

### Autumn in Hieron 13: What A Surprise

Transcribed by:

Ilias (0:00:00-0:19:26) - Cole (0:19:26-finish)

NICK (as Narrator): Previously, on Friends at the Table:

[Jack de Quidt's "[Autumn Not Winter](#)" plays in the background]

Keith (as FER0): So, there were these big, giant, glowing towers, and there was- there was- Brandish was there, and his ship was there, and they were- all the undead, and they were hangin' out, and they were partying. And there were people there, and they were living, and they were hanging out with each other-

AUSTIN: The second your foot hits the ground, your blade comes alive. There's chanting, a choir of voices,

Austin (as SWORD VOICES): Tristero, Tristero, Tristero.

AUSTIN: *[reading from the Nacre broadsheet]* 'Lord Tristan the Ninth, the Ivory Crown, locked away in the Black Tower.'

*[Hieron theme plays and fades out]*

AUSTIN: What d'you-

KEITH: Hey!

AUSTIN: What d'you do? What's everyone doing? At this point, let's say everyone's kind of found each other again.

JACK: Um, wait, am I still by Emmanuel?

AUSTIN: Also... Oh, right, I forgot that Emmanuel was there. I forgot *your* thing. Also, you'll see that I've changed the name of this thing from 'The Black Tower' to 'The Sable Spire,' which is what I have written down here later in my notes, cause I decided the Black Tower was too... too boring.

JACK: Have you been playing Shadow of Mordor, Austin? *[amused]* Is that what-

AUSTIN: I've been playing a *lot*- I've played a Lot of Shadow of Mordor. And by now, if you're listening to this, you've probably already read [my piece](#) on pastemagazine.com/games about Shadow of Mordor.

JACK: And if you haven't- if that hasn't come out, we've just broken an embargo. Or...

AUSTIN: Or, like, and I've lost my mind. This is the other thing, if it's not- if that isn't out by the time you're hearing this? I have...

KEITH: Yeah, this will be posted for three years; we have a hundred weeks of backlog.

AUSTIN: I will...*[Ali laughs]*

JACK: We're recording this in September the 7th, 1999, and, uh...

*[All laughing]*

AUSTIN: I'm really looking forward to the Playstation II. Um. *[all laugh more]*

ALI: It'll be great!

AUSTIN: I don't actually know if that works. I'm not... I don't remember... dates...

JACK: I'm about to blow your mind: So, there's this thing called the Nemesis system, right?  
*[Austin laughs]*

KEITH: Um, I think that- Austin, if I remember, the Playstation II came out mere weeks after September 1999.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's like six- it's like six months. It released on March 4th, 2000, so perfect. I'm so hyped for the PS2.

KEITH: You're so- ugh, we couldn't be more excited, and guess what?! My dad is about to get me a Playstation I type of thing.

*[all laughing]*

AUSTIN: Oh, aww, buddy. Alright. So-.

JACK: Okay, so... can I just-?

AUSTIN: So, Emmanuel, yeah. Let's zoom in on- let's zip back over then to Lem King and Emmanuel.

JACK: Like, just as a- as a tiny tiny piece of detail, I've just been pocketing things that nobody would miss, like-

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: -bits of masonry that have come off the walls, or-

AUSTIN: Yep. Mhm.

JACK: Like a metal washer that's on the street or something. Like, you know, tiny, tiny stupid things. Um. Has Emmanuel noticed me?

AUSTIN: Mm hm.

JACK: He has?

AUSTIN: He gasps when he sees you.

KEITH: Aw, god, this is-

ALI: Oh no.

KEITH: -potentially the worst thing.

ALI: No, this is bad. This is probably going to be bad.

KEITH: Oh god.

AUSTIN: His hand- his hand drops to his side towards his dagger. He isn't like, in full pirate combat gear, but like, he has a dagger on him.

JACK: Where are my buds?

AUSTIN: Um...

ALI: Kinda far away...

AUSTIN: Fero is off watching a ceremony for a ghost who's decided to stop being alive, and Hella is dealing with, uh, a post-post-apocalyptic fantasy newspaper boy.

JACK: So... I'm separated from my buds.

AUSTIN: You're separated from your buds.

JACK: Okay. Right. Um, I'm just looking at the moves sheet here. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: He goes-

KEITH: I just- Where-?

AUSTIN: Just tell me what you do. He says,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): You.

AUSTIN: And is like, fiddling with his dagger, as if to draw.

KEITH: I- I'd just like to just say, like, we're not on a pirate ship; we're in a *city*.

AUSTIN: That's true.

KEITH: Like, this is *bad*.

JACK: Um, we're in a pirate- well, we're in- No. *[in Lem's voice]* 'We're in the greatest city I have ever encountered in my life.' We are.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Yeah, Lem can get out of this one. You can do this.

JACK: Um, I don't know, Hella. Let's just check...

ALI: You can probably talk him down.

AUSTIN: What do you do? What do you do?

JACK: Um, my immediate reaction is I want to make a Defy Danger roll for charisma, and I want to like- This comes from- I want to look him in the eye, and I want to make it clear that I'm not reaching for my sword. And I want to put my finger up to my lips. Like- like, if we had facecam on I'd be able to do this, but I'm like,

Jack (as LEM): Alright mate. Like, shh.

JACK: I'm essentially trying to bank on the fact that before it got screwed up when Brandish climbed up on the boat, he and I were having a bit of a moment- Or at least Lem thought that he and I were having a bit of a moment.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

JACK: So, I'm gonna roll Defy Danger here. *[laughing]*

ALI: Oh god.

AUSTIN: Go for it.

JACK: Which is 2d6 plus charisma, right?

AUSTIN: Minus one because of your scarred status.

KEITH: Like, I just want to say that- Oh god, this is so- Dungeon World has really good mechanics for rerolling a character after you've died-

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

KEITH: But that doesn't work if all three of us die at the same time.

*[all laughing]*

JACK: *[groans]* Oh god. Okay, right. So, I just click- can I just click the little button here, or will it not take that?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it should work- It should be- No, no, no, it should totally work.

JACK: Oh, I'm so scared. Okay, here we go. Oh! Oh. Okay.

KEITH: Minus one is seven, so we're still good.

AUSTIN: You're still good. No, it-

JACK: No, no. It- it counted-

AUSTIN: Yeah, it did. It did.

JACK: Yeah. That's a- Eight is, uh... What's an eight on Defy Danger?

AUSTIN: Okay, um... 'On a seven to nine, you stumble, hesitate, or flinch. The GM will offer you a worse outcome-'

JACK: Fuck! *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: '-hard bargain, or ugly choice.' It's still a success.

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I just have to decide in what way I complicate things for you. Um. Hmm.

KEITH: Oh, wait. Okay, so this is- this is a worse partial success than I thought it was going to be.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Does, does Lem know that... I don't know he was a pastry chef, right?

AUSTIN: No. You've *no* idea. Uh, okay. Let's see.

JACK: 'Cause I have a feeling that would really appeal to Lem. Like, if only Lem knew that.

AUSTIN: He- he moves his hand off the dagger, but then he reaches out to grab you. And he's like,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): *[angry]* Come with me.

ALI: *[intrigued]* Oh...

Jack (as LEM): *[pauses; surprised]* Okay.

KEITH: Whirlwind romance. *[Ali laughs]*

JACK: Right, um... I don't- uh- Can I make eye contact with my buds?

AUSTIN: Uh, no. You guys are split at this point.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Maybe Hella can see you, but I- I think at this point, Fero is deep in this- in this moment because it's so weird and strange.

ALI: I'm also like, reading.

JACK: *[overlapped]* Oh. Well, in that case-

ALI: Not that I don't want to help you, but...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JACK: In that case... I'm just gonna.. go. *[laughs nervously]*

AUSTIN: Okay. He-

JACK: Um, well, partly as well- Sorry. Just from like, Lem's thinking here as well.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: He's essentially been reduced to being a kid here, so-

AUSTIN: Right, right.

JACK: -a lot of this is just like, he's- you know, he's a bit scared, but he considered that a success. Like, he's not being killed, and also he's in the- he's in... It would be like an actual real-world Harry Potter fan discovering Hogwarts. He's in Hogwarts. *[Ali and Jack laugh]*

AUSTIN: Mhm. Mhm... That is... that is true.

JACK: So, I think he's probably like, buoyed up by a lot of this stuff.

AUSTIN: Um, he- so he drags you quickly through the streets by the wrist to a little alleyway just off this marketplace. I'm gonna put it like- that's the wrong thing. Uh... like, there-ish? Do you see that spot I just marked?

JACK: Uh, it's loading it.

AUSTIN: To the south-east a little bit?

JACK: Yes, mhm.

AUSTIN: Like, there. Um... and once there he pushes you up against the wall,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): What are you doing here?

AUSTIN: Actually, is that his voice? One second, let me...

JACK: I don't know. I think he's French.

AUSTIN: *[tries a different]* 'What are you doing-' I think he is, too, but I don't want to do... uh... *[trying his best to do a French accent]* Can I do... 'What are you-' *[frustrated]* Mmm. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: I don't think I can do- I don't-

KEITH: How 'bout this? He speaks in a French accent. Austin speak normally.

AUSTIN: One second. I'm muted. One second.

JACK: He's practicing his Jeff Goldblum. *[Keith laughs]*

AUSTIN: Ahh. *[another different voice]* 'What are you doing?' See I- *[shouting]* My Goldblum always falls into a Shatner! God damn it! The gravity of a Shatner!

KEITH: The gravity- it's like a black hole, and it sucks you in. *[overlapped]* You can't- There's-

AUSTIN: 'The Gravity of a Shatner' is my favorite Idle Thumbs episode.

KEITH: Is that a real thing? Aw, you didn't just make that up?

AUSTIN: No, I did, but it sounds like a thing.

KEITH: Oh, okay. Oh okay. So, okay. I'm still proud of you.

AUSTIN: Good. Yeah, I'm just gonna talk normally. I think. I think? Yeah.

KEITH: But we all know. We know that he speaks in a French accent.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): What are you doing here?

AUSTIN: In fact, I think all of these people here probably speak in a French accent.

KEITH: That's fair.

AUSTIN: Great.

JACK: Have we found- have we found space France? I mean fantasy France?

AUSTIN: It's similar, certainly.

JACK: *[laughing]* Okay.

AUSTIN: Anyway, you're up against the wall. He's- he's about as strong as you. You know. You're basically equally matched.

JACK: Well, yeah, that fight went on forever.

AUSTIN: Which is to say- And, like, you're basically- Neither of you are combatants first, but can hold your own, you know?

JACK: Yes. He's a pastry chef; I'm a librarian.

AUSTIN: Yeah, right.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): What are you doing here?

JACK: *[pauses and laughs]* Um, is there-? I don't know how this kind of works with out-of-character. Can I like, phone a friend here and talk to the other-?

AUSTIN: No. No.

JACK: I have to make this decision-

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: -entirely on my own?

AUSTIN: Absolutely. Yeah.

JACK: Okay. Um...

Jack (as LEM): We followed the Kingdom Come. Um...

AUSTIN: He slaps you on the side of the head. *[Jack laugh]*

KEITH: *[amused]* Oh man! Emmanuell!

Austin (as EMMANUEL): You're- you are idiots. You need to leave immediately. You *cannot* be here.

Jack (as LEM): Why not?

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Why not?! *[sighs]* You were with, uh- You were with the captain. You will be locked up just like him! I- Mm. I should go... I should go tell someone about you being here. I don't even know why- Hmmm.

AUSTIN: He's like, very clearly 'internal struggle mode' right now.

Jack (as LEM): Uh, uh... No, you- you, uh...

JACK: Oh, wait! Hold on. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: This game is so cool because you just go off on these little inlets of narrative as a player and as a GM, and then suddenly you're like, 'Oh, wait, there's a mechanical thing here.'

AUSTIN: Yes, there is.

JACK: Or there's the possibility for a mechanical thing.

AUSTIN: There is.

JACK: And that's so cool. Um. I have-

AUSTIN: Keep talking for now. I know what you want to do, but, like-

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Give it a little bit- give it a few more moments here before you-

JACK: Yeah. Well, I don't want him to run off, mate. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: No, yeah. That's fine, but respond to him.

Jack (as LEM): Um, no. We are- we are here. We are gonna be very, very careful. You don't need to tell anyone about us. We're not gonna harm you. We're not going to put you in any danger. Um, please let us have this. Please let us- please let us- *[Jack laughs lightly]* Please let us take this opportunity.

JACK: And I think that Lem here is- To an extent, he is trying very hard to say, 'we're here to rescue Calhoun,' but really what he's probably thinking is 'I'm in this city! Like, look where I am! Don't take this away from me!'

AUSTIN: Yeah, I don't think- I don't think 'we're here to rescue Calhoun' comes across at all in what you just said.

JACK: Yeah, no. And uh... I'm-

AUSTIN: Okay. Which is fine, but-

JACK: I don't want to tell him that we're here to rescue Calkou- Calhoun because fundamentally-

AUSTIN: *[lightly laughs]* Calkoun.

KEITH: Cancun- we're here to rescue Captain Cancun.

JACK: *[laughing]* We're here to visit Cancun.

AUSTIN: *[laughing]* Spring Break!!

JACK: *[laughing]* Party boat! *[more seriously]* He is fundamentally a member of Brandish's crew. Like, just because I rolled a success here, I don't want to tell him that. Um... Okay, so,

Jack (as LEM): Do you know where the New Archives are? Do you know what they are?

AUSTIN: He shakes his head,

Jack (as LEM): Okay, right. So.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Ar- No.

Jack (as LEM): I come from a place far up in the North-

JACK: Wait. Yeah, like the north-

AUSTIN: North-East of here.

Jack (as LEM): North-East of here. Um, and it's a- it's a community where we catalogue things. We find things out. We are explorers, and we're travellers, and we're librarians, and we're- we're archivists. And all of our old stories have told us that this place doesn't exist. It is dead; it's gone. Um-

Austin (as EMMANUEL): It is.

AUSTIN: -he says.

Jack (as LEM): *[laughing]* But we couldn't find it. It- We had no contact with it.  
*[spluttering]*

Austin (as EMMANUEL): And you *won't*.

AUSTIN: -he cuts you off.

ALI: I love Emmanuel.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): There is no taking this- You *cannot!* You shouldn't- You have a moment. You can either leave, or you can stay forever. Make your choice... quickly.

Jack (as LEM): *[pause]* I'm gonna stay.

AUSTIN: He laughs.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Oi.

AUSTIN: And he curses I think, probably. Some curses that, again, you've heard some bastardized versions of- the sort of like, 'this fucking guy' type of thing, right? Like-

JACK: Yeah, you know, like, four hundred years ago when people said 'this fucking guy.' That's what Emmanuel says.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but in a- at the time, it was like, you know, whatever. It was some other version of that. I don't know any other curse words.

JACK: Christ's Bones.

AUSTIN: Right. Christ's- Exactly. Exactly. He probably actually says- Actually, yeah. He says,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Uh, Tristero.

JACK: *[exhales an amused]* Oh god.

AUSTIN: That's what he says.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: What're you attempting to- What move were you attempting to do there?

JACK: I think I was trying-

AUSTIN: Were you trying to do... Speak Frankly, or-?

JACK: Speak Frankly.

AUSTIN: Or were you doing Parley?

JACK: I think I was doing Speak Frankly.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: But I've kind of said what I wanted to say anyway.

AUSTIN: That's fine, but remember Speak Frankly gives *you* access to stuff, so-

JACK: Oh, wait, it does? Oh, yeah. It super does, doesn't it?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Charming and Open. Yeah.

JACK: I think I've bought myself a moment, at least a short moment here.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I think that you've- In other- I think that you've hit the required act of speaking frankly with someone, so now you can ask a question from the list below.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: They must answer truthfully, um, and then they may ask you a question from the list which you must answer truthfully.

JACK: Okay. Um...

KEITH: Ahh! Ahh! Ahh! *[noise in the background]*

ALI: Ooh??

JACK: Keith just got waylaid by a kraken, ah...

KEITH: Aah-!

JACK: You okay, Keith?

KEITH: I'm okay. It's okay.

AUSTIN: Mhm?

ALI: Are you playing-?

KEITH: I was leanin' back in my chair, and I was playing with my phone in my hands, raising it above my head and twirling it around, and I dropped it on my head.

AUSTIN: Good job! Good work.

KEITH: Thanks.

ALI: Put your phone down, maybe.

KEITH: Well, it's down now. *[Ali laughs]*

JACK: Um... just- I kind of don't want to get into the semantics of it, Austin, but if I ask 'whom do you serve?'

AUSTIN: Mhm?

JACK: Like...

AUSTIN: You can ask that.

JACK: Yeah, but I- ah- he's just gonna say Brandish, right? 'Cause he's-?

AUSTIN: I don't know.

JACK: Well, he's a member of Brandish's-

AUSTIN: I don't know! I know what he'll say. I know what he'll say. You don't know.

JACK: Okay. I'm gonna- Right. Oh, I've just- This cable here that I didn't know- Oh my god! I've got a desk lamp! *[laughs]* *[Keith laughs]*

ALI: *[laughing]* God

AUSTIN: What- happened?

ALI: You just discovered you have a lamp?

KEITH: Jack just realised that he had a desk lamp.

AUSTIN: Oh my god.

JACK: It was hidden underneath a shelf, so I didn't realize it was here. Ahh...

AUSTIN: Is it a time.is desk lamp that you didn't realize was real until just now?

JACK: I'm gonna turn it on. Oh, god it- No.

ALI: Oh, baby boy...

JACK: It's- it's fluorescent. It's fluorescent. No, it's really hot.

AUSTIN: Ugh, that's no good. Yeah.

JACK: Ugh. Okay.

Jack (as LEM): Question number one, Emm-

JACK: Do I know his name?

AUSTIN: No, I don't think you do. I don't think you ever actually exchanged names. You can just do that. That's not one of these questions. You know, one of these isn't like-

JACK: Yeah, no. What was the tone when he swore at me?

AUSTIN: It was res- It was, again, like 'what am I gonna do with this guy?' It was like, 'Ahh, what situation am I- Why have you given me this burden, god?' is basically what it was.

JACK: *[laughing]* 'This fucking guy,' yeah. I'm gonna offer him my hand and say,

Jack (as LEM): I'm Lem King. Um-

Austin (as EMMANUEL): *[sighing]* Emmanuel.

AUSTIN: He shakes your hand.

Jack (as LEM): Alright, okay. Who do you serve?

*[pause] [Keith laughs]*

AUSTIN: How do you phrase that, exactly? Like, I'm gonna count it as 'who do you serve,' but I do want to know what your phrasing is there.

JACK: Yeah, like, um... Like,

Jack (as LEM): Who are you working for, Emmanuel? No, like, who's your boss? Um-

AUSTIN: He sighs and says,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Well, if you're gonna be here- if you're gonna stay, you should know. Ah. I- Obviously I- uh, I go out with Captain Brandish. And I directly, of course, work under Ginny, his- his first mate, but all of us here, we are- You have entered the kingdom.

AUSTIN: -he says. Er, actually, he doesn't say kingdom. He says... hmm. How does *he* see this? He says,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): You are now a citizen of- of Nacre, the Empire of Pearls, and you and I both serve Empress Adelaide Tristé IV, the Queen of Death.

AUSTIN: He asks you-

JACK: Oh, um...

AUSTIN: Hmm... Hm. He asks you- These are good questions. These are good questions I can choose from.

JACK: Oh, you get different questions to me? Or do you get the same ones? *[overlapped]* Oh, they're similar.

AUSTIN: No, no. 'They must answer it truthfully, and then they may ask you a question from the list which *you* must answer truthfully.' Hmm... it's one of these two.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): What are you really feeling right now?

JACK: Uh, and I have to answer him honestly?

AUSTIN: Yes.

Jack (as LEM): I'm really excited.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): What are you *really*-?

Jack (as LEM): I'm *really, really* excited.

AUSTIN: He shakes his head again.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Tristero, Tristero, Tristero.

JACK: I don't know if, like- Because as well, for this guy- Because he doesn't know what the Archives are...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I don't know whether or not for him, cultural archives- I guess even within the world, people who know who the archives are- who the archivists are, know that they have this kind of obsessive-

AUSTIN: Right.

[0:19:26]

JACK: -encyclopedia- Love for encyclopedia. So, I feel for this guy, but at the same time, I did have to answer truthfully.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: But like, you know like, Kingdom of Pearls, Queen of the Dead and everything. That is really exciting to Lem.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Okay. Question two.

AUSTIN: There aren't- This isn't- this is one- That was one question.

JACK: Oh, I get to ask one question. Oh-

AUSTIN: You ask one-

JACK: I was thinking of um...

AUSTIN: You ask the player *a* question from the list. Yes.

JACK: Oh, sorry. I was thinking of-

AUSTIN: You were thinking of Discerning-

JACK: Discern Realities.

AUSTIN: Discerning Realities. Yeah. Yeah.

JACK: Yeah. Alright. That's fine. Cool. Let's come back to me. *[overlapping with Austin]* Let's cut back to-

AUSTIN: Let's cut back while this is happening to Hella and Fero, who at this point, I think, have been able to reunite. Lem is gone.

Keith (as FERO): Have you seen Lem? *[laughing]* Hey, um, you seen Lem?

Ali (as HELLA): Nope.

Keith (as FERO): That's- that's fucked, right? *[Austin and Ali laugh]* Do you wanna like, look for him? Or-?

JACK: This was inevitable. *[laughs]*

Ali (as HELLA): Well, I'm gonna tell you about what I just read.

Keith (as FERO): Oh- oh yeah! Okay, sure. Yeah.

Ali (as HELLA): Yeah. Um so, Calhoun is here, and he's in chains. But, he might be a prince or something. I didn't really understand the newspaper.

Keith (as FERO): Oh, that's fucked up. I saw- I met this guy who decided to stop being a ghost.

Ali (as HELLA): That's weird.

Keith (as FERO): It is weird.

Ali (as HELLA): I don't wanna hear about that.

Keith (as FERO): It was cute. It was cute.

Ali (as HELLA): We should find out-

Keith (as FERO): No, no, no. it's not- You don't wanna-?

Ali (as HELLA): I don't think it's cute. Let's just- let's move on.

Keith (as FERO): We can talk to his like- it looked- I think probably his like, grandson or something was over there. Do you wanna talk to him?

Ali (as HELLA): No.

Keith (as FERO): Oh.

Ali (as HELLA): Why would I want to talk to him?

Keith (as FERO): I don't know. It seemed like they were having a moment.

Ali (as HELLA): Let's just find Lem.

Keith (as FERO): Okay, let's find Lem.

AUSTIN: Uh, you see- Are you undertaking a search? Where are you going? *[everyone laughs]*

KEITH: Oh, we're just kind of lookin' around.

ALI: Yeah, the way that you like-

KEITH: But like, sticking together.

ALI: If you're like, at a store- like, a department store, and you think that you don't have the money on the-

KEITH: Yeah. You know how-

AUSTIN: But this is- this is like- Right. No. This is like, 'You're in a department store in a *city*.' And-

ALI: Right.

KEITH: Yeah, so like, we're peering over the clothes.

AUSTIN: Right. *[laughs]* So... And then your- But your friend went downtown. Like- *[everyone laughs]* You understand what I'm saying?

KEITH: Okay.

ALI: Is he that far away?

KEITH: Do you... Okay, so-

AUSTIN: He's like, a couple of city blocks away. You know?

ALI: Oh, dang.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

Keith (as FERO): Well, hey, do you maybe want to figure out- Like, maybe we could go listen in on some shit. You wanna listen in on some shit?

Ali (as HELLA): Yeah. That sounds not that bad, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fair.

KEITH: Do we- can we- Okay. Can I- can I tell who looks sort of like the most important people nearby?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. There are definitely some people in the markets area- in the gardens who are like, dressed a little nicer. There are some people who are wearing... a kind of...

KEITH: I wanna- I'm looking for someone who's having like, a really, really boisterous conversation about current events. *[Jack laughs]*

AUSTIN: Okay. There's a debate.

ALI: *[overlapped]* No. Well, no-

AUSTIN: That's what's happening.

KEITH: Okay. That's what I'm looking for.

AUSTIN: There are... Yeah, there are- there is a debate between somebody who kind of looks like they are... you know, vaguely of like, a merchant class. Do you know what I mean? But like, if like a higher up. Someone who- *[overlapped]* kind of- You've seen them-

KEITH: *[overlapping]* Okay. Yeah, we're talking- we're talking like, merchant class when merchant classes started being a thing.

AUSTIN: Right. Exactly.

KEITH: Alright.

AUSTIN: And you've kind of seen them moving through this space earlier. Like, overseeing it a little bit and checking in on the different stands. And like,

Austin (as RANDOM MERCHANT): Oh, how's business been?

AUSTIN: You know,

Austin (as RANDOM MERCHANT): What- what are you selling today?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Like,

Austin (as RANDOM MERCHANT): How- You gettin' any-?

KEITH: Oh, what a fucking shithead.

AUSTIN: Yeah. But I mean- No, like- *[Keith laughs]* He's like a real- he's a real Lem. You know?  
Like- *[laughs]*

KEITH: Oh, he's a Lem. Okay.

AUSTIN: He's a real Lem.

ALI: Alright.

KEITH: He's a Lem. Not like a sunglasses indoors kinda guy.

AUSTIN: No. Yeah, he's not a sunglasses indoors guy.

KEITH: That's what I was-

AUSTIN: He's like a real... He's like- like, he's doing this cause he spent a long time-

KEITH: He likes stuff.

AUSTIN: He spent a long time selling stuff in these stands. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah, he likes looking at stuff.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: And like-

KEITH: And having stuff.

AUSTIN: And engaging with the owners of these places. You think that he has some sort of supervisory role over the whole market.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah. Right.

AUSTIN: He-

KEITH: Oh, when I say he likes stuff in a- I don't mean like, in a materialistic way.

AUSTIN: Right. Yes.

KEITH: I mean like, he's interested- he's curious about things.

AUSTIN: He's talking to a man in a kind of shimmering white platemail armor.

KEITH: Okay. Is this the shithead? *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Neither of them are really shitheads, I don't think.

KEITH: *[amused]* Okay. Okay.

AUSTIN: I think both of them are... Um, both of them are... They're old fr- You get the opinion that they're like, old fr- they're like... You remember- Do you remember the old days in America where like, Democrats and Republicans were friends? ...still?

KEITH: Do I remember? No.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Were you not alive at that point? Okay. So, there was a time-

KEITH: I don't think I was.

AUSTIN: -in America... *[laughs]* There was a time in America where it was like, fairly common to have good friends who didn't have your political views.

KEITH: Mhm. *[attempting to interject]* My-

AUSTIN: Because, you know, there was a general, de-politicization of the everyday life, which was actually detrimental to engaging in debate and in trying to improve the general political situation. Which is to say that people generally just like, pretended like these things didn't matter to them because most of them were pretty well- Anyway. So-

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, I get it.

AUSTIN: That's these guys. Right?

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like, these two guys have different views about the city, it's clear. But there's a familiarity to them.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: There's a closeness to them where they're like, 'Ah! You're crazy!' You know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That sort of stuff. Um, and... Give me- I think this is a Discerning Realities.

KEITH: Okay. Um-

AUSTIN: I think. You're over listening to them. So, yeah give me that. Good rolls tonight.

KEITH: Sure, that's an eleven.

AUSTIN: Has anyone failed anything tonight yet?

JACK: I think Ali got a roll of six earlier.

ALI: *[quietly]* It was like, a four?

KEITH: Er, Ali- Yeah, Ali rolled a six. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Was it that? What did she fail? I wanna make sure we get this right. Oh! Oh, it was to... It was trying to consult the sword. So, yeah. Mark down XP, Ali, from earlier. Make sure you have that marked right. Alright, so you get three-

KEITH: I'm never going to level again if I keep playing so good. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: -Discern Realities here. Give me three questions off this list.

KEITH: Alright, let me just get that- get that list. I wish it was faster getting to the list.

AUSTIN: And I'm basically gonna give you this- You know, these are the questions you can ask generally about the city that you're going to pick up from bits of conversation overheard. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: So, I'm not- These questions aren't going to be limited to like- My answer of like, what happened here recently isn't gonna be like, 'Oh, these two guys started talking.' I'm not- *[Ali and Keith laugh]* I'm not that dork.

KEITH: *[still laughing]* Okay. Okay.

AUSTIN: *[jokingly]* 'What should I be on the lookout for?' *[in another voice]* 'Those fish sandwiches are real cheap. You go get- That's a deal! You should be on the lookout for-'

KEITH: Okay, I wanna- I wanna know who's really in control here.

AUSTIN: Okay. *[overlapped by Jack]* You... you know, you again- you piece this together-

JACK: I've got some information that might be pertinent to that. *[Austin laughs]*

AUSTIN: You piece this together from- from the conversation. And like, this is- this is like you're on some spy shit right now.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Like, you're sitting down on a park bench with Hella.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. This is- this-

AUSTIN: Pretending to not know each other, and you're both over here like-

KEITH: Assassin's Creed one.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

KEITH: That's all we're doing.

AUSTIN: Exactly. You hear them debating things, and I'm not going to act out the debate on both sides. I'm just gonna give you the facts here. You know that this town- the city-the city of Nacre, which is also known as the kind of heart of the Empire of Pearls, wh- however big that is. Who knows?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: -is- is-

KEITH: It might be as big as this city now.

AUSTIN: Exactly. But it is ruled by Empress Adelaide Tristé the Fourth. Sometimes just Adelaide. Sometimes just, you know, Adelaide the Fourth. Sometimes the Fourth Empress.

KEITH: Sometimes Four.

AUSTIN: Sometimes Four.

KEITH: Sup Four?

AUSTIN: What's up, Four? Sometimes the Queen of Death.

KEITH: *[laughs]* Okay. She sounds real.

AUSTIN: She's- Yeah. So, she is... Was that what you were asking? Who's really in control here? Yeah, she is.

KEITH: Oh, I was- Sorry. I meant who's really in control here among those two... arguers.

AUSTIN: Oh, neither of them.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Neither of them.

KEITH: Then no. Okay. So, there's not some sort of power thing going on between them.

AUSTIN: Well, there is, but neither of them is in control. They represent-

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: They represent two different factions of the kind of Dem- of the- Sorry. Not the Democratic- the political spectrum here.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: One of them has its hands in the state and in military power. Obviously, the guy in armor. And there is- and the other guy kind of represents the citizenry here.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Also..which one of them is a ghost? Um...

JACK: Good question.

ALI: Can we roll to figure out which one is a ghost?

AUSTIN: Yeah, give me- give me... One is the armor guy. Two is the- Okay, the armor guy. So, the armor guy is...

KEITH: I was feelin' armor guy.

AUSTIN: Yeah, me too. The thing that's interesting here is like, the other ghosts I've been imagining as kind of blue and spectral. Kind of like Jedi ghosts. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah. Mhm.

AUSTIN: He's like, white ghost. He's like, white-translucent, shiny like these towers.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: And that conveys a sort of power to his presence.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: It almost seems like he's drawing on their energy as he walks around the space.

KEITH: Alright.

AUSTIN: So, he kind of represents this more military faction, and then Vincenzo, who is the merchant dude, is... you know, represents the kind of citizenry here. The- the people livin' their everyday lives.

KEITH: Okay. Alright. And-

AUSTIN: The other guy's name... What's a good name for a good soldier type? What's a good like, Italian name for a soldier type?

KEITH: Waluigi. *[Ali laughs]*

ALI: Yep.

AUSTIN: It's not- No. No, it's not Walu-

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Guys.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Giovanni.

AUSTIN: Giovanni.

KEITH: Okay. I thought you said they're all French.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I forgot that I'd already decided that they were Italian is the thing.

KEITH: Oh, okay. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Like, I have all of these Italian names here that I'd *completely* forgot about. Um... *[thinking]* ba-ba-ba...

KEITH: I mean they can be both because this place is neither.

AUSTIN: Yes. This place is fictional. Exactly.

KEITH: Yeah. So, Giovanni. Who's the other guy?

AUSTIN: Vincenzo.

KEITH: Vincenzo. Alright. Well, okay. So, I wanted- Like, I wanna know what the thing they're debating about is, and I could just-

AUSTIN: But you have to pick one of these Discerning Realities questions here.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: So...

KEITH: I guess- I guess...

AUSTIN: I think 'what happened here recently' would convey that, right?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. I was thinking- I was trying to decide between that and what is about to happen.

AUSTIN: Those are two different things. I think that-

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: But I want to be careful. I want to make sure I answer the right one for you.

KEITH: Yeah. Because I think both of them- I think I want to know both of them. I think I want to ask both of those.

AUSTIN: Okay, so those are your next two questions. Okay.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, here we go.

KEITH: Like, I want to hear what happened and what might happen because of what they're debating about.

AUSTIN: Okay. Sounds good. So, here's what just happened. What happened over the last day is that, a surprise to everyone- and you get this like, 'Who coulda guessed it?' You know, that kind of like-

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: 'No one could have imagined this in a million years.' That Brandish showed up with who you quickly understand to mean... Calhoun. But they call him- they call him a lot of things. This is- *[lightly laughs]* They -they start off- they call him, you know, the Missing Boy. They call him Angelo. They call him the Heir Apparent. They say Our Brother. They call him the Prince of Pearls. The Emir of Alabaster. The Ivory Crown. And then-

KEITH: Man, they're talking a lot about this guy.

AUSTIN: *[overlapped]* It's still not the whole thing.

KEITH: This guy is Babe Ruth with the nicknames.

AUSTIN: They also call him things like, The Reluctant. Like, you know, no one could have guessed The Reluctant was-

KEITH: Okay, so this is why he's in chains.

AUSTIN: -still lived, let alone was- would be brought back by Brandish. They call him The Betrayer. They call him-

KEITH: Oh shit.

AUSTIN: -The Coward. They-

KEITH: So, I'm listening to them for like, six hours. *[Ali and Jack laugh]*

AUSTIN: No. It's like- it's almost like they don't have the same- That like, these are almost like royal titles. Do you know what I mean? It's almost like they're speaking in-

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: -in a kind of...

KEITH: Like, they're trading titles back and forth?

AUSTIN: Right. Exactly. Like, it's almost- and these are like, established titles. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: These aren't like- they're not- they're not- these are descriptive. These are like, elements- aspects of this character in their lives.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: They call him The Wretched and The Abdicator. So, he... It was shocking to them. This is what just happened. This man, who you know as Captain Calhoun, was captured, brought to the Sable Spire, the prison to the southeast of the city, is currently-

KEITH: Because he's an abdicator.

AUSTIN: Because he was an abdicator. Because he abdicated his- his throne.

KEITH: His throne, took from Four.

AUSTIN: Right... You're not really sure why or how there. I don't think that's- That doesn't They're not like, 'Oh, by the way, here is the history of our kingdom and what we know.' *[Ali, Jack, and Keith laugh]* Like, they don't go deep into that.

JACK: No, that's a murder.

AUSTIN: *[overlapping Jack]* But you do get enough out of it to know that there is some- *[hearing Jack]* Right, exactly.

KEITH: Let's trade histories real quick!

AUSTIN: *[laughing; in a voice]* 'I know you and I both know these things, but uh-'

KEITH: *[in a similar voice]* 'Let's get a fuckin' pie and talk about history!'

AUSTIN: *[in voice]* 'Ey! Oh! It's Angelo!

KEITH: *[in voice]* It's fucking Italian Shrek!

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Italian Shrek! Oh, I forgot about Italian Shrek. Alright. *[Ali groans]* So, you know that he- So, that's- that's basically what *just* happened. What you know is going to happen- Oh, he's currently in prison, at the top level of the Sable Spire.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: He's under the watchful eye of Veneer, who is the warden of the Sable Spire.

KEITH: Oh, that sounds like a tough fight.

JACK: There to prevent chairs from accidental water damage.

AUSTIN: That's true. In the coming days, he will be put on trial for treason, and this is what the debate is about. Vincenzo thinks that they should not put him on trial, and they should not- Because the result of a treason trial is execution. There is no- He doesn't see this guy coming out of it any- any way possible other than losing his case. And if he loses it, he's executed. And Vincenzo says, you can't do that- you can't do that to divine blood.

AUSTIN (cont.): So, the... Giovanni's side is like, he gave up his right to divinity when he betrayed us all. And in the coming days, he'll be transferred from the Sable Spire to the courthouse, which is attach- attached to the palace in the northeast side of the city. There will be a parade that people will watch him being dragged, basically, through the street to the palace for his trial where he currently has no defender. No one in the town has decided to be his kind of defense attorney. And it's- it's kind of clear that there's just debate about what this means. That like, the kind of- There are people in the- in the city that want him to just return and like, sit on the throne. And there are people who need him dead or who want him dead for their own reasons. And that's kind of the split that you're seeing here.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think that's everything...

KEITH: That is. That's my three questions.

AUSTIN: I just wanna make sure I'm not missing anything that just happened or that will be happening. A lot of the parties are about him returning. And at this point, you can tell that there's- they kind of even address this- They kind of explain that like, these people don't know what they're cheering for.

KEITH: Right. So, ev- So, for the most part, the people are celebrating because, 'Oh, this dude's back. Woo!'

AUSTIN: Right. But there are- And there are those among- among them who are very clear that it's about- it's about, you know... getting justice for some misdeed. But there are also people here who think that this is going to be- to mean a golden era for the Empire of Pearls.

KEITH: Do they- do they ever say- do they ever say what his betrayal entailed besides just leaving? Or if it was just like-

AUSTIN: Yeah

KEITH: -if he leaves anything else happens?

AUSTIN: I think at the- towards... So, this is, again, one of those situations where friends can like, start in a kind of polite debate, and then it ends up getting heated. And one of the last things they say to each other is... I think Giovanni says to Vincenzo- Giovanni is the military soldier type- he says- he kind of reaches out with his spectral hand and puts it Vincen- Vincen-jo's- Vincenzo's shoulder and says,

Austin (as GIOVANNI): The boy killed his father. There's no coming back from that.

KEITH: *[whispers]* Oh shit.

AUSTIN: And he turns and walk- and like- and like-, uh, Vincenzo shrugs the hand off of him, and he shakes his head, and they separate from each other. And- and as they walk away, Giovanni says,

Austin (as GIOVANNI): Next week?

AUSTIN: And Vincenzo and- yeah, Vincenzo nods and says,

Austin (as VINCENZO): Next week.

AUSTIN: What do you do?

ALI: *[whimpers]* Friends.

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: What do you do? *[Ali laughs]*

KEITH: I think-

ALI: That was pretty heavy.

KEITH: Yeah. It was pretty- Man. Fuckin' killed his dad! Maybe his dad was a dick. Who knows?

AUSTIN: Who knows?

KEITH: Dads- Fuck Dads.

AUSTIN: Let's go back to- let's go back to Lem for a moment here.

KEITH: Okay. Yeah.

JACK: How does it stand where I am at the moment?

AUSTIN: You guys shook hands. He says- I think at this point, he's just like- *[laughs]*

KEITH: He's like, had it- *[laughs]* It seems like Emmanuel's whole thing is, 'I've had it up to here with this tourist.'

AUSTIN: Yeah, but he's also kind of- Like, just like when they fought, you know, there was like, a resignation of like, 'Well, I'm fuckin stuck with this guy.'

JACK: *[laughs]* He knew it from the start.

AUSTIN: He's like- Yeah. He's like,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): What- what do you want to do?

AUSTIN: *[getting more excited; laughing]* Like- like- *[Jack and Keith laugh]*

Austin (as EMMANUEL): What's up? What are you-? I can tell you're really excited to be here, Lem.

Jack (as LEM): *[laughs lightly]* Thank you. That means a lot.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): I don't understand, and I wish I could convince you to leave. But while you're here... What-

AUSTIN: P.S. It's super lucky that Lem is obviously super excited to be here and like, can't even think about saving Calhoun because that would have been bad. It's really good that you were the one who- who gave that up. You know what I mean? *[Jack laughs]* So, he just kind of like-

His tone is like, when a friend visits town and- er you visit a friend's place, but like, they haven't really planned anything. *[Jack laughs]* It's like- it's that sort of like, we could just order pizza and drink beer. Or like, do you want to go to- do you want to go somewhere? Like, what do you-? Like,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): What do you want to do, Lem?

Jack (as LEM): *[pauses]* Can we go look at the palace? *[Keith laughs]*

Austin (as EMMANUEL): The pal- *[unbelieving; to himself]* He wants to look at the palace... Oh my god. *[Keith and Ali laugh]* The palace is closed at nights and on weekends.

Jack (as LEM): Is there like a- *[everyone laughing hard]* Is there like, a good hotel nearby? Or like, a pub or something?

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Good hotel? Now he wants a good hotel. Yeah, we could- *[everyone laughs hard again]* We could go to- We could go to Tristero's, maybe. I guess.

AUSTIN: And he's like- He like nods you over.

JACK: Like, you know when you've been having like a- like a- You know when you've been feeling depressed, and you've been having- you're having a really great day.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: And then like, just in the middle of doing something in that really great day, you're suddenly reminded of the fact that yesterday was terrible or something?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: And you get this kind of like, momentary like- not a sinking feeling, but this kind of momentary like, 'Oh, yeah. That.' Every time he mentions Tristero, Lem is just like, 'Oh, yeah. That was a- uh-'

AUSTIN: That happened. Yeah. *[quietly]* Why am I not about to- Woah!

Jack (as LEM): Tristero's, huh?

AUSTIN: Not what I wanted.

Jack (as LEM): Is that a hotel?

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Yeah. I- Where do I even start?

AUSTIN: -he says. And you're kind of walking through the streets at this point. Sorry, I'm trying to turn this thing. This thing's supposed to- Nope, that's a street. This map these map tools are real tough sometimes, you guys.

ALI: *[sympathetic]* Oh.

AUSTIN: Just want to fucking turn this rectangle. Let me- let me- let me have this!

JACK: *[laughs]* Let me have this moment.

AUSTIN: *Just let me have this moment.* Let's- let's slide it up here, and then I'll do it here. There's a- there *is* a big hotel. There is a *very* big hotel here.

JACK: Wait, where? I've lost the thing now.

AUSTIN: Well, yeah, it's cause I moved it off the map, so I could fuck around with it some, and it's just like, not-

JACK: Oh.

AUSTIN: Oh, I see what's happening. It's- it's off- *[sighs]* This does this sometimes. It's really frustrating.

JACK: Podcasting: a primarily visual media. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: I know. I know. I know. *[Keith and Ali laugh]* There it is.

KEITH: You- Hold on. Austin. You *are* recording the video for this though, right?

AUSTIN: I do. I do have all of the video for all of this stuff. It's true.

KEITH: How are we not- I can just do that. Do you want me to just do that?

AUSTIN: *[resigned]* We can. I'll send it to you.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I know. It's- it's kind of weird that we just didn't ever...

KEITH: I mean I asked a couple times, but you were like, 'Eh, maybe we'll do that,' and then we just never brought it up again after, you know, two weeks ago.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that did happen, huh? *[exasperated]* Oh my God. I- I'm going to reset Roll20. So, he- he grabs you. He kind of like- he doesn't grab you by the hand anymore. He's- he's kind of letting you follow him along, and you're walking through the kind of night streets, which again are primarily lit by these big towers. There aren't like, lamps anywhere. The lights- the lights of both the ghost people and the towers is enough to make this place visible to you, basically. *[to self]* Woah! Not what I wanted. Um, and he takes you to a... a place kind of right across from the market where you just were.

JACK: Oh, lucky.

AUSTIN: It is very lucky for everyone here. And... there we go. And he says,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Yeah, this is- this is the place. This is- In a way I guess, this is the heart of Nacre. You know... where do I- where do I start? A long time ago, this was a very pretty city, I guess. Way before my time. Way, way, way before my time.

AUSTIN: He's undead, by the way, but he's definitely one of the undead from the recent killing that- of Brandish and his crew.

JACK: He is kind of newly undead.

AUSTIN: He's newly undead. You know, kind of dealing with all of this.

JACK: Hm.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): A long time ago, Nacre was just a real- a really beautiful place, I guess. There's lots of good food. Lots of good drink. It was a good time for everybody.

AUSTIN: Do you kind of show any recognition of that fact? Are you-?

JACK: Yeah. Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Yeah. Like um... Like,

Jack (as LEM): For us, this city is like- It's like a legend. It's like a- it's like a magical fictional place.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): It may as well be. This place, uh... It had lots of- lots of tourists. Lots of people loved this place. One of them was Tristero... It's hard to imagine, I know. But he really loved it here.

AUSTIN: And he says that as if you should, of course, know what he means.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): So, when things got bad in the world, he made it not be so bad here. And since then, him and his line, they've been ruling this place.

Jack (as LEM): Just cause he really liked it? It was like a home for him?

Austin (as EMMANUEL): I mean he is a hard work- a hard- a hard job. You know? You find a vacation spot with a job like that.

Jack (as LEM): Emmanuel, I'm going to be honest with you. Where I come from, we don't know who Tristero is. I've- I've only heard his name the first time today.

AUSTIN: He laughs.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Now- What's it- It's bad out there, huh? *[Jack and Ali laugh]*

Jack (as LEM): Yeah, it kind of is.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Pwoof. You know, Tristero?

AUSTIN: He says. Like, as if- saying as if maybe he said it wrong.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Tristero, you know. He who controls life and death? *[Jack/Lem breaths a laugh]* The man who- who ushers our souls onto the afterlife? Tristero.

Jack (as LEM): Not- Not ringing any bells there, bud.

AUSTIN: Here's a thing. Give me- Hm, what is this?

JACK: Oh, hang on.

AUSTIN: How do you- How do you notice this? Oh yeah! Do you have some Bard shit? What's your Bard shit? *[Jack laugh]*

KEITH: Well, you got that violin.

JACK: I've got a violin.

AUSTIN: You do have a violin. Give me- What are your- But what's your Bardic knowledge?

JACK: Uh, my Bardic Knowledge is- *[inaudible]*

AUSTIN: Grand histories?

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Oh, it's- Oh, it's grand history of the known world.

JACK: Grand histories. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sorry.

AUSTIN: Now this should be- this is a- Hm. Oh, this is a Spout Lore.

JACK: Okay. You want me to roll Spout Lore?.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Give me a Spout Lore as you're trying to think through this.

JACK: Mm. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because there's a moment at which it could fall into place for you.

JACK: I'm not just gonna Fero this here. I've done my research, even if that is a-

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know. Yeah.

KEITH: Hold on. *[Austin laughs lightly]* Hold- Whoa, whoa, whoa. What does that mean?

JACK: Fero-ing it is just going like, 'That's really weird!' *[Jack and Keith laugh]*

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: So, I roll plus intelligence, which isn't one of my best stats. I don't think so. We'll have fun now. Oh, no. Intelligence is alright. Six.

AUSTIN: Not like that, it isn't. *[someone whistles]* Okay.

JACK: Mark XP.

AUSTIN: So, here's what happens. Yeah, go ahead Mark. XP. You're in-

KEITH: You deserve it, Buddy.

AUSTIN: You go into this hotel, and it's been kind of converted. It's a weird place because... He kind of gives you the walking tour of the space. And it becomes clear that- *[Austin stops; Ali laughs]* For reasons, Keith just typed in the chat, 'Maybe you should have Fero-ed it.' I just need

people on the- I want record of that. *[Keith laughs]* So, it becomes clear that this is like, a strange mix of a destination and a... like a- like a resort destination, in a sense. But also, a religious space.

JACK: Are we talking about Nacre? Or are we talking about Tristero?

AUSTIN: This- We're talking about Tristero, the hotel. The hotel named for Tristero.

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And you realize it's because it's a holy ground. It is the... it is the space where... Okay. Here it is. Tristero, God of Death- this is kind of unfolded to you as you're- as you're here- Tristero, God of Death, used to take vacations here. This was his place off. This was- He has done the year. It's New Year's. He spends it here on the coast at Nacre. This most beautiful city And at the moment of Erasure- and this is where it kind of comes back to you- It's as if a spell has been broken. It's as if an enchantment comes undone. When you- when you put the- when you're in this space, and you hear the story, it all comes together. And books that you've read in the Archive had these words all along, and you didn't know it. You read these books. You read them, and what you're hearing now was in them, but you didn't see it. It wasn't there *[Jack laughs]* at the time. Everyone at the Archives has read these books. They know this story, but it's gone.

JACK: Are we talking that it literally, physically wasn't there? Or-?

AUSTIN: I'm gonna continue. No, it was- it was physically there. But upon reading it, like, your memory now fills in the blank.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: That those times you poured over the stories of the Erasure, this was in there. But it's- it was just... for whatever reason, you couldn't hold onto it. And the reason is clear to you almost- you know, as you get this kind of walking history. The city, Nacre, was one of Tristero's pleasures. So astonishing its architecture. So wonderful its people, its culture, its food, that he wanted to spare them. And so, in the Erasure, in the moment that would have torn this place asunder, separated it from the world, he shielded it with his own divinity. He gave up his- his job. *He* stepped down from the role of God of Death and became Tristan the first, the Emperor of Pearls and founded the royal line that walks here to this day.

JACK: *[exhales deeply]* Do you wanna cut back to the others? Or-?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so.

JACK: I don't know. I'm just cautious that-

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that that's a good spot to stop there. Lem and Hella-

JACK: You mean Fero and Hella.

AUSTIN: Fero and Hella. God damnit! I got through this whole game-

KEITH: Hi! Hi, my name's Keith and Fero. How are you?

AUSTIN: For what it's worth, I mostly... Yeah. No, that's fair. *[Ali laughs]*

KEITH: Yeah, Austin. You haven't called me Kyle in nearly a couple of months.

AUSTIN: It's true! It *has* been a couple of months.

KEITH: But like, that's still- like, that's not a great track record *still*, right?

AUSTIN: It could be better.

KEITH: Like, I've never called you Janine ever.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Not once!

ALI: That's different. *[Austin and Keith laugh]*

AUSTIN: But what if her name was like, Anine? Then you might. Like, Aunine. Then you might.

KEITH: I- Well, okay..I've never called you Art then.

AUSTIN: Are you sure?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Someone has.

KEITH: It wasn't me.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Likely story. So, let's- let's get back to you guys. At this point- at this point, I'm going to say- let's make it super easy. You see- You've been like, looking around these gardens in this market area for quite some time before you finally see Lem walk into this hotel *[high, excited voice]* with one of the fucking pirates from the pirate ship! *[Ali begins laughing]* He was on the Kingdom Come! He stabbed that guy!

KEITH: *[amused]* Oh, god. I'm so mad.

AUSTIN: He stabbed him in the chest!

KEITH: *[amused]* I'm so upset.

ALI: I'm also very mad.

AUSTIN: And they're like, buds. *[Jack laughs]*

KEITH: Cause- because I- Like, we spent- we spent like, twenty minutes last week talking about Emmanuel, right? Like... But Fero didn't have even a second to look at Emmanuel. That was all Jack stuff.

AUSTIN and ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: That was all with Lem. And all of that was texture that we were being told that- that Jack was being told that- All Lem got was like, a funny look.

AUSTIN: Yes. *[laughter]*

KEITH: Like, that's all that- That's all that actually happened. So, Emmanuel is barely- is like, only relevant to Lem for over-romanticizing it, and not relevant to Fero and Hella at all.

AUSTIN: No.

KEITH: So, this is- We could-

JACK: No, I think- I think now Emanuel's pretty relevant to me.

KEITH: Well, now. Yeah. But at the- at the time, not really. Like, at the time, you had like, enough justification to do what you did.

JACK: Yeah. Agreed.

KEITH: But you had no actual knowledge about Emmanuel or who he was or anything. Like, he just like, had to look, and you went with it.

JACK: Yes.

KEITH: And that's fine and cool, but it also like- we don't know who that is. And we just see you with a fucking pirate. Like a rando pirate. Like, I just want to make it clear that we don't see you with *Emmanuel*. we see you with *a pirate*.

AUSTIN: An undead pirate.

ALI: An undead pirate who we know works with Brandish.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: He's not just like, a guy in this town.

AUSTIN: And they're just chattin', and they go in that place.

ALI: Oh, they look chummy, I bet.

AUSTIN: They look *mad* chummy. *[Ali groans]* They are so much-

KEITH: Well-

AUSTIN: They are really- Well...

KEITH: Lem looks chummy.

AUSTIN: I think Emmanuel still has some chumminess in him.

ALI: Yeah. He's certainly-

AUSTIN: He's undead. He's not a jerk.

ALI: He's like, amused by Lem at this point.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes. That's what it is. It's that sort of chumminess. It's like- You're right.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: You're right, Keith, to say that it's not like they're best buds hanging out. Like, there isn't-

KEITH: Yeah. This is not an arm lock thing. This is sort of like a- like, Lem is kind of like a puppy to him.

AUSTIN: Yes. *[Jack laughs]*

KEITH: This is like- and like-

AUSTIN: Wow.

KEITH: -and like, Emanuel is a little bit of an- a little bit annoyed.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: But like, I still love my dog.

AUSTIN: Yes. Exactly.

JACK: Would you blame Lem if you were in his shoes?.

KEITH: No, not at all. I'm just describing it.

JACK: Yeah, no, that's fair.

KEITH: I think- I think that you are- your- Lem's reaction is... You're allowed to be the most real with how you're taking this. Like, I think we'd all be fucking freaking out.

JACK: Yeah. I think- I don't know. Anyway, where are you at?

KEITH: *[laughing]* I think we fuckin' follow you.

AUSTIN: Okay, so you guys are like, kind of a few steps behind him this whole time. And just to describe this space one more time here. It's- it's a hotel that all of the kind of resort- resort place like, elements of it- So, like, there's still a dining area on the first floor. There are still couches in the lobby. But like, no one is here to vacation anymore So, there aren't like- There's no receptionist waiting to check you in. There's probably a receptionist there to like- There's a receptionist there, but they serve an almost holy role, right? Like, there's almost a religious element here. There is certainly. There are not almost- There *is* a religious element here.

KEITH: So, this is like a live- this is like a Stations of the Cross, sort of.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

KEITH: But it's a hotel. Like-

AUSTIN: But it's a hotel. And it's still a hotel. And like, in honor of Tristero, it still operates in terms of like, 'Oh, that restaurant still serves the menu that it did then to the degree that it can- to the degree that they can still get those- those supplies.' You know?

JACK: This is so cool. *[Ali laughs]*

AUSTIN: The- the walking tour-

KEITH: So, we can- we can almost boil down Brandish's theft of all that food to fulfilling a religious requirement.

AUSTIN: Part of it definitely is that. Yeah. Part of that food comes here. And like, the rest of it goes out to those markets that you were just at. Do you know what I mean? Like-

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Those people are given an amount of food to like, do stuff with, and like, they can buy from- from the supplies that Brandish brings in. You know, like, there is a little light bit of a market here in terms of like, buying new stuff and trying out new recipes and making cool crafts with the- Like, sometimes Brandish comes back with- Like instead of food stuffs, it's just like, 'Yeah, I got a bunch of iron. I don't- Okay.' Like, 'I just got a bunch of wood. Let's do some stuff with this. This is cool.'

JACK: Yeah. 'Here are twenty-three sheep.'

KEITH: What was-?

AUSTIN: Right. Right.

KEITH: Is- Did- Does Brandish have- Cause Brandich has a reputation of being like, sort of a-like, a marauder-

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

KEITH: He's going around, and he's, you know, stealing shit.

AUSTIN: And killing people and hurting people.

KEITH: And killing people.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: And that's- but that's like- that's still part of his thing. Like, he's doing all this stuff, and it's like, 'Ah, Brandish is just a guy.' But he also like *is* a cruel pirate... also.

AUSTIN: Yeah, he's a pirate.

KEITH: Well, he's a bo- Like, he's a- you know. Yeah, he's a pirate.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Like, he's not- I guess I'm not saying he's cruel *for a pirate* even.

AUSTIN: Right. That's the thing.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Like, I don't think he is cruel *for a pirate*. You know what I mean? Like-

KEITH: He's just pirate.

AUSTIN: He's a pirate, and he hurts people, and he kills people, and he takes their things. And like, there's no dressing that up in any other way, except to say that he's also bringing that stuff back for the civilization to continue to flourish. This one-

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: -last beacon of pre-Erasure beauty. *[Jack breathes a laugh]* You know? I don't know what that's worth to you. If anything. I know what it is worth to Lem. I have a *feeling* I know what it's worth to Hella, which is little. *[lightly laughs]* Maybe.

ALI: I-

AUSTIN: I don't know. How does Hella feel about this place?

ALI: I guess what you said just right before that.

AUSTIN: That like-

ALI: You're asking about the hotel in general?

AUSTIN: Yeah, just the city in general. Like, you recognize as you move through the space that this is- to some degree, Brandish's pirate fleet is how this old beautiful city can continue to exist. Does Hella care about that?

ALI: I-

AUSTIN: Does that like- Does that lighten the sin of Brandish in any way?

ALI: No. I think that it becomes like, even more frustrating for her.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Because this city like- it's familiar, but it's also like, really unnatural.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And she is probably not into the fact that it exists.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Yeah.

ALI: Like, she doesn't want food from her people or anyone else being used to feed ghosts.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Like, no one-

AUSTIN: Uh, you don't see any ghosts eating.

KEITH: The gho- I don't think the ghosts eat.

AUSTIN: The ghosts are not eating.

ALI: Ok. But like-

AUSTIN: That's a very specific thing here. Which is weird.

ALI: Sick.

AUSTIN: We'll get to that in the future, for sure. That's a *thing*. I have a whole note about the food situation with regard to ghosts. It's- ah. This is the human I am. *[Jack laughs]*

ALI: Okay, but like, regardless this-

KEITH: *[interjecting]* No one's- no one's upset at you for it, Austin.

AUSTIN: Okay, good. I'm glad. It's important to me.

ALI: This is the most bustling city that she's ever seen.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

ALI: And also like, one that she rejects from the very core of her.

AUSTIN: Okay. Mhm. So, you guys are kind of wandering through this place. You guys- uh, Lem and- and Emmanuel are always again, like, five steps ahead of Fero and Hella. Or like, they turn the corner just as Hella and Fero like, turn their corner to like, catch a glance of them. They go up the stairs. They like- Again, the camera shot here is like, it's a- it's a pan down from watching... You see Emmanuel and Lem step off of the stair to a new landing, and it pans down to see a Fero and Hella *start* going up those stairs. Really ornate beautiful stairs. Like, this was a destination before the Erasure. And I think at some point-

ALI: Can I-?

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

ALI: Can I make an interjection to say that like, Hella is purposely trying to make sure that Lem doesn't notice them?

AUSTIN: Sure. Sure. Totally. Totally. Absolutely. Give me... Given me a Defy Danger dexterity really quick.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Because there's something else happening here that we'll get to in a second. Before we break. We're almost-

KEITH: Am I also Defying Danger?

AUSTIN: No, no. You can Aid if you'd like.

KEITH: Okay. Yeah. I'll do an- I'll do an aid. That's just a regular to 2d12?

AUSTIN: 2d6.

KEITH: 2d6.

AUSTIN: Plus- Yeah, plus-

KEITH: *[quietly]* 2d12?

AUSTIN: 2d6 plus one for your bond. Unless you have two bonds.

KEITH: Let me check. I think that we just have the one.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think so, too. Yes.

KEITH: Yeah. That's eleven.

AUSTIN: Okay. So, you do well. *[amused]* So, you can give her a plus one. *[Ali whimpers]*

KEITH: Oh yeah. Here. Have my plus one.

AUSTIN: She's up to a five. Which is bad. It's doubly bad because of another role that we haven't touched yet. And we'll come back to in a second. Lem, I think- *[Keith groans]* I think you are, at this point, like, the final station of the cross, so to speak, of Tristero's journey here. Right? His- The kind of- The last step of this- of this hotel temple is his penthouse. *[Jack breathes a laugh]*

AUSTIN (cont.): And it ends on like, a balcony looking out onto the inlet. You can see to your- you can see on the- on the ocean waves, the sun to the east is starting to sparkle down onto it, right? Like, the sun is starting to rise behind you effectively to the east, but you can see the first glimmer of that on the reflection of the waves. It's a beautiful sound. And it's quiet. And the stars start to disappear, but the space still feels bright and joyful. Emmanuel offers you a cigarette. *[Ali makes an 'aw' noise]*

JACK: Yeah. Cool. I'll go for it. Smokin' on a balcony in the most magical city..

AUSTIN: *[calming voice]* Right. You kind of lean over the- over the edge there. And... Hella?

KEITH: There's a tobacco industry?

AUSTIN: Listen. There's- there is tobacco certainly.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: There's certainly tobacco. I think Ordenna definitely produces tobacco. Um- *[laughs]*

JACK: Wait, wait. Hang on a second before we- I wanna- I wanna apologize to Emmanuel for fighting him with a big sword earlier.

AUSTIN: Okay, that's fair. He says,

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Eh. *[Keith laughs]*

KEITH: A job's a job.

Austin (as EMMANUEL): Yeah, things are- things are complicated. Not again though, huh?

AUSTIN: He laughs. You guys to take a long drag when-

KEITH: That's foreshadow. We're gonna have to kill Emmanuel. *[laughter]*

AUSTIN: Who knows?! I don't know. What I do know is that, at this point, Lem- Sorry. *Fero* and Hella come into the penthouse to see the two- Emmanuel and Lem smoking, and then there's just like, a nice- there's a good like, hand on your shoulder, Hella.

*[Jack de Quidt's "[Autumn Not Winter](#)" plays in the background]*

ALI: *[nervous noise]* Yeah?

AUSTIN: What do you do?

ALI: Um, definitely... I reach for that dagger that I have.

AUSTIN: Good call.

ALI: That's my instinct.

AUSTIN: As you reach for it, you feel the sharp edge of a blade up against your neck.

ALI: Oh boy.

Austin (as BRANDISH): Ah, ah, ah. *[clears throat]* I wouldn't if I were you, Missy.

AUSTIN: And you feel the air come from the hole in his neck.

Austin (as BRANDISH): What a surprise!

*[music plays out to finish]*