seen before. In some places there were glowing lights on the walls without any— without any, you know, candles to— to provide the fuel. And then in the final moment, you stepped into a room that was unlike the rest, alive with something that felt like sentience. It was filled with kind of ethereal people, not quite ghosts, more like a vision from a different world.

And you can find out, as Uklan Tel would tell you, that in fact, he suspects that that's what this is. That this place is a vision into an alternate world, a world that could be or could have been. Um, that at certain moments in time, other realities slip in. Realities that if but, you know, if one or two things had changed. If the revolution had gone forward. If the butterfly had flapped its wings over in south Hieron, you know, this world could exist. And this is the... This is the first of these that you've seen and it has terrified Uklan Tel. And it— it probably shakes you up a bit when you see among the workers here, among the clanking machinery and automation, Hella in the far distance. What do you do?

[TIMESTAMP: 0:08:42]

NICK: Um. I think I did this last time.

AUSTIN: You did. Go ahead.

NICK: But, uh, I'm gonna cast a Detect Magic.

AUSTIN: Yes, everything here is magical. That is— That is what you did last time.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um.

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: Uh, so everything here is magical and on top of that Sunder— Sunder Havelton, who is—to remind you—that is Fantasma's old kind of rival but also peer. She cast a kind of ward spell to keep you— to kind of keep you protected from this space.

NICK: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: Not that there's any specific immediate threat but you can see this kind of orb of energy around you that reveals what the floor *should be* underneath you. So in all the rest of the space, it's this kind of notched metal floor, but under you it's just like some bricks 'cause it's just like the side of the tower where it once stood. So, so that's...

DRE: She's basically anchoring us.

AUSTIN: Right, um... She says,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): I can move with this but I can do very little else.

ART: Um. Did— I probably did do this last time, but this is evil or not evil.

AUSTIN: Not evil.

ART: None of it? Not even weird ghost Hella.

AUSTIN: [sighs] I don't know. I don't know if weird ghost Hella's evil. Um... Yeah. Weird Ghost Hella is evil.

[DRE laughs]

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: I do want you to know that I was looking up at a poster that says, "Sinister," while I made that choice. [NICK laughs] I have a— I have a Belle Sebastian, "If You're Feeling Sinister,"

poster and like, maybe looking at the word 'sinister' is not the best way to determine whether or not something else is evil. I think that might bias me.

ART: Sure. Well, I mean, it effects like— It affects things.

AUSTIN: It affects things, yeah. Um...

ART: But I don't know how much it affects things.

AUSTIN: Ugh. Uh, it's—

ART: Because I don't know what's happening here?

AUSTIN: Oh man. It— She's evil. She's evil but like the place isn't, do you know what I mean?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Uh, no one else here is. Uh, there are dozens of workers.

NICK: What?

AUSTIN: None of them seem to have made note of you.

NICK: What was she doing, again?

AUSTIN: I think she was just, she was just like speaking with people and kind of organizing.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: She was in kind of an overseeing kind of supervisory position [NICK: Oh, alright.] in this big work shop.

ART: It's Corporate Hella.

DRE: Uh, does she have her sword?

AUSTIN: She does have her sword. She is still like, armed. Um, this is— I think you can tell this is sort of a like— [sigh] It is industrial but it is very much still a military operation. Uh, they're forging things. Some things are very clear, like oh yeah, they're forging a sword. They're forging armor. But like some things are just like big pieces of metal and you don't have a clue what something that size could be used for.

ART: Um...

NICK: (whispering) Robots.

ART: It's probably robots. Um... Does anyone object terribly to me calling out to her? We know Hella.

DRE: Well I guess... we just ask Sunder like,

DRE (as Throndir): Can they— Can they see or hear us? Or are we kind of—

AUSTIN (as Sunder): As long as you're in this— this orb, they won't. *I don't think* —

AUSTIN: She corrects herself.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): — they'll notice us here.

NICK: Uh, Fantasma goes invisible, just in case.

AUSTIN: Sure. Give me a roll.

[DRE laughs]

ART: Playing with fire.

AUSTIN: Alright, so what are you— Are you forgetting? Are you...

NICK: Um...

AUSTIN: You rolled a 9, [NICK: Yeah.] which means he has to either take a condition um, forget the spell or... take an ongoing negative. Is that right?

ART: Is that draw attention attention to yourself (cross) or is that for...

AUSTIN: (cross) Oh draw— Yes, yes, yes. Or draw attention to yourself, yes.

NICK: Yeah, it...

AUSTIN: Sorry, that's...

ART: Which would seem to be the worst choice here.

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: Or the best! Or the best.

NICK: Well, it's uh, let's see.

AUSTIN: It's forget a thing...

NICK: Draw unwelcome attention.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: Take 1 ongoing to cast a spell until the next time you rest, or forget it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's what it is.

NICK: Um... Or put yourself in a spot, so that spot doesn't necessarily have to be unwelcome attention.

AUSTIN: Right.

NICK: Um... [buzzes lips] I'm going to— Well, I mean we're resting every night, right? Go back to the camp—

AUSTIN: You are, yeah.

NICK: Okay. I'm going to forget it.

AUSTIN: Um, alright so Fantasma does his hand trick, now he's gone. But still inside of this bubble. Uklan Tel is... is kind of looking around, up and down the space and is veering a little to close to the edge of Sunder's bubble. Um.

AUSTIN (as Uklan): Remarkable and terrifying. What could cause this?

AUSTIN: He shakes his head. There's...

DRE: Um...

AUSTIN: It's up to you. What are you doing? You know, again—

ART: Is there...

AUSTIN: So you can— you can do anything you would normally do. You can do the Search and Scavenge move, which could theoretically get you more, but that's— that's— Yeah, it's up to you. What are you doing?

ART: I'll take the Search and Scavenge move.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Before you do that, Art, can I— can I consult my god tingling senses?

ART: Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: Nothing.

DRE: Nothing.

AUSTIN: This is nothing he's seen. [skype notification sound] Uh-oh.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Somebody just left the Skype.

ART: Well it's not— It's not me.

AUSTIN: It's not me.

DRE: It's not me.

AUSTIN: I think it's Nick. I think we lost Nick.

DRE: Oh, Nick.

ART: So it's probably Nick.

DRE: Yeah, Nick got dropped.

ART: So then I won't roll Search and Scavenge then.

AUSTIN: That's good. You're safe.

ART: I mean, I will, but when he comes back.

AUSTIN: Oh. So you're not just giving up on it.

ART: I'm not giving up on it. There's— There might be — This is interesting.

AUSTIN: This is interesting.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: I want to get out.

AUSTIN: Did you get a weapon last time? I feel like you got a weapon.

DRE: Yeah, he got a sword.

ART: I did. I got a sword.

AUSTIN: You got that golden sword, right. Okay.

ART: (cross) The golden sword that— that I'm lis...

DRE: (cross) Have we determined that that sword is magical?

AUSTIN: I think we did.

ART: Well we determined it's not evil.

AUSTIN: We determined it's not *evil*. I don't think we checked if it was magical.

ART: Well Detect Magic was cast just now.

AUSTIN: That's true.

ART: But everything, you were saying was like more of a (cross) blinding flash of Detect Magic.

AUSTIN: Yeah, everything is magical. Yeah.

DRE: Ooh. We're in Disney World.

AUSTIN: We are in Disney World.

DRE: Everything is magical.

ART: The Disney World of...

AUSTIN: Whoop. "How would I— How would I rate the quality of this call?" What? I'm still in this call, Skype.

ART: Uh-oh. Are we in an alternate Skype universe?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so.

ART: Along with being in an alternate universe right now?

AUSTIN: We're— We're all in multiple different multiple dimensional universes. [ART sighs] So Art, you were —

DRE: Art, you're gonna Search and Scavenge?

AUSTIN: — going to Search and Scavenge.

ART: I was going to search, that is a Wis?

AUSTIN: That is a Wis.

DRE: What's your Wis Modifier, Art?

ART: I'm pretty Wis-y aren't I? Oh wait, no I'm not. I'm specifically not.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but you said you were doing. Let's do it.

ART: I'm a Wis baby.

DRE: Oh boy.

AUSTIN: Uh, 8's okay.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you can choose one. Something to eat, a useful tool or weapon, useful information or long lost knowledge, or medical supplies.

DRE: I—

ART: Useful information or long lost knowledge, please.

AUSTIN: Alright.

DRE: [sighs] Somewhere we're gonna have to get medical supplies for your rock finger.

AUSTIN: I don't think they make—

ART: I don't think they have any rock finger medical supplies. We're not going to find a 'Soft' in here.

[AUSTIN laughs]

DRE: You don't know man. [AUSTIN sighs] Old tower.

AUSTIN: So, it— I think this just comes through careful observation over the course of the day. Um, this— You know, you're kind of like eavesdropping on different conversations. You follow Hella around. She's talking to other— other people who are in similar roles, supervising other people. They are preparing for an invasion. They are kind of building, amassing, a collection of arms so that they can march down and defeat a strange— a strange group of wizards who are threatening them from the south. Um...

ART: Is it us? Are they talking about us?

AUSTIN: I don't think they're talking about you.

ART: Okay.

DRE: We only got one wizard in this group.

AUSTIN: Right.

[NICK laughs]

ART: Well, they might just have identified us as wizards. Like wizards might just be a catchall term for them.

AUSTIN: Right, um.

ART: Like Barbarian.

NICK: I am pretty strange, though.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: That's true.

AUSTIN: They— It becomes clear that they took—

NICK: I haven't yet learned Mirror Image, so...

AUSTIN: [laughs] Once you do, then you will be Wizards, yes. [sighs]

NICK: Yup, yeah.

AUSTIN: They took this place in the last couple of years. Um, and its— You know, I've said this before, this space is super disorientating. Um, and it's hard to know what that even means. For a long period of time, you're not sure if you're here like, where the tower is or if you're in Ordenna, somehow. You know, like, this sort of magic or whatever it is, is hard to understand.

But you do, at some point, as you're following them, wind up on a level with windows pointed outward. Um, and you kind of leave the workshops behind and move into the beautiful black and gold of the kind of upper tier hallways of this— of this floor. Um, and— Or not this floor but this sector, I guess.

And there is, through a set of open windows, a balcony out and Hella alone walks onto the balcony and looks over the edge towards, what now you understand is the west. And you see the woods that separated Velas from this place and you see the kind of, remnants of the trees that once separated the two. You see a path, burnt and carved from Velas to here. And in the distance, you can see smoke, where Velas was once. And it's hard to tell if it is the smoke of industry or of war. You can head back to camp now.

[TIMESTAMP: 0:19:48]

NICK: Hmm.

AUSTIN: Unless you have more to do here, which is— which is fine.

DRE: Do you want to try talking to Hella?

ART: [laughs] I have a lot of fun ways to get us all killed (laughing) kind of like that.

NICK: Um...

ART: I mean, the problem with talking to Hella is you're going to have to like step out of the bubble.

AUSTIN: You will.

ART: And then like, there's things like— like Hella could— The Hella we've met could kill all of us and I don't know what alternate dimension steampunk Hella could do. [AUSTIN, DRE laugh]
But she's probably not like, cuddlier.

AUSTIN: She's still evil.

DRE: She's still evil.

ART: She's still evil.

AUSTIN: But also still looking out at the distance and sighing, you know?

ART: Yeah. I mean, I don't think our Hella was entirely not. Like, she was— she was friendly.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: You know, while she is, you know, the baddest MFer we've ever seen, I've never felt like in constant danger.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Whereas like, I don't know if constant danger isn't on the table here.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: Especially if you like, stepped out of your magic bubble to talk to her.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: "Hey, s'up."

ART: But like, if we think the magic bubble is permeable for us, both ways, I— I mean, we could probably keep you alive long enough to get back in the bubble and away from her.

NICK: I'm invisible.

AUSTIN: You are invisible.

ART: I mean, yeah.

NICK: I could step out and say something if there was something you wanted to impart. Or ask or something.

ART: Well, does this Hella know us?

NICK: We have— I don't think we have any idea.

DRE: We don't. Yeah, we don't know.

ART: Well, like we would really be counting on it, right?

DRE: She definitely doesn't know me.

ART: Well you don't— We don't know that.

NICK: Yeah.

ART: It could be.

NICK: Also, the us's of this universe could be completely different also. Like...

ART: Although, ugh. Hadrian— Hadrian recently reached out to our universe's Hella. I'm wondering if— if yeah. If we should just do it. I mean, the worst that happens is she murders us all, but I mean, that's kinda always on the table, right? [DRE laughs] Like, we're living on the edge of a knife in general.

AUSTIN: What do you do?

ART: Oh, I guess we should ask, right?

AUSTIN: Ask what?

ART: If we can get back.

DRE: Ask Sunder what happens if we step out.

AUSTIN: You can step in.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: She confirms that you can step back in.

ART: Can— Can she— Can she follow us?

AUSTIN: What do you mean?

ART: Could— If she saw us step back in, could she get into the bubble?

AUSTIN: She can't leave the bubble. She— She— The bubble emanates around her. She's holding it up.

ART: Ups— No, sorry, we had a pronoun problem.

AUSTIN: Oh, would Hella?

ART: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah, could Hella get into the bubble?

ART: Could we— Could evil— Uh...

AUSTIN: Uklan says— Yeah, "Could Evil Hella?" No, uh, that doesn't work. Uklan says,

AUSTIN (as Uklan): Even if she could, she won't. We can not risk bringing back a living being from this other world. Not in these circumstances. In something more controlled, maybe, but our first time shouldn't be with someone you *know*. Too many complications.

ART (as Hadrian): Oh, no I— I don't mean— I don't mean "Should we intend to bring her back?" I mean, "Could she maliciously come back?" Do you think if we...

AUSTIN: Uklan looks at Sunder and Sunder says,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): I'm not sure. Theres— Theres too many variables. It's hard to know.

AUSTIN: She looks at— She looks over to— She doesn't look over, 'cause he's invisible. She kinda like looks around, like looks up in the air and like,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): [sigh] Fantasma, do you have any idea?

[NICK chuckles]

AUSTIN: Do you have a— Give me an Intelligence roll if you want to find out, I think.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's your— You're a magic theory boy, you know?

NICK: Yeah.

DRE: Theory boy. Who's a big theory boy?

NICK: Um... Actually...

AUSTIN: Unless you just have a...

NICK: I can get a...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: I can get a +1 on this from my new Know It All Perk.

AUSTIN: Sure. Ooh.

NICK: When another player— Oh, another player character. Okay.

AUSTIN: Eh, this is Art's. This is part of Art's general question.

NICK: Alright, yeah. So when someone asks me a question that no one else knows, I get a +1.

AUSTIN: Nice.

DRE: Huh.

NICK: That's still only a 9.

AUSTIN: That's fine. [ART: Huh.] Um... You are... You know the interesting thing here is that... I mean, I guess the thing is, you get to— This is technically Spout Lore, right? Um, let me think how this should work. This is on my— This is— It should be clear, we haven't played like strict, um, you know Dungeon World in a long time at this point so I'm a little rusty. Um, uh, you're not sure—

NICK: So yeah, if it's a Spout Lore, then you're telling me something—

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's something interesting but not useful. Um...

NICK: Right.

[ART laughs]

AUSTIN: You know that— You know that uh, when different sorts of um... In your research, you've never done this or anything.

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: But you believe that theoretically, that if two different timelines came into contact, a new third one would be created.

DRE: Oh boy.

NICK: Oh.

ART: You know what would be a fun way for this game to go? You guys remember that Jet Lee movie, *The One*?

AUSTIN: Oh my god.

[DRE laughs]

ART: What if we just did that, but with Hella?

AUSTIN: Where Hella is—

ART: Universe Jumping Hella is trying to accumulate power by murdering each other. And we're all just horrible bystanders to her interdimensional wave of carnage. (laughing) That's what you guys want to do right now, right?

[NICK laughs, AUSTIN, DRE sigh]

DRE: Sure.

ART: I think we should do it, right? That's what everyone got from that?

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh.

NICK: That was a really good bit of a recent Fantastic Four run that had a similar thing except with Reed Richards.

AUSTIN: Did he kill other Reed Richardses?

NICK: He didn't but the other Reeds did, yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh. Okay. I see.

ART: Right, that's also—

DRE: Do you think this is the Ultimate Hella or Earth-313 Hella that we're looking at right now?

[AUSTIN sighs, NICK laughs]

ART: Everyone— Oh, we're definitely— We're definitely universe 616.

DRE: 616. That's what it was. I don't know why I had it 313.

ART: I want to just be clear.

NICK: 313 is exactly the same except everyone's half as tall.

AUSTIN: Weird.

DRE: Oh, okay. That works.

NICK: Yeah.

ART: A tiny town of... Uh. Anyway, yeah, I think that's a great idea. I think we should— We should go talk to Alternate Universe Hella.

[TIMESTAMP: 0:26:45]

AUSTIN: Okay. Well, I mean, so you step out. Who's going out of this bubble? Other than, clearly Hadrian.

NICK (as Fantasma): [clears throat] I will go, I suppose.

DRE (as Throndir): [laughs] Yeah, okay, sure. Let's do this. Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): [sighs]

DRE: Well— [laughs]

AUSTIN: Well, okay, so again Fantasma's invisible, so okay.

ART: (laughing) Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you step outside of the bubble.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Hella turns and draws her sword immediately.

ART: Yeah, it's—

AUSTIN: From a distance. There's ten feet between you, let's say.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Um...

ART: I— I put my hands up. I put my hands up.

ART (as Hadrian): Hella.

AUSTIN: She looks at you with wide eyes.

AUSTIN (as Hella): An apparation.

AUSTIN: She shakes her head.

AUSTIN (as Hella): I knew this place would be haunted.

AUSTIN: Um, and then she looks at— at Throndir and says,

AUSTIN (as Hella): And a snow elf. Hm. You escaped our boots? You come now for vengeance?

ART (as Hadrian): We're— We're not here for vengeance. Do— Do you know us?

AUSTIN (as Hella): Know you?

AUSTIN: She sighs. And begins to walk forward, with her sword down. Um, like not— It's still drawn but it's low. Um... And as it gets closer, it begins to chant,

AUSTIN (as the sword): Our son, our son, our son Fantasma returns.

AUSTIN: And at that, her eyes go wide and begins charging at you.

ART: Oh, fuck. Um... Um...

DRE: Bubble time?

ART: How close are we to the bubble?

AUSTIN: You can get back in the bubble.

ART: Okay. Wow, this sucks. Alright.

NICK: Really wish I had different spells prepared right now.

AUSTIN: Isn't that always the way.

ART (as Hadrian): I'm sorry my friend, this was a mistake.

ART: And I go back into the bubble.

DRE: Yeah, I'm hopping back, right in behind ya.

AUSTIN: And... Fantasma?

NICK: Uh... I don't know. Fantasma wants that sword. [DRE laughs] Like, it's like *everything* [AUSTIN: Mhm.] in his being is saying, "Knock her down. Take the sword. Take the sword and jump back through the bubble." But, mmm. [laughs]

AUSTIN: I— Listen, I'm not— Listen, this is an open-ended. I— We are, you know, we are in the woods at this point. Let's do what you think is right. You ha— Time out, here's a thing I just remember Nick [laughs] Nick hasn't heard the holiday special yet. We are— We are well established that sometimes characters do things that *they* think is right even though the rest of the party would like things to go a different direction.

NICK: Right. That's (cross) Fantasma in a nutshell, basically. [laughs]

AUSTIN: (cross) That is— I know, I know.

ART: I mean, you're not— If— This is nicer than stealing our universe's Hella's sword. Who knows what's up with this universe's Hella's sword.

DRE: Yeah, apparently she likes to kill a lot of snow elves, so...

ART: She called...

AUSTIN: To be fair, so do you.

DRE: Yeah. Yeah, that's right.

AUSTIN: That's on the docket.

[DRE laughs]

ART: She called— She called— She called me an apparition. I think this universe's Hella might've killed this universe's Hadrian.

NICK: Um. What is... What is her reaction when they disappear?

AUSTIN: This is all— We're at like a split second here.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Because like...

NICK: Well can I— Can I like back up a bit —

AUSTIN: And then wait?

NICK: — get behind her.

AUSTIN: Sure.

NICK: And then just like watch her for a second.

AUSTIN: They vanish back into the— into where you can see the bubble. Presumably, because the way the spell works, like if you've been in it, you can see it I guess.

NICK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um, and [sighs] Oh. Right. She swipes at the air with her sword and you see the bubble like, as if it were a curtain, get cut, and start to tear.

DRE: Uh-oh.

ART: Uh-oh.

AUSTIN: Sunder, inside the bubble, starts to like, you know, say more words and like, Uklan Tel is like going through pouches and looking for new things to like put on the ground because that's how Semiotics works. Uh... And he's trying to— They're both like scrambling to keep this ward up.

NICK: Wait a minute. Is— Is Hella, [Kuwabara](#)?

AUSTIN: I don't— I haven't seen that show in forever.

NICK: Does— Does her sword—

AUSTIN: Right he has—

NICK: That's for you, Keith.

AUSTIN: You also haven't— I keep forgetting there are lots of things that Nick doesn't know because of not having heard the holiday special. One of the things that was established in the Holiday Special, is that Ordennan Metal—Which we have finally named, by the way. Ali, Hella's player, finally came up with a name. It's Aserem—has special properties.

In the holiday special, Nick, there were characters who were fishing and used— had a special fishhook made of Ordennan Metal, um, so that—of Aserem—so that they could hunt something magical. Uh, Ordennan Metal, Aserem, is often used when going against opponents of supernatural or magical capabilities, because it let's say reacts negatively to them.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: It cuts through them with ease.

NICK: So... Is this something that would've been known at the time that I was in the university?

AUSTIN: You had— No, absolutely not.

NICK: Oh, okay.

ART: It's like a new thing, right?

AUSTIN: It's like the last fifty years, yeah.

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: And not in— Like, only in Ordenna, and then bit by bit as that got out. You know, they weren't— They're— You know, what this is is, that was a fact that was always true of this metal of Ordenna. But it wasn't— It wasn't exactly clear what was happening until very recently, even for them. They knew they had really good metal.

NICK: Sure.

AUSTIN: They knew they were making swords that were really sharp and that they were winning in combat when combat happened. Um, it was only recently that they understood that, "Oh, one of the reasons that we win a lot is because we can effectively counter magical things." Um...

NICK: Right. Um, okay, well. [sighs] Since I don't like her getting at— like potentially getting at my buddies.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

NICK: Who, you know I— Fantasma would never admit that they were his buddies.

AUSTIN: Sure.

NICK: If he were asked, his idea would be, (in Fantasma's voice) "It did not seem strategically sound to let her attack my bodyguards."

[AUSTIN, ART laugh]

ART: Yeah, well.

NICK: So I'm gonna uh, try to cast Dispel Magic, which is a new spell I got.

[TIMESTAMP: 0:34:30]

DRE: Ooh.

AUSTIN: Mmm.

NICK: And I'm going to try to dispel the whole effect.

AUSTIN: (muffled) Okay.

NICK: I don't know if that's too big?

AUSTIN: I think you should roll it.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: There— There are ways for this to be interesting.

DRE: Wait, are you trying to dispel the bubble or you trying to dispel like this whole alternate reality that we're seeing?

NICK: Yeah, I'm trying to dispel that because Austin said that that was magical.

AUSTIN: It is.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: He's not wrong.

ART: Dispel that. That'd that'd be great.

AUSTIN: Let's give it a roll.

DRE: Jesus Nick. [laughs]

NICK: What?

ART: The most interesting—

AUSTIN: Do the roll. Do the roll.

ART: No, I'm super excited for this.

AUSTIN: Me too.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This— I don't care what the roll is. Any way it goes is a good roll.

NICK: 9.

AUSTIN: Okay. Which means you basically succeed but you draw— you pick one of those things, yeah.

NICK: I'm gonna— I'm gonna forget the spell.

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: Even though that's not the most fun thing to do. [laughs]

AUSTIN: No that's fine. You cut— She— She, at this point looks in and makes eye contact with the people in the bubble as you're preparing this spell. She cuts like the— Again the hole in the bubble, reaches out with her gauntlet, grabs it and tears it, just as your spell goes off. Like she's ready to jump into this bubble when you launch— What's this spell look like?

NICK: Um, it looks like a...

AUSTIN: Like what's your— What do you do to do it?

NICK: Um, I uh... Well, I mean, no one can see Fantasma right now but I— [AUSTIN: Yeah.] I actually kneel down and I like put two fingers between my eyes and uh, I— I'm mumbling some magic words that you know [AUSTIN: Sure.] are mostly indecipherable.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

NICK: Um, and then I tap my staff and when I tap my staff on the ground, it sends out a ripple.

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: From— From where my staff hit. And as the ripple moves outwards, it just washes away everything.

AUSTIN: Okay. It hits Hella's f— Well, it immediately hits the ground as it moves outward and it uh...

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: The ground beneath your feet changes from this kind of polished stone 'cause you're out on this balcony [NICK: Mhm.] to old ruined rock. The vision that you see to the west changes back to the woods as they were. Um, once, when you traveled through them. And from this height, because you are still, at this moment, high up in the air, uh, you can still see Velas, way off in the distance [NICK: Mhm.] where the ocean hits the end of the continent.

It moves over. It envelopes Hella or rather Hella is erased from existence just before she jumps into the bubble. And then that effect continues throughout this space and you realize that a tower that was once standing is now... in the middle of falling again. Um, the walls start to shake and crumble. The floor tilts and gives way. Sunder drops her shield and shouts,

AUSTIN (as Sunder): We have to get out of here now.

AUSTIN: I— I—

ART: Great.

NICK: Wait a minute.

AUSTIN: I think we're gonna need...

NICK: What's— What's falling?

AUSTIN: The place you're in.

NICK: Oh, so the other dimension version of this tower.

AUSTIN: No the other— Right, the other dimension is being— is being replaced with— You erased what was here.

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: But what was here *was* another dimension. The whole thing.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And so now, you're kind of rebuilding a falling tower which was, what it was before it was this.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: So now you're in this bit of the tower as it's crumbling to the ground, instead of being frozen in time [NICK: [laughs] Okay.] and locked into a different timeline. Do you see what I mean?

NICK: Sure. Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Like, "Oh, right, gravity exists."

NICK: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Because that's at the point at which you freeze— they froze this. So I think we're gonna need some Defy Danger rolls to get out of this.

DRE: Yeah.

ART: Yeah, that sounds appropriate. What— What kind of Defy Danger rolls do you think these are?

AUSTIN: This is probably...

DRE: Getting out of the way or acting fast? 'Cause yes.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so. I think that's Dex.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I think— I think— Yeah, I think that's what we need here.

ART: I can't just ignore it? Just like...

AUSTIN: Oh shit, I forgot one thing! I forgot one thing. Important thing.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh.... You'll notice it later, don't worry.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: We'll move, we'll move.

DRE: Oh no!

AUSTIN: Woof.

NICK: Oh no.

ART: So you're not taking— taking justifications for other rolls? Fair enough.

AUSTIN: Uh, what's your justification for escape? What's your justification?

ART: I could just endure it. I could just like, survive it.

AUSTIN: I mean, you can, but that means you'll take damage.

ART: Or I could Strength through it. I could just like, run through the wall.

AUSTIN: Just roll Dex.

ART: I do.

AUSTIN: Oh my Jesus Christ.

ART: Oh, gross. Okay.

DRE: Well, it was nice knowing you, Fantasma. Carry on our legacy.

[NICK laughs]

ART: Well I also messed it up. Uh...

DRE: I know.

AUSTIN: Alright, um. Fantasma. Um, jeez, okay. [sighs] Man, those are some rolls you all got, huh.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna need more tokens. Um, let's see... Let's...

ART: Are you asking for a bribe?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Listen. I need you to— What's it worth to you that you don't die? [ART, NICK laugh] You know, I'm just asking questions. Um...

NICK: As uh— As things start crumbling down around everyone, um, Fantasma, like I don't know if he's successful yet —

AUSTIN: He's successful.

NICK: — But he starts running past everyone and he just shouts,

NICK (as Fantasma): Maybe that wasn't tactically sound.

[DRE laughs]

AUSTIN: Um...

ART: I mean, I think that's interesting philosophical question is did Fantasma just kill everyone in that dimension?

AUSTIN: Yes, he did.

NICK: Wh-Woah.

AUSTIN: Um...

NICK: Really?

AUSTIN: Yeah, dog. Um... So...

[DRE, ART laugh]

NICK: I thought I was just going to close the window.

AUSTIN: There wasn't no— The magical thing was the dimension.

NICK: Oh dear. Okay.

AUSTIN: Um...

ART: Dimensional genocide.

AUSTIN: So Fantasma...

DRE: So that happened, right.

AUSTIN: Okay, you're all like running through this place and it's weird because— It, you know, the layout is completely different than what it was under the effect of this magical space. Or this other, this kind of like, dimensional rupture. And as you are running, you— First of all, each of you winds up separate from each other. Um, you know, Throndir's like, "Oh this is the way I have to go," and you're running. You know, Hadrian is like maybe chasing after him and then a wall falls and separates the two of you. The whole place is crumbling around you. Um, Fantasma, you manage to find the way out. Um, but you're invisible at this point I, you know, remind you. You— Behind you are Uklan Tel and Sunder Havelton and because they can't see you—

NICK: Wait actually I think— No, I'm pretty sure I have to dispel Invisibility to cast another spell.

AUSTIN: Oh, do you? Okay. Is that how that works?

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. So you're not invisible at this point. Um, double check that for me. I'm pretty sure you're right.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: Yeah. "While the spell's ongoing, you can't cast a spell."

AUSTIN: That's fair. Okay, so you dispelled invisibility at this point.

NICK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay, so... I have to give you a different hard choice. Um, okay, then this is the hardest...

NICK: I mean, if it could be— Like it could be a lingering effect from it.

AUSTIN: Sure. I think this is interesting for me.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think this is an interesting thing to happen here. But, I could also see you wanting to argue against it, you know um, which is, because you were invisible, you get out, but they don't see you. And you know that they get left behind because you were invisible.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: If you— If you would've led them out, instead of protecting your own safety, you know that they would've made it, and are instead lost in here now. Um... God, you... Give me— Going to roll damage for— for Thrandir and— and uh, Hadrian. Here's Hadrian. Ah, that's alright. And here is Thrandir. Man.

DRE: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: Man. Low rolls. 2, 3 damage each.

ART: Well, for having a building fall on us —

AUSTIN: Well, you know.

ART: — that's about as well as you can hope for.

AUSTIN: That's one of the effects of the building falling on you. The other is that one, you don't get to go back to— I guess this is now Thrandir, um, or not Thrandir, sorry, Fantasma. Oh, god we're gonna need more tokens on this map. Um... Actually let's make this—

NICK: Can add the Player Tokens.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we could do that. [pause] God, I don't know where they went is the problem?

NICK: Oh.

AUSTIN: I don't know— I think those are on the previous, on a different map so they didn't stick, you know. Um...

NICK: Oh. Wait, you can't—

AUSTIN: I didn't assign—

NICK: — attach one. Oh.

AUSTIN: You can, you can totally assign them to the characters. I never— I don't think we ever did that, I think we just used— attached them on the field for that one [NICK: Sure.] thing. Um... One second.

NICK: Roll20 —

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: — dot-net.

AUSTIN: It's cool. It's a cool thing.

NICK: It's cool. It's cool.

AUSTIN: Um...

NICK: I'm glad it exists.

AUSTIN: Me too. Oh, oh, wait. I'm back. I'm back. Let's give this cool thing to— Where that go? Come on. Come on. There it is. See that little blue thing? Little blue mark?

NICK: Yup.

AUSTIN: That's Fantasma.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: The square with the sun is Hadrian. Um... And let's go with that. I want a quiver or something. Yeah.

DRE: Is there just an arrow or something?

AUSTIN: Yeah, there are arrows but they're really hard to see. That's weird, here's a quiver.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, let's put you... You are here. Um, so you all make your way out, separate from each other with no knowledge of where the others are. Also, um, by the time Thrandir and Hadrian get out, it's been a day. So let's go back to Fantasma. Um, what do you do, when you make it out of this crumbling mess?

[TIMESTAMP: 0:46:10]

NICK: Uh... So —

AUSTIN: Everybody's gone.

NICK: — nobody got out with—

AUSTIN: No, nobody got out.

NICK: Including uh...

AUSTIN: Including Sunder and including Uklan, and including Fantasma— Or sorry— including Hadrian and including Thrandir.

NICK: Hm.

AUSTIN: Your invisibility servant did, (laughing) who is carrying your books.

NICK: [laughs] Well that's good. Uh... Jeez, um...

ART: Just spend a day exploring without us.

NICK: Is it— I mean...

AUSTIN: You— So it's, at this point, it's like sunset. You spent a full day exploring this place. Uh, you can get back to the campfire if that's what you want to do, so you can rest and get your spells back, or you could not do that. It's up to you.

NICK: Gosh, I don't know. I think— Alright, so I don't think Fantasma would make a good decision here.

AUSTIN: Sure.

NICK: Because he's not used to caring about people, period.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

NICK: Uh, and he— he doesn't really know what to do about this thing that is entirely his fault.

AUSTIN: Sure.

NICK: And has trapped the only people that he can maybe sort of call friends in the whole world.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's a tough situation. It's a tough situation.

NICK: So, I mean... I think he's gonna turn around and go back in there.

AUSTIN: Um, okay. Uh...

NICK: He's gonna— I'm gonna cast Light.

AUSTIN: Okay.

NICK: Cast my light Cantrip so I can, you know, see where I'm going.

AUSTIN: So the way Cantrips work in this is that you still roll for it but you don't have to memorize it, right?

NICK: Yeah. So I rolled an 8.

AUSTIN: Okay. What are you taking? What's your... your... effect?

NICK: [popping noises] I'll forget it.

AUSTIN: Okay. Bit by bit...

NICK: 'Cause it's just, you know.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's just light.

NICK: Trudging forward.

AUSTIN: Yeah. What's your light ball look like again?

NICK: Uh.

AUSTIN: Is it just that floaty ball of light? Is it just that traditional...

NICK: No, it's coming out of the top of my staff, like Gandalf style.

AUSTIN: Right, right. Um...

ART: Something interesting, and not for now, is that I now also now have access to a Cantrip Light spell [AUSTIN: That's useful.] and how those are different might be...

AUSTIN: Yeah, that could be interesting, sure.

DRE: I have a torch, uh, you know.

[ART laughs]

NICK: Is it a magic torch?

DRE: No it's just my regular torch. It's part of my adventuring gear.

AUSTIN: Alright, you are... You find your way back in and uh... are you there?

NICK: Yup, woah.

AUSTIN: I heard a weird Skype sound, sorry.

NICK: No problem.

AUSTIN: I'll just make I'm still recording still. It's fine. Um, so you make your way back in, um and... You spend hours looking through this— this rubble, trying to hear something or someone.

NICK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And we're gonna leave you there for a second. That's where you're— That's what you've committed to do for the next turn.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Hadrian—

NICK: So did we decide, am I still invisible? At this point?

AUSTIN: At this point you're not, no.

NICK: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: At this point you've un-invisibled, let's say. I mean, especially after what happened there, right? Uh... Okay.

NICK: Right, yeah. That would've destroyed all of his concentration so...

AUSTIN: Right, exactly. Um, okay so... That should be map layer, I guess. Ope, nope, no it shouldn't I guess. What the fuck? Whoops. Sorry, Roll20 is rough sometimes. Hadrian.

[TIMESTAMP: 0:50:27]

ART: Yo.

AUSTIN: You have found your way— You kind of stumble out of the wreckage of this one— this one sector into the very like, very like entrance of this next one. Um, kind of ignore the map here, but there's this empty gap, the two kind of combined. The one that says Ordennan on it has now kind of slammed into the one that doesn't have a name. The one that's name I almost read out loud. Um... Uh...

ART: The secret murder box? Oh.

AUSTIN: The secret— Right. Welcome to secret murder box. It's an actual play podcast.

DRE: Actual murder podcast.

AUSTIN: Actual murder podcast, exactly. Okay. So... you are in... You know, you're in kind of a nice— It's almost like— I guess you've never seen a hotel lobby before. Um, it was the other game that had a hotel lobby. Uh, it is a— there's a room with a um, couple of couches around a table. They don't look very comfortable. There's a long wooden— I guess desk, but like so long it's hard to even identify it as a desk. Um, with a bunch of strange cubbyholes behind it. Um, there are uh... there's a candelabra hanging from the ceiling, with lit candles. Uh, and the floor has a kind of deep red carpet with some stains on it and some gold trim. Um, the room is kind of red and brown and gold and there are some mirrors in weird places that really don't— like, not very useful reasons, I guess for aesthetic reasons but it's just confusing. Um...

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: There is a door that is closed to your left. Um, with— You know those door handles that have, you know, not levers but they're like long— They're like long door handles, do you know what I mean? With the little curve at the end.

ART: Oh, sure.

AUSTIN: Like a line, but you know. Like kind of a fancy door handle, that are— that are—

ART: Oh the kind that turn or the kind that you just push?

AUSTIN: The kind that turn. You turn them.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: You reach, you grab it, you grip the whole thing in your hand. You close your hand around them and then you turn. Um...

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: Uh, with a— I know— [ART: Oh, you're like—] Welcome to Friends at the Table. We talk about door handles.

ART: We just describe doorknobs in excruciating— "Close your hand?"

AUSTIN: I don't know why anyone listens to us. Um... Jeez.

[NICK, ART laugh]

DRE: Oh boy.

AUSTIN: So, um, and then in front of you— So that's over to your left. Those— Two of those doors closed and then in front of you is um, a— kind of big open set of doors that lead to a staircase going up. It's faint at first, but you can hear it from the left. A familiar rhythm. Uh, dede-de dede-da dede-de dede-da dede-de dede-da. Um, you've heard this song somewhere.

ART: Oh?

AUSTIN: Maybe in a different tower.

ART: Yeah. Yeah, probably.

NICK: What's the door handle made of? Like what— Can I turn the little arrow on the Nested here?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. That's great.

NICK: What's the— Can we look at the atoms?

AUSTIN: [laughs] What is the door handle thinking? Everyone should go play Nested. Nested is a great game. Do a google for "Nested game."

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Throndir, just gonna set the stage here. Um...

NICK: Is there another Fantasma inside that door handle.

AUSTIN: It's really funny you would say that. For reasons that we'll get to shortly.

NICK: [laughs] Oh. Okay. Um...

AUSTIN: Um, Throndir, you similarly wind up in this other space here.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: This kind of um... So again to kind of paint the picture for people who are watching. They were in a big— On the map, they were in kind of a big grey block that was part of this fallen tower. Hadrian has fallen northwest into another block. Uh, Throndir has fallen southeast into the— into another block and that block is kind of split into two and he's in the northeastern half of this other block. Um, there are also some other little blocks that are kind of in between some of these places, and none of them are in those. [sighs]

This place is the most decadent shit you've ever seen. [DRE laughs] And unlike before, you are not in any sort of protective bubble that keeps the things that are happening here from affecting you or from noticing you. Um, this is a collection— again, part of the way we're doing this is that I'm kind of giving a snapshot of this space because each one of these spaces is massive.

Right, like this tower was a massive metropolis, standing from bottom to top. So each of these is like a huge chunk of that city. So I'm only giving you snapshots, I'm not giving you like, "Oh, and then you—" So you're walking through this space which is a collection of kind of townhouses built floor to ceiling.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Like, without any roof or like the roof is the ceiling. Um, stores, nice cobblestone streets. Um, there are people here. People who... a number of different races but more elves

than anything else. There are lots of little— You think, you know, having spent some time in Velas, you think that they're stores at first, but you realize there aren't any— there aren't any like, registers. No one's working a desk to charge anyone for anything. Everything is just like— They're kinda like stockpiles of things ranging from like cloth to books to, you know, little ball bearings. Just a million different stores for a million different things.

There's a nice indoor park. And a couple of places you notice, a strange symbol um. It's three consecutive vertical lines, each a little bit taller than the last. Um... You haven't seen this yet. You don't remember this because you didn't— Or you don't know this because you didn't meet Gregalos. This is, for listeners of Friends at the Table, the symbol that was on the ring that Gregalos had.

DRE: Hmm.

AUSTIN: This is the symbol of the Disciples of Fantasma. Boy, who wants to go first? Um... I think...

[TIMESTAMP: 0:57:49]

ART: Well, Nick is like—

AUSTIN: Fantasma, yeah...

ART: Or Fantasma is behind— ahead of us?

AUSTIN: Oh right, he's ahead of you. Yeah, yeah— No, he's behind you. Yeah, yeah, you're right. He's behind you because you have already gone though the night. Fantasma, I think give me a Search and Scavenge roll and one of the things you'll be able to find is like, people, and I think that makes the most sense, which is a Wisdom Roll.

NICK: Okay. 7.

AUSTIN: Okay, so you can choose one. Something to eat, a useful tool or weapon, useful information for long lost knowledge, medical supplies or a person.

NICK: Um... I— Well I'm looking for my friends so I'm —

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're looking for your friends.

NICK: — so I'm gonna— I'm gonna choose...

AUSTIN: You're gonna choose—

NICK: Oh, right, okay.

AUSTIN: Choose a person and then— and then I'll roll 1d2 and we'll figure out which of the two people it is that's still in this block.

NICK: Oh, gotcha, okay. I didn't think it was gonna be... I was going to pick info 'cause I thought I was going to have to hunt for... tracks or...

AUSTIN: Oh, no, no, I'm just saying you're just going to get one of them. You know.

NICK: Uh, yeah, yeah. People.

AUSTIN: That seems like the quickest way to do this so we can keep rolling. Um...

NICK: Right.

AUSTIN: If it's a 1 it's Sunder, if it's a 2, it's Uklan. It's Sunder, okay so I think you find her in a space um, that is all but collapsed. Um, and she has managed to reverse the polarity on the spell that she had up before.

NICK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: So that instead of being separate from the— that other world, she has now— she is now holding the last of that other dimension and it's— She's in that dimension, do you know what I mean?

NICK: Jeez. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, and she sees you and you're able to guide her out of the— this kind of Ordennan block to where the exit is.

NICK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um... And she steps outside and closes that dimension behind her and that whole dimension is now gone.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): [sighs] Thank you. I— You're getting soft, old man. In the old days, you never would've come for me like that. You'd been off in some tower, reading books. You read a book to make you a little more courageous?

NICK (as Fantasma): I uh...

DRE: (laughing) Woah.

NICK (as Fantasma): Um... [clears throat] It seemed like the best course of action to stay together.

AUSTIN: She rolls her eyes and punches you in the shoulder.

[NICK laughs]

AUSTIN (as Sunder): So did everybody else get out?

NICK (as Fantasma): I... don't believe so.

AUSTIN (as Sunder): Okay. Alright, let's go back to the camp for the night and we'll come back tomorrow and we'll see what can be done. I don't know about your— your guys but Uklan's a pro. I have no doubt that he's doing fine.

AUSTIN: She says it in a way that, you know, she's very much not sure she's doing— or he's doing fine.

NICK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Hadrian.

NICK: She's convincing herself as much as me.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes exactly. So let's slide you back down. Hadrian.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What do you do in this space? I guess again I should ex— I should explain what this space is. Um... I guess pick a direction. One of these two directions and then we'll roll it from there. Do you want to open that door with the waltz going on behind it or do you want to go up the stairs?

ART: Um... I mean, I will just butcher a room full of books right now. I'm not even messing around. [laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughs] I don't know. Do you remember what happened in that room full of books? That almost went real bad for y'all.

ART: I choose not to remember it that way. I choose to remember that I was on the verge of butchering that room full of books, [DRE laughs] and I'm not even sure there's a room full of books behind that door. It could be anything.

[AUSTIN sighs]

NICK: You just want to— just want to kill some books 'cause that's the symbol of Fantasma, is it?

[AUSTIN, NICK laugh]

ART: They only got mad 'cause we were making noise in the library. That might not even be a library back there. That could be anything.

AUSTIN: This is true. Also yeah, you're right. Fantasma would be a book. I'm going to delete this magical circle and replace it with a book. [NICK laughs] Obviously.

ART: I mean, either way, I realistically think I could probably peek in that room. And if it's a library full of crazy silence obsessed books, I could probably go do something else. [AUSTIN: Mhm.] I could just turn around and walk the other way.

AUSTIN: Okay, so you go— Is that what you do?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: My feet go both ways.

AUSTIN: So you go and you peek in it is definitely a room filled with books. I should paint a different— It's definitely a room filled with dancing books. And you're like, "I'm gonna turn around and go the other way." And when you turn around to go the other way, you're not in a hotel lobby anymore. Now you are in a um, another long corridor on a higher level of a tower. Uh, but this time, it is filled with snow elves, running to and fro. The whole thing shakes every few seconds as if it is assaulted by something massive. You see— You see men and women taking up bows and firing them down below from a number of outcroppings on edges of the buildings.

ART: Do I recognize any of these snow elves? Are these the snow elves from before or are these just—

AUSTIN: I mean, how closely did you look— Yeah, sure. Yes. Sure. The dude who arrested you, is definitely among these snow elves.

ART: That motherfucker.

AUSTIN: He shoots you a glare and you like match eyes with him for half a second. And then you look around and suddenly you are back in the— in the library, arm in arm with books which are dancing around. One of the books has a different— has like a pamphlet on its book face as if it's a masquerade mask. Um...

ART: [laughs] Oh...

AUSTIN: They dance with you for a number of— for minutes and minutes and you can't like pull yourself away. And one of them dips you and when you come back up, you're back in the hotel lobby, standing in front of the mirror, and you are a young, beautiful, blond mare. Uh, man. Not mare. Not a mare!

ART: (laughing) Not a mare.

AUSTIN: You're not—

DRE: Pretty pony...

ART: Am I a horse?

AUSTIN: You're a horse. You're a horse.

DRE: A pretty pony.

AUSTIN: And then you neigh for half a second. Oh, okay. You're a young and beautiful blond man. You find yourself smoking— smoking? God— smirking. Words are hard, y'all. You feel yourself smirking, looking into the distance, past something. You recognize this face, this face that is now yours for this moment. You recognize it as the young boy king, Samot.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then a moment later, suddenly, you're in a massive state funeral. No, now it's not a state funeral. Now it's just a funeral. It is raining and people are wailing. There are names being read, one after another, the names of the dead. You don't recognize any of them but the place you are in, of all the places you've been so far, feels the most alive. It is the one that feels the most... Uh, what's the word I'm looking for. It feels the most, not visceral. Like physical.

DRE: Tangible?

AUSTIN: Tangible, thank you. And then you are in a desert. You are in the middle of nowhere and every step you take, seems at first to take you nowhere at all, just goes and goes. And then your steps gain distance, somehow. Each step you take travels— makes you travel a little bit

further than would be realistically possible. And you can just barely make out the oasis in the distance. And when you reach it, it's the campfire. You're back.

ART: That's weird.

AUSTIN: Pretty weird.

ART: That's some weird stuff that just happened.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

NICK: It's cool though.

AUSTIN: It's pretty cool.

ART: Pretty cool.

AUSTIN: This brown book instead if that's okay. Throndir.

ART: Glad we got to the bottom of what color book Fantasma is.

AUSTIN: [AUSTIN, NICK laugh] Listen we all have our— our interests. Mine are, what color of book would Fantasma be [DRE laughs] if he were a book? Let's mark that. Sorry. Bring this back into the regular thing.

NICK: Also, now I totally have Every Breath You Take in my head because of all of the steps that— every step that Hadrian took.

AUSTIN: Right. And because Sting. Again.

NICK: Every— And because Sting. Yup.

AUSTIN: The one— The one where Sting is the name of this episode.

[NICK laughs]

DRE: This episode is brought to you by Sting.

AUSTIN: [sighs] Alright, Thr—

ART: Does he have a new album coming out? He's a great musician.

AUSTIN: You guys heard the new Sting? Hey everybody, if you go to sting.com, use the promo code, "FriendsAtThe" we couldn't get "FriendsAtTheTable," it was too long, but just use, "FriendsAtThe" [NICK laughs] you'll get a ten percent discount on the new— There's not— That's not. Wait, one second, I have to go to sting.com and make sure it's not *gross*.

NICK: No, it's— it's Sting's website.

AUSTIN: Oh, he's starring in a play. They have a musical.

ART: Oh, I bet that's great. I bet he's talented at everything.

AUSTIN: The Last Ship, it's called.

ART: That's a terrible name. I mean I love Sting, please send us money.

NICK: I like his scruffy old bold Sting beard, though.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: It's good.

AUSTIN: That's a good look.

NICK: Good look.

AUSTIN: Oh, he wrote the music and lyrics to the Last Ship.

DRE: Ooh.

NICK: Oh.

ART: Oh, that—

AUSTIN: And the— What? Wait. The new musical... duh-duh-duh...

ART: They use Message in a Bottle?

AUSTIN: Oh, they *better*, right? No, they don't. Bye. I'm closing this window. [ART, NICK laugh] Thrandir.

[TIMESTAMP: 1:07:47]

DRE: Yup.

AUSTIN: Based on what you saw before, you can now kind of understand this space is... again, looking into a different dimension.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: But again, unlike before, people are taking notice of you, a little bit uh... a little bit cautiously. They aren't— You don't ever see another snow elf here, so you are kind of one of a kind, uh but, no one is like aggressively coming after you.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, there are— There are, every few blocks, so to speak, of this big open... Again, I'm trying to paint the picture of a kind of upper— upper class neighborhood of like you've never seen before, but it's still all indoors. So it's kind of a weird amalgamation of— it feels a little cramped no matter what, because there's a ceiling. And it doesn't matter how many clouds you paint on the ceiling, it's still a ceiling. Um, though I guess, in this— in this quarter more than any other, they have the ability to make that a little more interesting. So yeah, let's say actually, it's clear that there are still clouds painted on the ceiling here. [DRE laughs] This is a fake sky, but they like move in real, realistic ways.

DRE: Hmm.

AUSTIN: It's like— It's like— You know, it's like almost as if there's a video screen up there, or something, where it's animated. The ceiling is— You can still— You can see it's flat. You can see that there's no depth to it. But it's still animated. It's still been magically [DRE: Yeah.] you know, infused with something to help make it feel like you're actually outside. Um...

DRE: What time of day is it inside this place 'cause it's sunset outside, right?

AUSTIN: Well, by the time you got in here— It was sunset when Fantasma found his way outside the kind of manufacturing quarter. Um, here, by the time you'd got into here, you'd lost track of time, but I guess you would guess it's like the next morning. By the way, remember um, that— I guess, nothing yeah. I guess you haven't stopped to eat yet.

DRE: Hmm.

AUSTIN: Which means you're probably starting to get a little hungry. Trying— Starting to get a little hungry.

DRE: I mean I have rations with me.

AUSTIN: You could eat a ration. Um, so you could eat a ration to stop that from getting worse. Go ahead and eat a ration.

DRE: Go ahead and eat a ration, okay.

AUSTIN: Fantasma, you should probably do the same if you've rested.

NICK: Yup. Already did.

AUSTIN: Nice. Um... and Throndir, are you doing Search and Scavenge? 'Cause I don't think should do that here.

DRE: Yeah, let's try that.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: 7.

AUSTIN: Okay, you can choose one. You can choose piece of information, a useful tool or weapon, something medicinal or a fourth thing that I forgot. Something to eat, +2 rations.

DRE: Um... I'm gonna go with a useful tool or weapon.

AUSTIN: Okay. [sighs] You— I think you blunder into one of these things that's like a store but that doesn't have anybody to like collect money.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um... And... Let's think what would be a cool thing here? Um, or like a fun, ridiculous— Oh, okay, hmm. I'm gonna turn this on you. What sort of store would you walk into?

DRE: Oh jeez. Um... Well I mean, I've got food, so I wouldn't need to go into a food store.

AUSTIN: You've got food, yeah, you're not going into like a food store.

DRE: Got plain rations. Um... I think he would probably pick the one that looks like just like the most like, "What the hell is that thing?" and go in there.

AUSTIN: Okay, um... There's like a— Okay, there's a weird place and it has like a— First of all, it's all like dark in there. Like everywhere else is really well lit, but in there it's a little dark, but there's like weird glowing lights, too.

NICK: You found the Spencer's Gifts!

AUSTIN: And there's like— There's a couple orbs.

DRE: [laughs] Or a vape shop.

AUSTIN: Those things are the same thing, let's be honest. [DRE, NICK laugh] And there are orbs. I'm glad Nick got it immediately, by the way.

NICK: Oh, no, I was just joking, I'm sorry.

AUSTIN: No, that's exactly what I was doing, you nailed it. [NICK laughs] Um... And there are weird, weird glowing orbs that have like what look like magical energy reaching out from the inside towards glass. Um... And there are like these, like pieces of metal that balance in interesting ways and they're like, reproductions of— you don't know, there are like orbs floating around other orbs and shit. Um...

AUSTIN: So I think you just— And you, it's weird 'cause like other people are just coming in and out of there through the time that you spent in there, and they're like, "Oh yeah, I need one of these," and they're taking it and putting it in a satchel and leaving. And it feels like stealing but it feels *good*. Um... [DRE laughs] And I think, probably— like it's tough, 'cause I'm being honest, the most interesting thing is, for Thrandir is probably the thing with glowing fake electricity.

DRE: Yeah?

AUSTIN: So maybe you just take one of those.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's worth something. That's a weird thing, right?

DRE: Yeah.

NICK: What about the mouse pad with the squishy bit that's the guy's crotch?

[AUSTIN laughs]

DRE: Yeah. What if— Are there any cards with naked people that I can bring back to...

AUSTIN: Novelty, yeah, yeah.

DRE: Back to Hadrian. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Great.

AUSTIN: Um, so you get that thing and— and... Okay, actually, here we go. Let's be a little— Let's be a little more— Let's bring it down a little bit. When you see it, um, your Kindrali vision kicks off.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: And you— You can see that it is a— You can see a much bigger version of it. In fact, so let me actually paint what it is. It's like one of those glowy orb things from Spencer's, you know what I'm talking about?

[ART laughs]

DRE: You touch it with your finger and it like arcs out towards your fingers.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Except instead of purple plasma energy, it's like a bright orange, energy.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like uh, that's— that's— And you do touch it and— He sees a much larger version of that, towards the bottom of the tower and behind it, with a wall being built around it. Like a *much* larger version of it. When you touch it, it— Um... One second let me take a look at your current situation. Um... When you touch it, you feel yourself um, get a kind of a surge of energy that definitely came from this thing. You take a +1 Forward on your next physical activity.

DRE: Hm, okay.

AUSTIN: Um, it dims but it doesn't go out. Like it— If you touch it again, it doesn't respond in the same way, but it's clear something in it is still burning, ready to return to that state. So yeah, basically, once per day, you can touch it to get a +1 Forward on any physical activity.

DRE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Glowy power orb. Um, and then you manage to find your way out. I mean, you could stick around here and you could investigate more. Like all of these things do have more going on, but there's a limit, especially to what you can do by yourself without any extra expertise.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, you know?

DRE: I'm gonna head back to camp.

AUSTIN: Sounds good.

DRE: Take that— That's the survivalist move.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I agree. Um...

DRE: Uh, how much does that orb weigh? Do I just do 1?

AUSTIN: 1, yeah, definitely.

DRE: Okay.

[TIMESTAMP: 1:15:25]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um... Move you all there again. Okay. By... So I guess that's the— Again, let's work through this time shit here. Okay yeah, that's the— the next day, I guess. Because— So Fantasma ends up staying overnight to save Sunder. And then they come back for that day to rest and recoup. And then later that night, Hadrian and Thrandir make their way back. Uklan is still nowhere to be found.

NICK: Oh, okay.

ART: We need that guy. He's the one I need the most.

NICK: When uh— So Sunder and I were there when Hadrian showed up, right?

AUSTIN: Yes.

NICK: What— What did that look like? Did we see him walking all the way up to it or did he just like...

AUSTIN: You saw him...

NICK: Did he just like pop in?

AUSTIN: I think he just— No he came— He came over the— 'Cause you remember it's kind of in a little valley point.

NICK: Oh right, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I think he just appeared at the top of the valley and that's when you saw him.

NICK: Okay.

ART: How much sand is in my shoes?

AUSTIN: Some.

[NICK laughs]

ART: Alright. That's interesting.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: So there's a— So there's a soggy sandy Hadrian.

AUSTIN: Yes. [laughs]

NICK: Who's also still in his like, under clothes.

AUSTIN: Right 'cause he never got any extra armor.

NICK: His like under-armor clothes.

AUSTIN: Wait, what happened to his armor? Did he just lose that? He lost that to the—

ART: They took it from me in the snow—

AUSTIN: Right, so you do notice this.

ART: The cause of the great Hadrian-Snow Elf war of whatever year this is, plus three months.

AUSTIN: You— Your right hand is marbled, at this point.

DRE: Uh-oh.

ART: So it'd be like a real nice steak.

AUSTIN: Yes, it would be a great steak if you ate that hand. [NICK laughs] It's turned into a marble stone.

ART: Yeah.

NICK: Maybe cake?

AUSTIN: And, huh. And you realize that when this happened, in fact it's up past— It's toward your wrist. It's like not just your hand, it's like going past your arm at this point. This is a thing that I'd forgotten earlier. This happened when you stepped outside to talk to Hella, *very* quickly. So like, that's not the rate at which it happens normally, but when you made that jump from your timeline into this other timeline, it advanced quite a bit, and did not retract when you went back into the bubble.

NICK: I hope your hand was in the shape of a fist.

AUSTIN: Uh, *weird*, it still moves.

NICK: Oh, okay.

DRE: Hm.

NICK: So Hadrian can still move it —

AUSTIN: Yes.

NICK: — like normal.

AUSTIN: Like normal.

NICK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: Cool.

AUSTIN: Ope.

NICK: Wait a minute...

ART: Hold on, I'm just looking to make sure— Remember when I— I guess this is a spoiler for a thing that happens in the future. I'm trying to make sure I don't have another like, "Oh wait, I can— I have a move that says, 'All rock turns to flesh.'"

AUSTIN: Oh, that would be a... a thing.

ART: Yeah, it's definitely not true.

NICK: If uh, Fantasma starts getting stretchy and... [AUSTIN laughs] and uh... I can't remember the name of our elf friend.

AUSTIN: Thrandir? Yeah.

NICK: And Thrandir starts uh— Is just on fire all the time?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

NICK: And— And Sunder's making these invisible bubbles everywhere, uh...

AUSTIN: Yup, you got it.

[DRE sighs]

NICK: Mr. Fantasma.

[AUSTIN sighs and groans, NICK, DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Uh, so were there questions? Were you talking? I forget if people were talking.

NICK: Um...

AUSTIN: I feel like no.

NICK: Once everyone—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

NICK: Once everyone is back, uh... Fantasma stands up and sorta like clears his throat and addresses everyone and says,

[MUSIC - "Autumn Not Winter" by Jack de Quidt fades in]

NICK (as Fantasma): I want you all to know, that I am so-ah... I uh... I apola... That shouldn't have happened.

[DRE laughs]

NICK (as Fantasma): And (quietly mumbling) I'm sorry.

NICK: And then he sits back down.

[MUSIC - "Autumn Not Winter" by Jack de Quidt plays out in full]