

Winter in Hieron 09: Warm Assurances

NOTE: Previously a 'Dianne' was listed on this transcript but the 'started' column was left at a no, please contact me if you're her and you've been working on this outside of the document!

Amaya / @adawnundarked

[Note - timestamps every five minutes, search for #]

AUSTIN: Of all the moths that live in the settlement of Old Man's Chin, Anther is the dullest. With a grey, puffy collar and clouded wings, Anther spent most of their life being unrecognized by their peers, who were all bright colors and distinctive flair. But today, or rather, tonight, as Samoth's holy sun remains absent, Anther did the unthinkable. They blended in with the overcast sky above and flew reconnaissance for twelve straight hours, gathering information about enemy movements without drawing attention. By the time Anther arrived back, you'd already learned the terrifying truth of the matter, though.

[MUSIC: INSIDE]

AUSTIN: The sound of Ordennan Anchors, stomping. Hundreds of them. Living metal soldiers, marching towards Twinbrook. It's already echoing for miles through the dry woods that separate here from there. Anther does offer you specifics, though. They are a day from Twinbrook, and another two days from there to Old Man's Chin. The math doesn't offer any warm assurances. You have three days until they arrive. Three days until they overrun Red Jack, the Weaver King, and the humble moths of Hieron. Three days before their smoke overruns your air, and their swords reach your throats. So let's start with the basics. What do you do?

ART: (pauses) So, the tone of that narration (Ali laughs) says that this is a bad time to be questioning our...

AUSTIN: You know.

ART: What side we're on, here?

AUSTIN: (laughs) You can do whatever you want. You know, there's no. Draw maps, but leave blank spaces. (laughter)

[MUSIC CONTINUES, THEN FADES]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual-play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. We are playing Dungeon World by Adam Koebel and Sage LaTorra, which is a hack of D. Vincent Baker's Apocalypse World. My agenda is to portray a fantastic world, to fill the characters' lives with adventure, and to play to find out what happens. I am Austin Walker, your host. Joining me, Arthur Tebbel.

ART: Hey! Hi, hi. You can find me on twitter @atebbel.

AUSTIN: Ali Acampora.

ALI: Hi! You can find me @ali_west, and you can find the show over @friends_table.

AUSTIN: Andrew Lee Swan.

DRE: Hey, you can find me on twitter @swandre3000.

AUSTIN: And Janine Hawkins.

JANINE: Hey! You can find me on twitter @bleatingheart.

AUSTIN: And you can find me @austin_walker, a thing I didn't say before because I forgot how our show works. (Ali laughs) How's it going, everybody?

ALI: Fine.

ART: Great!

AUSTIN: It's snowing in New York, so I feel like...

ALI: I know! I don't like it.

JANINE (overlapping): (sighs) Yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): I feel like it's - finally. Finally.

ALI (overlapping): Not a fan.

AUSTIN: I'm not a fan either, but like it matches the, the... plot of this game, so. (Art laughs)

ALI: (sadly) Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you have some days before the Anchor attacks. You believe. Like, you know, who knows, my - my, when last we played, two of the members of the Commission of Smoke and Steel, the Justiciar, Tevira Shal - or, three. The Justiciar, Tevira Shal, Stornras Glasseye, and I think either Porto Porlo Pinta or Avora Gental, I think Porto, also lived. If I'm wrong, I - it's because we haven't played in like a month. (laughs) But, but along with them escaping, they kind of made an assurance that there would be hell to pay. And then also, the halfling merchant who you'd originally been protecting and escorting towards... towards Rosemerrow, pretty clearly betrayed you all and... and promised to bring hell on your heads. And so that's kind of where we left. (Ali laughs)

ART: Oh, I guess that's how we know we're on the right side, cause the other side just definitely wants to kill us right now.

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but you could also leave, right?

ALI: (hopefully) We could do that!

DRE: No!

JANINE: (uncertainly) Huh.

ART: We could just bounce and be like... (laughter) #00:05:00#

AUSTIN: Let's - let's start, let's get in character to figure this shit out. I think it's... it's what counts, what passes as morning now. (laughing) So the last time we played, the way - the way *time* works also changed, and light, and days, and nights. (pauses) So I, you know, I'm gonna say that by the time Anther got back it had been like a full, a full cycle, I guess I'll call a day even though there's no sunlight involved. There are 36 hours per kind of cycle now. There's a 12-hour cycle, or a part of the cycle, where there is no... no moons are visible. There's 12 hours where one moon is visible, and there's one 12-hour cycle where both moons are visible. And those three repeat in that sequence, which means that there is occasionally enough light to - it's just like a really overcast day, as these two huge moons reflect down a ton of light. But that's still not great. Like, that's still not daytime, and it's still very cold. But then there are also these moments of just like, complete darkness, or near complete darkness. There is a sort of weird, ambient glow, that - that lights things just enough to not trip over your own feet.

So let's say that it is, it is the quote unquote "daytime" here. We've just, you know, moved into the bright 12-hour cycle. And you're all awake, and in Old Man's Chin, the settlement at the south of this kind of outcropping of... Hieron. So what are you all doing? Let's start with Hadrian, what are you doing?

ART: Okay, so, the last time I asked about guidance, I was given...

AUSTIN: Mmhm?

ART: I was given the cry of a wolf.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ART: And, and a feeling - was it a feeling of warmth, or was that you just, just underscoring where my guidance prayers are coming from now?

AUSTIN: I don't remember. (Ali laughs)

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: Did I give you a feeling of warm- I think I gave you a feeling of warmth, that was me, Austin, making clear that... to re- I was trying to remind you of the cloak.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: That Samot gave you.

ART: I want you to know I'm thinking about that cloak a *lot*. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Okay, good. That's good. That's something. So yeah, that was the last thing that happened there. Just so you know, I'm not gonna move the clock on you until I'm gonna tell you I'm gonna start moving the clock on you. So. You're good to do whatever you want in this opening segment, like I'm not gonna say like, oop, it's been a day, you fucked up. (Ali laughs) So yeah, we're - we're good for now.

ART: No, what I want to do is I want to cast Guidance again, but I'm a little worried that I'm being pestering?

ALI: (sighs, laughs)

ART: But I don't think that's really how magical...

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ART: religion things work? I think... I don't know. Or it is, and fucking, it's over anyway.

ALI: It's getting worse with each Guidance test. (laughter)

ART: (affronted) Yeah! Well. This is what you guys decided - (laughter) this is the Paladin you have, I mean.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yep! So what's this look like?

ART (overlapping Austin): You can go see if you can get one of those metal guys, but, uh. (Austin laughs)

ALI: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: I should look into that.

ART: (pauses) No you *shouldn't*. You love me. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Eh, you pull the right strings, I don't - you know. You could do it.

ALI: Yeah!

ART: So I'm gonna cast Guidance.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ART: And I think that's - that's the, Wisdom, right?

AUSTIN: I believe so.

ART: (incredulously) Why don't I have any +'s in Wisdom? What the hell is the m- why do I keep doing this?! It's like... (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, I don't know. I don't know why you haven't raised that Wisdom. At all. At *all*.

ART: I have, it just needs to get to 12.

AUSTIN: No, it has to get to 13, friend. (laughs)

ART: (pauses) I'll fail these spells all the way to 13 Wisdom! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: (resigned) Okay. (Dre laughs) Good. (pauses) That's a 9.

ART: But not this time! (laughter) What happens at - 9's bad though, right? 9's -

AUSTIN: Well no - it's a spell. So, so you either have to take a -1 on spellcasting going forward, you have to lose that spell, or you have to draw negative attention to yourself.

ALI: Or do you have any prep left?

ART: Oh, where did I mark down my prep?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, where are we at on prep?

DRE: Uh, I still have 2.

JANINE: I have 2 also.

ALI: I think I - I also have 2, I think.

ART: Um, I'm looking for where I wrote down how much prep I had.

AUSTIN: Great.

ART: I'll call this my last prep!

AUSTIN: Okay. I appreciate - I appreciate the goodwill. (laughter) So yeah, you get to keep the spell.

JANINE: (laughing) That's a good start.

AUSTIN: Mm.

ART: No, we - I get to not draw negative attention to myself. That is definitely what I was going to pick. (Ali laughs) #00:10:00#

AUSTIN: Hm. (pauses) Okay. Guidance. The symbol of your deity appears before you and gestures towards the direction or course of action your deity would have you take. And then it disappears. The message is through gesture only. Your communication through the spell is severely limited. You hear another wolf howl, and then, from the treeline, a kind of old, ragged wolf stomps through the snow, and - and... runs through town, and is like, chased around playfully by some of the little Oni boys, and it like, barks and plays with them for a little bit, and then it goes over and just sits in front of the pit where the Weaver King is. And it kind of just lays out and like, (mimics dog panting) like, pants a little bit. And just stays there.

ART: Great. That's... so clear. (Janine laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, well. You know. Gesture only. (pauses) Hella?

ALI: Uh, I don't want to like. I feel bad like, being this person? (laughs) But like! I don't want to say that she's -

AUSTIN: *Ali* does, or *Hella* does? (Ali laughs)

ALI: I - I don't want to say that she's not doing anything?

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: Cause I don't think that she's like, the type to like, just be like sitting in the tent while there's like stuff to be done, but she's not actively helping.

AUSTIN: What does she do with her spare time left alone generally?

ALI: (laughs) Um...

AUSTIN: Like is she training, is she, like, just by herself, is she reading something, is she... staring at the stars, like what's - what's she do?

ALI: (laughs) She's having a rough time. Yeah, I think that she's probably staying by the like, tent that they had set up for themselves.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: Which I imagine is kind of far away from the town. And like, probably training. She has those like, books that she took from the, like... underground place.

AUSTIN: Oh, totally.

ALI: She might be looking through those.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: But like, kind of keeping to herself. Like.

AUSTIN: Do you want to... do you want to like, be reading those books? If you do, you can, you can Spout Lore, and ask me another question.

ALI: Oh, sure!

AUSTIN: Like, that can be a downtime thing for you now that you have those books, at this point.

ALI: Okay. Yeah, I might as well spend it doing this now. Cause like, she's not like (sighs) she - she doesn't want to help these moth people out! (laughs)

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: And like, also doesn't want to like, commit treason? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Right. Right.

ALI: So like, she's either like, alone, or trying to convince people to just like, we should just go! We should go to Rosemerrow!

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): We can have that - I mean, if she wants to do that as an active thing, then you should do that as an active thing.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: But let's do the Spout Lore first, and then we can wrap back around.

ALI: Okay. What's Spout Lore?

AUSTIN: It is Intelligence.

ALI: Okay!

AUSTIN: When you consult your accumulated knowledge about something - and in this case, you're consulting a book.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: And what's, what's cool about it is, I can - based on the roll, I can be something... so it's something interesting and useful on a 10+, it's something interesting on a 7-9 -

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's a 3.

ALI: Oh my god! (laughs)

AUSTIN: So. That's *low*. That's lower than I -

ALI: Yep! I have a -1 Intelligence.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but even with -

ART: So that's a better roll than it looked like! (laughter)

AUSTIN: Yes! Correct, it was a 4.

ALI: (laughs) Uh huh!

AUSTIN: Yeah, no one could even help you with an Aid or anything here, that would still be...

ALI: (quietly) No!

JANINE: Mm!

AUSTIN: *bad*. That would still not be good. Um.

ALI: I'm very distracted while reading these books. (laughs)

AUSTIN: So, I think the thing... well, it's funny you say that you're very distracted while reading these books. Because, I think that there is... there's a point at which you're working your way through this book, and something starts to make a little more sense to you than it did on your first readthrough, which is you crack that the word varal, which we've talked about before,

ALI: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: means drying line. And it, it becomes clear that your family was given that name as a punishment for something. And you figure out that the thing that you were, or your family was, were traitors. You were traitors who didn't even have the good sense to flee. And because of that, kind of a hit to the old, uh... the old consciousness, take Stunned.

ALI: Okay! Sure...

AUSTIN: Which is a, which is a... a debility.

ALI: Alright. Where should I mark that?

AUSTIN: There's a button that you can hit, underneath your Intelligence.

ALI: Oh! Ahaha!

AUSTIN: It lowers your Intelligence by 1, that's what it - so it gives you -1 on Intelligence.

ALI (overlapping Austin): That's cool. Alright. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mmhm! (Ali laughs) So you're just like, completely in the - you're just completely like... thrown off by this weird fact.

ALI: Yeah. Uh huh.

AUSTIN: The last thing you needed to hear right now was that you come from a family of - of traitors.

JANINE: Mm!

ALI: Cool!

AUSTIN: So Throndir and Adaire, what are you two up to on this fine morning?

DRE: Throndir is meeting with Red Jack to discuss if Red Jack is capable of making explosives.

AUSTIN: Good con- good idea.

JANINE: I want to be on that meeting.

AUSTIN: Okay. So it's you two at Red Jack. Red Jack is sitting on the front porch of... do you see this collection of buildings in the north of Old Man's Chin?

DRE: Mhm. #00:15:00#

AUSTIN: This like... big boxy ones? So those are where Red Jack and Red Jack's, like, clan, of... (uncertainly) children? Live? They're all like little... Oni children. They're all like, they have bowl haircuts and fang- big fangs, and like, are... like, wearing, you know. Not enough - they're like, they're like children in the South, in like, the rural South, where it's hot all the time, and they're just like - why am I, why would I fucking wear a shirt? Like no, I'm just - I have, there's like... skinny, scrawny red body, you're just gonna fucking see it and deal with it, we're busy playing.

DRE: Yeah. (Janine laughs)

AUSTIN: And they're just like, running around and having a good time. There's about twelve of them in this village. And Red Jack, you've noticed over the last like couple of days, like, feeds them, and kind of like... it's kind of like herding cats, more than anything. (Janine laughs) They get into trouble and he like, you know, puts their shoulders back in their sockets when they fucking fall off of a house or whatever.

JANINE: Ahh! (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: But like, other than that, he doesn't - he keeps like a very long leash on them, and lets them get into shit. And you're not sure if there's like a biological - you don't understand what the relationship is there, necessarily. And he's kind of sitting on that - on, on the front porch of the, the biggest house there, smoking a long pipe and just kind of like... sitting, just sitting and kind of like, trying to get his bearings a little bit. He was wounded really, really badly in that last combat, and also he still lost his hand previously. (laughs) He still hasn't grown back yet. And so

that's kind of where he is. I imagine he has on like a robe, and is kind of like, still kind of fucked up. So how do you broach the issue of explosives, Throndir?

DRE (as Throndir): Well, if, I mean if we are going to face an army of metal people, we need the Weaver King. And if we're gonna have the Weaver King, then we need that dam to go away, one way or the other.

AUSTIN (as Red Jack): (sighs) That's a good idea. We've thought of it before, and... explosives are *very* dangerous, what with the Weavers, and all. But it's something to think about, at least. Hmm.

JANINE (as Adaire): If you bomb that dam, that city... you know (laughs) just...

JANINE: You know, as - as players, we've seen that map.

ADAIRE: Like, there's stuff right next to that dam.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ADAIRE: That's gonna get taken out too.

AUSTIN: He nods.

RED JACK: Yes, well. It's the way of things.

AUSTIN: (pauses, sighs) I'm trying to think if he would know anything about how to do this. (pauses) He says:

RED JACK: We don't have anything like that, but do you know who would? Twinbrook. Between the merchants who pass through there, chances are that... some, some, ah, mining... cooperative probably has exactly what you need.

THRONDIR: Hmm.

RED JACK: Hmm.

THRONDIR: What if... instead of explosives, if the Weavers, I mean, they've - they've come out from under the ground to try and like, steal Sol's cart and stuff like that. I mean, could all of them, if they concentrated all of themselves coming up underneath the dam, could that break it?

RED JACK: We've tried that, and it's... in their current state, it's unlikely.

AUSTIN: He looks over at the Weaver King and then out into the fields, and kind of says, like... or shakes his head, and says,

RED JACK: They're mostly twigs, these days. Easily broken. Not much force behind their... their reach. If you could *feed* them though, maybe. Get them stronger. But then -

ADAIRE: But then to feed them, we need to -

RED JACK: Yes.

ADAIRE: Yeah.

RED JACK: HA HA HA! (Adaire laughs) That's the way of things, isn't it?

ADAIRE: Maybe - maybe we can look at this a different way. If what we need to take down the Twinbrook dam is in Twinbrook, there - (sighs) maybe there's, (sighs) maybe not, but, maybe there are other ways to - to convince Twinbrook to take the dam down. Not, you know, I... lord knows, I have tried to do so directly, and that did not quite work. There might be... more indirect... ways we could get what we want.

RED JACK: Mm.

ADAIRE: Rather than... even - if we have -

RED JACK (overlapping Adaire): (seriously) If you're going to be indirect with Twinbrook, you should be direct with me.

ADAIRE: I'm getting to it! (laughs) Even if we get the explosives... there are other things we could do with explosives. Like, if we brought those explosives upstream, and used them to knock a volume of snow, or something, into the river, maybe try to flood it... it would flood at the point of the dam, flood Twinbrook, they would have to release the dam.

AUSTIN: How does Adaire know this? #00:20:00#

JANINE: That's how dams work, right? Like...

AUSTIN: No, but how does Adaire know shit about dams? This is a Spout Lore.

JANINE: Mm. (pauses) Which one is that, is that Intelligence?

AUSTIN: That's Intelligence, yeah. Knowing how things work is, uh.

JANINE: Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: It's one of those things of like yeah, we know that, cause we went to *school*. (Dre laughs)

JANINE: Mmhm. I mean -

AUSTIN (overlapping): Adaire was raised by a church who wouldn't like -

JANINE (overlapping): I -

AUSTIN: who she didn't like.

JANINE: Yeah. I would say that, that -

AUSTIN (overlapping): Who doesn't, who -

JANINE: This would actually probably be a thing that Throndir know- I'll, I'll roll anyways, but like.

AUSTIN: You know.

JANINE: That's what beavers do.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Throndir can help.

JANINE: And you've seen beavers do that shit.

AUSTIN: Throndir can totally Aid. Yeah.

DRE: Yeah, I'll roll to Aid. That's just 2d6+bond?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can wait - you can wait until after.

DRE: Okay.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: I've reversed that previous decision, I think it's more interesting to let you swoop in and then try to help - help each other.

JANINE: Okay...

AUSTIN: (pauses) Welp, you're gonna need to help.

JANINE: Hm.

AUSTIN: That's 6. (Janine laughs)

DRE: Alright, here we go. (pauses) Oh boy.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Wow, you rolled - you - 3!

DRE: Yep!

AUSTIN: (laughing) You got a - you got a 3, man!

DRE: Yep, yep.

ALI: 1+1+1! (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's a - that's a 3!

DRE: Mhm!

AUSTIN: Yep, you're - yeah, you're totally right, Adaire. This will *absolutely* work. (Dre laughs loudly) And you know just the place to set the bombs.

JANINE: (groans)

AUSTIN: *And* you realize that if you do it at night, like, at the full night? You'll probably be able to get into Twinbrook actually really easily, and get the bombs without noticing.

DRE: Oh, god! (laughs)

AUSTIN: If you act on... if you act on this, both of you take an XP.

JANINE: I mean, well I - we need to lay out our whole, our whole plan here, you know?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: We still need to - (laughs)

AUSTIN: I'm just saying, if you - but if you go, if you get the bombs and then - or, the explosives, and, and then try to... try to overflow the, the river in this way. *Absolutely* take an XP.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, and this is what you believe. That is what Adaire believes.

JANINE: (dejected) Yeah... yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So.

THRONDIR: I mean, the only... I mean, it seems like the two options are to... are to destroy the dam by force. The only other way I could see is if, you know, we convinced Twinbrook, who seems to be a relatively, like, proud, independent city, that it's not in their best interest to have... like, a bunch of Ordennans run in,

ADAIRE: Yeah!

THRONDIR: and basically... let them have the run of their town.

ADAIRE (overlapping Throndir): That's the other thing I was thinking, was that if Twinbrook has a healthy fear of Ordenna coming in and... and settling in, getting super comfy, on their

way to Rosemerrow, then that would maybe be incentive for them to do something. (pauses)
Like breaking down that other bridge.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Red Jack nods. Red Jack -

ADAIRE (overlapping): And by extension the dam, cause otherwise they'd just walk on the dam.

AUSTIN: Right. Red Jack nods, and then he says,

RED JACK: But that places them at a great disadvantage. Remember, Ordenna was coming to repair the bridge to Rosemerrow. With both bridges broken, where's that leave Twinbrook?

ADAIRE: I mean, that leaves them getting one arm splinted while the other one's tied behind their back.

THRONDIR: Yeah.

RED JACK: But who would repair the road to Rosemerrow?

THRONDIR: The Weavers?

ADAIRE: (pauses) That's a thought.

THRONDIR: I mean, if they're - if they're healthy.

ADAIRE: Quid pro quo.

AUSTIN: He nods.

RED JACK: (pauses) It's up to you. I'm not going to try to march into that town and attempt diplomacy for the dozenth time.

ADAIRE: (doubtfully) Hm.

THRONDIR: Yeah.

ADAIRE: That's fair.

RED JACK: But if you wish to.

THRONDIR: I mean, at the end of the day, they don't own that river. And if they can't see that, then... we'll just have to make them.

ADAIRE: I mean, the thing is, either way, we're gonna have to go somewhere. Cause we need - we need two things here. We need two things to make this work. We need more people, and we need more water. And -

AUSTIN: Um - what do you mean by more people?

JANINE: People to fight.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay.

ADAIRE: And, to some extent, getting more water would... kind of help with the other thing.

AUSTIN: Totally. Yep, it definitely would.

ADAIRE: Cause then the Weavers can, you know. But you know. Plans and backup plans and backups for your backup plans.

DRE: Yeah. If we're gonna try and do some diplomacy... I mean, if we only have three days, it's probably not realistic for Throndir to try and call his goblin diplomat pal? And get here in that timeframe?

AUSTIN: Um, you could - hm. Probably not to get here - ahh. You know, I kind of said when I gave you that goblin diplomat that you would be able to bring him in as needed, once, and so if this is the time you want that to be... I mean, we're not that far from Auniq.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Looking at the - looking at the map, like. You know, Auniq is at probably the top of these two rivers, frankly. Frankly. Excuse me.

DRE: Ah man, just, goblin boat, down the river. (Janine laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, seriously, if you want to send a bird messenger or something.

JANINE: Hm.

DRE: Um...

AUSTIN: To your - to your diplomat friend.

DRE: Yeah! Yeah, why not. It can't hurt.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Or you could - you could probably send a moth to there, to deliver the message. There's enough of them. (pauses) Okay, so, I guess that's one way to do it, and Throndir, you're sending off for your... your bud. And you can - you believe that he would show up by the next full day. #00:25:00#

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like, with like, a short amount of time between... there will be like an hour before the Anchor arrives in Twinbrook, that you could go there and do some diplomacy shit. But it's a very tight window.

DRE: Kay.

AUSTIN: I'm also gonna let you know his name is Gnik [pronounced Nick], Gnik spelled g-n-i-k, Gnik with a 'g.' (laughs) Who else has things?

ART (overlapping Austin): My favorite failed G-Unit member. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Great. Great. (pauses) Does anyone else want to do a thing? I guess Hella, it sounds like you want to maybe have *the talk*, which is what are we fucking doing?

ALI: (pauses) Yeah! (laughs) I think that I... at the point that we're like, let's send for this guy a day away... (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah. (Janine laughs)

ALI: (laughing) And like, bomb this dam! She's like,

ALI (as Hella): Maybe let's consider why we're even doing any of this.

ADAIRE: Well what's our - what's our alternative? Like, climb into a ditch, and then climb out of a ditch? (laughter) And -

HELLA: We could just like, figure out another way. Like, maybe if we go north a little bit, or if we just like, chill in Twinbrook, and wait for it to be fixed. (sighs) This whole thing between these two towns doesn't involve us.

ADAIRE: (pauses) Kinda does now.

HELLA: (sighs)

ART (as Hadrian): It kind of does now.

THRONDIR: Yeah.

HELLA: (sighs again)

ADAIRE: We've - (laughs) we've sort of already squared heads against - against some folks. If we just go hang out in Twinbrook, uh, you know. Harsh words might be coming our way regardless.

HELLA: (sighs, disgusted) Ugh, god. Yeah, fine.

ADAIRE: What - okay. (Ali laughs) What if -

HELLA: What - (laughs)

ADAIRE: Hella? Hella.

HELLA: Yeah? Mmhm.

ADAIRE: What do we need to do here to get you feeling better about this? (laughter)

ALI: (laughing) You're such a good friend! (laughter)

HELLA: (doubtfully) Hm.

ADAIRE: Cause if there's something we can make happen, then let's make that happen.

HELLA: I know... how much of a fan of making things happen you are. But I feel like -

ADAIRE: I'm *such* a fan.

HELLA: (laughs) I feel like there are too many things happening right now. Like, who is this guy that's coming from Auniq? And like, why is he gonna - (sighs angrily) and then - like - mm! (laughs angrily) We *just* have to get to Rosemerrow. I don't think that blowing up a dam is gonna get us there any faster.

THRONDIR: No, but it's gonna stop this village from being slaughtered!

ART (overlapping): (exasperated) What did I just tell you about telling me about the dam!

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah, Hadrian you just - I guess you just heard that! (laughter)

HADRIAN: No one's talking about blowing up a dam, right?

ADAIRE: Not anymore!

HELLA: (sighs) (laughter)

ADAIRE: If we don't have to! We might still ha- we probably won't have to.

HELLA: There's like, paying customers who live around that dam. Who might get hurt by this, Adaire.

ADAIRE (overlapping Hella): Yeah, I - I got a friend who has like a bar, and I - I don't want to mess with... he's got enough problems.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Aw!

THRONDIR: Oh no, not the Greasy Snifter!

HELLA: All that grease!

ADAIRE: It's - it's an institution, okay! (laughter)

THRONDIR: (laughing) Go right up!

AUSTIN: (sighs) God.

ADAIRE: It's a pillar of the community! (pauses) Okay. Okay. So, okay. So your thing here is, this doesn't get us to Rosemerrow any faster. That's fair. That's a fair point, because we're gonna be sitting here, and that's... but. Maybe - maybe we can do something here that will also progress us towards Rosemerrow. (pauses) Cause like, here's the other thing.

Rosemerrow - (sighs) your - your friends, your cool friends, who had breakfast with us. (Ali laughs) Did mention going to Rosemerrow. I don't know that Rosemerrow's gonna be super happy about that. Lots of mixed feelings about the uh... you know.

HELLA: (pauses) Mmhm.

ADAIRE: Uh... forays. Um. (Ali laughs) Maybe if we reach out to Rosemerrow, we might be able to... get a dialogue going. Get some assistance, get some... I don't know. I don't know! That's the thing, who knows. We don't know until we ask.

HELLA: (sighs) Adaire, your problem is - is that you talk too much. (laughter) To too many people. We - we just have to go there! (laughs) We don't have to start a dialogue! (groans)

ADAIRE: I mean - but - okay, we do! Because if we go there - look. I don't like asking favors, I like offering opportunities. (Austin laughs) And - if we -

AUSTIN: (laughing) Good.

HELLA: (exasperated) You're incredible. You're incredible! #00:30:00#

ADAIRE: If we can - if we can go to Rosemerrow with an opportunity in hand (Hella sighs) then they give us something back. That's how opportunities - you know, that's how it works!

AUSTIN (overlapping): I can't believe - I can't believe that Adaire went to the Lazer Ted school of management. (laughter) It's unbelievable.

ALI: God.

HADRIAN: (hesitantly) I - there's also... there's a right and a wrong issue here (Austin laughs) and, and I have to say, I'm - I'm struggling a little, but... but the right thing almost never seems to be to let an *army*, a trained army, destroy a... a village, a largely peaceful village, here.

HELLA: (sighs) They're coming here for a reason, Hadrian.

HADRIAN: I mean, if it's the reason they had -

ART: Last night, two nights ago? How, how many...

AUSTIN: Two nights ago.

HADRIAN: If it's the reason they had two nights ago, they haven't adequately proven their case, and again, they're marching an army here! This isn't -

AUSTIN (overlapping): I will say, again. There are undead moths around you. (laughs)

ART: Did we - did we establish that conclusively?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: I thought that was still a grey area.

AUSTIN: Remember, there was one who took you here. The one who led - who originally led Throndir and Hella here was undead.

DRE: Yeah, but then he got better!

AUSTIN: Yes, he got healed, he got resurrected by the Weaver King.

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: And then, during that attack, more died. So I want to give you just like the rundown, just so - so we have some specific, like, facts and figures, really quick. There... there were about 50 moths here. There are now, I'd say, in the neighborhood of 30 living ones, and then a number of undead ones.

ART: (pauses) Okay, but -

AUSTIN (overlapping): Another 20 or so. There are -

ART (overlapping): (insistently) But what here is *evil*.

AUSTIN: Nothing. That you got. But again, that's not how Ordenna works. Ordenna isn't about evil, Ordenna is about natural or, or... you know. Productive.

ART: (pauses) Yeah, and I'm not - I'm not here to serve the gods of Ordenna! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Right. Fair. There are probably about 10 Weavers besides the Weaver King, and there are... we said about 12 of the Oni children, that you've seen.

ART: I guess here's where I'm struggling, is that I have no particular reason to think that - I mean, I do believe that I'm being told to stay here, divinely, and - this is an out of character note - I feel like I have to maintain my consistent position against undead people, (laughter) just to kind of rein in the amount of shit I get on twitter. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Uh huh! That's - that's fair. That's fair.

ART: I'm struggling with these two - these two points, right now. (laughter) I mean, then again, none of these people have hit me with their broom or whatever yet, so.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah! Not yet.

ALI: You took so much damage... people on twitter should remember that. Anyway. (Dre laughs)

HADRIAN: I think - I think we have a moral obligation to help these people.

HELLA: (disgusted sigh)

HADRIAN: (quietly) That's the right noise.

ADAIRE (overlapping): (sarcastically) That'll win her over. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Well, you know. From him.

HADRIAN: I'm not saying we have to die in a war here. But I think we have to help.

HELLA: I will help up to a point. I'm not raising my sword against any Ordennan soldiers.

ADAIRE: I can work with that.

HELLA: (laughs) Of course you can.

ADAIRE: (laughs) I like to be flexible.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay! So, here's how this is going to work. You have three days. Everyone can take an action every day, you know, depending on ones that seem like they'll take more or less. You can, once per day, prepare the town in some way. It's a - it is a... depends on what you're trying to do, so it depends on what the stat is, but this can be things like training the, the regular moth people to be a little more... ready for a war, in which case what will happen is they will get a boost to what type of damage they do, to incoming soldiers. Right now, they roll 4d4, and if you spend a day training them, that will go up to 4d6, and if you spend another day training them, that will go up to 4d8, etc. You can also help Red Jack shape his boys up and get them to be a little less (laughs) wild, and a little more orderly, which will both protect them and maybe even help a couple of them... kind of, help, in - in the ways that mischievous Oni boys do.

#00:35:00#

You could help by healing Red Jack, is another thing you can do. Right now, he is not doing very well. The nice thing about this is you don't just - it's not just that you get to help heal him, but like, any sort of... he is a being who thrives on interaction, and learning, and talking. And just spending time with him improves his Constitution. And the thing that makes him the thing he is is that there's no limit to that. To get, like, nitty gritty, he has a maximum now of 5HP. Every day

that you spend hel- healing him, helping him, training him, working with him, talking, like, as a dedicated thing you're doing, you'll raise that by 10HP, and there is no cap to that.

You could also try to figure out how to, again, work on the water situation, which we've talked about. And if you can manage to get the Weaver King some... some water, even if it's just enough to get it resurrected - or get it, uh, all, you know, fed up for a little bit, it can begin resurrecting some of those undead moths, to get them into better fighting shape too.

Or you can pitch me something else! But, but there are time limits on these things, and there are a limited number of days, so. You tell me what you want to do. Day one.

ART: I want Thrandir to go first. (Ali laughs)

DRE: (surprised) Okay!

ART: I don't mean to like put you on the spot, but like... I think there's like, a really good - there real- there are more, there's more than one, like, really good thematic potential for Thrandir.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ART: And I want you to like, pick with your eyes open.

DRE: Um, I think I want to spend time with Red Jack.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cool. What are you doing?

DRE: (pauses) I think Thrandir is just kind of like, tending to his... his messed up hand.

AUSTIN: Mm.

DRE: And it's, I mean it's - it's very basic stuff, it's like, let me change your bandaid, like, let me wash it for you. Thrandir isn't really like trained in any sort of like, medical stuff. But it's, it's more... it's like you said, it's the wanting to spend time with him part.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: And I think - I think the topic of conversation they eventually get onto is Thrandir wants to know about how he met Ace. Because he thinks that Red Jack and Ace have a bond similar to him and Kodiak.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I even imagine Kodiak and, and Ace, like, playing with each other in the background, like chasing - or Kodiak is chasing Ace around a little bit, in the kind of near woods, and barking, and, and they're neighing, it's fun. It's good.

DRE: Austin, you know the way to my heart. (laughter)

AUSTIN: I do. I - hopefully a lot of people's! Animals are good, actually. (pauses) Red Jack says,

RED JACK: Oh, I didn't find Ace. Ace found me. I was like one of these little ones here at the time, disobeying my father and wandering a little further from home than I should have. Needless to say, I - I took a tumble. And it was Ace who dug me from the avalanche, and... dragged me home. And then he refused to leave, until I got better. It's a funny thing, that whole experience, it - that's around when I really grew up. I suspect some of my young ones will have calls for that soon, too. And then I left home, with Ace, and we saw the world. What about you, and the dog?

THRONDIR: I had to leave home. You know, I wanted to, but I didn't have a choice in it either way. And I was wandering through the woods, and - and I just, I just found him. His old masters had died, you know, from the cold, from exposure, outside of Auniq, and... I don't know. We just came together, and we just made sure that we both made it out.

RED JACK: You know, a thing they say is, you can't choose your family. It turns out, you can't choose your very best friends, either.

AUSTIN: And he like, gives you a little shoulder squeeze.

DRE: I think when he squeezes Throndir's shoulder, Throndir puts his hand over his hand and holds it there.

AUSTIN: Very sweet and good. Give me a Charisma check.

DRE: Oh boy, I'm not good at those.

AUSTIN: Mmhm! (pauses) That's not great.

DRE (overlapping): Uh, that's a 4. Nope!

AUSTIN: That's not great! Alright. (pauses) So I think the - the time spent with him still gives you this, this nice bonus, of, uh, raises his HP. Like I'm not gonna say that didn't happen, it was a good scene, I'm not gonna take that away from you. But there is, like... there is, as he squeezes your shoulder, there is something in it that... and maybe this even fires up via, via good old Kindrali vision. There's something familiar in that squeeze, that feels like a departure. Like a... a goodbye. And he pulls away, and he says,

RED JACK: Ah, I'm gonna... tend to some things in the house, get some things prepared, you understand.

THRONDIR: Yeah! Do you - do you need any more help? I can...

RED JACK: (firmly) No, no. I'll be - I'll be fine. I just need to settle some things. #00:40:00#

AUSTIN: And he goes away for the day, and the next day, too. You won't be able to have this interaction with him tomorrow. (pause) Who's next? You can also do any other thing, like I'm - I'm just, those are some options I gave you, but like, pitch me other stuff, or if you want to do something else *completely* different.

JANINE: (unenthusiastically) Oh, I think I know what I have to do.

AUSTIN: Okay. (laughs) What do you have to do?

JANINE: Uh... I have to go see Rosette.

AUSTIN: (pause) Okay.

JANINE: The...

AUSTIN: I think - yeah.

JANINE: Not quite queen.

AUSTIN: Mm, she's a moth queen. I think we've decid- I've decided. I don't think that's how moths work, necessarily?

JANINE (overlapping): I mean, she talked how she wasn't a queen. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Oh, did she? Okay.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I believe you.

JANINE: She looks and acts like one, but yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Oh right, she did. Yeah, she kind of - she kind of like, positioned the way the moths work as being a little more... flat hierarchy than that, that's true. So she's, um... I like, speak of that, actually, I think she's probably... tilling the soil, of, of, some, some... crops. I don't know, what's a good wintery crop? What's something that actually could live through the - through the snow?

ART: I mean, all sorts of boring things. Onions, potatoes... um.

AUSTIN: Yeah. (pause)

ART (overlapping): Kind of in that family.

AUSTIN (overlapping): I think she's, I think you find her - I think you, yeah, you find her planting some potatoes. I think the way potatoes root is probably really appealing... to them. Almost

aesthetically. She's like, on her knees, planting potatoes. (abruptly) Wait - how do you understand her?

JANINE: Doesn't she speak Common? Or whatever it is?

AUSTIN: Throndir - Throndir understood her - yeah, I guess she was able to talk to...

JANINE: She's - cause she talked to Hella.

DRE: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right. She was able to talk to Hella. Okay. Most of them don't, because we have to use Throndir or Hadrian's talking stuff, but yes, she speaks Common. Totally.

ALI: She speaks like the recordings, though?

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah.

ALI (overlapping): Not like a recording, but yes.

AUSTIN: Yes. The - but it like, it is like the recordings.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, it is like, sounds that she's heard from other people, yeah. I don't think she notices, like, she's planting her plants.

JANINE: Oh (laughs) okay. Uh. I'm not gonna like, walk up straight behind her. I'm probably gonna walk up so she can... see...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: me in the... periphery, cause, you know, we had a... scuffle, before, so I don't want to freak her out.

AUSTIN: That's fair.

JANINE: (pause) So. I don't even know her name, do I?

AUSTIN: Mm-mm.

JANINE: She's just like, some sort of super moth to me.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I think she looks up to you, and in, in that recorded manner, says like...

AUSTIN (as Rosette): How are your wrists?

JANINE (as Adaire): Oh, church boy fixed them up real good.

AUSTIN: Her like - her wings flutter, as if in a nod. And she continues to, to plant... her potatoes.

ADAIRE: Um. So, quick - hey. Why - why are you planting potatoes right now? (hastily) Just - I'm just curious.

ROSETTE: (bluntly) Because we need to eat.

ADAIRE: (pause) Okay. That's fair. Um. (laughs) I was actually wondering! If uh, if you might be interested in doing something a little... um... like a *little* more urgent, you, we can - I don't know, (hesitantly) we'll probably be back by this evening, maybe? You could finish up your potatoes? I guess... evening isn't really a thing right now. Uh... (Austin laughs)

ROSETTE: I have to finish these. If we don't plant our yield, we won't eat when it's harvest time.

ADAIRE: You're not gonna eat when it's harvest time unless we take care of some stuff a little... a little more pressing than that? Than the potatoes?

AUSTIN: She sighs.

ROSETTE: I don't have much longer to go, but... (irritated sigh) what is it you need?

ADAIRE: I was wondering if you could carry me to Rosemerrow.

AUSTIN: There's like laughter... she like, laughs with her antennae, so it's like violins laughing around you. (pause) And then she plants another potato.

ROSETTE: (exasperated) That is longer than a day. Two days. At my fastest. Especially with *your* size.

ADAIRE: That's rude! (laughs)

AUSTIN: It's not a fat joke! It's a, like a - you're a *human*. You're a person.

JANINE: Mm, sure. That's fine. (laughs)

ADAIRE: Well, then, the sooner the better! Look, um... (sighs, Dre laughs) okay. Okay. I'm gonna be candid here. We need more people here to keep your people alive. And I can't exactly guarantee that, but I have some ideas of how maybe there could be arrangements made that might contribute to that in some positive way. Maybe.

ROSETTE: (angrily) Since when do you care about our people?

ADAIRE: I mean, look, you - every - every group of people has something that is unique to them. And you can take that something that is unique to them and bring it other places, and

it's very, very valuable, and expensive, and profitable. (laughter) I'm not gonna - I'm not gonna bullshit you! Like (laughs). #00:45:00#

AUSTIN (overlapping): She goes - does her like, her wing nod. Yeah, give me a - give me a Defy Danger Charisma. The danger here is that you're ignored, which is very dangerous.

JANINE: Yeah. (laughs) That's - that's usually the danger! (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah. (pause) There you go.

JANINE: Nice!

AUSTIN: She, uh - you rolled a 12. She again does the like, violin laugh around you, but it's like... it, it's almost as if, like, it comes into tune, and then the sound comes from like, being... almost volumetric around you, to being focused in on her. And then she stands up, and nods at another moth, who comes over and picks up the, the sack of, of... farming equipment, and supplies. She says,

ROSETTE: I appreciate honesty. You are a person who knows what they want.

AUSTIN: She looks over, like, across the field, and spots Hella. (laughter) And says,

ROSETTE: That is rare, in your group. When do you want to leave?

ADAIRE: Uh, soon as possible, right after I, I need to... I need to maybe, uh, talk to someone before we go, but. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: She nods, and begins walking back to the big long house that the, the kind of... where she holds court, so to speak.

ROSETTE: Find me. We'll go.

ADAIRE: Sounds good!

JANINE: The person that I want to talk to... (pause) Oh, I don't know who I want to talk to, actually. It's just like - it's just like, an idea that I want to plant, knowing that I'm not gonna be able to execute on it so maybe someone else might want to?

AUSTIN: (skeptically) Uh huh? (laughter)

JANINE: (laughs) Uh.

AUSTIN: Very complicated. (laughter)

JANINE: (slowly) Maybe I'll tell Hella. And let Hella decide what to do with it.

ALI: Oh, are you sure? (laughter)

AUSTIN: Mhm!

JANINE: I think it's interesting if I do that.

ALI: Okay... sure!

JANINE: Cause I mean, that's the thing is, Throndir's busy right now. In terms of... like, Throndir is, is talking with Red Jack at this time, right? Pretty much?

AUSTIN: Yep.

JANINE: And Adaire's, as probably reads already, not *super* into Hadrian? And his whole like... thing?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: But she likes Hella! (Ali laughs) I mean, as much as she can like a person. (Ali laughs again) So she's - yeah. She's gonna go, gonna go see Hella. If that's okay.

ALI: I was gonna ask if somebody wanted to assign me a task, so this works. (Austin laughs)

JANINE: Oh, that actually - that totally fucking works! (Ali laughs) (pause) So we're - yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Hella, what are you doing when - yeah. When Adaire comes in.

ALI: (pause) I want to just be brooding again. (laughs) So, so much! I w- I don't know. I guess like, (hesitantly) helping out? Like... (sighs) what are like, chores that like, moth people would have to do?

AUSTIN: There's a bunch.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: You know, there's - like again, there's, there's the... handling of the crops, there's the like, getting, getting... wood, to build new stuff with, there's the cleaning up of, of like... trash, and stuff. There's prepping food, and hunting.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: There's all sorts of stuff that you can do. It's like, what does - what's a person do in a village?

ALI: Right, yeah, exactly. Yeah, I was thinking either just like, kind of busy, like, lifting tasks? Like, carrying stuff from one side of the town to another, like, bullshit like that.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: But - yeah! If you want to corner me while I'm, like... (laughs) helping these moth people.

JANINE (overlapping): (laughing) Corner's a really strong word!

AUSTIN: Geez, yeah!

JANINE: Well. (laughter) So I'm gonna walk up to Hella.

ALI: Okay.

JANINE: And maybe like, probably like, if she's like, lifting stuff, Adaire probably like, also lifts a thing - like a light, a light, not a heavy thing. (Ali laughs) She probably like - you know, puts - does a little show of, of like, helping out! We're doing this thing together! Hooray! (laughter)

ALI (as Hella): Did you need something, Adaire?

ADAIRE: Yeah! Um... (pause, laughter) So I had this idea of... you know, I know you're not super comfortable with, with like... you know, (mock scary voice) taking up arms against the other Ordennans! And... um.

HELLA: Yeah, I kind of don't want to like, commit treason.

ADAIRE (overlapping): I don't know why I said it like that.

HELLA: Uh huh.

ADAIRE: Yeah, that's - that's fair!

HELLA: Mhm.

ADAIRE: No, it's fair.

HELLA: Mhm.

ADAIRE: It's totally - (laughs uncomfortably) yeah. Um. So I was thinking, a thing that - that might be good, and I'm not gonna be - I would do this myself. I would totally do this myself. (Ali laughs) But. I'm about to like, go? (awkwardly) Not, like, forever, I'm gonna come back.

HELLA: (exasperated) Where are you going?

ADAIRE (overlapping): I'm not just ditching y'all after doing that whole... sales pitch.

HELLA: *Where* are you going. (laughs)

ADAIRE: I'm just gonna go to Rosemerrow. Real, like. Briefly.

HELLA: *What?* (laughs) #00:50:00#

ADAIRE: (laughs) I'll be fine! Don't - it's fine! Um.

HELLA: (sputtering) That - I -

ADAIRE: So...

HELLA: What -

ADAIRE: Yeah?

HELLA: Adaire! (laughs)

ADAIRE: I'm coming back!

HELLA: You're the reason we're all here, and we're *all* supposed to go there.

ADAIRE: I know, but that's - okay, you know when I was like, oh well we can, you know, maybe we can two birds one stone, help these people, the Rosemerrow stuff too, this is part of that! It's all - it's all part of that.

HELLA (overlapping): (muttering) Okay, I... it's gonna...

ADAIRE: It all goes together. Um.

HELLA: Sure. We're not gonna have that argument again. Yeah, but what are you -

ADAIRE: It's fine. It's fine.

HELLA: So you're *leaving* - but - okay!

ADAIRE: *Temporarily!* (laughs)

HELLA: What did you want.

ADAIRE: (laughing) For a brief window! Um. Okay. So I had this idea. (pause) Cause that weird, like - the rooty stuff? The like, big old... wood pit thing?

HELLA: The weird monster, yeah?

ADAIRE (overlapping): It needs water, right? That's the whole -

HELLA (overlapping): Yeah. Uh huh. Yep.

ADAIRE: Yeah. The weird monster.

AUSTIN: Mmhm. (Art laughs)

ADAIRE: It needs water. That's the whole thing.

HELLA: (sighs loudly)

ADAIRE: But we can't have fire in here because it's a town of very flammable people.
(pause) And Oni. Are probably not as flammable. I don't really know about Oni.

HELLA: Where are you going with this?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Not as - not as flammable. Oily, though, but. (Ali laughs)

JANINE: Eugh. Well then that's kind of flammable.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: What kind of oi- anyway. (Ali laughs)

ADAIRE: So, okay. Can't have fire in here. Plants need water. Snow, fucking everywhere. Like. So what do we - you know. What can we do about that? And I was thinking that we need something that could maybe... we could have a fire sort of far away, and have something that holds the heat, like you would if you were like... I don't know, like, cooking shit. And you wanted to not just have it on the fire. You know, like you would heat up a pan, and the pan holds the heat for a bit, or you heat up like, a brick, and the brick holds the heat for a bit. (sighs) So I thought, if we could maybe arrange for something like that, and then you put *those* in the snow... in the area...

AUSTIN: (laughing) I need - you keep coming up with things and I don't know how Adaire would know, Janine. (laughter)

ALI (overlapping): I - yeah, I'm gonna be honest with you...

JANINE: Okay.

ALI: You're saying this, and I don't know that Hella knows what a crockpot is, like. (laughter)
Like there's very much like a head tilt.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: How about I do - I'll do a Spout Lore to see if I can actually even...

AUSTIN: Yes!

ALI: Mhm!

AUSTIN: Absolutely.

JANINE: Okay. That's fair. That's fair.

AUSTIN: Not like that! You could prep.

JANINE: I think I'm spending a prep. I'm definitely spending a prep on this.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Okay, but - so this is, I can tell you something, I have to tell you something interesting but not useful. It's up to you to make it useful. (pause) (clicks tongue) So what's the thing you wanted from this?

JANINE: To basically be able to heat, like, bricks or stones, even?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And then bring those in to melt the snow that's around the plants without causing a fire risk.

AUSTIN: So what you know is that there is a point on the map near here that has... I'm gonna, where do I want to mark it... I think it's actually pretty far, and you have to get kind of close to the road. I think it's probably like, here-ish? Can you see where that is, like to the west of Twinbrook? That has natural... thermal, like, vents? Like geothermal, like, it's like, *hot* there. And sometimes it, it - there are like nice hot spring, uh, (Janine laughs) hot springs there. And other times, it's just like... it's just hot stone. And that would be a place to go get some water. It's far, so it would take you a lot of time, and it's close to where the Pala-din, the, the Anchor, are marching, which is not great.

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: But that is a thing you could go do.

ALI: But -

JANINE: (sighs indecisively)

ALI: In like...

JANINE: Mmhm.

ALI: the time it would take to get all the way up there and come back?

AUSTIN: Mmhm?

ALI: That wouldn't serve the like, purpose that you need, right?

AUSTIN: No. I will not give her -

JANINE (overlapping): Yeah, the rocks would probably like, cool, yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): I'm not giving her the thing that she wants.

ALI: (laughs) Okay!

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: She did not get a 10. She got a 7-9.

JANINE: No. That's a shame.

AUSTIN: So yes, sort of. (pause) But you just don't know how to construct a thing that would heat - that would safely heat stones, that wouldn't set - that wouldn't be a risk of setting fire to...

JANINE: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: this huge, completely dried out...

JANINE: (pause) It's probably like, Adaire's probably seen like, a baker do some shit with hot stones, and she's like, we'll just do that!

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah. I know where there's some hot stones! (laughter)

JANINE (overlapping): And then it's like, well. (pause) Like, Hella's not a baker, and all the hot stones are really far from here, and.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Okay.

ALI: (sighs)

AUSTIN: And like, fire is tough to use.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like.. it just, it's not easy.

ADAIRE: Okay, Hella. Well, if you find some hot stones, or if they just - I don't know. If a meteor falls, or some sort of... sky rock.

HELLA: Yeah, if a meteor falls, I - the *first* thing I'm gonna think of is getting water to these moths. Of course, Adaire. Yep.

ADAIRE: Okay. Cool. I'm -

HELLA: Have fun in Rosemerrow.

ADAIRE: Do you want - do you want anything from Rosemerrow?

HELLA: (under her breath) Oh my god. (to Adaire) No. No, you have fun.

ADAIRE: Okay.

HELLA: I'll see you in a couple days.

ADAIRE: Alright. Okay.

HELLA: (frustrated laugh, sighs)

AUSTIN: Great. (laughter) I mean you could - you could do the expedition to give you the water. I'll buy - like, and that will let you, at the end of the day, you know. Do the thing where you, where you heal this... this Weaver King, or some of the Weavers, to make them a little - it's up to you. But like, even totally, that is a way to go get water to do this. #00:55:00#

ALI: (laughs) God. Um. (pauses) Hadrian, unless you want to like, team up with a thing.

ART: I mean -

ALI: I guess me doing that, and like, scoping up the Pala-din? And then like, coming back, and being like, here's water, is... a thing I could do. (laughs)

ART: I mean what Hadrian wanted to do was - well, I mean. Hadrian had a... I had a, I had a prioritized list (Ali laughs) and what I have left is... is train, is train people. I think that's where Hadrian's skills would be best used.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Mmhm.

ART: Um. But we can... (quietly) can sort of do that whenever.

JANINE (overlapping): You can also just straight up ignore Adaire's bullshit plan. (Ali laughs) That's okay! (laughs)

AUSTIN: I mean, I appreciate that this is - it gives them a way to actually do the thing with the Weavers,

JANINE: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: that they would have had to go north of Twinbrook somehow, safely? And that would have been really dangerous? This is safer than that.

JANINE: Yeah.

ART: It would give me a chance to test one of my more hare-brained hypotheses, too.

AUSTIN: Okay?

ART: I mean... who commands the Pala-din?

AUSTIN: Right. (pauses) You haven't seen. (Janine laughs) You have no idea.

ART: Right, but like... who did it before?

AUSTIN: Um, in your experience? Tabard did.

ART: Yeah. But - but through the authority of Samot, right?

AUSTIN: Correct. Yes.

ART: The dude whose cloak I'm wearing?

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Yeah. That's totally a hare-brained scheme that you could -

ART (overlapping): You can't prove that I *can't* command the Pala-din. Is my point.

AUSTIN: Totally. Uh huh! (laughter) (pauses) But you'll -

ART (overlapping): But I mean, that doesn't seem like it should be our, our... plan A? (laughter)
Like, everyone just chill out for a few days, they're gonna show up, I'm gonna tell them to fuck off, (laughter)

AUSTIN: It'll be fine!

ART: and this is all gonna be over.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: But yeah, Hella, you should do - you should do whatever feels right, in your heart.

ALI: (laughs loudly) You sure about that, Hadrian?

ART: (defensively) Yeah! (laughter) Read the letter! I believe in you. (sad groans, 'aw's)

ALI: (whispers) God! So... such good friends that I have. (louder) T- there's two thing - okay. I'm of two minds here.

AUSTIN: Mhm?

ALI: One is that, like... Hella, like, taking a walk (laughs) probably isn't a bad idea for her right now?

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: And if she saw that thing, like, heal the undead people, like... maybe if this thing can just get rid - "get rid" of - she has a negative on Intelligence, so I'm... using quotation marks here.

AUSTIN: Uh huh! I got you.

ALI: (laughs) If this thing can like, "get rid" of the, the curse, like... nurturing that isn't the worst thing that she could do.

AUSTIN: Sure. That's the thing -

ALI (overlapping): The second thing is that like, I don't know that she'd be willing to train these guys. Like. (scoffs) I'll help you... make it a fair fight.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: I'm not gonna fight *with* you. (laughs) But.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: You know.

AUSTIN: Cool. Uh, so which are you doing?

ALI: I...

AUSTIN: And which is Hadrian doing?

ALI: Yeah.

ART: I was gonna train the... the troops. But if Hella wants to do that, and if Hella wants to do that by herself, (pauses) I guess, you know, we could figure something else there.

ALI: No, yeah, I'll go north.

HELLA: (casually) Hey, uh, Throndir, could I borrow Kodiak?

THRONDIR: (stutters) Uh...

AUSTIN (as Kodiak): (pants)

JANINE: We have Sol's cart and horse still, don't we?

AUSTIN: (pauses) Yeah.

DRE: Oh, yeah.

ALI: Oh, do we?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

THRONDIR: I mean, probably, but what do you need him for?

HELLA: It's - (sighs) okay, so. Adaire pulled me aside, and she wants me to go to like, this hot spring? To, like, get... water? I guess? And I figure it's not like, the worst idea. Because that thing in the middle seems impor- I don't know. (dismissively) I just - this whole thing is

your guys' deal. But. (Dre laughs) If there's water there... (sighs loudly) I don't know. (angrily) I have to go through the woods, I thought your dog would help.

THRONDIR: Yeah, no, I -

KODIAK: (barking) Boof! Boof! (Ali laughs)

THRONDIR: That's a good idea. And... thanks, Hella, you're more than welcome to have Kodiak go with you.

HELLA: Okay. You sure you don't mind?

THRONDIR: Yeah, no!

HELLA: Okay.

THRONDIR: I think it'll - it'll be good for the two of you. You know, get some...

AUSTIN: (laughs) Great.

THRONDIR: Get some proper bonding time. (laughs)

HELLA: (sighs, annoyed)

AUSTIN: Alright, give me a roll. Um, I feel like this is also going to be a Defy Danger. Ah, the question is like, is it Wisdom, or like... I - I think it's probably... my gut says it's Wisdom. Because it's not Dexterity. It's not like you're sneaking alone, you have a cart with you. So it's less like, can you be quiet by yourself and like, sneak through the woods, and more like, can you know when to be - to stop moving. And Wisdom would be that.

ALI: Oh, okay. For me, I thought it was like - more Constitution? Like, just getting through the storm, and stuff?

AUSTIN: No, you can - no.

ALI (overlapping): Like, okay, I can obviously...

AUSTIN: No, it's - you can totally do it, yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: No, definitely not Constitution.

ALI: (laughs) Okay. So.

AUSTIN: Cause it's not like it's - it's not like blizzard weather right this second.

ALI: Right. (pauses) Ok-

AUSTIN: Make sure you're marking XP for failed rolls, by the way, everybody.

ALI: Have I failed, today? I have failed.

AUSTIN: Oh - yes, you have.

ALI (overlapping): I have failed, yeah.

DRE (overlapping): Oh, shit!

AUSTIN: I don't - (laughs) yeah.

DRE: Thank you, Austin. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh huh!

ALI: Oh, it's another one! Perfect.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Um...

ALI: Uh, oh I could bring - #01:00:00#

AUSTIN: You could - you could spend a prep, and then Thrandir could help you with Kodiak.

ALI: (uncertainly) Okay.

AUSTIN: What's your bond with Hella, Thrandir?

DRE: Actually, I have 2 bond with Hella.

AUSTIN: Oh, word!

DRE: Cause I - I wrote a new one after the last session. (Ali laughs) Which is...

AUSTIN: So what are they?

DRE: Well, my first one is, "I can learn a lot from Hella about how to be an adventurer for hire!" (laughs) And that may change soon. But then my second one, my new one that I wrote with her, was... "The only skill of mine that Hella may respect is my bow, and I'll show her how deadly it can be."

ALI: (concerned) Oh!

AUSTIN: Nice. That's a good one.

ALI: I have uh - I have a bond with Thrandir now. And it is...

AUSTIN: What is it?

ALI: Um, "I am no bright-eyed adventurer. Neither is Throndir. I'm not going to go out of my way to protect him from this foolishness."

AUSTIN: (laughs darkly) Oh, Jesus Christ. (laughter) Okay! Um.

DRE: (laughing) So basically, "this goofy motherfucker over here." (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: No. Mhm! (pauses) So I - I'm gonna say you roll Aid Interfere and add, add Kodiak's, uh, Cunning to your roll.

DRE: Okay! Let me, uh...

AUSTIN: So it's a pretty big buff. That's like a +4 to your roll.

DRE: (surprised) Is that what it is?

AUSTIN: Yeah, cause it's +2 from Kodiak's Cunning, and +2 from your two bonds.

DRE: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: So 2d6+4.

ART (overlapping): If you fuck this up it means you really don't like Hella. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Boy.

ART: That's... that's what the dice are telling you.

AUSTIN: That's an 8. That, so that pushes it up to a... it means that you are - you are target t-of, uh, of... any down things that - downsides that come from this. (pauses) Alright, let me think...

DRE: You better not hurt my dog, Hella. I swear to god. (laughs)

ALI: Oh, my god. Austin?

AUSTIN: Uh huh? What's up? (pauses) Hi.

ALI: Come *on*.

AUSTIN: What's wrong?

ALI: (quietly) It's fine...

AUSTIN: Mhm! (pauses) So... hm.

ALI: I can't just get caught in the woods and go hey guys, I'm with you! (laughs) Hey!

AUSTIN: No, that's not what's gonna happen. You're - that's not the thing that you fail here, in fact.

ALI: (laughing) Right.

ART: That's not how armies work, either. (laughs)

AUSTIN: No.

ART: It's not just like, oh, yeah, you're with us? Great! Come on! I brought this dog! (laughter)

AUSTIN: You are... you are walking through the, the woods, as you do. And this area is like, pretty hilly? And you wind up getting... let me see, let me - I'm gonna look at your inventory, really quick. I'm gonna be *that* GM for a second. (pauses) What's some cool stuff that you could lose? (Ali sighs) That's what I like to do. Oh yeah, there we go! (laughs)

So you - you're - you end up, like... Kodiak does - does his very best, to warn you. (laughs) But you end up catching some, some ice, that isn't - you thought it was like, nice snow that you could walk on. And, instead, the cart and the... the horse completely slip and slide, and you end up trying to pull it back in, and rein it back in, and in the process, get jostled off, and end up falling off of a... a cliff. Not super high, but what does happen is you end up caught by your backup, on... the, the... edge of a, or like, the limb of a tree. And the only way to get down is to d- is to like, cut loose part of that backpack. So you lose your adventuring gear.

ALI: (groans)

AUSTIN: If you do. Alternatively, you could spend this turn and the next turn, getting this water and coming back.

ALI: That still has *five* uses. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: Which is like, all of the uses.

AUSTIN: It's *all* the uses.

ALI: (groans)

AUSTIN: So you could, you could spend - it just spends an extra day. (pauses) Of like, slowly trying to work your way off of this thing, and then... climbing the tree, and getting the stuff back, and all of that. (Ali laughs) But you're like caught up there, it's a bad look.

ALI: How long -

AUSTIN: You're very glad you are alone, and no one can see you, looking very embarrassed.

ALI: How long was it gonna take me to get there and back to begin with?

AUSTIN: One turn.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. One day.

ALI: So I'm just losing...

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: (sighs) Could I reasonably buy another one in Rosemerrow? Will you... you're not gonna stop me from doing that,

AUSTIN (overlapping): What, adventuring gear?

ALI: obviously, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ALI: Okay, yeah. Then I'll just -

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, adventuring gear you can get - you can get adventuring gear for money in, in... in Old Man's Chin.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Then I'll just - I'll lose that for now. That's fine.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And we've got those silken coins.

AUSTIN: We do have those sil- well, you do, and you're leaving. (Janine laughs) Alright, cool, so yeah. While you're getting the hot water and loading it into the - the cart, which you manage to chase down and get and all of that. You - one, it smells real bad. It is like rotten eggs. It's gross. The geothermal just is not good on the nose. If you thought that this walk was gonna be peaceful and good -

ALI (overlapping): I was not gonna have like a nice, like a hot springs episode, by myself?
(laughter) Like, could have center-

AUSTIN (overlapping): I mean - you could - if you want to get used to it, you can get used to it.

ALI: (sighs) I don't want to go back and be really mean, and also smelly. (laughter) It's one or the other. #01:05:00#

AUSTIN: You know. (Ali laughs) Maybe that's why you take the extra day, is just like you fall from the tree and you're like, man, *fuck* this. (laughter) I'm like - my muscles hurt, and I'm gonna get in this hot spring and just chill. (Ali laughs) Regardless, like, the sound of the Ordennan soldiers is super loud, as they march. It is... like... very, like, I don't know, I guess you've been part of parades. You've been part of Ordennan parades, before. So you kn- you're the one person here who's familiar with this, but it's still intimidating. Right? Like, it's the sound of footsteps, of hundreds of footsteps, exactly in lockstep. And also they're made of metal. And they go for a long time, like it's not - they don't, when they walk past you, so to speak, that walking past period is... a long-ass time. It has the entire period of you loading the water, and maybe taking a dip, and all that. (Ali laughs) Like it's not like they walk past in five minutes.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: You know what I mean?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So. So yeah! That's good. You can bring back the water, uh, tomor- or no, you're gonna bring it back today. Which of the things are you gonna do with it? Are you, are you resurrecting more moths with it, by feeding it to the Weaver King? Or are you kind of boosting the regular Weavers?

ALI: Oh, it's - that was like a one or the other sort of thing?

AUSTIN: Yep. Mhm.

ALI: I guess giving it to the... the center part, so the moths can not be dead. Anymore.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me a roll of 1d20. That's how many moths will go from being undead to less undead.

ALI: (laughs) Okay. (pauses) (angrily) Oh my *god*!

JANINE: Oh my god! (Dre laughs)

ALI: Austin, no! That's not a fair -

AUSTIN: I - that's the rule.

ALI: That is not the rule!

AUSTIN: That's the rule.

DRE: (pauses) Does she get to mark XP for that?

ALI: (frustrated) Come on!

AUSTIN: Yeah, mark XP for that one.

ALI: No! (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

JANINE: Ah...

ALI: (laughing) I would rather like, have a minimum of like, 5.

AUSTIN: Mm.

ALI: Hey everyone, I rolled a *one*. (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: You did. You rolled a 1.

ALI: I don't want to - (laughs)

AUSTIN: Mark XP, and like no, here's the thing, is like - this is not the water it means. This is not like, good, fresh water, from the icy river.

ALI: God.

AUSTIN: Like, this is weird, geothermal... water. This isn't, like, this is weird, underground river water that it doesn't need. Maybe, in fact, it even has, like... maybe because of how close this is to the ocean, it's even salty in some way. Like, it's - it's, it's a little too, there's too much saline content. And so it's not, like, good water.

ALI: Fucking Adaire. I swear to god.

JANINE: I didn't roll! (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh huh! (laughing) Make sure you do take XP for that one. I'm gonna give that one to you for fun.

ALI: (laughs) (sadly) I took it.

AUSTIN: I love, just, Hella's very bad, terrible, not good day. (laughter) It's so good!

DRE: And then Kodiak comes and tells Throndir all about it.

AUSTIN: Yep! Here's what I'll do, I'll let you add two more for, for Kodiak's coming. (Ali laughs) That's 3. I'll give you 3. You're up to 33 regular moths.

ALI: (laughing) I'm so upset!

DRE: Christ.

AUSTIN: 17 undead. It could have been up to 20.

JANINE (overlapping Austin): Can Hella have some sort of bonus for having a relaxing bath?

ALI: (sighs)

AUSTIN: (pauses) Yeah, you can get rid of Stunned.

JANINE: Bath bonus? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, get rid of Stunned. The bath bonus, you get rid of Stunned. How's that sound?

ALI: (pauses, quietly) I'm so upset. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Hadrian? You want to train some moths?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What are you - how are you planning -

ART: I'll train some moths.

AUSTIN: How're you doing that?

ART: I've been thinking about this.

AUSTIN: I bet!

ART: Because - because there's two ways to think about this. One, I bet Hadrian does a fair amount of work in a teaching capacity.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah, that's fair.

ART: Like... like around? Town?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: On the other hand, I don't know that martial... arts, pardon the term. Um, is something that he'd be particularly good at teaching, because what he did to get good at fighting was be a devout religious person (Austin laughs) and then it just happened for him.

AUSTIN: Oh, I mean - so you don't think that he did a lot of training? Like martial training? Do you think it is just fully his holiness? His, his like, devotion, and - and, is it religious strength? Or does he have a training regimen?

ART: I think it's - I think Hadrian trained a lot, and doesn't see his own training.

AUSTIN: Mm.

ART: He sees that he used to be much smaller.

AUSTIN: Right. Well, I think give that a roll.

ART: That like...

AUSTIN: This could be one of those moments of realization for him.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Depending on how this goes. I think... god, what is, what is teaching? (sighs) How are you doing it? Like, what - how are you keeping them in order? Is it about the display of your strength? It is about... getting their morale going? Is it about teaching them specifics?

ART: I mean, this might just speak to how I interact with teachers, and not what teaching is like, and I know who I'm talking to when I say this.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Uh huh.

ART: But I think - I think teaching is Charisma.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think that that's a big part - I think that's one way to teach. I don't think it's the only way to teach.

JANINE: Mmhm.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: But that is definitely a way to be a teacher. So yeah, you can give me - give me that Charisma roll. (pauses, exasperated) Y'all -

ART: Are you *kidding* me?

AUSTIN: Y'all have got to start succeeding on rolls. (Ali breathes sharply) You rolled a 6. Um. Thrandir is there, and can help you.

DRE: (pauses) Oh, boy. Yeah? #01:10:00#

ART: I think Thrandir would be a *great* assistant teacher. (Ali laughs) As someone who - who knows what he's... he's doing.

DRE: Uh, am I just rolling to Aid or Interfere?

AUSTIN: If you want to. Again, you open yourself up, if you, if you do 7-9, to... negative outcomes, here.

DRE: What's the worst that could happen?

AUSTIN: Good question.

ART: Exactly.

DRE: (excited) Hey!

AUSTIN (overlapping): That's a success!

DRE (overlapping): That's an 11.

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: That's a - that's an 11. Alright, so, uh... (laughs) the good news is. That you... manage
-

ART (overlapping): I love good news.

AUSTIN: Huh? You love good news. It's good.

ART: I love good news! (Dre laughs)

AUSTIN: The good news is that you... completely, absolutely, do a good job of training them,
like - give me an image, what's that look like?

JANINE: (pauses) That montage song is playing.

ART: I -

AUSTIN: Yes. (laughter)

ART: Yeah, I think the - the image of Hadrian teaching is like... there's a lot of like, cliches in it,
right? It's like, no, *this* is how you hold a sword. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: It's like... uh... you know... striking, like uh, of... probably not striking the trees. What the
hell are they hitting? (pauses) I mean, there's probably stumps and shit, like.

AUSTIN: Yep.

ART: Like it's a forest. You know, where they're hitting things, and you know... you know, one kid
does it, and it's, you know, not very impressive, and the next kid does it, he's a little better. And
then Hadrian like, clears them out, and like... hits that stump, and that thing, you know
explodes, and they're like... oh, that's cool, I want to do that. And he's like, okay. You know? It's
- all your power's coming from your hip, right? And he like, shows that.

AUSTIN: Mmhm. So, good news is that you totally did a good job, and raised their damage dice from a D4 to a D6.

ART: Whoo!

AUSTIN: The bad news is... there was an accident.

DRE: Uh-oh.

AUSTIN: One of them, who was like... one of them was striking, uh, a tree, instead of striking a stump. You were like, very clear. Go out, find a stump, work on your overhead slash.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like just, go in, work on it. One of them, who's *very* eager... (pauses) What's like, what's a part of a plant that we haven't used yet? Or like a plant word. (typing) What's a good plant word for this one... I think this one is named... (pauses) (abruptly) This is a bad - I went to a bad page!

ALI: Mm?

AUSTIN: I went to like, plant words, like, whatever, and the plant words they include are things like "grapes." (laughing) Like, I guess that's technically a plant word!

ART: Yeah!

AUSTIN: That's not really what I was looking for! Technically! Uh... maybe this one's just called Stem. Stem did a bad job. (Dre laughs) Stem was attacking a big tree with lots of snow on top of it, and was buried underneath it. And by the time you dug Stem out, they were already... undead. So, Hella, good news.

JANINE: Mm...

ALI: Oh, just one in, one out!

AUSTIN: What - yep, mmhm! (pauses) You're still up two, because of Kodiak. But, uh... but yeah.

DRE: (woodenly) Bet that - bet that moth would have done better if its name was Humanities, am I right?

AUSTIN: (pauses) Mm. I'm gonna take a break. And we'll be right back. (laughter) Alright, where are we? What's - what's - we're back. Let's start... in Rosemerrow. So, you are... let me look at Rosemerrow really quick, and think about time. Alright, so, here we are in Rosemerrow. And because of the direction you're coming - you're coming from the west, right? First of all, how does this feel? How does it feel to be - like, how - in your mind, what does being flown around by a big moth feel like?

JANINE: Uh... honestly, Adaire's probably wishing she could do this more often, cause it makes, like, seeing the lay of the land real easy. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, you - it is strange. And also -

JANINE (overlapping): I mean, it's dark, but.

AUSTIN: Well, here's the thing. (laughs) There is a really bright light to the east. It makes it really easy to navigate towards Rosemerrow. Like, first of all, Rosemerrow already is bright, compared to most places. So from this height, like, you can immediately see it as you lift up... from Old Man's Chin, and get the lay of the land east. But then there's also just like, a super bright light, because there, on the west- uh, western shore of Rosemerrow, in - in Westshore-Upon-Scene, there is little Ledman Adelberry McGillicuddy Johnson Johansen Maestro Ableton Alexander Quentin Carver Mason Brubaker Seagram Lenova Four - Lenova the Fourth Wing of the New Old Museum. And, uh, it's on fire. Like, by a lot. Like, there's a lot of fire? Like, this whole museum is ablaze. And it lights the streets of Rosemerrow, and like, the entire district. I don't think, you know - there aren't sirens, but there's definitely, as you get closer and closer... the sound of people yelling, and - and all that. And I think by the time you get there, the... the fire is out. Or like, it's - it's just kind of simmering, it's kind of, um...

JANINE: Smolder.

AUSTIN: There's like a few embers left. Smoldering, thank you. There's - there's some embers left, and... people have largely left to go back to sleep. They're also just really - everyone here is really upset, because the sun disappeared. #01:15:00#

JANINE: That's fair.

AUSTIN: And they don't know why, and it's terrifying. There's lots of talk about it being proof of the curse that Ordenna talks about, and it's done great things for the Ordennan, and also the Church of Samoth's, uh, kind of like... reputation, in the city. Like, people are look- are grasping for something. Where - where do you ask to be dropped off, and what do you want Rosette to do while that happens?

JANINE: (sighs) Huhmm...

AUSTIN: You know what, give me a - give me a fate dice. Someone roll me a dice that means something.

JANINE: What? (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Just give me like a couple -

ART (overlapping): Like, personally?

AUSTIN: Yeah, just give me a 2d6. (pauses) There's no bad outcome, I just want to see if it could be a really good outcome. (pauses) Oh, there you go, that's 10. So, I think you - do you

know - I guess I'm gonna count that 10 as you totally know who the Chancellor of, of Roseheart - of, of Rosemerrow is. And normally he would be in Roseheart, but you pick up his... you see him near the fire at Westshore-Upon-Scene's New Old Museum. And... two things. One, how do you recognize him? How do you recognize that it's him? And two, how do you know him?

JANINE: Uh, okay, how do I recognize him... (pauses) Could it be a thing, like a behavior that I sort of, like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Like, if he's a dude who is more inclined to get involved in the community,

AUSTIN (overlapping): That's exactly it.

JANINE: then of course he's gonna be at the fire shit.

AUSTIN: So like, I think -

JANINE (overlapping): Like of course, of course he's gonna be seeing that through.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So that - so I, I think like, your gut, as soon as you see how bad the fire is, that he's gonna be nearby. He's the sort of person who immediately gets involved. It's one of the reasons why he was able to rise to power in Rosemerrow. And like, even beyond that, you know that he... is the sort of person who, despite being Chancellor, you know. He lets his security hang back a little bit.

JANINE: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: He likes to have, he's - you know, he has security around him, but they're not like, all up in his grill. He's a guy who sorts - sort of like, walks the streets alone at night, still.

JANINE: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: Much to the chagrin of his security, and his advisors, and much to the joy of the people of Rosemerrow. (pauses) How do you know him?

JANINE: Um... well, I think... given the kind of dude he seems to be, maybe when he heard that there was a mapmaker in town a little while back,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: he decided, like, oh! why don't I show you some of the like, you know, some of the areas, maybe, where there are...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: You know, not just the main drag, but like, oh, here's this little side street, and it's got a lot of good shops in it, and it'd be cool if we could maybe draw a little attention to it so people will come through a little more often, and give them some more - some commerce, and...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Right. Right. And so now you like, you added - you added it to the map in such a way that when people s-

JANINE: I made sure it looked a little bit wider, or something.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Right.

JANINE: You - you can go through this way! It's great!

AUSTIN: Right, right. (touristy voice) Oh, wow, the Lantern District! Honey, we should go to the Lantern District! Like. (laughter) And then they get there, and it's like three lighting stores. (Janine laughs) Good restaurants, but anyway. So. You know him, and you know that he is Gilbert Greene Byrd White Henderson Lenova Tevilton Bachman Brayer Slayton Showman Carolina Quincy Lutz. Gilbert Lutz. Names are super important in Rosemerrow - you need 15 names to become the Chancellor. People say that, you know, it's easy to get 14, and become one of Rosemerrow's elite, but that 15th is, is... deeply difficult to achieve.

And I think you - you can just kind of get dropped off, right there, in the city street, as like, the wet snow that's all melted drips off into the gutters. Thank god that, that... Lutz had these gutters installed a couple of years ago. (laughs) It's turned out to be a great thing for Rosemerrow. I image he was a - you know, he's a halfling, with a bald head and a big red beard and a, kind of a... heavy coat. I kind of imagine it as like, a tan peacoat. His hands are in the coat. And he probably has on a hat, of some - like a really - what's a good hat for a... a chancellor to have on? Like, a good chancellor, not a shitty chancellor.

He just kind of has... (pauses) I kind of just want him to have on, like, a knit cap. He's just like a regular dude out here. And he has gloves on, and... (pauses) Do you land just in the street? Do you land nearby and walk out? What do you do?

JANINE: (pauses) I'm gonna land nearby and walk out, because I don't want to draw too much attention to Rosette, because the thing...

AUSTIN: Fair.

JANINE: You know, Rosette - one, there has been a fire here recently.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: And I am very aware of how flammable moths are right now.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So. (pauses) And also, like, I'm not gonna send her around Rosemerrow doing fucking errands, like, she's...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: She's a moth queen! (laughs) I'm not gonna -

AUSTIN: Yeah. #01:20:00#

JANINE: I'm not gonna ask too much of her here. Just kind of like, tell her to... maybe hang on a r- a roof? Or something, might be a good place?

AUSTIN: Yeah, she says -

JANINE: You know?

AUSTIN: She says... I think actually what she says is like,

AUSTIN (as Rosette): I'm going to pick up a few things.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: And then like, flitters away. And you're like, okay.

ADAIRE (overlapping Austin): Not people, I hope! Hah hah!

JANINE: Waving. Bye.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah. And as soon as you walk out in the street, I think Chancellor Lutz recognizes you.

AUSTIN (as Lutz): Ahh, what's her name? (pauses) Adaire!

ADAIRE: Yeah, you got it in one!

LUTZ: Adaire. That's how I got here, huh? (Adaire laughs) So, uh... are you here for the museum, or...? Cause I got, uh, bad news for you, kid. (Adaire laughs) It's gone.

ADAIRE: No, I, uh... it's a shame though, I would've liked to... would've liked to scope it out here. If there've been some... additions. I don't know.

AUSTIN: I imagine he's like, 15 feet away from you, and isn't closing distance.

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN: So -

JANINE: I'm gonna close that distance.

LUTZ: (cautionary) Ahh! (pauses) What can I help you with? There was a big fire, the -

ADAIRE: Yeah...

LUTZ: My people are a little jumpy tonight.

ADAIRE: Yeah. Um. So - (sighs) I kinda come bearing some bad news, not like the worst news, it could certainly be worse. The timing doesn't help. But. (pauses) So, I've sort of... caught wind... that Ordenna's coming. In your direction. Which is -

LUTZ (overlapping): Yeah, we have... we have scouts. I'm aware.

ADAIRE: These are more than scouts.

LUTZ: No no no, I'm saying I *have* scouts.

ADAIRE: Oh. Oh, yeah.

LUTZ: You don't get to be Chancellor without there being a, a whole. (pauses) I've heard they're marching. Do you have a timeframe?

ADAIRE: We have a bit of a timeframe. Um, it's a little bit shorter for someone else than it is for you, which is why I'm here. (Lutz laughs shortly) Ordenna's... going to be a little bit distracted, shortly. And... I thought it would be -

LUTZ (overlapping): You keep saying short, is this - do you, is this a running gag? What are you doing?

ADAIRE: (awkward laughter) Oh, no, that's - sorry, I -

LUTZ: Eh, I kid.

ADAIRE: I, uh - you know, it's been a long - it's been a long night. For everyone, I think. (pauses) No, so, they're coming after a... a group, that is more or less minding their own business, but has... caught Ordenna's attention, for some unknown reason. And Ordenna's going to be making a little stop-off on their way to Rosemerrow, to... do what Ordenna does, over there. And I thought it might be a good opportunity, if you had anything available, if you could...

LUTZ: (sighs)

ADAIRE: I don't know. You know your resources better than I do, certainly.

LUTZ: I know - I know my resources very well, and I'm... Listen, Adaire, you're a - you're a smart kid. But you want me to strike Ordenna? They're marching an army at me. I'm - I'm, frankly, nervous. Ordenna could've burned down this museum today to try to kill - rest in peace - Mayor Lenova. They could've, uh, been in league with the - with the gnolls. It's hard to know if they're here already, or if they're coming, and... to what degree we have to play

nice. Because if they're already here, in force, secret, among us, then - eh (sighs). You know. It's - it's - uh, a bad idea for me to throw the first fist.

DRE: (disappointed sigh)

LUTZ: What do you need specifically? And what can we get out of it? Because remember, I have to go to the - the mayors, and say this is why I did this thing. You know, we don't have a standing army. I have my guard, and, and... I have some mercenaries we hire. And that's not much. If we commit one of those things, and lose them, again - after tonight, I imagine the gnolls are gonna come over the walls any day now.

ADAIRE: Well... (sighs) look. You know Ordenna's coming either way. You know that whether they're here now or they'll be here in four days, or whatever, they're coming. And... you have an opportunity to... (pauses) to come for them first. When their back is turned. You either - you either strike at them when their back is turned, or you strike at them when they're facing you, or you just lay down.

LUTZ: You know what? Let's get some soup. Come with me.

ADAIRE: I love soup!

AUSTIN: And he takes you to a little diner, and I think you have this debate with him over the next, like, hour. (pauses) Give me a roll. Is this - I think this is Parley. I think your - the leverage you have here is the timing and placement of the Ordennan troops.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which you can offer to him or not. (pauses) That is... an 8! That's not the worst it could be.

JANINE: Yeah. I'll take it.

AUSTIN: So he says, uh... so on a, on a Parley, a 7-9, they'll do what you ask, but they need some concrete assurance of your promise right now. (pauses) He says, after this whole thing,

LUTZ: Alright, look. Here's what I can do. I can't give you the... the standing mercenaries that we have on retainer. That's - I'd have to explain that explicitly to my mayors, and that would be one of those things where if one of them one wanted to run against me... (sighs) it'd be a whole thing. But my men are loyal. And... if what you're telling me is true, they could earn themselves a little glory. By uh, you know, cutting the head off the snake, as it were. So...

AUSTIN: And he says, uh,

LUTZ: Let me think. Alright, I can give you... (pauses) 25 men. And women, and, you know, the whole unit. And, uh, I'll have them march as soon as possible. Ah... is the bridge still out, to Twinbrook?

ADAIRE: It is.

LUTZ: Oy. Alright, well I know another bridge to cross, I can send them there... and then... that'll be an extra day... they'll be there in four days. Three, if they - if they hurry.

ADAIRE: Mm, would it be helpful if - cause I have, I have a means of crossing that. It's not a means that can carry multiple people, sadly, cause that would be fucking great. But it's a mean that allows me to cross. Is there anything that I could do to... you know, on the other side, like, put an anchor point for a line, or anything like that that would hasten that?

LUTZ: (sighs) I, you know, you'd have to talk to my captain, he'd have to see the place... Look, I - I can give you the 20 men. It's gonna take three or four days. It's all I can do.

ADAIRE: (quietly) You said 25.

LUTZ: (annoyed) Okay, well, you caught me. You know. We're all negotiators in this life, Adaire. (laughter) You like the soup?

ADAIRE: It's good! It's good soup.

LUTZ: It's good soup. It's my favorite soup place.

ADAIRE: It's always good soup in Rosemerrow. The best soup, I say! That's what I tell everyone.

LUTZ: I'm trying to make Rosemerrow like a soup. That's the thing, people - people want it to be a salad. I want it to be a soup. (pauses) Anyway. I got business to attend to. But, uh, it's been great seeing you. You, uh - (pauses) funny question, I'm just putting this out there. Do you have any idea what's up with the sun? People are worried.

ADAIRE: Yeah, I'm worried too. Um. You know, the sun's kind of not really my dom- I'm more focused, you know, I look down at the earth, I don't look up at the sky, so I don't really... I can't say I know. If I find anything out, I'll de- I'll let you know! I'll keep you in the loop, but.

LUTZ: Sounds good. Sounds good. (pauses) Alright, uh... I'll give the information to my captain and, you know, good luck.

ADAIRE: Thank you. You too. You take care.

AUSTIN: He sips some of his soup, and just kind of like... nods to the door, not in a like, dismissive way? But he's definitely dismissing you.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. When you come back, when you meet back up with Rosette, she has a backpack filled with like... assorted supplies that she's gotten from places, you're not sure where? And then like, grips you again.

JANINE (overlapping): I'm a thief, I'm not gonna question. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Right. Good, yeah. And flies you away. (pauses) Who is going to the - the thing in Twinbrook? The - to negotiate?

DRE: (pauses) I mean I -

AUSTIN: Throndir?

DRE: I guess I should. 'Cause it's my friend. Um.

AUSTIN: It is your friend.

DRE: Hadrian -

AUSTIN (overlapping): (laughing) He doesn't really know what the deal is.

DRE: Hadrian, if you would like to come, that would be great, because... Throndir doesn't really speak negotiation well.

ART: (pauses) Oh, yeah, Hadrian's a master negotiator. I mean, I'll go with you, but it's a bad - (laughter) you're taking the wrong person!

AUSTIN: (laughs) This is the thing you'll be doing this day. Is the thing I'll say. So, uh, if that's not what you want to do today, you're gonna need to... not. You're not - can't do this.

ART: No, I think it's a fine - I think it's a fine use of... I think it's a fine use of my time.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: I *killed* someone yesterday, what am I...

AUSTIN: (pauses) So do you just walk into town, or do you kind of sneak in, or like what's your... what's your plan?

ART: I just saunter in, casually, wearing the brilliant white cloak of a living god.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay. Great. (Ali laughs) I think the Ordennans who are here don't... they are, like, licking their wounds, so to speak, and don't come out to fuck with you. (pauses) Do you head to the, uh... god, what was the name - I'm gonna bring us back to Twinbrook for a second. (pauses) Okay. You go right to the Regency Inn and Tavern, where you're going to meet the - the Regent herself. What was her name? It started with a 't'... uh, Tieran. Tieran Meloy. And...

yeah, I think she's just - she is just in the downstairs part of the Regency, and she's in the tavern part. Um, instead of like her - her kind of penthouse, converted office. And she is... this is the very beginning of the next day, so she's probably having her breakfast. And she is surprised to see you, but then more surprised to see the little goblin man who comes in moments afterwards. When was the last time you saw Gnik, Throndir? #01:30:00#

DRE: I'm sorry?

AUSTIN: When was the last time you saw Gnik? It was - was it - I guess it was the negotiations?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: With Auniq?

DRE: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: Okay.

AUSTIN (as Gnik, nervous, quick speech): So what's - so what's the deal? What are we - what's the whole negotiation thing? You said something about a, a, a dam?

THRONDIR: Yeah, okay. Um, so here's the situation. Twinbrook built this dam, on this river.

GNIK: Yeah?

THRONDIR: For a - for a decent reason. Apparently they were having trouble with people falling in, and the river basically taking people down, and - you know, they couldn't rescue people. So -

GNIK: Ooh.

THRONDIR: Yeah.

GNIK: That's tough. That's bad!

THRONDIR: Yeah - it is bad! So they built this dam to try to save lives. Unfortunately, it's cut off water access to a village further downstream. And that water is really important, because there's a... there's a really fantastic creature that lives there. Have you heard of a Weaver King? Have you heard of this before?

GNIK: Uhh, can't say I have.

THRONDIR: Okay. Um, it's - it's, it's something else. But it needs the water to live. And without that... Weaver King, which is basically this village's like, protector and demigod, the village is also not doing so great.

GNIK: I love it. You do a lot of charity work. You know what Throndir, you're always trying to help people. It's a - it's a good look on you.

THRONDIR: Well, thanks. Uh, but yeah, I - I'm not so great at the - at the negotiating thing? Um.

GNIK: These people ever see a goblin before? They're all giving me looks.

THRONDIR: Uh, probably not. Probably not.

GNIK: Okay. Good to know.

THRONDIR: But you know! They live next to a, a woods full of all sorts of, uh... fantastic people who are probably not what they're used to, so. They'll get used to - it'll be fine.

GNIK: You've got a bright disposition, boy. It's a, it's a - (laughs) again, it's a good look, it's great. Real optimism. Living optimism. (pauses) Alright, let me introduce myself.

AUSTIN: He walks away from you and right up to Tieran Meloy.

GNIK: (rapidly) My name is - is Gnik, and let me tell you, I - I - I just, I'm here, I - I - with a bunch of uh, ideas about how you could make the city here better, it's a bunch of things, I'll walk through them one through ten.

AUSTIN: And he just goes off on this... ridiculous spiel.

DRE: (laughing) Press Goblin Powerpoint, just sets it up.

AUSTIN: Uh huh! And like, not once do you hear him talk about the dam. (pauses) This goes on for like, 40 minutes. And you know you have an hour to... to get this done. And he's just like,

GNIK: (rapidly) You know I came in here on the riverboat, and I - I started from the river and it's a funny thing, from the riverside, you can't - can't see the town at all, there are no signs, I think first thing you gotta do is put a sign up on the river, that way people who are coming downriver can see it on the sign. Second thing is you got a lot of ice on the river, you gotta rid of the - gotta get rid of that ice that way people can use the river. That's the second thing you gotta do. Third thing. Greasy Snifter - that's a bad name! That's the first place I saw when I got off the boat. (Art laughs) That's too bad for a name. Third thing, your shop's area, it's all cluttered and clumsy and there's a lot of stuff and it's all bad. You gotta make that look good, you gotta invest money. You gotta make money, spend money. Wait, got that reversed. Spend money to make money, that's what I always say. My name's Gnik, by the way. (breathing out) I'm from the north.

AUSTIN: And Tieran is just like - ohh, boy! (pauses) Uh, Hadrian say- you typed in the chat, oh, I have a plan!

ART: Yeah, it's kind of a - it's kind of a buzzer beater?

AUSTIN: Okay. (Ali laughs)

ART: It's not like - I guess my plan is, if this gets - if this gets fucked up, I'm just gonna heave the ball... from half court? (Janine laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) Okay?

ART: And then we're gonna win the game! It doesn't matter!

AUSTIN: (laughing) That's a good plan! I - here's a -

ART: I'm just gonna Steph Curry this!

AUSTIN: (laughing) You know Steph Curry - like that's not his *plan*. (Dre laughs) His plan is to be winning the game by like 30 points, and then, if he *has* to, he'll do the buzzer beater.

ART: (pauses) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like sometimes he does the buzzer beater for fun.

ART (overlapping): My plan was to be up 30 points by now.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: But it hasn't worked out like that.

AUSTIN: Well, at some point -

ART (overlapping): I'm down 2, and I'm - I feel like I'm facing a press!

AUSTIN: (laughing) Okay! Good! (pauses) Throndir, are you gonna help, uh, Gnik here, at all?

DRE: Uh - I mean... yeah, but I don't know how, because (laughs) Gnik has not really clued me in on his plan, and he seems to just be... just be rolling. I mean, it seems like his plan is to, you know, talk about everything but the contentious thing.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

DRE: To try and - to try and win some points. (pauses) Yeah, I don't know! I would like to help Gnik, but I'm not sure how. #01:35:00#

AUSTIN: He - there's a, definitely a point in, like, the Powerpoint-esque presen- he definitely has, like, an easel with some printed out slides and stuff that he's like - or the, it's just a - it's an easel with paper on it, like, parchment on it, and he just has a marker that he takes out and like, sketches stuff.

DRE: Perfect.

AUSTIN: He like sketches - he like, resketches the shape of the town. And he never stops talking while doing - he's just like, going a mile a minute. It's like the opposite of Bob Ross. It is the most stressful thing you've ever seen. (Dre laughs) And whenever he turns a page, he goes like,

GNIK: (rhythmically) Anndddd, anotherthing. (laughter)

AUSTIN: And he always looks at you and gives a little wink. And so he turns another page, and since he's gone through 9 or 10 things at this point, and he says,

GNIK: And *that's* what I think. But you gotta hear what my friend Throndir thinks about the place. Cause that guy - he knows what he's talking about!

THRONDIR: (pauses) Oh! Okay. Um. (pauses) Yeah, I think, uh, I think Gnik has a lot of great ideas. Um, and I think too, after... after spending some, some time around here, I think um... I think that, um, you all have a very unique little kind of ecosystem here, between Twinbrook and... and the surrounding areas, um. And I think that it would be best for everyone if we could somehow get this ecosystem to be... working together, in more...

DRE: And like, Throndir looks at Gnik, and goes,

THRONDIR: (uncertainly) synergy...?

AUSTIN: (laughs) Gnik, like, is shaking his head during like all of the like, ecosystem, and like, interesting area, and then you say 'synergy' and he's like, yes. (laughter) And he nods his head.

ALI: (quietly) God.

GNIK: That's exactly it. Listen. Uh, Tiernan, Tieran, I - we just met, I know, but - you got a lot of things around here you could be leveraging. You're not leveraging them enough! (pauses) One of those things... is the river. Right, Throndir?

THRONDIR: (with forced enthusiasm) Yes! Absolutely! (pauses)

AUSTIN: He's like -

THRONDIR (overlapping): We're talking about... untapped natural resources here that, that you are just sitting on top of.

GNIK: (pauses) You know, I hadn't thought about it that way. I was thinking about it as just a means of uh, of travel, but you're saying it's a resource! Tell us more about how it's a resource.

THRONDIR: (awkwardly) I mean it's all of these things, Gnik! Uh, I mean, it's definitely an excellent opportunity for travel, I mean, the river goes down into the ocean.

DRE: Yes? Right?

AUSTIN: He's drawn a - he's drawn a blue river -

DRE (overlapping): This is me out of character asking yes. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yes yes yes.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Uh huh, yeah.

THRONDIR: It goes down to the ocean, so I mean, you're looking at potentially a trade route from uh... you know, from people coming in through maybe a port downriver, and then travelling up the river.

GNIK: Ah! That's funny! You know who has a navy these days? Ordenna! That's a person who have - that's a place they have a navy! They could maybe use the river. I hadn't thought about that, Throndir, thank you for bringing that to attention! What's another way you could use the river, perhaps?

THRONDIR: Uh. Well. You know. The Ordennans seem to have some interesting technology, so maybe there's ways to get, uh... you know... some form of power, or something, from the river?

GNIK: That sounds like science fiction, but what do we know! It's the future! Things are changing every day!

AUSTIN: He looks up at Hadrian.

GNIK: Now, I'm not a religious man, but the thing I heard was, "The gifts that Samoths gave us should be worshipped and - and praised." Does it say anything about that in the books? (pauses, laughter) Of the Creed? Of Samoths?

JANINE: Elbow, elbow. (laughter)

HADRIAN: I mean... of course it does. (pauses)

GNIK: (pauses) ...What's it say? (laughter)

HADRIAN: I mean - we're supposed to tend... to the things on the Earth as Samoths tends to the things in the Heavens.

GNIK: (aside, exasperated) You gotta speed it up kid, you gotta - it's like a - you gotta have like a motta. Like three words at the most.

HADRIAN: (indignantly) I thought that was - that's really as brief as scripture gets! There's not a lot of pithy... sayings in there.

GNIK: You gotta get something like, uh - Throndir, talk - go draw something for her! I gotta talk to your boy.

THRONDIR: (anxiously) Okay! (laughter)

GNIK: Uh, okay, we can do it, we can workshop it real quick. Uh, (breathes out) uh, as in Heaven, so the written... doesn't do it, oh, boy, this is a toughie. This is a toughie. I should've gone to Sunday school. (sighs)

HADRIAN: I mean... we're supposed to - we're supposed to tend to the land, we're not supposed to...

GNIK: No, it's bad. That's bad. (pauses) Keep going, keep going, keep going.

HADRIAN: I mean - I think you'd be better - there's a lot about not... about not overstepping your, your place. I mean...

GNIK (overlapping): Okay! We could work with that.

HADRIAN: This is something that - that only - you know, this is something for an artificer to build. Not for a -

GNIK: (abruptly) Wait -

HADRIAN: for a layperson. (overlapped by Gnik) This - this whole construction could be seen as -

GNIK (overlapping): (loudly) Let no man stop the stream that Samoths put in place! That's what it says in the scripture!

AUSTIN: He turns around with a big gesture, like just opens his whole body up. #01:40:00#

GNIK: (confidently) And you know, these days, it doesn't matter if you don't agree with the scripture necessarily. You know, I'm a little guy, I don't know Samoths from Mamoths! But what I do know is, he's getting more *power* these days, and you gotta start knowing how to work the market so not to upset people. You see somebody come in here, they see the dam, they think ah, those guys, they's devils or heathens! Can't go shopping there! Less heathens, m- more - g- griev- hm. More... breathin's. You get to breathe more as long as you're not a heathen. (pauses)

HADRIAN: (quietly) That's not much of a -

GNIK (overlapping): So all that is to say, perhaps... I'll let Throndir do the big finale.

THRONDIR: (long pause) Uh.

DRE: (pauses, laughing) Oh, god! That's a lot of energy that you just handed off to me, Austin!

AUSTIN: You gotta dunk it!

JANINE: You have a dog, you have a dog!

AUSTIN: That's - you have a dog! Good point!

THRONDIR: Um, well, I think what Gnik is trying to say is, um, the best thing for yourself, for your people, um, for Samoths, is to... let the river flow free again.

GNIK: Let the river flow free again.

AUSTIN: And he opens up, again, his whole body, just like, hands completely outstretched. He's in a suit, by the way, and the suit is definitely too big for him. But it's good, cause it means he lost some weight rec- like it's just like, he's feeling good about himself, like it just - he needs to go shopping for a new suit, it's not just - it's not just he has a bad suit.

GNIK: So that's it! That's the pitch. All those other things too, but especially the dam.

AUSTIN: Give me a roll, Throndir.

DRE: Oh, god. What am I rolling?

AUSTIN: Mmhm! (Ali laughs) Definitely a Charisma of some sort.

DRE: Oh, Jesus. (laughs)

AUSTIN: I'm letting you -

ART (overlapping): Don't worry, I've still got the half court shot. Don't worry about this, this is...

JANINE: (nervously) Hm.

DRE: *Do* you?

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think that this is... probably just Defy Danger - Charisma again?

DRE: Oh, boy.

AUSTIN: I know what the danger is.

DRE: Here we go!

AUSTIN: That's a 6.

ALI: Mm...

DRE: I'm using a prep point to make it 7.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um... (pauses) she says, uh, Tiernan - who has like, a short-cropped, white haircut... like all, or her - her hair is, is like, stark white. And, uh... her, her - she has, like, a really nice, mauve suit on.

Austin (as Tieran): That was a hell of a presentation you boys made! Ah, you know, I think you might be right. You know what?

AUSTIN: Uh, does anybody remember what her - what her like, assistant's name was? I completely forget. This is bad, I should've written this guy down.

DRE: Ooh, I also don't remember.

AUSTIN: Well she has a new one, and his name is Jason, but spelled with a 'g.'

DRE: (laughs) Really into using 'g's today, huh?

ART: Wouldn't that be - wouldn't that - mm...

AUSTIN: Nope, it's Jason with a 'g'! A soft 'g.'

TIERAN: Gason! Write this down. Put this in the uh, the planner. Next week, we're gonna start thinking about getting rid of that dam. Look into the, the - make sure we do it right, and... perfect. You know, that'll be the first thing we do once we get the, the road to, uh... Rosemerrow fixed. Thank you so much for the presentation. You know, a lot of people have tried to convince me of this over the last couple of weeks, and (sighs) boy! It's - yeah. You're a little guy, like me, and that's, you know? I think someone had to come down to our level, so to speak. That's what I like about - about you goblins.

HADRIAN: (sighs) Okay.

TIERAN: Alright now. If you guys need any... bacon or whatever. Just go ahead. It's good.

ART (overlapping): I'm gonna I Am the Law this.

ALI: Wha-

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Yes!

ALI: No!

ART: I'm -

DRE: Mhm! (Ali laughs)

ART: I'm gonna give them an order based on my divine authority?

AUSTIN: (sighs) What's this look like? (Janine laughs)

ART: And there's only like a medium chance we end up in prison right now. (laughter)

ALI: (laughing, quietly) You got that partial success!

AUSTIN (overlapping): What do you say?

ART: (pauses) But, what - it's gonna take a week, we're - we're dead in a week!

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you got a success! She's gonna do it, just not gonna do it on your time scale.

ART: Yeah, that sucks!

AUSTIN: (laughs) Okay.

JANINE: You're not wrong.

ART: There's an army coming!

AUSTIN: Uh huh! (pauses) Well give me a, uh -

ART: We're not made of time right here.

AUSTIN: So what are you - give me a roll, and then tell me what you're saying. Or, or vice versa.

HADRIAN: I'm - I'm sorry. You must not have understood me. I'm, uh - I'm not cut out for politics. (bluntly) The scripture demands the dam come down. You don't have the authority to have built it in the first place. Samoths, Once and Future King of all of these lands,

AUSTIN: (softly) Oy.

HADRIAN: demands that all projects be approved by him personally. I need you to take it down, right now.

AUSTIN: Give me a roll.

ART: (quietly) Ah, fuck. (Dre laughs) Remember the roll really only affects my forward (laughs) but...

AUSTIN: That's an 8.

ART: It's an 8.

ALI: (relieved sigh)

ART: Which means, I think they have to do the - the three things, the... they have to attack me, flee, or do what I say.

AUSTIN: Mm.

ART: Back away cautiously, and then flee. #01:45:00#

AUSTIN: So I don't think they're going to attack you. That seems, like, dramatic. I think backing away here would mean something... else? I think backing away, like, would mean... like -

ART: I've been wondering what this move means in this... context. That's - I've been -

AUSTIN (overlapping): So I think -

ART (overlapping): I've been itching for a chance to use it socially. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Attack would mean - attack would, at this point, mean, I think, use her authority to get you arrested. (pauses) But I don't think this is a - this is a crime. Like, I think you - at most you would seem silly, if that's what she wanted to do. And that's not really... that's not really a, a jailable offense. Fleeing might mean... you know, I could see a reading where it's like, fleeing just means she goes to her office and just like, walks away from this situation. Um, but I think you have to read it a little - a little broader than that. Because that's not what it would mean in combat. Fleeing would mean that, you know. The thing that's useful about this in combat is - if you, or like about to be combat - you can make someone flee, which means you get their territory. So I think fleeing in this sense is actually pretty similar to giving in, which is... what she says... hm. I think I'm just gonna give it to you. I think she's gonna do what you say.

TIERAN: (reluctantly) Alright, well... I'll talk to - Gason, change it till... tonight, and we'll get (sighs) an overnight crew on the thing, and it should be... we'll get a little of the water going, first thing, and uh, it'll be a, a couple of days before it's really... up and running, but it's the safest we can do. We *can't* do it faster than that. You have to understand.

HADRIAN: I - I appreciate your support.

AUSTIN: Gnik says,

GNIK: What'd I tell ya? These religious types, they're everywhere these days. You gotta work with 'em, you can't work against 'em! Eh?

AUSTIN: And he gives you a little elbow at your knee, Hadrian. (laughter) He's not that small. Yeah, at your waist? Let's say your waist.

HADRIAN: Yeah, you're - you're right.

AUSTIN (overlapping): You did it! Okay! (pauses) As you're leaving, she says, like -

TIERAN: We can keep the bridge, of course? That's our lifeblood. Yes?

HADRIAN: Of course.

TIERAN: Of course.

AUSTIN: Alright. Hella.

ALI: Hi (laughs).

AUSTIN: What are you doing today?

ALI: Can I have a... Red Jack day?

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: No?

AUSTIN: Not today.

ALI: Oh, right, he left.

DRE: Oh, that's right.

AUSTIN: Remember? He's... yeah. Throndir's talk just kind of made him remember that he's a mortal being and will die one day.

DRE: No...!

ALI: (disappointed) Cool, great.

AUSTIN: And maybe someday soon.

ALI: Yeah.

DRE: Just wanted those Red Jack smooches. It all went so wrong.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It happens, though.

ALI: (quietly) This is why I'm the only one. (pauses, laughter) Uh.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're alone in town today! Is a thing.

ALI: God.

AUSTIN: You're the only person in your group that's here. And Red Jack is alone, and Rosette is gone. I guess you could - you could have a little one-on-one with the one who was undead, and now is not undead.

JANINE: Frond?

AUSTIN: Frond, yeah. Frond the friend. Friend Frond.

JANINE: Or you could hang out with those shitty children. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Yep!

DRE: Oh, god, yes!

ALI: Lord. (laughter)

AUSTIN: You could totally do that. That's do- you could totally do that!

ALI: I just want to talk a moment... to (laughs) let everyone know that Hella is the only one in this town right now. I just wanna - (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah! (Dre laughs)

ALI: I just wanna like (laughing) kind of put on screen how furious she is. (Janine laughs) Otherwise... god. It's tough, because I keep wanting to say, like, where would she be the most useful? But like...

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Oh, god.

AUSTIN: But that's not who she is today, right?

ALI: (laughing) No, she's so mad. Mm. Um.

AUSTIN: You don't have to do one of these things, necessarily.

ALI: (sighs)

AUSTIN: But you could. You totally can. How about this - give me a picture of where she is. She wakes up. (Ali laughs) Everyone's gone. What is she doing, in the morning?

ALI: Mm...

AUSTIN: It's her first 45 minutes of being awake.

ALI: I don't know, she goes about her day, like she probably starts, like training. Um, takes her sword out and like, practices some moves, like by that tent that they have.

AUSTIN: Like six or seven moths who... yesterday swore off training, after watching one of their friends get crushed by snow, watch you cautiously as you go through your, like, training regimen, and eventually stand up and begin like mirror- trying to mirror your moves. Near you. Not too close to you, but like.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: There's probably like, yeah, seven of them.

ALI: (indecisive sigh)

AUSTIN: And they're using, like, farming implements, right, (Ali laughs) they're using like - like, the stick that goes onto a rake and they - to remove the rake end, and are using it like it's a sword. (Ali laughs) And they're not good at this.

ALI: (laughing) I think - I think she catches one of them, like, really fucking up, out of the corner of her eye, and like... whistles, and like, waves for them to come closer. #01:50:00#

AUSTIN: Ah. Um... he like, skitters over to you.

AUSTIN (as Moth): Skrr skrr.

ALI: (laughs) Oh right, I can't. No one's -

AUSTIN: You can't speak their - yeah, you don't know their language at all.

ALI: (mumbling) And no one's here, so I can't even - oh, Jesus Christ.

MOTH: Skrr skrrr skrr - skrr (hisses)!

ALI: Um -

AUSTIN: And like, does a swing next to you, and like, really proud, and they're just *terrible* at it! They're just... not good at all, like their wrists are really - are really limp. And so it's like they're swinging with - everything is in their forearms, somehow. And it's like, is that just cause they're moths (laughs) and that's how they swing? Or do they not know how to swing a weapon?

ALI: (sighs, laughs) She can't communicate at all, so I think she like, kind of... like, I think she tries to watch, and like, tries to pinpoint what they're doing wrong, and like, accentuates it in her own arm, if that makes sense?

AUSTIN: Like, to like - yeah, yeah, totally. Like, so you're trying to... like, corre- overcorrect for them.

ALI: Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. (pauses) And you do that, and I think more of them join up. And soon, you know, maybe totally unintentionally, you're training these - these moths. And it is like, it's like, do as I - do as I do, it's like monkey see monkey do, to get them to do it right.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: (pauses) What, um... I think this is probably... I think you're - that you're leading by example. I think this is just Strength.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like it's just, you're doing attacks, basically.

ALI: (laughs) I feel like you're throwing me a bone, but I'll take it.

AUSTIN: Take - listen. Even with your ridiculous Strength, you still only got a 10, somehow. (Dre laughs) So. Fucking, listen.

ALI: (sighs) God. She's really not into it, (laughs) so.

AUSTIN (overlapping): But it takes you up to - from 46 to 48. That's pretty good. That's pretty good. (pauses) You'll understand what all these numbers mean, (laughs)

ALI: Mhm!

AUSTIN: once bad things happen.

JANINE: (groans)

AUSTIN: So, also, Hadrian and Thrandir, like, as you leave, you see the Ordennans begin to arrive. It is like... I like, imagine you step out of the Regency to the porch out front, and you have just enough height to be able to see, like, the row of - of the Anchor. And they just go, for miles and miles and miles. (pauses) Marching, like, four to a row. And there are a number of horses, with kind of seated Ordennans mixed in with them. And I was asking - do you just sneak out of Twinbrook?

DRE: Um, I mean, we already used our turn to do something, so like, I couldn't be like... I also want to sneak off to get those explosives.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Oh, so you *do* want to do that, still. (Ali laughs)

DRE: I mean, you know. Half court shots, and all that, right? (Austin laughs)

ALI: I - (pauses, laughter)

DRE: I mean, may- not even for this bridge, but if we're fighting, like, literally miles of... automatons,

AUSTIN: Mmhm?

DRE: some explosives might not be a bad thing.

AUSTIN: Sure. Um... so there -

JANINE: Uhhh. (laughs nervously)

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Is this a thing you're telling Hadrian, or you just - you just, like, "I gotta deal with some shit. I'll meet you back in town." (laughter)

DRE: Uh... (laughs) yeah, probably more the latter, than the former.

AUSTIN: Oh, boy.

ART: Ah, remember when I didn't take senses that pierced lies?

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

ART: Y'all are lucky. (laughter)

AUSTIN: I mean, so are you - you're lying to Hadrian about this?

DRE: (pauses, sighs)

AUSTIN: What are you saying? Like, give - make the scene happen. Give me the scene.

DRE: No, god, no. Throndir wouldn't lie to Hadrian. It's not to that point, between them, yet.

AUSTIN: Yeah. (Ali laughs) Yet.

DRE: Yet. Um, I don't know.

ALI (overlapping): (quietly) Ah, really fun game.

DRE: I mean, I think at least on this - at this, they seem to be enough in like, moral alignment here. For different reasons, but like, still pointed towards the same thing right now. I think Throndir says...

THRONDIR: Adaire and I were talking, and I think we know where we could... you know, maybe find something that would help level the playing field if it - if it comes to conflict. If it comes down to open conflict.

ART: Um... Hadrian gives like a, like a look. Like, uh... like that look your parents give you, when, like, you're about to start giving them some bullshit. (Austin laughs) That look.

THRONDIR: I mean, I don't know, how many - do you *want* the details? I thought maybe you wouldn't want the details. It would be one of those things where, you know, the less you - the less you know, the better you are, but. (Austin laughs)

HADRIAN: No, I don't want - I don't want to not know, I want you to not do it. That's not how morality works. (Austin laughs)

THRONDIR: (pauses) Hadrian, it's a -

JANINE (overlapping): Speak for yourself.

THRONDIR: It's an army versus a village of untrained... moth people. #01:55:00#

HADRIAN: (sighs)

ART: I wish I was better at coming up with Bible stories quickly. (laughter)

DRE: I mean, there's the one with the - with the really big - with the really big guy, and the smaller guy. That could be a...

ART: I can't use ones from our Bible! I need to come up with new and original Bible stories. (Dre laughs) Things that would survive for - for millenia.

[MUSIC FADES IN: INSIDE]

HADRIAN: We're outnumbered, but the Ordennans are wrong. And people fighting against injustice have power that dwarfs... any, in the mundane world.

THRONDIR: I mean, we're not blowing anything up. (Hadrian sighs) I want to believe you, and I've seen - I mean, we were in Samot's tower, and you overcame incredible odds, but...

AUSTIN: (laughing) Sure did!

THRONDIR: But I mean, I've also seen us lose, and see you get stripped of your armor and thrown in jail! And I - I, I don't want to be responsible for that happening again if there was something I could do to stop it from happening.

HADRIAN: Hardships are a part of life. We all... we all see many sunsets. We have to know that it's gonna rise again.

THRONDIR: That's a uh... kind of an ominous thing to say when the sun's gone, Hadrian. (laughs)

HADRIAN: I think it means more now than ever. The sun will rise again. We will all endure. Tyranny and wickedness will be driven from the world. These are the things I believe more than anything else.

[MUSIC CONTINUES, THEN FADES OUT]

ALI: Hey everyone, here's just like a post-credits announcement. I just wanted to give everyone a heads up that next week is gonna be another Forest Party episode. I guess uh, you know, a behind-the-scenes post-credit factoid is... you can come up with whatever names you want to, but internally they're being called Forest Party and Mountain Party right now, thus the, like, twitter emoji, if anyone caught on (laughs). Things got a little uneven as we were building up to the big, special thing that's gonna happen after this, so... just a heads up there. Just so nobody, you know, presses play next week and thinks we made a mistake, or, you know, (laughs) really want to hear what's going on with Lem, and Fero, and Ephraim, and Fantasma. You're gonna find out! But it's gonna be two weeks from now, so. We just gotta finish up this whole... *situation* first, because it became sort of a situation. Um... and, yeah! That's it! See you next week, thanks for listening, and have a goodnight! Or day, or whenever you're listening to this.

[END OF EPISODE #01:58:35#]