

[Spring in Hieron 41: The Second Spring Pt. 3](#)

Transcriber: Adela

[Jack de Quidt '[Under the Boughs](#)' begins playing]

AUSTIN: Seven months before the arrival of the Frost Shepherd, and seven months *after* the cataclysmic emergence of the rhizome, the people of the Last University had finally found themselves, well... they'd *found* themselves. The maps of Adaire DuCarte and her young cadre of amateur cartographers had given these people, who had been through so much, a sense of place. A picture, finally, of where they stood in the world. But a *good* map could do more than just ensure that you really did live where you thought you did. Certainly Adaire knew that in a world like the Rhizome, no map could ever be complete, but a good map was useful. It revealed something about a place and the people and the creatures and the patterns in it. And so, to make sure that the young rogues Rix and Rowe, her most precious students, understood this point, she sent them with the family dog, Barbello, to map out the route that ran between the settlement's busiest marketplace and the lake a half day's walk away. Now they've returned, but with vastly different maps.

Austin (as RIX): Mine's the good one.

Janine (as ADAIRE): They're both good. They're just good in different ways.

Austin (as RIX): Yeah but mine has like, a lot of routes, and I marked where I *think* the best hiding spots are. Because what I wanna do is I wanna wait until one of those fishers comes back with a big cart filled with fish, and then I'm just gonna sneak up, and I'm gonna take just one, just *one* fish just for me and Rowe.

Janine (as ADAIRE): You don't need to do that, I can get you a fish.

Austin (as RIX): Yeah, but this is gonna be a better one.

Janine (as ADAIRE): I can get you a fish each, and it'll be the same fish. And it won't have been in your pocket for at least fifteen minutes so it'll probably be better.

Austin (as RIX): I guess that makes sense. But I didn't really see any actual fishermen on my path anyway.

Austin (as ROWE): Ah-ah- [sneezes] [Adaire/Janine mumbles]

Austin (as ROWE): I- I don't-

Janine (as ADAIRE): Here ta-just take this handkerchief. You shouldn't do it into your sleeve.

Austin (as ROWE): Ah. I put down all where the pollen is, because it's scary and it makes me sick.

Janine (as ADAIRE): See, that's valuable too, people need to-

Austin (as RIX): It's not valuable!

Janine (as ADAIRE): You-

Austin (as RIX): It's-

Janine (as ADAIRE): You both painted maps that are useful in different ways. Look, if I just put them together like this, I'll hold them up to the window so that you can see the sun through them. And see, look, you have- you have the hiding spots here so people can use those, but you've got the pollen too. You've got the routes. You've got everything that someone would need, whether they wanted to not be sick or to r- to rob someone, I guess.

Austin (as BARBELLO): Ruff! Rrruff!

Janine (as ADAIRE): [*laughing*] I don't know what to tell you, Barbello, I really- you shouldn't let them rob people.

Austin (as BARBELLO): [*whines*]

Janine (as ADAIRE): You're better than this. [*Austin bursts out laughing*]

[music finished playing out]

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 continuing our epilogue of Spring in Hieron, of Hieron in general, with a game of The Quiet- [*thunder rumbles in the background*] -The Quiet Year, that was lightening and thunder, ah, that scared me! Um, The Quiet Year by Avery Alder. [*breathes a laugh*] Ah... let's go over what's on this map before we begin, I guess. Yeah?

DRE: Kay.

SYLVIA: Yeah, probably a good idea.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um. Jeez. [*sighs*] What- what are we looking at here? Okay. From top left to bottom- starting in the top left. We've got some clouds. If I remember, those are bad pollen clouds, right?

JANINE: They're not necessarily bad, they're just pollen clouds.

AUSTIN: You're right. You're right, that was- that was very-

KEITH: The way that they're bad is if you have allergies.

AUSTIN: Right. But if you- if you don't have allergies, and like pollen, boy. Um, then we've got a giant-

JANINE: If you're a giant bee, for instance. Which you could be, because-

AUSTIN: Right. Right. Ah, we got a sun up here, we have two suns. We've got a smiley sun, and we have the two suns that- two have suns that reunited to become another sun. We've got a moon, with- with some people on it out in the distance. That's where Severea led a whole bunch of people who had joined her- her moon trip. Um. We've got a horse that's just- just bad, we're gonna move on. [*Janine and Dre laugh*] We have a *number* of insects hangin' out here. They're big insects, we are not safe from them. Minus safety. Um, we have some other like disconnected communities spread across the various tree limbs. Those are the squares. We have some, ah, some agriculture happening, so that's nice. It's nice to have food and water- we have a jellyfish, who's [*Sylvia laughs*] also a waterfall. I drew a little dock, by the way, on that jellyfish, but now that I look at it it looks like a little- little hat, just like a little cap on top of the jellyfish [*Janine laughs*].

SYLVIA: (indistinct)

AUSTIN: And then it goes to the tie, goes to the tie that is actually supposed to be a giant- a *legend* of a giant fish.

KEITH: In that hand on the left we could put a briefcase. [*lots of laughter*]

ALI: Oooo.

AUSTIN: That would be perfect, yeah. [*Sylvia's still laughing*] Um, we have some- we have the University, a big, neon blue university, surrounded by little green kind of- of refugee communities that have kind of become more permanent settlements. We have question marks all over the place, because we don't have knowledge [*Austin laughs*]. We got another big bug, we have some roads, they're not all the way there, but you know, we're getting some roads together. We have a, um, what is- what- what do we call this again? This tram, this ah, gondola? We have

[DRE in the background: Gondola!]

AUSTIN: -a gondola, going between the University and Alcyon in the bottom- the middle right, I guess? We have a- a- um, some previous version of Velis off on some distant branches. We have a weird mushroom ring in the bottom left. We have a *giant* um, a... spiderweb, with spider. We have some sap that's running across the main tree branch here, and we have a- I guess some little Sapkin, is what we decided they were called- is what you named them?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -that are comin' out of the tree sap. A little bridge over that sap. That's nice, that's nice. Um, we have a *giant* arm [laughter] from the Weaver King, that just goes, it just goes off the map. It just goes-

JANINE: The finger is- kinda goes under and then up again in the sap pool, it's-

JACK: One of the biggest things we've ever seen.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, this is, this is- if it's not Rigour scale, it's the closest thing we've seen in this- in Hieron, to that scale. Ah, we have a compass that's all messed up, cause we got our map situation, right? How do you make a compass when there is no, like, pure referant? We have a big card in the middle, we have Alcyon, ah, and we have the Grey Duke's forces, two steps away. Which are gonna be- that's gonna be a lot when that happens. Am I missing anything? I don't think I'm missing anything that's on the table.

SYLVIA: Um, did you mention the cliff- it's kind of covered by the cart now-

AUSTIN: Oh, right! The canyon, yes, we have-

[KEITH in the background: Canyon.]

AUSTIN: We have a canyon that's running alongside this one limb. And I think that that might be it?

KEITH: Oh, I have something- I have a question. What are the- what's the grey around the refugee camps?

AUSTIN: Those are unfinished roads.

KEITH: Oh! Great.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Got it.

AUSTIN: Oh, we also have Adaire's map school, sorry, Adaire's- what's the full name of it? Adaire's-

JANINE: Adaire DuCarte's Higher, and then there's like a hyphen, Revisional Cartography Co-operative.

AUSTIN: Is this a pun that I don't understand? Is there a reason why there's a hyphen-

JANINE: No. Like higher, higher like Hieron, so yes, there's a pun.

AUSTIN: Ahhh. Great. Uhuh.

JANINE: Higher like up, cause we're up in trees and it's kind of- that would also work.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: But the other one.

AUSTIN: We also have this section of the tree limb that is thinner, as if it's been munched on by a giant bug, or a bird, or a- I don't know, what does- like a beaver

JANINE: *[overlapping]* Wasn't that like a garbage-

AUSTIN: *[overlapping]* But it's-

JANINE: -garbage thing?

AUSTIN: But it's a garbage chute, it's like you can push stuff around really quick to make it gain speed, and then launch it. So. That is what it is. Also someone seems to have given the sun- it's- it's a scoop, it's a raisin, it's- it's one scoop of raisins- *[Keith laughs]* A single raisin scoop. *[Dre laughs]*

KEITH: Raisin Bran's seriously underrated, I think.

AUSTIN: Agreed, also sunglasses were- I didn't notice at first. I appreciate the sunglasses. Also I just wanted to note, based on the way it was drawn, and I've been thinking this since the last game actually, Janine did this great job with the clouds, the pollen clouds, where it's like three colours, so there's like a white, there's kind of like a- like a yellow, like beige paté, and then there's like a deeper yellow, like mustard colour. But there's part of one of the clouds that's right above the sun that looks like a tiny cowboy hat *[everyone bursts out laughing]* sitting on top of

one of one of the suns' rays, and I've been holding that in now, for the entire game. I love it. [*Dre continues to chuckle*]. [*Austin laughs*] Alright! So.

ART: The clouds were there first, so that is my fault, I would ah-

AUSTIN: No, you're- it's not your fault. I would say that it is your... success. Ah, we have some Resources, let's go over those really quick. We have Abundant food and water, and also Abundant sunlight. And then scarcities, we have flight, community, maps, roads and paths, safety, knowledge, population- as some members left to go to the moon- and good tools. Quite a few scarcities.

KEITH: Luckily we've made some in-roads into some of these.

AUSTIN: Yes, absolutely- Oh, I did skip one, which is there is a new material that we haven't named yet, that was found in the, um, in the...

JACK and DRE: [*softly*] Oh yeah...

AUSTIN: ... underneath the University that is like, some sort of like- I think Sylvia¹, was this you who narrated this?

SYLVIA: Yeah, it was Ordennan steel sort of mingling with the, like, ecology of the tree.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

SYLVIA: That's kinda how we described it.

AUSTIN: Is it almost like- it's almost like the- the Second Spring, the like- whatever this is, has like, sapped away the Heat and the Dark, but left behind the super strong like- or you described it as an alloy, actually, right? So it's like it's blending in some way.

SYLVIA: Yeah, like... I really like the idea of it having like bits of material in there that look like the bark, but are metal. You know?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

SYLVIA: So, I like it being an alloy as opposed to just one material.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. Um. Art, it is your turn, I believe.

ART: Yeah, I think that's correct.

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

AUSTIN: And you've drawn the Seven of Summer.

ART: The Seven of Summer says: 'Introduce a mystery at the edge of the map OR an unattended situation becomes problematic and scary. What is it? How does it go awry?' And I would like to disclaim that I intend to pick the second option.

AUSTIN: [*wary*] Uhuh?

ART: I was just going to give everyone a moment to tell me they really want a mystery.

AUSTIN: Naw, I mean, if we- if we're upset we take contempt tokens, you know? That's what that's there for. You should do the thing that is in your heart.

ART: Okay.

KEITH: Yeah, what's the problematic and scary stuff that's in your heart? [*Austin, Sylvia and Dre laugh*]

ART: Well, I mean now it feels like a- like a real- like a referendum on my psyche, [*Austin laughs*] but I mean, this kind of works. I think that we are getting pollen hail.

AUSTIN: [*drawn out*] Wow. What's that like?

JACK: [*over Austin*] Oh god.

ART: Um. Okay so- so you know hail?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Um, like a- like ice rain- one of the worst-

AUSTIN: [*over Art*] Yeah, yeah yeah yeah.

ART: One of the worst rains?

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

JACK: It's like rain, but it- it means more business.

ART: Yeah, business rain? Uhuh. [*Austin laughs*] [*Art laughs*] As we call it. Um, what if- what if that were made of pollen? And I think what that like, sort of, feels like, is- it's like frozen orange juice? You know how like, you freeze orange juice-

AUSTIN: [*resigned*] Uhuh.

ART: Orange juice essentially being pollen, um, juice? [*Austin laughs*] I think.

AUSTIN: Delicious.

ART: Ah, as a juice scientist I'm an expert in that. [*Austin laughs*] Um, but you know it's like- you know how it's like... flakey?

(pause)

AUSTIN: Yeah! Totally.

ART: Like a frozen orange juice, not like a-

AUSTIN: [*over Art*] Like a fr- like a- yeah.

ART: -[not] like an ice cube?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: Ah, so I think this is kinda like flakey and fuzzy, and um- on bad days it gets pretty big, I imagine it also- [*Austin sighs*] it'd also acquire mass a little more easily because of the texture. So you get like-

AUSTIN: [*over Art*] Is it-

ART: You know, some days it's- [*Austin sighs*] it's nothing, some days it's baseballs.

AUSTIN: Ughhhh.

ART: One really bad day it was basketballs.

KEITH: What's the water to pollen ratio, is it pure pollen, or is there-?

ART: I think it's- I think it's a- maybe like a 30:70?

KEITH: That's-

ART: [*over Keith*] Water to pollen.

AUSTIN: Thirty- water to pollen- ooh that's a lot of pollen.

KEITH: [*over Austin*] 70% pollen. So it's like pollen *dough*. [*Austin sighs*] Frozen pollen dough.

ART: Yeah. Uhuh.

AUSTIN: [*sighs again*] I miss the fish- the fish rocks, honestly. [*Keith laughs*]

JACK: What are the effects of this, like does it come crashing down through, like, tile? In the University? Or, like, does it screw up allergies in a major way?

ART: It's def- it's an allergy nightmare. Um, I think that's why it appeals to me- [*laughs*]

AUSTIN: Okay. [*Janine and Dre laugh*]

JACK: [*over Dre's laughter*] Interesting use of the word 'appeal' here Art.

AUSTIN: Uhuh. [*Keith laughs*]

ART: Yeah. Um. But like, it's dangerous, big things falling from the sky are inherently dangerous, I think the flakey texture I'm describing makes it a little less dangerous? It does a lot more splatting than it does crashing.

AUSTIN: It's still probably really disruptive.

ART: And there's prolly some crashing.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ART: And like, you don't want to get hit with one in like, the face.

KEITH: Right.

ART: Or any other part of your body, if I'm being honest.

KEITH: [*over Art*] You won't want to wear a mask or something- [*inaudible*]

AUSTIN: [*over Keith*] Here's another question, real quick. Because we- again, we've drawn this map as if it's a, like a diorama, like a bisected diorama, like-

ART: [*over Austin*] Mhmm.

AUSTIN: -left to right, up to down, but we know that there is not that sort of organizational stru-like, that isn't how space works anymore. There's always an up in a sense. Which means that these- are these clouds also orbiting around us? Or like, really what I'm getting at is, is the pollen hail coming at us from multiple directions- *[laughs]*

ART: Definitely? And I know I didn't pick 'mystery', but I'd like to say that it's, like, localized around the University. That like, people who go and travel notice that the hail stops pretty quickly.

AUSTIN: So it is a mystery, so you've also given us a mystery.

ART: No, I'm giving you 'a situation that's gone awry in a mysterious manner.'

AUSTIN: *[over Art]* Ahhhh. I see. Okay- *[Sylvia laughs]* Can- can you add the pollen hail, please? To the map. Um, while I update these clocks- *[laughs]* Christ. 'First wave of mappers', up to 3. 'Talk to Sapkin', up to 3. 'Alcyon', up to 1. 'Grey Duke's forces', up to 5 out of 6. Um, and 'Talk to the Weaver King'- Fero Feritas. Um, what was your journey- I guess, really, I don't even need to be in this conversation, because, I really think Dre, you gotta play the Weaver King. You're the one who put this Weaver King here, ah, you're the one who set this up. Um, but I do- from you, Fero, I am really curious, what was your journey looking for the- like- where to talk to the Weaver King- what was that like?

KEITH: Um. So, Fero can fly, and this isn't *Dungeon World* so I don't have to worry about how long I can fly for- or I guess in *Dungeon World*, as long as I'm not using special moves I can fly for however long anyway. But, I- so I don't think it was about like, finding a path, or, like getting from branch to branch, I think it was just like following the arm.

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

KEITH: And I bet that some of the arms go to, like, dead ends, or it twists off, or maybe it's hard to tell where the Weaver King ends and a tree trunk begins, and so, I think he's sort of just like following, just like trying to solve a maze. You know, like a top-down maze you'd get at like a kids' menu at a restaurant?

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* But for weeks?

KEITH: But for, yeah, for weeks, and it's not top-down so you can't like, work it out. You've gotta actually test each-

AUSTIN: *[over Keith, knowingly]* Right.

KEITH: I guess like a hedge maze, then, it's like a hedge maze, but it's a Weaver King's long, long arm.

AUSTIN: My favourite Michael Lutz game. Uhhh. [*Keith laughs*] God. Um, Dre? What's he- what's Fero find?

DRE: Um, I think at this point the Weaver King is so big there's not like a- like cause, when we've seen Weavers, for the most part, they've had, like, faces, and things like that. Like there's like, almost identifiable body parts?

AUSTIN: [*wary*] Uhuh.

DRE: I don't know- no, here's what happens. I don't think Fero finds, like, the head of the Weaver King.

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

DRE: I think, uh- does Fero have to, like, stop and take breaks or anything, or?

KEITH: I- I probably get done flying, like, I probably can't fly just forever, but I don't have to sleep.

DRE: Right.

KEITH: So. So I guess I take some breaks, yeah.

DRE: I think while you're taking a break it just sounds like there's like, leaves and branches rustling in the wind, and then that slowly turns into a voice. Um, and I think the Weaver King has just grown up a bunch of, like, very leafy branches that rub together to make... voice.

AUSTIN: Love it. What- what does the Weaver King- is it- is there a greeting, at that point? Or is it just like a coming together until there's vocalization in a broad and non-specific word sense?

DRE: I think it's like it takes a while. And that's why it just sounds like leaves, and like twigs rubbing together.

KEITH: Something that I could add- I should be able to talk to the Weaver King in the Weaver King's language, if it is different than my own. If that's an easier way to talk to the Weaver King.

DRE: Oh, it probably is, and the Weaver King didn't know that.

AUSTIN: The Wea- well, it depends, right? Because the Weaver King isn't- is the Weaver King part of Spring? Or is the Weaver King- this is is The Weaver King, right?

DRE: Mhmm?

AUSTIN: So, the Weaver King is an, ah, already extant thing, that is not part of that expanded language set that you have, Fero. This is like knowing Spanish, this is not like knowing- do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Isn't my move that I can communicate with- oh okay, I see what you mean.

AUSTIN: It's a person, right? The Weavers are people.

KEITH: [*over Austin*] Right. Yeah yeah yeah yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, which is why I'm saying it's more like Span- like obviously it's not Spanish, it's being said by the sound of rustling leaves. But I don't think- like I don't wanna- one, I don't want to deflate the really cool image that Dre just gave us. But two, I just don't think that that is true with what your move says- like, if it was part of the new Spring, you could- I think you would have an easier time talking to these big bugs than talking to- in that manner.

KEITH: In that way, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. But we don't need to- I don't need Dre to now vocalize the sound of rustling- rustling leaves and stuff- also we know that fictionally this whole conversation- finding it, having the conversation, takes four weeks. And so maybe this is part of why it takes so long [*laughing*].

KEITH: Well, yeah, like, the Weaver King's been just kinda, kinda trying to figure out how to make this work.

AUSTIN: And this is- the conversation probably takes a long time- whatever Dre says probably takes longer than what Dre is about to say.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Yes?

KEITH: Um. Have I been wa- have I been watching this happen, the leaves form? Or was I just like sitting down and hanging out, and then some leaves just say 'Yes?'

DRE: [*laughing*] I think it's probably-

KEITH (as FERRO): [*over Dre*] Aaaaaahhh! Aaahh!

DRE: -forming.

KEITH (as FERRO): [*continues vocalizing distress*]

DRE (as WEAVER KING): [*laughing*] Whoa, whoa. Okay, I got it, just, okay. [*Keith laughs*]

KEITH (as FERRO): H- hey??

DRE (as WEAVER KING): [*heaves a sigh*] I am- I am so sorry. I've been- [*Keith giggles*] I've been trying to talk to you for a while. And, uh, well I guess I can't get rusty, but...

KEITH (as FERRO): Can I... help you?

KEITH: Fero doesn't get it yet.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Oh, I thought I was going to help *you*. You've been- you've been flying alongside of me for- for a while now.

KEITH (as FERRO): Oh damn, are you- you're the hand.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): A- I've been called many things, I think 'hand' is new, but...

KEITH (as FERRO): There's a really big hand next to where we all live.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Oh, yeah, that's... yeah, that's me. [*Austin laughs*]

KEITH (as FERRO): You're the Weaver King. [*Dre laughs*]

DRE (as WEAVER KING): ...Yes.

KEITH (as FERRO): Um, I guess I really wanted to know if... your hand plans on moving any closer to where we are living- and if so, could you please be careful not to squish anything?

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Oh! Ah, of course, I- I never wanted to squish anything. Have I- did I squish something?

KEITH (as FERRO): No, it's just so big.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Oh.

KEITH (as FERRO): And we're- comparatively we're so small.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Oh, I- I know, but I was- I was trying to be careful.

KEITH (as FERRO): It's fine, people were just a little bit worried.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Yeah I, ah- [*sighs*] I was- I was trying to grow, um- I think you all started calling them Sapkin?

KEITH (as FERRO): Uh- I don't know what you're talking about. [*Austin laughs*] I-

AUSTIN: Right? Fero's been on the way here during all of that. [*laughs*]

DRE (as WEAVER KING): I was- I was trying to grow a- a new- a new group of children, to speak for me, because I was having- as you could see, it took me a while to figure out how to speak with *you*.

KEITH (as FERRO): Yeah, it sure did.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): I'm sorry.

KEITH (as FERRO): That's okay. I'm fine with it. It was nice- I mean, the end result is the exact same as I thought it was going to be, except that you knew about me the whole time, which I didn't know. Um... why are you so big?

DRE (as WEAVER KING): [*sighs heavily*] I um... actually- I don't know.

KEITH (as FERRO): Damn.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): It just... you know, I've- I've been different sizes.

KEITH (as FERRO): I don't know that. [*Austin laughs*]

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Well, okay. I guess- okay, well now you know that I've been-

KEITH (as FERRO): [*over Dre*] My friends have met Weavers, I've never met a Weaver.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): [*surprised*] Ohhh. Well, they- they don't look like me. They look more like-

KEITH (as FERRO): They've been *described* to me before- I think I get the picture of it? What- what makes you the King? Is it just that you're the biggest one?

DRE (as WEAVER KING): It's... complicated. I'm not- I am one, but I'm many of us.

KEITH (as FERRO): Many Weavers.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Yes.

KEITH (as FERRO): Even when you're smaller?

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Mhmm.

KEITH (as FERRO): That's wild.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): I don't- I... I can't stop growing.

KEITH (as FERRO): Is that a problem?

DRE (as WEAVER KING): [*sighs*] Not yet, there's a lot of space now, but... that's why I- I reached over.

KEITH (as FERRO): To get more space?

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Well... Yes, but also, to- you are part of the group at the University, yes?

KEITH (as FERRO): Mhmm.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): You all have done a lot. [*Austin laughs quietly*] And I figured, if anyone has answers as to what's going on it- it would be you all.

KEITH (as FERRO): Can you hear from your hand? [*Austin laughs out loud*]

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Somewhat.

KEITH (as FERRO): Jeez, okay.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): If it was closer, I could, but I- I try to respect your privacy.

KEITH (as FERRO): No telling secrets by the sap pool.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): That's my new EP, actually.

AUSTIN: [*laughing*] Damnit.

KEITH: Um. Let me see, I don't think there's anything else I need to know from the Weaver King.

KEITH (as FERRO): Weaver King, I don't think there's anything else I need to ask you. Is there- I mean-

ART: Fero's got his clipboard over here. [*Austin and Keith laugh*]

DRE (as WEAVER KING): [*over continued laughter*] I assume you'll be heading back and, ah, if it comes to you... I'll be around.

KEITH (as FERRO): You said 'Sapkin'?

DRE (as WEAVER KING): That's- that's what you all have taken to calling them, and I- this is embarrassing, but I didn't really think of a name for them myself that- that you all could speak or understand, so.

KEITH (as FERRO): Jeez I- I can't wait to find out what you're talking about. [*Dre laughs*] [*Keith laughs*] Alright, well, unless there's anything that I can do for you... I assume there isn't- but I'm tr- sometimes trying to be polite.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Oh what- I've been rude, what's your name?

KEITH (as FERRO): Fero.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Nice to meet you, Fero.

KEITH (as FERRO): Mhmm. [*Dre laughs*]

DRE (as WEAVER KING): Sorry it, ah, took so long.

KEITH (as FERRO): That's okay. As long as we don't have anything to worry about with the hand.

DRE (as WEAVER KING): No, and um... You know, it's- if it- like I said, I think I could use some help but- it's definitely not my intention to- to cause any problems.

KEITH (as FERRO): Sounds good. Well, if we figure out why you are so big, we'll talk to your hand. [*Austin laughs*] Bye!

AUSTIN: And from that day forth, the phrase 'talk to the hand'- [*Keith bursts out laughing*] [*Ali giggles*] -meant 'to speak with care and enthusiasm- [*Dre bursts out laughing*] [*Keith continues laughing*] -to a new friend'.

DRE: 'To have a great and intimate conversation.'

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: The face *do* want to hear it, but it's just very far away. [*Austin laughs*]

AUSTIN: Um, okay. Relations with the Weaver King have begun. Art! The rest of your turn.

ART: Yeah, everyone has fun projects, and I don't have any fun projects.

AUSTIN: Do you wanna start a new project, does Hadrian want to start a project?

ART: [*quietly*] I don't know.

JACK: Hadrian, the Grey Duke is coming.

AUSTIN: Y'all I- I *really*- the Grey Duke is here in a *min*- tomorrow, so. It, starting-

JACK: [*over Austin*] Yeah, yeah yeah yeah. Hadrian-

AUSTIN: [*over Jack*] -starting a project might be late.

JACK: What about a one clock- or a one step clock called 'Hadrian draws his sword.' [*Austin and Keith laugh*]

JANINE: What about 'discover something new': 'killing the Grey Duke'. [*Austin and Jack laugh*]

ART: Oh, how about 'discover something new'...

AUSTIN: Uhuh?

ART: A book of Grey Duke etiquette.

JACK: [*thoughtfully*] Oooh.

AUSTIN: Yeah? Like-

ART: That's it, that's my idea. [*Austin sputters*] [*Jack laughs*]

AUSTIN: What's that look like?

ART: Oh, you know, like-

AUSTIN: [*over Art*] And also, is Hadrian the one who finds it?

ART: No, right? Cause- ah-

KEITH: [*over Art*] Cause it'd have- he'd have to have been reading. [*Austin laughs*]

ART: Yeah, Hadrian's not- Hadrian's not a reader. [*Jack laughs*] I think we've established this. Um- I think Hadrian is trying to like transition to- you know what I mean, like, Hadrian doesn't have a sword anymore. So there is no drawing of his sword. What if he's like-

AUSTIN: [*over Art*] This is true. Yeah.

ART: -trying to make time? You know, he's back, he's trying to explore other interests. He goes- you know, he goes to study with Benjamin, like- and he thinks he's just gonna like, hang out, and instead just like, starts wandering. Cause you know, Hadrian has always been interested in manners. [*Austin snorts*] And-

AUSTIN: That's true.

ART: He was like, I will go read some manners books, and finds this one. Why is it here? I don't know. I'm- I don't have a rationalization for this.

AUSTIN: Is it something that showed up here because of recent trade? Is it something that was in, like, the orc- like, the Archives, somewhere? You know, is it a thing someone who used to be part of the Grey Duke's domain, like, something that they had?

ART: I think an- an orc find is a fun explanation, they have all sorts of stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: He's an orc, right?

AUSTIN: The Grey Duke, yes, he is an orc. Yes, from a lower strata. Or from what was once a lower strata.

JACK: And is now, ah, here, I guess?

AUSTIN: *He* isn't.

JACK: Oh right, he's sending- he's sending foot-

AUSTIN: He is- yeah, he is- he's so-

KEITH: [*over Austin*] He is in his home office.

AUSTIN: Yeah, mmmm.

ART: I don't know what this would look like on the map.

KEITH: [*over Art*] He rents a work-share space.

AUSTIN: Um, well, maybe... Maybe- mmm- well I don't know, what's- you know, what does it look like? Is it like a thing that- for now it's probably nothing, right? Cause it's just a book- unless you're discovering something else, or unless you are, next turn, going to start a project that's like 'we're gonna build an embassy' or 'we're gonna build a-'

JACK: I was going to say, is it like the equivalent of like a lemonade stand embassy, where it's just like a desk dragged out, and a chair and a book of manners? [*Keith laughs*]

ART: The diplomat is in.

JACK: [*laughing*] The diplomat is in.

AUSTIN: Hadrian the diplomat. Finally a new title. Yeah, if you wanna draw a little stand, that is your diplomacy stand, at or near- [*Keith laughs*] that's a start.

JACK: Mmm.

KEITH: Diplomacy, twenty-five cents.

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

ART: Alright, I'm- I'll work on it.

AUSTIN: Alright-

JACK: [*over Austin*] Have you thought about framing your sentences as 'I feel' instead of 'I want', turns the page. That will be twenty-five cents. [*Austin laughs*]

AUSTIN: Alright, I think that's your turn. Jack, you are up next.

JACK: Okay. Draw-

AUSTIN: Draw a card.

JACK: One- I've got it- it's the Ten of Summer.

AUSTIN: Ooooh.

JACK: 'You discover a cache of supplies or resources, OR, a scarcity has gone unaddressed for too long. Start a project that will alleviate that scarcity.' Interesting.

AUSTIN: The top one also says 'Add a new abundance.'

JACK: Oh, yes, yes, sorry. So, our current abundances are food and water, and sunlight?

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: And our scarcities are flight, maps, safety, [*Austin laughs*] population, community, roads and paths, [*Keith laughs*] knowledge, and good tools.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: We were already struggling, and then the world wasn't. Um, okay so I think I'm going to try to alleviate a scarcity. I'm going to start a project that will alleviate a scarcity. Okay, I want to try and do something about this flight situation.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Because Fero can fly-

AUSTIN: True.

JACK: And, some of the Mistral who live in the community with us, uh, was their name Zogia?

AUSTIN: Zogia- I don't- did Zogia actually come back? Was that the one who came back? Was that the, um, like the wizard-y one?

JACK: Perhaps. We-

KEITH: [*over Jack*] I think it was.

JACK: We sort of- and then I assume more Mistral came-

AUSTIN: [*over Jack*] No, Zogia was the bad one, Zogia is-

JACK: [*over Austin*] Zogia is- Zogia is bad.

AUSTIN: [*over Jack*] -is done. Uh, Zogia- I think Xeralia, I think? Xeralia?

JACK: Xeralia.

AUSTIN: I'm pretty sure it was Xeralia.

JACK: Um, but it's really- you know when you can't drive, and you have to ask a friend to drive you anywhere?

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: Bad. Ah, I am- I am the person who can't drive. And so I think that-

KEITH: [*over Jack*] Is it asking Fero to fly places for you?

JACK: Yeah-

JACK (as LEM): Fero, could you go see the, um, go see the Weaver King?

JACK: I think that, ah, I'm going to try and put in place some kind of system of gliders.

AUSTIN: Who's doing this? Like, in the community?

JACK: This is... Fero... and Zeralia, and Lem.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: And, and possibly um... possibly Blue J?

AUSTIN: Okay?

JACK: Who has always had a sort of aptitude and interest in nature.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Is that fair to say?

AUSTIN: Yeah, definitely. In both nature and in, like, *stuff*. Like, Blue J is someone who is- I've always imagined as like someone who wants to know how things work, you know?

JACK: [*emphatically*] Yes, yes! Absolutely. And so I think that this- this project is drawing from big boughs of a tree branch above our heads that have like spinning sycamore seeds on...

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: Um, that Lem is watching and taking notes on how these things move and fall and catch the air. And then also, just like,

JACK (as LEM): Fero, be a bird! Stretch your wing out. [*Austin laughs*]

JACK: And then just like, drawing around the wing. Um, like making card models- card? Why did I say 'card' as if that's a thing that exists in a fantasy world? [*Austin laughs*] [*Keith laughs*] Like loose wood, stretched, sort of, skins, and cloths, and canopies, um... And I think this is a- I could see it as either a four or a five step clock. I'm happy to hear either.

AUSTIN: I mean, if this is going to remove that scarcity, I think it's at least a five. Right?

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Like it's a s- like- the fact that you can do it in a single step at all is remarkable, and only a thing that happens because you drew a card, you know?

JACK: Yes, yeah, absolutely. It- you know, it might even be multiple projects otherwise. I would make an-

AUSTIN: [*over Jack*] It would absolutely be, yeah.

JACK: -argument for it being a five instead of a six, because we have specific, sort of, source material?

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: -to think of, in terms of how flight works, and I-

AUSTIN: You don't have to figure out- you have people who fly, like you said.

JACK: We have a- we have multiple wings.

AUSTIN: Also, Callowkeen! We didn't even mention Callowkeen, but Callowkeen can fly too- we have a bunch of individuals who can fly.

JACK: [*over Austin*] Which is a completely different kind of- kind of wing.

AUSTIN: Yeah- and moths! Sylvia in the chat notes. Yes, moths are here too. So.

JACK: Yeah, absolutely.

AUSTIN: Between all that, like, yeah that's a lot of people who can fly.

JACK: But if we can diversify the means of flight, that would be incredible. Cause it could mean that, like, a lot of our guard, as well, might not currently be able to fly, but if they could now fly they could take positions on branches and things.

AUSTIN: How do they lau- I guess, let's come back around when you finish this. Cause it's-

JACK: Yeah, oh, I- *[inaudible]*

AUSTIN: *[over Jack]* -cause we're thinking about launching- *[inaudible]*

KEITH: *[over Austin and Jack]* That was just- that was the question I was gonna ask too.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Let's come back around at it, cause who knows, the next card we draw could be 'erase a project'.

JACK: Yeah, absolutely. And then *[laughing]* we know how that works, which is crashing.

AUSTIN: Yes. So you said five-

JACK: Five-

AUSTIN: Five. I'll put it down there.

JACK: Alright.

AUSTIN: 'Flight.' Um... boom.

JACK: Perfect.

AUSTIN: And I will already mark one of those so there's only five left.

KEITH: We should not- I know that that's just where the pie is for the clock, but we should not practice flying where that bug can get you?

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

JACK: Mmm mmm, no. 'Cause you'd just go-

AUSTIN: *[over Jack]* But how are you going to practice?

JACK: *[whistling/imitating a glider]* and then it goes CRONCH. *[Keith laughs]*

AUSTIN: Well, so... I'm gonna take the-

KEITH: [*over Austin*] I just have to say the bug zone, it's- it's set backward a little bit.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: You can tell by the thin branch, thin outline.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Also, you've got infinite directions to fly in other than that one direction.

AUSTIN: Well, so, I just want to really quick- before we get there, one, we're going to need a Sapkin scene, but before we get that, I'm gonna give you the Grey Duke scene. Not the Grey Duke, but the Grey Duke's Forces. So, ah... I can try to move these Grey Duke Forces but I bet it's gonna go poorly. But I'll try it anyway.

ART: I just want to make sure that you've seen the diplomacy stand.

AUSTIN: Ah, where's that- is that the little red boxes?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Great. Ah, I don't think that they're going to go to your diplomacy stand, I'm sorry to say.

ART: [*incredulously*] What?

AUSTIN: I know! [*Art sighs*] I know, you put all that work into it. They have other- oh this is gonna- I'm gonna move a bunch of things at once if I do it this way, so I'm not going to even try to move them. Um, god, what does- where would, you know- they're marching down this huge branch, this huge root. Where would Corsica Neue- where would the University put its troops? Would it march them past the Sapkin, would it have them be at, like, the edge of the refugee camp? Would it be- where would it be? Where they would like hold the- try to hold the line here.

SYLVIA: Maybe by the river, like the sap river- because if it is like, one, we have the gondola there that we should probably help make sure-

AUSTIN: [*over Sylvia*]: -is safe.

SYLVIA: -is safe and intact.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah yeah.

SYLVIA: But also, we're more familiar with this area than them, and that's a natural like, obstacle in their way.

AUSTIN: Totally.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

[Jack de Quidt's "[The Duke At Sunset](#)" starts playing]

AUSTIN: So. Everyone is at- Ephrim, are you on the field- like, are people, like, prepared- obviously you're not prepared, you don't have 'Safety'. [Austin snorts] But, you- do you- is there like a, a call to arms? I'm deferring to Ephrim here as like, the leader- one of the leaders of the University.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I think among the military forces there is definitely like, an 'all hands on deck' mentality here, because this could go bad-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: -and the last time we were marched on, the world kind of ended as we knew it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Um, so, yeah I think there is definitely an 'all hands on deck' uh.. vibe going here.

AUSTIN: So I think, you know, everyone is out in ranks, and you can kind of- you know, I think it actually- they wait to make their move until it's- not dark, because I think so many suns, it's tough to wait for like the best- like, for- 'Hey, this is a real, regular-ass night time.' But I think there's a moment of, you know, one of the many suns- or a couple of the many suns are out of view behind- behind huge, distant limbs. There's like a dappling effect of sunlight, like, out in the field in front of you. But it's kind of dark in front of where you are, and you see them kind of get closer and closer, and then you lose sight of them. I almost say you lose sight of them past the canyon, but before the sap. [pause] And they don't seem to show up, and everyone is like, confused. And Corsica sends out scouts, and I think the scouts return with news around the same time that you hear a- like, a *dreadful*, terrible cry [bug scream in Jack's music] as they remove the head from this giant insect above the University. And then march down and around, and end up spreading their forces effectively around the University.

[music ends]

AUSTIN: [cont'd] It's, you know- what it'll end up doing is- putting a spot here, to the East, past the sap river, North, where the big bug used to be, and West- ah, I'd say actually probably not this bug. I think this bug is actually probably still here, but maybe like Northwest of the fields.

Um, and, they have- you don't have an Abundance of 'Safety', but you no longer have a Scarcity of it. And they send a diplomat to meet with you, um.. What was the name of the person before? Do we remember? The name I didn't write down, like a fool. It was not a great name.

ALI: Wait-

JACK: The Grey Duke's diplomat?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I did not have a chance to write it down, I don't think. Let me double check, but I don't think I did. Or I had a chance, I just didn't do it, you know.

JANINE: Was it something like Tesh, or...

AUSTIN: It was some- it was Tesh, I think it was Tesh. Ah, so I think Tesh arrives, this time along with, um, a woman, another orc, named Morn, who like the general, she's the general of this group of the Grey Duke's Forces? And the two of them, like, come to town- I think there's probably like, with an honour guard, or something. And begin to spread word that they- you know, I think word begins to spread that they have done what Corsica's soldiers, what the University's soldiers could not, and begin to bring safety to the University. Um, [*Jack hmmphs*] and I think that they show up in front of your little, ah, diplomacy stand, Hadrian.

SYLVIA: Alright.

AUSTIN: And before, Ephrim, you show up in this scene, which you are welcome to, I think that they have to get a few minutes with Hadrian's [*Sylvia laughs*] lemonade diplomacy stand. Morn, who is this just brawlic- just giant orc warrior queen- reaches out a hand to shake yours. Are you seated, are you standing?

ART: I mean it's definitely a stool [*Austin laughs*]. I mean, I'm leaning all the way into the Charles Schulz drawing here.

AUSTIN: Right, good.

ART: You know, Hadrian with his head in his hand, like, and then he like, perks up when he sees them coming, and like, and I think will like stand up when they get there, you know-

AUSTIN: Mhmm-

ART: -wanting to make sure that- I want us to get the right starting image.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Panel one: Hadrian sitting behind this lemonade stand.

ART: Right, but like, there's a second stool but they're probably not gonna use it, so he would be like-

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: -go and stand next to it.

AUSTIN: Um, I think Tesh says-

AUSTIN (as TESH): We gave word that we'd be coming, but- I have to admit, I expected maybe more of a... building. Some sort of, um, interior meeting- but, it says 'The Grey Duke' right on your stand, so. I'm Tesh, this is Morn.

ART (as HADRIAN): I'm Hadrian, um- things are just really hectic, we haven't had time to really get anything together, um. I don't know if you- how much you saw, coming in, but- things have been a little rough.

AUSTIN (as TESH): We saw quite a bit, in fact, we did our best to take care of some of it.

ART (as HADRIAN): Yeah, um-

AUSTIN: Morn laughs, she's like- [*Austin does a short, huffy laugh*]

AUSTIN (as MORN): Was a good battle. You're a big man, I'm surprised I didn't see you out there.

ART (as HADRIAN): I'm in between- um... vocations right now, I mean I'm giving this-

AUSTIN (as MORN): [*derisively, over Hadrian*] Vocations?

ART (as HADRIAN): -diplomat thing a shot.

AUSTIN: And Tesh is just like-

AUSTIN (as TESH): Yeah- voca- people say the word 'vocation' sometimes.

AUSTIN: She is not impressed by your big words.

AUSTIN (as TESH): So-

ART (as HADRIAN): I killed a dragon once, I don't know if you heard...

[*several people snort*]

AUSTIN (as TESH): Great. Congratulations-

ART (as HADRIAN): Thank you!

AUSTIN (as TESH): -on that. So, has the community here, uh, agreed to our demands?

ART (as HADRIAN): Um... [*Austin laughs*] You know-

ART: This is when Hadrian realizes that-

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Hadrian!

ART (as HADRIAN): Yeah!

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Dragonslayer and diplomat, huh? You really- you're just a man of all- all trades, huh?

ART (as HADRIAN): Um, I'm just hoping that by the end of this thing they'll call me the diplomacy-slayer. [*Keith laughs out loud*] [*Dre laughs out loud*]

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): I'm sure either way, we will.

[*Austin laughs*] [*Keith laughs loudly*]

AUSTIN (as TESH): Lord Ephrim, of course.

AUSTIN: says Tesh.

SYLVIA: I'm gonna do a handshake with everybody here.

AUSTIN: Of course. You do.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

KEITH: Was that in character?

SYLVIA: Yeah, no- yeah, I said that out loud, for sure. [*Austin laughs out loud*] [*Keith laughs out loud*]

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Ah, let me just do a real quick handshakeroo here. [*Austin sputters*]

SYLVIA: I've turned into Ned Flanders, after the whole [*many people laugh*] incident, it's-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: It's been hard.

AUSTIN: Life's taken a change, yeah.

AUSTIN (as TESH): We believe our terms are solid. We have forces that you do not currently. We wish for this new world of ours to be well-organized. To have some of the things I know you're already invested in. Roads, communication, travel. And we think the best way to do that is to begin bringing people under one banner. The Grey Duke did this in the Buoy below, well, when it was below. And we seek to take advantage of the- take advantage of what we have to help bring a sense of order to the chaos around us. Our request for tax and tithes is well within a reasonable quantity, and frankly, if we had managed to come to terms before, we would have had to have made such a showy arrival.

AUSTIN: And Morn is like,

AUSTIN (as MORN): I liked the showy arrival part. I love it when they say no the first time and I get to cut off the head of some nearby cretinous beast.

AUSTIN (as TESH): I know, Morn, I know you do like that, I know.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): And when we say no the second time, what happens then?

AUSTIN (as TESH): Well, normally there is another- as Morn said, cretinous beast nearby. We slay that one, and the people want to start paying us taxes themselves. They know who will protect them.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): I agree, I'm sure they do at this point know who's going to protect them. And while I don't think your goals are inherently bad, I can agree with the roads and, sort of, taming our surroundings, ah- we have no plans on being subservient to anybody. And I'm happy to engage in diplomacy-

SYLVIA: Gestures toward the stand. [*Austin and Keith laugh*]

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): -with the Grey Duke himself, if he'd love to visit sometime, ah. But, for now, I'm going to have to respectfully decline, and...

ART (as HADRIAN): Respectfully decline!

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Was that something- was that something you learned in the book? Was- repeat a thing another person said for emphasis? [*several people chuckling in the background*]

ART: Yeah, and it's like- it's like- it's like being a hype man.

AUSTIN: Right. Uhuh. That's the number one rule.

ART: [*over Austin*] I think if we do this again, Hadrian's gonna have a big clock, on a- [*Sylvia laughs out loud*] -necklace.

AUSTIN: Um, I think at this point Corsica is like, stomping this direction, with her own personal honour guard. And just draws her sword as she approaches.

SYLVIA: Uh, I am going to- when she arrives, put- kind of raise my hand up to be like, not yet.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Corsica! I'm glad you could join us, I had just filled in our guests here that we have no plans on flying their banner. Ah, would you like to help back me up on that at all?

AUSTIN (as CORSICA): We'll fly their heads.

JACK: Shit.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Okay-

KEITH: Corsica got so mean.

AUSTIN: The world's in chaos.

SYLVIA: Got?

AUSTIN: Yeah, listen.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Now, we'd prefer if it didn't come to that.

AUSTIN (as CORSICA): Leave.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): I suggest you take my partner's suggestion here, and leave.

AUSTIN (as TESH): Disappointing. Disappointing. Ugh, well, maybe the people down the road in Alcyon will be better partners.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Maybe so. You're gonna have to ask them about that.

AUSTIN (as TESH): We already are. Have a good one.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Happy trails.

AUSTIN: I think Morn does the, like, fake-out lunge, and- [*Sylvia snorts*]

KEITH: What, like, head forward but-

AUSTIN: [*over Keith*] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KEITH: -made you flinch.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Did Ephrim- I- did not flinch, I don't have to marry my mother-in-law [*Austin and Ali laugh*] [*Keith laughs out loud*] [*Jack giggles*] So, y'know.

AUSTIN: I think Corsica just slowly sheathes her blade when that happens, and spits on the ground. [*Jack sighs*] Alright. This is a real problem.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

ART: Uhuh, yeah.

AUSTIN: This is not a, like- as a note, you- you're in a slightly better place with 'Safety' because that big bug is dead. And because they will be, like, killing other big bugs, and slowly bringing things into what they think of as order. Ah, but also you don't have 'Community'. You don't have 'Population'. Right? And so, there is no- there is no big *rah rah* patriotic group of people who feel like, tied to the Last University. So, things to work on. Ah, I'm gonna start making little soldiers and put them places.

JACK: We have no idea where the Grey Duke is coming from even, right? Do we?

AUSTIN: Well we've- we've seen- we saw them arrive here from the east.

JACK: So we know that they're like, vaguely- they could have just been out, like, roughing up another town in the East as well.

AUSTIN: Totally. Hard to say. *[pause]* Build some camps, is what I'll do. Anyway, now, we should talk to the Sapkin, which- Janine, were you the Sapkin?

JANINE: Yeah.

KEITH: Sorry, did Jack get the second half of their turn?

AUSTIN: This is still- we're still finishing projects.

KEITH: Oh we're still- oh okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Wow. This is a long turn.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

KEITH: That was a big project that got finished.

AUSTIN: It was.

KEITH: The Grey Duke project was a big one.

AUSTIN: Um. So yeah, who- who was trying to talk to the Sapkin? Was that Thrandir?

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: So then, Thrandir and Janine- or and- *[laughs]* yeah, Dre and Janine, you tell me what happens when it's time to go meet the Sapkin.

DRE: Oh, I don't know. Janine, do the Sapkin talk- how big are they?

JANINE: The Sapkin are like the size of most people. They're like, particularly made to be to scale with the humans, the elves, the, etc. Some of them probably like a little smaller, some of them a little bigger, there's a natural deviation.

DRE: So, what-

KEITH: There any halfling-size ones?

JANINE: Prolly a couple.

DRE: What do we think is the reason it took four weeks, I mean is that just the walk? Or is it like, Thrandir gets there and then you have to do, like, the RPG thing of helping them do all their chores, for them to trust- [*Austin laughs*] -and want to talk to you?

JANINE: Um, I think it's probably more that like, most of them have just been born.

DRE: Sure.

JANINE: Um, and they've been born as adults, but they've been born into a world that they don't know. They don't understand existence, um... they probably communicate with the Weaver King to a degree, but the Weaver King's big, and has been talking to someone else for a while, also. And like-

AUSTIN: Yeah, true.

JANINE: Ah, so I kind of imagine that they are just sort of- as they're being born they just kind of are collecting in a group and like, figuring stuff out a little bit. Um, so I kind of imagine part of this isn't necessarily Thrandir helping them with chores, but it's Thrandir, like, seeing them, like- I don't know, I'm picturing, like, a moment where someone's passing by with a wagon because they're collecting some kind of sap pool-adjacent thing that they need. Like a flower- that likes sap a lot or something, [*laughing*] I don't know. This is an ecosystem. Um, and the Sapkin-

DRE: We live in an ecosystem. [*several people laugh quietly*]

JANINE: And the Sapkin are like, watching, and then they're just- and you know, eventually one of them sort of figures out, like, oh, right, okay, this- if I roll this, I can put something on this, and then it's easier to move this. And then I can, like, move this rock over here. So I imagine part of what Thrandir's been doing has been hurrying that process along a little bit, in terms of, like, being the person who can model certain- certain things, if that makes sense?

DRE: Mhmm.

JANINE: Like, hey, here's how you put together a little lean-to so you're not sitting out in the pollen rain, cause the pollen just sticks to you and it's really messy [*Austin and Dre laugh*].

DRE: And then you can't really take a shower, cause you're sap.

JANINE: Yeah, so you just like, go in the sap and get another layer of sap- but then you've got the pollen trapped in you and then you're not all, like, clear and beautiful. You're all cloudy.

AUSTIN: Great.

KEITH: Wow, I can't believe these Sapkin already have beauty standards. [*Austin and Janine laugh*]

JANINE: They're learning from the world around them, what can I say.

AUSTIN: Uhuh. Yeah. Sure. So, Thrandir, what do you- what do you say to them once it's- once it's talking time.

DRE: Um.. so I think the original- like part of the original mission 'Talking to the Sapkin' was to ask what, if anything, they know about the Weaver King, and then also to just in general try to establish relations, especially in the context of the Grey Duke. Um... So I think it starts with Thrandir just asking, like, what is, if at all, their relationship with the Weaver King.

JANINE: They probably don't have, like, words for parentage. Um, the thing that they probably have at this stage is words for, like, approval, or something going well, or success.

AUSTIN: Are they speaking the common tongue at this point?

JANINE: Yeah, I think they've- I think they've picked it up, but that's what I mean about like, they've probably overheard 'Good job!' more than they've overheard 'The tree is my dad-mom-person' [*Austin laughs*] '-parent.'

AUSTIN: [*quietly*] Uhuh.

DRE: Mhmm.

JANINE: Ah, so I think- I think it's like a chorus of, like- there's some- there's a couple thumbs up, cause some people have been- some people picked up thumbs up and they're trying to get that going. [*Keith and Sylvia laugh*] And some- I think some of them indicate, like, 'big' in terms of like, they are small, so the bigger thing is- like- they're trying to hint towards, like, progeny- progeneration- progenisation?

DRE: Sure. I think- I think that's a word.

JANINE: I dunno. Something like that's a word.

DRE: Yeah. Um,

DRE (as THRONDIR): What can we do at the Last University to help, and become better friends?

JANINE: Ah, okay, I think they point to- no, they wouldn't want that. Never mind. [*laughs*] But I think the idea was like, no when you're made of sap, that's not good. Like, clothes wouldn't- you

wouldn't want that. Ah, I think they, um, they use like found words again- like they talk about, mostly like- I think it's mostly goods. Like, it's- they specifically want things to study. They want things to learn about, um, I'm trying very deliberately to not make this feel cargo-culty. Because I want them to feel like children- not children either, that's not right. [*Austin laughs*] But I want them to feel like they are in that stage of their lives, and this is not a quality for them as people, this is a quality for the point at their life that they are in, where the thing they want to do is learn and grow. That's what I'm trying to- to underscore here, just for clarity's sake. So you know, they want what boils down to basically the things that kids want. Like, building blocks are a fun toy, but also they teach you a lot about how physical objects interact, and about, like, how can you balance this thing before it falls over, and like, how can you- you know, they teach you these fundamentals of how the world works. So I think that the- you know, they all probably mention different things cause they're all different people, and they all have different interests, and different things have caught their eye in the time that they've been alive. But the common thread is probably that they just- they want things to- to learn from and sort of experiment with, and get their bearings.

DRE: Do any of them want to come live at the University? Like do they have to live by the sap pool?

JANINE: I think some of the older ones- like, some of the ones who were in the first sort of round, you know, the ones who are probably like, four or five weeks old at this point- and they're mostly like, hardened up and transparent- some of them seem like, very interested in that idea. The ones who are still kind of like, murky, and still like, soft... They are a little bit frightened by that, like they're not- they're not so keen on that. They would rather stay with- with their crew, and by the- by the sap finger. You know what I mean, the thing- it's sticking out of the pool.

AUSTIN: The sap finger. Yeah.

JANINE: The sap finger.

DRE: Mhmm. Austin at any point while Throndir's here do Grey Duke people come over?

AUSTIN: Mmm-mmm.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: No, they're pretty well regimented. They're not- they're not, ah, Ordennans- do you know what I mean?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Also, also, also, if at any point Fero wants to show up on the way back, I think that's also viable. Given that he specifically knows the Sapkin exist-

KEITH: [*over Austin*] That's true.

AUSTIN: -and also, the timing on that works out kind of well, you know?

KEITH: Yeah.

KEITH (as FERO): Hey Throndir.

DRE (as THRONDIR): Oh, hey!

KEITH (as FERO): How's it goin'?

DRE (as THRONDIR): Good-

KEITH (as FERO): I was just flying back-

DRE (as THRONDIR): What'd you find out?

KEITH (as FERO): I learned about these guys!

DRE (as THRONDIR): Oh, yeah. They're... It's kinda... it's been nice.

JANINE: One of the Sapkin says-

JANINE (as SAPKIN): Hey Fero.

KEITH (as FERO): Hey, what's goin' on?

DRE (as THRONDIR): Oh.

[*Austin and Sylvia laugh*]

JANINE: They talked- they talk to the Weaver King a little bit, they know. They got some-

AUSTIN: Mm-

KEITH: Yeah-

JANINE: They've got a little bit of information.

KEITH (as FERO): You all been expecting me to come back?

JANINE: One of them kinda shrugs.

KEITH (as FERO): Mmm. Cool-

JANINE: They don't know- they don't know about travelling.

KEITH (as FERO): Cool. Yeah, I was- I was over there, I came back over this way, so. Yeah, the Weaver King says that ah, he made them so that we could communicate better. So, you-

DRE (as THRONDIR): Okay-

KEITH (as FERO): You all been communicating?

DRE (as THRONDIR): Mhmm. Yeah.

KEITH (as FERO): Cool. Oh- ah- the-

DRE (as THRONDIR): [*over Fero*] I think some of them are gonna- oh, go ahead.

KEITH (as FERO): The hand is safe. We're good with the hand, nothing's, you know.

[*Austin laughs*]

DRE (as THRONDIR): Yeah I-

KEITH (as FERO): It's not- it's not gonna crush anyone or anything-

DRE (as THRONDIR): [*over Fero*] No, it hasn't squished me yet. And it could have, so.

KEITH (as FERO): [*over Throndir*] I know people were concerned the hand was just gonna go crush everyone, but we're good, I think. The Weaver King seems pretty, ah, pretty- self-conscious?

JANINE: Self aware or self conscious?

KEITH: [*still in Fero voice*] Both?

JANINE: Okay.

KEITH (as FERO): The size thing, I think that he's concerned about the size and about not being able to stop growing. And basically was like, hey if you, if- you know, figure out a way for me to stop growing, to let him know.

DRE (as THRONDIR): Okay. Ah, well, I think some of the Sapkin are gonna come back with me to the University, d'you wanna walk with us?

KEITH (as FERO): Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: Love to walk home with some Sapkin. Alright. You know, friendship made with the Sapkin, friendship made with the Weaver King. Puttin' it together out here, you know?

KEITH: I should have asked if, you know, maybe the Weaver King *could* crush these, uh, canoes- all these-

AUSTIN: N- they're like camps- they're like- [*Sylvia laughs*]

KEITH: Yeah. [*Keith laughs out loud, several others laugh*]

JACK: [*over laughter*] Destroy all these bark canoes!

AUSTIN: They're like, ah, circular.

KEITH: [*over Austin*] They're all surrend- they're all surrendering!

AUSTIN: You're right, they- raise the grey flag, that's it. Um. For people who have not- not seeing this, I've drawn canoes with grey flags- and they do look like canoes. They're supposed to be like, you know, circular wooden structures, like camps.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, and they're are surrounding the- everything. Janine, you also have- is it Janine's turn, or is it Jack's turn? Jack has- still the rest of their turn.

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: So, do a thing- or, sorry- 'Discover Something', 'Start a New Project', or 'Hold a Discussion'.

JACK: Ah, I want to Discover a Thing.

AUSTIN: Mhmm?

JACK: Ephrim, what is your, like, sleeping situation? What are Ephrim's quarters like in this- in this new space? [*Austin laughs*]

SYLVIA: I don't know if- like if- the tower's mostly intact still, right?

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

SYLVIA: So I don't think they've changed that much.

AUSTIN: [*over Sylvia*] Not much-

SYLVIA: I think he's still mostly living in the tower, ah, probably somewhere where he can like, get a decent view of things.

AUSTIN: Do you think like the top of the tower has probably broken?

SYLVIA: Yeah... especially after the confrontation at the end there. Cause didn't part of the tree smash into it, or did that get rewritten? I can't quite remember.

KEITH: We were- we were above the top of the tower, I thought. We were like-

AUSTIN: [*over Keith*] Yeah, you were at like a secret level above the tower. Um- but I just actually made-

SYLVIA: [*over Austin*] Yeah, I might be misremembering something.

AUSTIN: [*over Sylvia*] -during the Second Spring, the ground shaking and everything kind of removing, like I think to some degree it happened at a rate where, like, small buildings are probably fine, but like- you know, towers are tall. Um, and maybe- I guess really the question is like, is the reason this tower is safe because of magic? Has it been magically sustained in some way? Or-

JACK: Or is it just like, well built- or is it like a combination of the two?

AUSTIN: It's- it would- yeah, it would have to be a combination of the two, right? The answer can be, yes, it's still there, but I was just curious.

KEITH: Just like, an incredibly old spell that is still working?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: To protect it?

AUSTIN: Could be possible, right? Though I guess at this point, with magic changing so dramatically- which, which we should get to at some point too- I don't know.

JACK: So I think, ah, one morning, you know, maybe the morning after the incident at the diplomacy stand, [*Austin laughs*] um, there's a- Lem knocks on the door to Ephrim's receiving room, or quarters.

JACK (as LEM): Ah, Ephrim?

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Oh, Lem, yeah. Did you need something?

JACK (as LEM): Yeah. Have you got a moment?

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Yeah, absolutely, what's- is everything alright?

JACK (as LEM): [*anxiously*] There's something in my room...?

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): [*thoughtfully*] There's something in your room.

JACK (as LEM): Yeah, and I just wondered if you could- ah- help me get it out. Or... capture it. Like, this is-

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Is it a bug?

JACK (as LEM): It's- yeah- ah, it's kind of hard to say, and it's difficult for me to get close to, ah- or really look at- ah, but I've closed the door, and I think maybe if you came and helped, ah- Emmanuel is not- does not want to have anything to do with it.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): I- agh- yeah, alright. I- I'll see what I can do. Ah- lead the way.

JACK (as LEM): Okay.

AUSTIN: When you get to the door, Emmanuel is out front and he sees you, Ephrim, and he goes-

AUSTIN (as EMMANUEL): I don't want anything to do with it. [*Sylvia snorts*]

AUSTIN: And then walks away. [*Dre laughs out loud*] [*Keith laughs out loud*]

SYLVIA: He'll get his wish granted.

JACK (as LEM): [*claps*] Okay! Ah, you ready?

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): I guess- what- you haven't- yes, okay, fine. Yeah, let's go.

JACK: And Lem very gingerly opens the door, and uh, knocking against the rear wall of Lem's room, with the energy of, like, a bumblebee, is a sun. About the size of a marble. [*several people choke down laughter*] Um, when it touches the wall, it burns it, but not majorly- more like when a candle flame leaves, like, soot on something. And it, you know, makes a sort of strange, ah, sound, when it hits one of the wall surfaces. And it-

KEITH: What kind of sound?

JACK: Like- I don't know- well Keith, what sound do *you* think a sun would make?

KEITH: A small.. marble... sun...

AUSTIN: Uhuh?

JACK: With the energy of a bumblebee.

KEITH: I bet it sounds a lot like a bumblebee. I bet it s- I mean, cause like normally a big sun would be like a very low, deep thing.

JACK: So, like a small sun...

KEITH: So like imagine scaling that- when you scale the sun down, you have to also pitch up the- so it's gotta be- it's gotta be like- [*clears throat*] [*emits strange wavering whining sound*]

JACK: Okay, so-

AUSTIN: Yeah. There it is.

JACK (as LEM): -maybe you could- I- I tried opening a window, but it doesn't want anything to do with that. So I was just- and I know you have- [*Keith continues to whine like a mosquito in the background*] -some kind of history with these things, I've heard. And I thought maybe you could help in some way. Have you closed the door? Can we close the door?

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Okay-

SYLVIA: I close the door.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): [*in tones of disbelief*] How long has it been doing this?

JACK (as LEM): It was here when I woke up. I don't know how it got in. [*Austin laughs*]

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Alright, um... do you-

JACK (as LEM): Is there some kind of magic?

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): I don't- okay- so, I don't know if I've got the magic to deal with.. This.

AUSTIN: It's a good question. We don't know what- what's your situation with magic in general right now, Ephrim?

SYLVIA: Yeah, my situation with magic is confusing, because I can reach out to the Spring as well as the Heat and the Dark, I think-

AUSTIN: Yeah. I mean at this point it feels like- it's been a months- it's been, you know, months, at this point, right? So, have you been practicing, have you changed what you- like, can you confidently pull the Spring out, now?

SYLVIA: I think he's been doing it in secret, yeah-

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

SYLVIA: He's got like, his own like personal garden, but it's actually just plants that he's been, like, trying to manipulate with his powers in different ways.

AUSTIN: Love it.

SYLVIA: So-

AUSTIN: Ephrim in a Poison Ivy outfit. [*several people sigh*]

SYLVIA: There you go, everybody. [*Austin laughs out loud*] So... [*Sylvia sighs*]

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): I could try making, like, seeing how it reacts if I made, like, a plant in the middle of the room for it to, like, orbit... but other than that...

KEITH: [*makes buzzing noise again*] [*Austin laughs*]

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): It's a- it's sun. [*laughs*]

JACK (as LEM): Yeah.

KEITH: Wouldn't you have to make something even smaller to orbit *it*?

AUSTIN: Suns orbit things.

SYLVIA: Suns can orbit things.

JACK (jokingly as LEM): Fero, close the door behind you if you're going to- [*Sylvia laughs*]

KEITH: [*emits wavering whining sound*] [*Austin laughs*]

JACK (as LEM): I mean I just don't know if it's something maybe we could use, or if it's- if it's- but Emmanuel's not going to come in while it's here.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Yeah, okay. Um. [*Keith laughs*]

SYLVIA: My initial instinct is to, like, try and put it in a jar? [*Keith laughs out loud*]

JACK: Like- it's-

AUSTIN: [*over Jack*] Ah, the jar of bees returns. [*several people giggle*]

JACK: Well, like, I wonder if- I wonder if- if we're describing it as a kind of like, fairly lazy bumblebee, I wonder if it doesn't super mind about that?

AUSTIN: I don't know, you tell me!

JACK: Like, do we-

AUSTIN: [*over Jack*] It's your sun!

JACK: -get the shot of like, Ephrim standing on a bed, reaching- carefully reaching up, and Lem, you know, with his hands to his mouth, being like-

JACK (as LEM): [*faintly*] Oh no, be careful.. oh, what if it stings you?

JACK: Um, but just like, carefully ushering a sun into a jar, or...?

SYLVIA: I mean, I th- that's the- I'd like to do that because one, I think it's the quickest way to help Emmanuel enjoy his home again, uh, but two, this thing, I think needs further study, right? It's a sun-

AUSTIN: [*over Sylvia*] Oh, Uklan Tel would *love* to study this.

SYLVIA: Fuck that guy, though. [*Austin and Jack laugh*] We- we have other people who know magic. So yeah, I'll try the sun-in-a-jar technique.

JACK (as LEM): Ah, thank you. Thank you- I didn't want to go near it, um, wow. It's really in there, huh?

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Yeah, um, I- I'm gonna keep an eye on this thing. Thank you-

JACK (as LEM): [*over Ephrim*] Oh, please take it away, ah let me- you know, let me know how it- it's getting along.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Oh, for sure, you can- if you want to visit, just let me know. I get-like, you found it.

JACK (as LEM): Ah...

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Okay, it found you. But, same difference. [*Austin snorts*]

JACK (as LEM): Well, thank you Ephrim. Um, how was the Grey Duke?

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Coulda gone better, *definitely* coulda gone worse.

JACK (as LEM): Oh. Oh.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): I mean, worse is- people- I'll explain later- Hadrian did *great*. [*several people choke down laughter*]

JACK (as LEM): Wow- okay, wow.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Yeah, uh, real- really impressed at how he's taken to his new diplomatic role, but ah... No, no bloodshed, so that was- I'd consider that a victory.

JACK (as LEM): Okay, well. Thank you.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Yeah, no problem.

AUSTIN: Love it.

KEITH: Honestly, Emmanuel being- being freaked out by sun like it was actually a bug is hilarious.

SYLVIA: It's really good.

KEITH: It's so funny.

JACK: Ah, I'm gonna draw um, some little sun beams coming out of the tower-

AUSTIN: Great.

JACK: -because it's presumably- again, this thing is bright- it's too bright to look at directly, but the amount of light that it casts isn't actually super intense.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: It's just like looking at a lightbulb.

AUSTIN: Right. Which you also shouldn't look at directly.

JACK: No, don't look at a lightbulb directly.

AUSTIN: Alright. Ali, it is your turn to draw a card.

ALI: Yeah, let's do it. Draw... Okay, 'Outsiders arrive in the area: why are they threat? How are they vulnerable?' Um.. 'Outsiders arrive in the area: how many? How are they greeted?'

AUSTIN: So basically some outsiders are here, for sure.

ALI: Yeah! Yeah yeah yeah. Uh... more outsiders. Hmm. So we- we have an abundance of food and stuff, right?

AUSTIN: Yep. Food and water, yeah.

ALI: *[laughs]* I had this very specific idea based on an experience I had with a bird yesterday. But I feel like this- this card-

AUSTIN: Great start to a sentence.

ALI: *[giggles]* I feel like this should be like, a society though, and not like, oh, there's animals in the area. Right?

AUSTIN: It just said 'outsiders', it could be- it could be whatever- whatever moves your heart.

ALI: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Like if there are animals that have not been here before, I would call those outsiders.

ALI: *[laughing]* Fair. Um.. yeah, yeah, the experience that I was specifically think about was there was like a... a bird that was really hurt, that like didn't run away because it was eating food

and was like, 'eating this food is a bigger priority to me right now than being afraid of you.' And I feel like if there are like, animals that have existed in Hieron that were like pre-Spring... already adjusting to that, and then also adjusting to all this new shit...

AUSTIN: Mhmm?

ALI: They'd be like, less cautious about like, getting into our farm.

AUSTIN: *[drawn out]* Yeaaaaah.

ALI: Or like, being in our streets.

AUSTIN: Totally. They're just like, 'Fuck it, I can be wherever I want.'

ALI: *[laughing]* Right!

AUSTIN: 'I lived through- I already- you know, I lived, bitch, let's go.' *[Ali bursts out laughing]*

ALI: Like, 'I need some fuckin' resources, and-'

KEITH: So what you're saying is that there's now a bunch of different kinds of animals that are exhibiting raccoon behaviours.

ALI: I- yeah, I was thinking of like, specifically, like an infestation of like, rabbits, or something. Where it's like, they're, you know, they're always in the gardens, they're like stealing vegetables off of vegetable carts, you see like-

AUSTIN: *[over Ali]* Some really cunning rabbits, I love it. *[Jack and Ali laugh]*

ALI: Sometimes they're just like, nestled in between homes, like, just chillin'. Like- they just came-

JACK: *[over Ali]* We have no idea how many there are.

ALI: Oh, no.

AUSTIN: So wait, is this- is this 'why are they a threat, how are they vulnerable?' - this is 'why they are a threat, how are they vulnerable' then?

ALI: I think so, yeah, I mean-

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah.

ALI: -how are they greeted, probably by being shooed, I don't know. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Right right right. *[Ali continues laughing]*

ALI: But yeah, I feel like this answers the first question more which is like, oh, now they're like- we can see how all of this is affecting like, people, and now it's like, oh, all of these other animals are also afraid of these giant bugs and need food and shelter and stuff.

AUSTIN: *[drawn out]* Right.

ALI: So I guess I'm gonna draw a bunch of rabbits next to the *[giggles through talking]* University?

AUSTIN: Hell yeah. I love it. Um, I'm gonna update these clocks. Nothing completes this turn. Great, so, you know, what I will say out loud is, that definitely puts the food and water under threat, right? They are a thing to be dealt with. *[Ali laughs]* I wouldn't move it to 'Scarcity' yet, but like, you know.

KEITH: I mean, the good thing about rabbits, I guess, is that they are themselves food.

JACK: Yeah, I was also thinking about that.

ALI: Mmm-mm. I'm not-

AUSTIN: Maybe that's-

ART: I don't wanna eat giant hooligan rabbit. *[Ali giggles]*

KEITH: Did we say they were giant?

JACK: *[over Keith]* Are these giant?

ALI: I mean...

ART: I'd assumed they were tough. And I figured- *[Keith and Ali burst out laughing]*

JANINE: I mean, look, you eat lots of animals that can be hooligans. Animals can be hooligans-

KEITH: *[over Janine]*: Turkeys are always hooligans.

JANINE: Yeah, turkeys especially. Geese, geese are- I mean, you're not necessarily- most people- most of us don't eat geese. But a lot of animals are hooligans.

ART: I don't eat geese *because* they're hooli- I- I don't wanna get a reputation among the geese.

KEITH: Yeah, next thing you know you won't be able to go to the park.

KEITH (as GEESE): Hey, we know you!

JANINE: They're already like that, though, is my point! [*Keith laughs out loud*]

DRE: Yeah. They already make me late to work, like, once a week because they just stand in the road.

KEITH (as GEESE): [*hissing noise*]

JANINE: Ugh.

DRE: Ugh.

JACK: God, geese are fucking great. [*Keith laughs*]

AUSTIN: I love them, they're the best.

JACK: [*over much laughter*] Fucking love geese.

AUSTIN: ... Rule.

JANINE: The thing I'm thinking about now is what happened- what- I wonder if this happened in history and I just haven't seen an example of it, but like, you know how bugs get preserved in amber?

AUSTIN: [*warily*] Uhuh?

JANINE: What happens if a whole-ass rabbit falls in the sap and then like, a million years pass, is that just an amber rabbit?

JACK: Yeah...

JANINE: Is that a thing that's happened?

AUSTIN: I think so. Probably.

DRE: Probably.

AUSTIN: The top ten amber fossils here... ah, that's a bug, that's a bug, that's a bug, that's a bug, that's a bug... that's a salamander!

JANINE: Ooooooh.

AUSTIN: Twenty more-

KEITH: That's close- that's like a cross between a bug and a rabbit. [*Sylvia laughs*]

AUSTIN: Twenty million years old.

JANINE: Can you link that, the salamander? I just wanna see it.

AUSTIN: I mean, it's not great.

KEITH: Now that's- is that pre-mammals, twenty million years? Are these-

JANINE: [*over Keith*] That woulda been pre-mammals, yeah. I think.

DRE: [*over Janine*] Oh, yeah. That's a salamander.

AUSTIN: Ohhh- here we go. A chamaeleon and gecko-

JANINE: That's a small-

AUSTIN: -ancestors. Here, wait, wait wait wait, this is- this is- this one right here. [*typing furiously*] Oh that- that's a foot, that's not the one. It's like, rotating- I got the wrong one. One second.

JANINE: Actually, I'm wrong, I don't think that's pre-mammals, that- I'm wrong. Now that I'm thinking about it.

AUSTIN: [*under breath*] How do I get this to be the image... Give me the right image. Cause it's good.

JANINE: I want like the whole one.

AUSTIN: I know, well I'm workin- it's not- I'm saying, it's here, but I'm- it's not letting me grab the photo. Cause it's alternating with the foot one. Here let me take a screen-

KEITH: [*over Austin*] Can you do like a screenshot of it instead of doing a copy image address?

AUSTIN: [*over Keith*] -yeah, yeah yeah. There you go.

JANINE: [*in awed tones*] Wooooow.

AUSTIN: That's a fuckin' gecko. That's a gecko.

KEITH: [*also awed*] Oh wooow.

DRE: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Right there.

JANINE: Oh yeah.

DRE: Mhmm.

AUSTIN: So.

JANINE: Is that a bit of its tail broken off?

AUSTIN: ... Who could say?

KEITH: Wow, mammals, two hundred million years. That's so- such a long time.

AUSTIN: Time is long.

KEITH: That's so many years.

AUSTIN: Space is big.

SYLVIA: That's a pretty good run.

AUSTIN: Pretty good run for mammals, am I right?

ART: Just about over. [*several people snort*]

AUSTIN: Yeah. [*Jack laughs*]

JANINE: [*over continued laughter/groans*] Not necessarily mammals, but us, maybe.

ART: I think we're gonna take all the mammals with us.

AUSTIN: Yeah, just...

JANINE: I don't know, there's some-

AUSTIN: [*over Janine*] -one big trip.

JANINE: [*over Austin*] -there's some of them that could take over- that could- that could figure things out.

AUSTIN: I'm rooting for them, listen, no doubt. Um, Ali. You should either Discover Something, Start a Project, or Hold a Discussion.

ALI: Mhmm. Yeah. Right now, what's just like the high level on like, the day to day with the Grey Duke situation?

AUSTIN: Um, they are hunting nearby predators, um..

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: They are ingratiating themselves with local communities. Those little squares all around the place, that are like other little one-off individual things? They're building up relationships with those. They are trying to show that they are- they are basically already in charge here, you know? That's how they're operating. They're providing antihistamines to people.

KEITH: [*sniggering*] Damn.

ART: That's advanced technology.

AUSTIN: [*over Art*] They're employing people- they're like, you know, recruiting.

ALI: Hmm. Is there a way to under- uuuuuh-

AUSTIN: Uhuh?

ALI: Is there a way to undercut that by being like, 'Yeah!' -or is that, like, not enough?

AUSTIN: What do you mean by like, 'Yeah'?

ALI: I- well- I get that they're trying to strongarm us, right?

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

ALI: But like... if it's like, 'Oh, you can either work with the mappers or you can hunt with these people, and we're fine.' Is there a way to like assimilate the other way, that it doesn't seem like-

AUSTIN: I think that eventually you still hit that point which is like, whose money do they use?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Which is like, who- we have abstracted out things like taxes, but I promise you, y'all have been taking taxes from these people. To build stuff with.

ALI: [*over Austin*] Right- okay, fair enough.

AUSTIN: And to like- and, or taxes not necessarily in money, but like- that food that is growing on those farms is not just like, there are rich farmers who own all that food, who sell it to the rest of the population. Do you know what I mean, like-

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -there's some sort of system in place by which there is a collective state happening here. And so, once they start to strongarm in on that way, I think that there's still a conflict there. There's certainly ways to deescalate violence, but they're not- they're not currently threatening direct violence to your people anyway, you know what I mean, so.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Or they are, but just via you.

ALI: [*laughs out loud*] Yeah, it's like- it's- it's hard to think about what Hella would do there, so maybe I'm just gonna like- leave it to somebody else.

AUSTIN: Is this a thing you want to hold a discussion on?

ALI: Yeah, I guess so. Um...

AUSTIN: Cause that's the other thing, is like, you could get a temperature check from the community, um, and feel out whether or not people- I mean, it's your question, basically, or your statement. You can either start with a statement or start with a question, if you start with a statement you don't get a follow up. If you start with a question, you can wrap back around and say something at the end.

ALI: Um, yeah. I guess I'll have a discussion with people, in that case. I think that Hella kind of collects the- the war table, essentially...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah?

ALI: We have a war table again- I don't know how often we meet up, but. Here we are. Um. I think the- the like, statement that I'm going to start off with at least, is that like,

ALI (as HELLA): I don't necessarily think that what the Grey Duke is doing right now is wrong, but I think that we as a community have seen people use these similar tactics and it's gotten out of hand. So I'm taking suggestions on how to deal with it.

AUSTIN: I think Chatterchin is there. And he says,

AUSTIN (as CHATTERCHIN): Honestly, I think we should um, I think- heh- maybe we- seems alright. I think- heh, why not just, become the Last University that's tied to the Grey Duke? There's gonna be other big powerful countries out there soon. You know? If it's not the Duke, maybe it'll be somebody else.

AUSTIN: Fero.

KEITH (as FERRO): I don't even like listening to Ephrim, why would I listen to some... Grey Duke? [*Austin snorts*]

AUSTIN: Adaire.

JANINE (as ADAIRE): He seemed okay when I talked to him in the Buoy. He was like, I don't know- I mean, he gave me that really cool map, that map was very interesting- it was useless, and we didn't need it, [*Austin laughs*] but it was cool. It had like those layers? I just like looking at it sometimes. Ah, and it was nice of him to give me that, I- I think I lied to him- um. [*several people start to laugh*] He was really cool about it, cause it wasn't a great lie. So he's not, like, he didn't seem *bad*. I agree he's being kind of a dick, but you know, ev- every- have you seen Corsica lately? Shit. Corsica's worse than the Grey Duke, if Corsica- okay, if Grey Duke was on our team, if we were originally team Grey Duke, and Corsica was the one who walked up and did her whole thing? That would be way different, wouldn't it? Who's with me? That would be way worse. [*Keith, Ali and Austin burst out laughing*]

AUSTIN: Who's with me? [*several people continue laughing*] Um... Thrandir.

DRE (as THRONDIR): Ah... I think it'd be different if they came and said, 'Hey, would you like to join us?' but instead they said, 'Hey, you're going to join us.' And-

AUSTIN: Well, we don't know what they said, because we only heard through Corsica.

DRE: That's true.

KEITH: Well, what they then did send someone that said 'You declined our first offer.'

AUSTIN: Totally!

KEITH: ‘-now, you won’t be able to decline our second.’

AUSTIN: [*over Keith*] I just- I just wanna underline that there’s a degree of remove from whatever that conversation is, and we’ll never get it. But go- continue, Throndir.

DRE (as THRONDIR): But yeah, basically, if someone is coming to say, ‘You *will* join us, or blank,” I’m not interested in working with them.

AUSTIN: Ephrim.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): Yeah, I have no interest in being subservient to another prospective empire. No matter how noble their intent is. I don’t think we need to go to war with them, but if war is what they’re ready for, that’s... that’s out of my hands.

AUSTIN: Hadrian.

ART (as HADRIAN): I’m- I guess I’m with Throndir on this one, I don’t like the idea of losing our degree of self-determination, that’s very important to me right now. Um... But I don’t think we have the capacity for war right now. I hope it- I kinda just hope it- it finds a way to mellow. [*Austin laughs*]

AUSTIN: And Lem.

JACK (as LEM): That was like a threat, right? This is... when you walk into a place with a bunch of troops and cut the head off, like, a gigantic prehensile-tailed bug, you know.. I feel like the bug is a- is a- representation of- of something else, and that might be us. I don’t want to give into this threat, but, like Hadrian said, ah... we’re in no place to fight.

AUSTIN: Alright. Good discussion. [*Ali snorts*]

ALI (as HELLA): Thanks for the tips everyone.

JANINE: [*laughing*] I just- I just need a moment here cause- cause Austin jokingly mentioned them giving out antihistamines. Which made me wonder what kind of antihistamine would actually-

AUSTIN: Exist?

JANINE: -be feasible?

AUSTIN: Mhmm?

JANINE: In Greece, ah, Pliny the Elder said that using ephed-

AUSTIN: [*over Janine*] Classic Pliny.

JANINE: -dra and red wine to cure asthma, and also said that if you drank the blood of wild horses, fox liver, in red wine, or millipedes soaked in honey, that would also do the trick for pollen.

JACK: Wow...

AUSTIN: The honey is the trick there.

ART: They *never* recommend red wine anymore-

AUSTIN: Right?

ART: -I think that might have been a placebo.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I wonder if there was like a local production quality to that. Cause that's a thing that people recommend, is like, eat local honey.

JANINE: [*over Austin*] Probably. He- he stole the ephedra thing from ancient China.

AUSTIN: Oh, that motherfucker.

JANINE: But the honey thing does make sense. The millipedes I don't know about-

AUSTIN: I don't- I don't know about all of that millipede shit, yeah, no thanks.

JANINE: But local honey, maybe.

AUSTIN: Local honey. Alright, I'm gonna draw a card. Ah, the King of Summer. Love to see it. 'Summer is fleeting. Discard the top two cards off the top of the deck, and take two actions this week.' So, the next two cards I'm gonna draw just don't exist. Um.. ah, let me just- I'm gonna move this over here for a second. Do you want to see the cards we're missing out on, or should I just take them?

KEITH: I wanna see.

JANINE: [*over Keith*] Just take them.

JACK: Uhh, just take them.

JANINE: I don't wanna see them, they're not gonna be- if you don't wanna see them-

KEITH: You can- you can give them to me and I'll read them to myself if you want.

AUSTIN: I've already drawn a card, people who don't want to see, look away really quick, I'm holding it in my hand, I can't just- I can't do anything with it, I have to put it down. So don't look, if you don't want to see it.

DRE: Oh!

SYLVIA: Ohhh.

AUSTIN: Huh. That's a good one to be-

JACK: [*over Austin*] I looked and I actually feel good about missing this one.

KEITH: Yeah, this- okay.

JANINE: Yeah, I take it back, yeah it's fine. [*Austin laughs out loud*]

AUSTIN: So we're- we're discarding the Eight of Summer, 'Someone tries to take control of the community by force. Do they succeed? Why do they do this?' or 'A headstrong community member decides to submit one of their ideas in motion. Start a foolish project.'

KEITH: That's great, because we're discarding this card so we don't have to do that, but also that means that is explicitly not happening.

AUSTIN: And then the other one- there, you're losing the Five of Summer, 'A project finishes early. What led to its completion?' or 'The weather is nice and people can feel the potential all around them. Start a new project.'

DRE: Hmm.

KEITH: So that one was a nice one, but I would rather have lost both than have-

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: -than have both.

ART: I mean, we could've picked 'They try to take control of our community and do they succeed?' No. We could've...

AUSTIN: Right, you could've metagamed it, sure.

ART: We coulda *handled* a problem.

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

JANINE: If we lied about our capabilities in this moment, sure. [*Austin laughs*]

AUSTIN: Um, alright, so. 'Take two actions this week.' I'm gonna start two clocks. The first is that Corsica Neue is raising an army. Uh, and, once-

ART: [*resigned*] Yeah, this feels like a-

AUSTIN: Getting-

ART: Corsica feels like a problem we have not been addressing properly.

AUSTIN: Getting some people together. I mean listen! [*laughs*] Ah, God- does she have a cool name for it? Um.. no. She was Queen of the Unstill, but, you know, it is not just an army of the Undead this time, so. That's a six step clock, because this is a big- this is like- she's trying to raise an army, she's trying to get together like, supplies, she's diverting stuff from, like- she's, you know, you don't have good tools. She isn't helping matters because part of what she's doing is trying to take some of this new metal and put it towards armaments. She's like trying to build out better, you know, defences for the University and the nearby communities. And for those people who are loyal, this is probably looked upon as being, like, 'Okay, sure. That guy cut off that big bug head.' ...What is the little orange that's being drawn on the ground? And also-

JANINE: I forgot that there were a couple Sapkin in town now, so I'm just putting that that there.

AUSTIN: Oh, thank you, good call. Yes. Ah, I'm gonna draw Corsica's army here, underneath the plants, underneath the agriculture. And then-

KEITH: Six step?

AUSTIN: Six step, six step. Gonna take a while. Takes a while to raise an army. And then, the second action is gonna be discovering something new. So, just looking at my notes to decide which- which thing to introduce. I think that a- someone- Ephrim? Someone comes to get you- and it probably wouldn't be Ephrim. I think it would probably be Hella- Hella, you're still active with the guard?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: They find strange- guards run to you- ah, I'm finding something new- and say that they found someone new- they found a body, down by that weird mushroom grove. A man who looks like, kind of old and dishevelled and like, dirty. His hair is messy. They just like, were on a patrol, and found a body in the- in the place- in the weird mushroom grove. And they have him in the 3 o'clock tower, and they take you to see him. And... I'm trying to think if you've met him. Yeah, of course you have. It's Alyosha.

ALI: Oh! I don't think I have, but sure.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah you did-

ALI: [*over Austin*] wait wait- a hundred percent-

AUSTIN [*over Ali*] You *absolutely* met him- one hundred percent.

ALI: [*over Austin*] Okay, yeah. [*laughs*]

AUSTIN: And Alyosha has arrived. Found in the found ring, fairy ring, of mushrooms to the south. And is not talking. And is, like, barely conscious. Um, and looks bad. Looks, you know.. There's a degree of it that's like skin and bones, that's like- a lot of his muscula- like, you haven't seen him but the camera has seen him while he was down in the forge, and he looked strong. But he doesn't look like that anymore, and he looks like he's gained ten years. And they found him, and he was, you know, coughing up blood, and was barely able to- to be woken, but they've moved him now, and they're- they're taking care of him. So. I'm gonna draw a little bed somewhere. [*someone snorts softly and mutters under their breath*]

ALI: Does, like, if Hella goes down there, does he respond if she tries to talk? Like, in terms of like-

AUSTIN: I think a nonverbal response, you know?

ALI: Okay. Cool.

AUSTIN: So yeah. So yeah! Put that on the table. That is my turn. I have to advance clocks- let me advance clocks before I forget that. Flight project: up to 3 out of- or, 2 out of 5, right? Uh.. boop. Or 3 out of 6 depending how you look at it. The University Alliance finishes and the first wave of Mappers finishes. Tell me about those projects, whoever was in charge of them. Ah... who was in charge of the Mappers? Was that a Janine project?

JANINE: Me. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Tell me about this wave of Mappers going out and coming back.

JANINE: So the Mappers were the second phase of the Map School thing, so we've trained people up- got 'em decent... and then sent them out into the world. And like, individually on their own a lot of these maps are trash. Um-

AUSTIN: [*uncertainly*] Uhuh? [*Keith laughs in the background*] [*Dre laughs heartily*]

JANINE: Here's the thing that- a lot of the maps are- there all- they all- they all have their own little intricacies and differences and foibles, based on whoever made them. Everyone's got their own read on- on this complicated- very complicated situation. This is a situation that is not easy to map.

AUSTIN: Mhmm?

JANINE: And they were trained on like, remember when the world was mostly flat and stuff?

AUSTIN: [*laughs*] Yes.

JANINE: They're doing- they're doing their best- but the important thing is that, collectively, these maps are useful. Like, individual maps have mistakes and individual maps can be difficult to interpret at points, but when you combine them with the context of other maps, you can see commonalities. You can start to see, okay, well, these three people all had this different idea of what this is, but from this idea I can interpolate like, where the mistake they are making was. And like, I can sort of see, oh right, I can see how *this* would look like *that*.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: So when you look at them as a whole, which is the thing that Adaire is doing as they come back, you get a sense of, like, oh, actually there is- there is a logic that you can piece together from these. And there are portions of each map that are good on their own, but you know, a lot of it is this sort of greater context of putting it all together. And the important thing is there are a lot of people out doing this now, and there are a lot of people who can revise things and be like, 'Hey, you know, I took so-and-so and what's-her-name's maps and this thing is changed' or like 'This thing, I think they actually made it too long, and it's like this.'

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So I think there is now sort of a- a living and conscious record of the surroundings. Which, I would say should deal with that scarcity of- of maps. Like it's a- it's a-

AUSTIN: Mhmm. That ain't nothin.

KEITH: Well it is maps.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it is maps. Alright! I've moved maps over- alright, so then, who's in charge of this Alcyon relationship?

SYLVIA: Think that might have been me?

AUSTIN: That sounds right. So where does this play out? What happens here?

SYLVIA: Um... I think it's like, the- one of the reasons why I think this was a multi-stage thing despite us having a pretty much direct line-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Was that it was just like, a lot of days of talking out, like-

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

SYLVIA: -the situation and stuff like that? And I think the big point that Ephrim wanted to drive home about what this would be, would be like, mutual cooperation, no like- like a peace treaty, obviously, but also open communication and open borders and stuff with Alcyon as well as like, if you guys ever need to- cause, like, I don't know- we have them on this little foot here?

AUSTIN: They are on the foot.

SYLVIA: I don't know how steady that is. But it's like- *[Dre laughs]*

AUSTIN: True!

SYLVIA: -if you guys ever need to come here, you're- it's always welcome.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Like, keeping each settlement's independence, while also helping each other to survive, basically.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, I think that the thing that Tabard wants to, like, basically- the thing Tabard promises you is a hundred percent the open borders, hundred percent the- the like, any sort of- if you always want to come try to live in Alcyon, that's cool. But the thing that he and that they in collective, are definitely wavering on, is like, they are not going to agree to help you fight the Grey Duke. They feel- you remember what their culture is like?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which is that it takes forever for them to make any sort of major decision? And so any sort of aggressive action, especially because they are still protected by the, kind of, poisonous plants that they've cultivated? That allow them to have really good choke holds- um- or not choke holds, choke points. *[laughs]* Ah *[through laughter]* they just eat these plants and they just get you in that, in that good choke hold after that. *[Dre chuckles]* They have really good choke points because of that, and also just- have kind of cultivated, effectively, kind of biological gates, biological defence walls, because organic beings still can't safely pass through their fields and stuff. And they have enough of that stuff to where, if they wanted to bring out more, they could. Their culture is like, pretty- is playing pretty conservatively in terms of the Grey Duke stuff. The Grey Duke doesn't threaten them as easily as he threatens you because of that? And so there's a degree of hands-offedness from them? Which is to say, they are willing to continue to trade with you, and to share knowledge and information, and be in a non-aggression pact- like, what is definitely not going to happen is they are not going to ever help anyone try to invade you. Unless you do some really, truly bad shit down the line. But they are not, like, they are not- you're not going to see them marching with the Grey Duke any time soon. But what they aren't willing to do is like, sign a defence treaty, you know?

SYLVIA: Yeah. I don't think Ephrim was really expecting that even.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Our whole- like it would have been a nice bonus, don't get me wrong.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

SYLVIA: But... now after that scene we had with the Grey Duke's emissaries, it's a lot more about just, like, one, being like, 'Hey! We can coexist with this other settlement. Maybe we should try that with you too!' But also just like, shoring up the fact that we can be, like, comfortable with our nearest neighbour, you know?

AUSTIN: Totally. Do you wanna add, maybe like another- you wanna add something to the map to represent that there is like- a-

SYLVIA: I could add like another car on the gondola, going the other way-

AUSTIN: *[over Sylvia]* That's also what I was thinking, one hundred percent, so.

SYLVIA: *[over Austin]* Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, awesome.

SYLVIA: Okay, I'll do that.

AUSTIN: Um, cool. Alright. That is... my turn. That is my turn. Keith, it is your turn-

KEITH: [*over Austin*] Hulloooo.

AUSTIN: -it is your turn now. Draw a card.

KEITH: Draw a card...

AUSTIN: Oh boy.

KEITH: 'A project fails, which one, why?' [*vehemently*] 'Something goes foul and supplies are ruined, add a new scarcity.' [*Austin huffs a laugh*] [*someone sighs worriedly*]

AUSTIN: Uhuh?

KEITH: Wow.

AUSTIN: We're gettin' there. We're in it. [*Sylvia sighs*]

KEITH: Move this to the side so that I can see what we're workin' with-

SYLVIA: [*over Keith*] I think those are the only two projects.

AUSTIN: The only two projects are the flight project and Corsica's army.

KEITH: Man, well, I know what I'm leaning towards... [*Dre laughs*] Yeah, Corsica's army fails.

AUSTIN: Why? What happens?

KEITH: Corsica raising an army is based on- on three things that are Scarcities. We don't have good tools, we don't have the population, and there isn't a good community-

AUSTIN: Mhmm?

KEITH: -of like, people who are interested in each other. Like, it just doesn't work.

AUSTIN: So what's that look like, though? What's that- what's that materially look like? Because if that- if this card hadn't been raised, she would have continued. It would have- it would have succeeded. So, what are like- illustrate how those things interfere.

KEITH: Ah... so I think that- so, when- I think it was Ali- introduced the tools Scarcity, was that Ali or-

ALI: Janine.

KEITH: Janine?

AUSTIN: Ah.. Janine?

JANINE: Me, yeah.

KEITH: Was it- were you also the one that said that, like, when you want to build something you've got to- like a lot of times smiths will want to take something else and melt it down and turn it into the new thing?

JANINE: Yeah, things need to be reforged rather than created whole.

KEITH: Yeah. So the way that- I think that the way that this worked was that Corsica was trying to recruit people for the army and then was like 'Okay, what do you got that you're gonna turn into your sword?'

AUSTIN: Right. Right.

KEITH: And I just- and people were like, 'What?' [*laughs*] And she's like, 'Yeah, you've gotta, you know, you've gotta make a sword, what are you going to [*inaudible*]

AUSTIN: [*over Keith*] So even- are you going- 'Okay, use this scythe or this sickle that you normally use'. 'We don't have those right now. Our sickles are made of trash.' These will not be good weapons, even as like farmers turned into a militia.

KEITH: Yeah. So I think it's- it's like, literally hard for her to recruit and then like, these potential recruits are being asked to supply their own...

AUSTIN: Right. Supplies.

KEITH: -their own supplies, and people are just refusing.

AUSTIN: Yep. Alright.

KEITH: I bet she's pissed.

AUSTIN: Oh, of course! But like, and also terrified.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, the Grey Duke has a lot of people here.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, so I'm gonna-

JACK: [*over Austin*] It's difficult as well, right, because when we met Corsica, she like, raised an army of people with a combination of charisma and, like, and iron will, right?

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: And for that not- for her to try and do something similar in the face of this and it just go like, everyone just be like, 'Uh, no.'

AUSTIN: 'No.' Yeah. 'We don't have it.' Ah, I've removed the flag from her camp, rendering it empty and abandoned. Um, I've advanced the flight project clock, only two more weeks on that. Fero, or Keith, Find Something New, Create a New Project clock, or Hold a Discussion.

KEITH: I... along the same lines- I'm thinking of maybe trying to- I want to try and get some of the Grey Duke's troops to defect.

AUSTIN: How do you go about that?

KEITH: Um.. I think it's- I think it's the same way that they're- or it's a similar way to what they're trying to do to us and to the communities around the Last University, where they're offering something? And, ah-

AUSTIN: Mhmm? What are you offering?

KEITH: I think it's housing. I think like, we can- you can just move here. Like, you don't have to be working- you don't have to be in a camp, like one step away from war. You can be living- you can be like, living. Instead of that.

AUSTIN: What are y- where are you getting the housing, is my question?

KEITH: Building it.

AUSTIN: With what? You don't have tools.

KEITH: We have wood. We have plenty of wood.

AUSTIN: You don't have good tools. So I think this is one of those multi-step things. Like, I like this plan, but this is going to be a multi-step thing, where you're right, you can start to offer them

things. But you need things to offer them, and the things you have right now are food and water, sunlight, and maps.

KEITH: And they've got at least one of those.

AUSTIN: They definitely have- [*Keith bursts out laughing*] -they definitely have at *least* those three things.

KEITH: You think they've got maps?

AUSTIN: I bet they have maps. They found you.

KEITH: That's true.

AUSTIN: Or, maybe they don't have- maybe you have better maps than them, honestly.

KEITH: Yeah. I bet we do.

AUSTIN: I mean honestly- I would bet you that they would be interested in your maps, but like.. They meaning the Grey Duke more than-

KEITH: Right. I don't want to give the Grey Duke our maps.

AUSTIN: But! But like, this is the thing is like: Okay, if you want to start the long process of this sort of defection campaign, it should start with how to you start building stuff- how do you make those tools not be shitty. Is there an end around here somewhere, is there another way either to make good tools or to sidestep needing tools to build stuff, or-

KEITH: Well- so- we have materials, um.

AUSTIN: But you don't have an abundance of materials. That's not a thing that you have.

KEITH: No, no no no. That's not where I'm going with it. We have materials that we've used.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: But have not, I don't think, taken full stock of yet. And I think-

AUSTIN: [*over Keith*] You know what- a thing you do have- a thing that I will say that is true about this situation is, people left. So there are abandoned houses- from when-

KEITH: That's true.

AUSTIN: -people went to the moon. So I do wanna- looking at all the stuff, part of the reason you have a low population is cause a lot of people left to go to the moon. [*laughs*] Ah, which mean also that-

KEITH: Taking those houses.

AUSTIN: There are some empty houses around.

KEITH: Well, let me put up my second idea and we can decide. My second one was to start a silk farm.

AUSTIN: ... Okay...

KEITH: We've- we used those threads already as-

AUSTIN: [*over Keith*] It's true! You know it works.

KEITH: [*over Austin*] -as material.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And then we kind of just forgot about it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And I bet you can make some sick tools out of, like, magic spiderweb.

AUSTIN: I think that's a good plan. What's- does Fero kick into this? Is this Fero's idea, or is this a broader communal idea?

KEITH: Um, I th- the housing thing probably is- ah, I don't know, cause Fero's done house stuff before too.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: They both sound like things that Fero would have a hand in.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

KEITH: But especially the wrangling a giant monster spider?

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

KEITH: That sounds like Fero, so, yeah. Let's do that.

AUSTIN: How long do we think that that takes? To get the silk farm up and running?

KEITH: Five steps?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that sounds right to me.

KEITH: It might be six, but we've got a magic druid.

AUSTIN: You've got a magic druid who can talk to giant animals.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm down with that.

KEITH: We can pay- we can pay the- we can talk to the spider, pay the spider in rabbits.

AUSTIN: True!

KEITH: And the spider will donate silk.

AUSTIN: God, yeah, do you negotiate that out? That's great. Love it. Silk farm, five steps. Let me fill in that first step. Boom, alright. Five steps.

KEITH: It's the world's only truly cooperative farm.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* God. *[Keith laughs out loud]*

AUSTIN: Alright. Janine- oh definitely, Ali. That's true. The moths can make shit with the silk, we've seen that happen already.

ALI: Mhmm.

AUSTIN: Right? They make coins and stuff, so. Not that- I mean, coins are probably easier, but- than, like, farming equipment. But still! -than hammers...

JANINE: Some farming equipment involves discs.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally! Ah.. go ahead and draw a card, Janine.

JANINE: Ewwwww.

AUSTIN: Ohh, rough! Rough!

JANINE: [*over Austin*] I also drew a line, oops.

AUSTIN: I'll delete the line. You worry about the card.

JANINE: 'The eldest among you dies, what caused the death?' or 'The eldest among you is very sick. Caring for them and searching for a cure requires the help of the entire community. Do not reduce project dice this week.'

AUSTIN: Yikes.

JANINE: Um... I mean, I have an answer for this, kind of.

AUSTIN: Uhuh?

JANINE: That builds on what Dre has already established, because I think the eldest among this community would be the Weaver King. If we're considering the Weaver King within this community right now, which I kind of am.

AUSTIN: Yeah, definitely. You've made contact, y'all are talkin', you've got some Sapkin here.

JANINE: We've established that the Weaver King is in a situation that the Weaver King does not super understand, and is not super comfortable with which is-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: -they're getting bigger and don't know how to handle that.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And in a world where the world itself is a tangle of branches there's a point where like, there's a point where you stop being a creature on that world and you start being, like, a person clinging to driftwood, by your toe. Like there needs-

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: There's a point where you have to stop growing or else you just float off into space or something? Um, and that's not good. [*laughs*] That's probably very terrifying.

KEITH: It's like my grandma used to say: it's bad to grow so much that you float off into space.

AUSTIN: That's what she said!

JANINE: Grandmas- grandmas know everything. Um, so I think- even though this is- you know, we've previously established this, but now we have Sapkin in the community and they are- at this point I think the ones- the oldest ones who are in the community- and every now and then a new one prolly joins in- but they're probably fairly caught up. Like, they probably still struggle here and there but they can communicate, they are immersed in this society. And I think they're in a position now to communicate, you know, information from the Weaver King. And to communicate some priorities there in terms of like, yeah this isn't- this is *bad*. Like, there is a point where a creature this large, a being this large, no matter how benevolent it's attempting to be, just holding on is going to destroy things-

AUSTIN: Yep.

JANINE: -is going to cause tremendous damage just trying to survive. And it's- you know, naturally it's not gonna just try and, like- you know.

AUSTIN: Uhuh. What- so which of these two are you leaning towards? Is it dying?

JANINE: [*over Austin*] The very sick one. No, it's the very sick one.

AUSTIN: Okay, okay. So-

JANINE: 'Caring for them and searching for a cure requires the help of the entire community, do not reduce project dice this week.'

AUSTIN: So what is the solution here?

JANINE: [*over Austin*] I started weavers, I'm not gonna end weavers Austin!

AUSTIN: I don't know, someone could. I've started a lot of things and I do my best to end them all. [*Sylvia laughs*] Um, what is the- what is the solution here? How does the community find a solution this week?

JANINE: I don't know that- is that what- I mean I don't think that's what the thing is asking, right?

AUSTIN: I guess- I guess not, I guess it's saying it's just that it-

JANINE: 'Caring for them and searching for a cure requires the help of the entire community.'

AUSTIN: Yeah- my read on that is that you're so busy trying to keep them from dying that you don't get to do other stuff that week? But I guess you're right, it doesn't necessarily mean that that person stops being sick. It just means that they get to keep living for now?

JANINE: I think cure would need to be like a project.

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah.

JANINE: So I think the thing maybe that's- maybe the, the thing in particular that's happening that is being responded to is the Weaver King has grown to a point where, like, they need to adjust their footholds. And they don't know where it's safe to do that, because like the hand, they're not super aware completely of what the risks are in those areas. Like it's- they're trying to be careful but there's only so much they can do. So I think it becomes a thing where like the mapmakers maybe mobilize for a bit to be like, 'Okay, there's nothing in this area, so you're cool to like, rest your arm here. Rest your one arm here, and then you can loop another arm over here because this is also a big empty spot' and- and it's sort of a thing where people have to mobilize to actually-

AUSTIN: Right. That makes sense.

JANINE: -make sure that this is true, and communicate it properly, and get the Sapkin in the loop, and all that stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I'm not gonna have Dre redraw this giant weaver arm, that seems like a lot of work.

JANINE: No, that's- there's a lot of strokes in that and Roll20 is not advanced enough to manage it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [*Dre laughs*] Alright. Uh, well, project clocks- or, dice- don't reduce this turn. So, what do you do with the rest of your turn?

JANINE: Where was Corsica's camp again?

AUSTIN: Good question.

KEITH: It was this one.

AUSTIN: Keith actually might have a thing here, that's true. Unfortunately. But I don't know if we wanna do it. [*Janine makes noise of distress*] But that is- that is the truth about-

JANINE: I thought Red Jack was like a constantly churning mushroom man, or something.

AUSTIN: But there's been one Red Jack and it's been the Red Jack since- since Severea emerged- since Severea came back to life after Samot killed her? So, before Galenica. Red Jack is older than Galenica.

JANINE: Okay. Yeah...

AUSTIN: And this is- this is a conversation we need to have, we can't just like- as much as I'd like to- as much as I like the Weaver King stuff, I would- we would be remiss to not actually have the conversation about whether or not this is Red Jack instead.

JACK: Um... Okay, you know about the world's biggest tree?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Or no.

JACK: Is Red Jack kind of a world's biggest tree- the- it might be world's oldest tree? It's the big tree that's lots of different trees. You know?

KEITH: Wait, are you saying that the Weaver- that Red Jack is the Weaver King?

AUSTIN: No!

JANINE: No! *[Keith laughs out loud]*

JACK: No no no no no.

JANINE: It's just a separate tree metaphor.

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

JACK: What's the name of that thing? It might be world's oldest tree?

KEITH: I know what you're talking about, yeah, it's a forest that is like, actually all the trees have the same root system.

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: That's the- also the world you're in now.

KEITH: Is it the world tree, is that what you're talking about? And then-

JACK: Pando. Pando-

AUSTIN: Pando... the Trembling Giant.

JACK: Yeah, Pando the Trembling Giant. Or the Quaking Aspen, in Fish Lake National Forest, Utah, is between 80,000 and 1 million years old. Which is just-

AUSTIN: That's a really wide window.

JACK: Uhuh. Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah, that's like when a plumber's says when he's gonna come to your house. [*Austin and Jack laugh*]

JACK: It covers 107 acres and it has around 47,000 stems, which continually die and are renewed by it's roots. It is also the heaviest known organism weighing 6,000 tonnes. And I think if we're talking about, like, ah- I guess my question is, is Red Jack the oldest thing here in the same way that Pando is the oldest thing, which is like, Pando is a bunch of smaller entities.

KEITH: But the Weaver King is also that.

AUSTIN: That is also the Weaver King.

JACK: Which Pando is older, the Weaver King or Red Jack? Which Pando?

AUSTIN: [*laugh*] Also, if someone said the oldest tree in the world died, would they mean Pando?

JACK: No, they would not mean Pando.

AUSTIN: Would they- what would they mean?

JACK: They'd mean Methuselah or something. Uh-

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Yeah, they'd mean Methuselah. The oldest thing-

KEITH: [*over Jack*] I also know the names of old trees. [*Austin and Janine laugh*]

JACK I'm literally on the old trees Wikipedia page.

AUSTIN: So yeah, I mean- I think that the- one of the complicated things here is that the Weaver King is in fact multiple things, some of which are presumably very new, and some of which are very old.

JACK: Mhmm.

AUSTIN: Galenica, they are- they are not here. They are not in this community-

KEITH: They're not- I thought they were in Alcyon.

AUSTIN: They're not in Alcyon either. I mean they-

KEITH: No?

AUSTIN: Their statue is there I guess, right?

KEITH: Right, but this is- the statue is, is them in a way.

AUSTIN: Yes, but they are out in the world- their focus is not Alcyon.

KEITH: Got it. It's more Galenica-

AUSTIN: Their focus is more on Alcyon while you were there because you are part of their focus, Fero.

KEITH: Right, okay.

AUSTIN: Um, anyway! I think that, like, I'm good with either of these things, but we need to be like- I just need to be able to say out loud that there is definitely a case that Red Jack is the oldest person in this community. Red Jack is a *person*, Red Jack's memories go back that far. And it depends on how you define a person. And I don't know that we've done a lot of, like, 'Well, biologically speaking' type shit, you know what I mean?

KEITH: Right.

JACK: Sure. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which, when we're talking about a being what can identify itself and who has an unbroken set of memories, or something like it- and to be clear, there are memories- it's a- it's like the soma thing, or like- uh, the transporter, you know, problems in Star Trek. There are certainly memories that Red Jacks have had that- like I don't know- actually I guess I don't know if that's true for these. I don't know if Red Jack- when a Red Jack is killed, does the next Red Jack remember the dying? Probably. Cause it's magic. So yeah, I think Red Jack has the longest unbroken set of consciousness. [*Jack sighs an oof*] But I don't know that that is also- again, we can go the other way, Red Jack also a weird plant person who, like, theoretically does have a younger body than parts of this Weaver King, which we know have been around since Marielda.

KEITH: I- I just sort of think the arguments for Red Jack not being the oldest would also make the Weaver King not the oldest.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Like, disqualifying one of them would be disqualifying both of them? And, you know-

AUSTIN: In which case, who is the-

KEITH: In that case, it's Red Jack.

AUSTIN: But I'm saying if it's neither of them, if then we're saying, no we mean like, a single life. Is there another person?

ART: Does- would it be- how old is Throndir?

AUSTIN: I don't know!

DRE: Uh-

ART: Like if we go beyond weird magic-

DRE: [*over Art*] -not as old as Red Jack, but also like, season- like fall Hieron, Word Eater ate Throndir's like, long livedness from being an elf. So...

AUSTIN: Oh, right.

ART: That doesn't make you retroactively less old.

DRE: Right.

KEITH: Is Throndir older than Corsica? How old's Corsica?

AUSTIN: Oh good point. Uh... well- uh, we know only as- well no, cause she went to Nacre. So we have no idea. It could be Corsica. If we're doing just like, first birth.

JANINE: That- that seems- eh-hh.

AUSTIN: But that's not like, an established fact about who she is, do you know what I mean? Or it is, we know that she went to Nacre, we know that she lived the life of a ridiculous video game character which is a healthy- [*Janine laughs*] -and also, and also in my mind is like a middle-aged woman, you know what I mean? Um, but I don't think she's like- there have to be older just *people* in the world, then her. Do you know, like there are grandparents here also. Um...

JANINE: Can I just end this discussion? It's Red Jack.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: It's just easier if we just say it's Red Jack. Cause we could go on forever itemizing everyone's ages and it's- that's not interesting, what's interesting is it's Red Jack or the Weaver King, and if it-

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: If it's- Keith is right, if it's one, it has to be the other. Um, my initial hesitance was also, I didn't know what to do with Red Jack, but over the course of that very long conversation, I figured out what to do with Red Jack. [*Austin and Keith laugh*]

AUSTIN: What are you doing with Red Jack?

JANINE: Magic is dying- [*noise of confusion*]

AUSTIN: I thought this was the right one, it was not the right one.

JANINE: Magic is dying in this world, magic is- is a big part of the thread that connects Red Jacks.

AUSTIN: Yeah. To each other, yeah.

JANINE: I think the thing that makes Red Jack sick is that Red Jack is becoming isolated from previous Red Jacks. Red Jack-

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: -Red Jack is just current Red Jack. He is I guess in some ways becoming- going from the oldest one here to kind of an average- I mean, a little older than most, maybe, but still pretty- pretty normal.

AUSTIN: Right...

JANINE: But with that comes a lot of, like, a lot of things that he knew for sure yesterday, he has never heard of in a concrete way today, but still has this like, vague idea of like- didn't something- something about this place-

AUSTIN: *Right...*

JANINE: Uh, you know, being in the University is, I'm sure, really rough for that, because it's a place of like, knowing you should know a lot of shit about it, but you really only have your current set of references on hand.

AUSTIN: Right. And um- remembers the life that he has led specifically, probably. I- here's the real question is like, does- is this sort of magic broke- and also, here's the thing: Severea is gone, right? We know that he is a creature that was tied to Severea and Severea's type of magic? But she has left this world behind.

JANINE: Mhmm.

AUSTIN: And so that's also probably heightened the loss of that type of magic. I'm curious, like, do his other children start to just grow up in a different way than the way that, like, Blue J did? Where it was about experience and interacting with other cultures, and to some degree, experiencing violence. Like, is there- is that chain broken? Is that style of growth just like- there was no big final confrontation with Blue J. There was no big, like, how does this all shake out. He's going to grow and die-

JANINE: [*over Austin*] That's the thing, that already felt like it was different.

AUSTIN: Totally. Totally. So is this- Caring for them and searching for a cure requires the help of the entire community- is this just like, the week that everyone realizes that Red Jack is starting to forget some things? And like, is not...

JANINE: Yeah, I mean, Red Jack has been a pillar of so many- not even just this community, but so many communities, so many crucial moments. Like-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: -Red Jack was the one who gave the speech before we went to kill the dragon.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Red Jack is Red Jack, Red Jack is in the foreground of Marielda, Red Jack is in the foreground of all of these moments.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So for Red Jack to suddenly- Red Jack is still Red Jack. I want to be clear- like it's not-

AUSTIN: Sure, right-

JANINE: -like Red Jack is not Red Jack anymore, but there is like a change that would be hard not to notice.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: And in addition to wanting to help him, you know, feel secure in that and feel secure at the University even if this is going on, there's prolly a degree of people needing to feel secure with like- with it themselves.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think we probably get- I mean, we know Blue J was on that flight project, I bet Blue J was on the silk farm. And I bet this week Blue J is like, 'I'm gonna go hang with my dad.' And we just get, like, Blue J and Red Jack like, walking off into the woods together to spend some time. And like, get Red Jack into a place that's less stressful, and less confusing. And I think we just get kind of a wide shot of Red Jack like, telling Blue J a story, and just like, spending time being together in this way, that is like, okay, Red Jack knows this. There's only been one Blue J, right? So this Red Jack doesn't have to reach anywhere else because they are- they are his, and there isn't some distant lore that he needs to recover from his brain to understand this. And I think for this week- and like, going forward I think you get more Blue J with Red Jack, helping, and just kind of like, being there for him. Alright. So. Projects don't advance. What do you choose to do?

JANINE: Yeah, so anyway. Like I was saying, where was Corsica's camp? Because-

AUSTIN: Ah, here. This like, abandoned camp to the west. South of the farms.

JANINE: The thing that Adaire does when a sad thing is happening and she doesn't want to deal with it- [*Austin laughs quietly*] -is, Adaire starts a project. And usually it's gonna be kind of a slightly- like a project started slightly out of spite? Um, that's the- that's the way I do it. So, I think Adaire goes to the abandoned military camp that Corsica had been trying to do something with, and gathers a group of her own- um, not mapmakers, just other people who want in. And she plants another standard.

AUSTIN: [*laughs nervously*] Uhuh?

JANINE: Ah.. this is gonna be Adaire DuCarte's Union of Solutions?

AUSTIN: Okay. What is that?

KEITH: It's a soap making company.

JANINE: [*laughs*] No. Um, Adaire is starting what is I guess best described as a- as like a covert operations kind of training thing? Where she's- instead of building a- instead of what Corsica was doing which was building an army, Adaire is- is building a sort of force of, um, subterfuge.

AUSTIN: Uhuh?

JANINE: And things like that.

AUSTIN: Spies? And- and ninjas?

JANINE: Not necess- no, not necessarily spies and ninjas, I- those things need weapons, usually.

AUSTIN: Uhuh. [*Janine laughs*]

KEITH: Eavesdroppers?

JANINE: Ah- kind of- kind- the second-

AUSTIN: [*knowingly*] Burglers. [*Keith laughs*]

JANINE: Saboteurs. Um-

KEITH: What was that?

JANINE: Saboteurs. Spies, to a-

KEITH: Oh, saboteurs.

JANINE: -to a degree, but like, people who can- who can kind of go out there and cause problems if problems need to be caused, or fix problems if problems need to be fixed.

AUSTIN: Put sugar in some engine, in some- in some gas tanks.

JANINE: Yeah. She- she basically wants more people in the world who can go out there and have some plans.

AUSTIN: [*worriedly*] Uhuh? And you're just doing this out in public?

KEITH: Uh.

AUSTIN: What's up, Fero?

JANINE: I mean, we don't have an army!

KEITH: Oh, sorry, I- you said sugar in a gas tank, and I was thinking of all the other ways you can use sugar to sabotage things, and I've heard a lot of people telling stories about putting sugar under wallpaper when they leave an apartment-

AUSTIN: Oh, that's the worst. Fuck that. That's wild.

KEITH: -and it draws in a lot of bugs.

AUSTIN: Yeah of course.

KEITH: And this sure would be a shitty place to draw in a lot of bugs.

AUSTIN: Yeah, don't do that part. That's- oh my god.

JANINE: No, this is more about like, we need a force to defend ours- to- we need a- we need a- we need some-

AUSTIN: An army.

JANINE: Exactly- I mean, you know, we need security but we don't have an army. We don't have the resources to support an army. But we do have other things we can do. There are other, you know- Adaire is the first person who will tell you that there are a lot of ways to defend yourself and not all of them involve swords.

AUSTIN: Uhuh. How long does this take? How long does it take to- to teach a bunch of people to be saboteurs?

JANINE: Well I mean the good news is Rix and Rowe are much better teaching assistants at this.

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

JANINE: Ah, honestly- well, Barbello's probably pretty good too. Um, I mean I don't- I don't know, I feel like it's probably a six.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I- it's- it's again, tough, because- lack of of Tools, lack of Community, lack of Population. All the stuff that made it tough to build an army- but less, because you don't need swords. You don't need swords. That is-

JANINE: Yeah. You know- but also, an army is about having-

AUSTIN: [*over Janine*] A bunch of people.

JANINE: -hundreds and hundreds of people that you can throw at someone, whereas having a bunch of spies and saboteurs is about have a few dozen.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Does that make it then less than it would have taken Corsica Neue to raise an army?

AUSTIN: An army is, hold this spear, learn how to, like, poke it-

JANINE: Yeah, this is more skilled.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This is skilled, and you don't have knowledge in that broad sense, which would make it way easier, I think. Um, because you could just be like, yeah, you can just use this special bark to do blah blah blah. Alright.

KEITH: Start a project to figure out what that bark does!

AUSTIN: You super do! Alright. Ah, Dre. Draw a card.

DRE: *[in a singsong voice]* Drawin' a card... ah, the Three. 'Summer is a time for production and tending to the earth. Start a project related to food production.'

AUSTIN: Uhuh?

DRE: Or, 'Summer is a time for conquest and the gathering of might. Start a project related to military readiness and conquest.'

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

DRE: Um... So, I'm gonna start a project related to food production. And I think this actually goes hand in hand with the project that I think I wanted to start in this turn anyway, regardless of the card I had. So if one of the things that the Grey Dukes are trying to do to- I guess the Grey Duke's army, not the Grey Dukes as a group-

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Right.

DRE: If one of the things they're trying to do is like, ingratiate themselves to other people-

AUSTIN: Yeah-

DRE: -or to, like, the farmers and stuff, by being like, 'Oh, we can pay you' or like 'we can do these other things.' I think to push back on that, Thrandir wants to just try and bring the community better together? And so I think he tries to recruit... maybe Benjamin would be best for this? Basically he wants to almost like go to these different farmers-

AUSTIN: Mhmm?

DRE: And almost do like a- I guess not like a true farmer's almanac, but like- to start writing down the knowledge that these individuals have on like, how to grow food.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: What sort of soil do you need to grow this crop? When should you grow it? How often do you water it? What should you- how should you fertilize? And I think, honestly the thing that I want to address- like, cause we don't have a scarcity of food-

AUSTIN: Right, yeah.

DRE: -but I think this- hopefully this starts to address the scarcity of Community. Because these different farmers coming together and sharing their knowledge- not just with other farmers but just with other people.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

DRE: You know.

AUSTIN: Is this- so two questions here. One is, are we sure this isn't about addressing the Knowledge scarcity? Two is, if I'm a farmer, why would I share this with you, if I don't already have a sense of community? And is that part of the reason the clock exists the way it does, is like, we need to- it isn't just going door to door. It *is* ingratiating yourself to these farmers. It is-

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -kind of like- and what's that look like?

DRE: And to me that's why it is more of the Community than the Knowledge. Because again, I think if this was- if we had a scarcity of Food, this would be about Knowledge to-

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, got it.

DRE: -to address that.

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: You know?

AUSTIN: So here's the other thing about this: is the knowledge bad?

DRE: I'm sure some of it probably is, right?

AUSTIN: It's the first summer of this new life that you're living in...

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: No one really knows, people are like 'Yeah, I plant with, with dog poop, mostly.' And, alright, I guess-

DRE: 'Hey, you got a big dog! You wanna, like, bring him around for a while?' [*Austin bursts out laughing*]

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay, that makes sense. And we'll- when it completes, I do want to- so you can think on this- what- how do you- if you were a farmer right now, why would you start to share things that you think are valuable information?

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: So, think on that and think about what that scene might look like. What ahhhh- someone reached for a contempt token and left a mark instead. [*Keith laughs out loud*] Anyway, what- how many ticks of this clock is it?

DRE: Ah.. I mean maybe it is six.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

DRE: Both in terms of like, travel time but also because of- like you said- like, the kind of reticence.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

DRE: And probably because there probably are like, folks from the Grey Duke's army who would also be against this, right? Because it is-

AUSTIN: Definitely, yeah.

DRE: Like, people coming together to form a kind of independent bond that is less dependent on outside forces.

AUSTIN: Yeah, definitely. Alright, um, cool. I'm gonna tick the rest of these boxes. Flight project advances- whoops, I need a bigger mark for that. Flight Project advances, needs one more week. Saboteur School goes into it's first week, Silk Farm goes into it's second. Alright.

DRE: Dang, who took- who took contempt at my cool farm book?

AUSTIN: I don't know! [*Keith makes sounds of holding in laughter*] It's a mystery.

KEITH: Do we have a- an extra box for Silk Farm?

AUSTIN: What?

KEITH: Oh I thought- I thought Silk Farm was five.

AUSTIN: It was five. It is five. The first clock- I gave you one immediately.

KEITH: Ohhh, okay, I understand.

AUSTIN: And then last week it didn't advance cause of Red Jack.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: So. It now has four left. Uh.. Throndir?

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: What are you doin'?

DRE: I wanna start a project this week.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: How many books we got left at this University?

AUSTIN: You know, good question. Probably a bunch, right?

JACK: I've got some, I got a bunch.

AUSTIN: [*over Jack*] Or! Is it the thing where like, the stars fucked a bunch of them up. Is this part of the Knowledge dilemma? Like-

DRE: [*over Austin*] Right.

AUSTIN: -they got turned into star stuff, and then the star stuff got turned into like, tree stuff?
But like, that's still not a book.

DRE: Yeah. I think what I want to do-

AUSTIN: [*over Dre*] But Lem has a bunch, I'm not taking Lem's books.

DRE: Yeah. [*laughs*]

JACK: Ah, some of them you can't fuckin' read.

DRE: Right. What I want to do to start a project to address our Knowledge scarcity- and maybe this doesn't turn it into an Abundancy, just gets rid of the scarcity-

AUSTIN: Mhmm?

DRE: -is to do like a full cataloguing of what books we have left, reorganize them in a way that, like, makes sense to non-academic people.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: And then make a public library, more or less.

AUSTIN: Yeah! I like that- how many ticks on the clock is it?

DRE: Ah- I think-

AUSTIN: [*over Dre*] Cause this is- this isn't-

DRE: ... four?

AUSTIN: Yeah, this isn't- this is just 'Hey what do we have?' Right?

DRE: Right.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm down with that. Um... ah... 'Book Cataloguing.' Boom.

DRE: [*laughing*] You couldn't just put Library, huh? Had to just put- [*dissolves in laughter*]

AUSTIN: Had to- that's what you do when you're cataloguing- okay, I'll make it the Library.
Boom. 'Libary' there you go- nope- still spelled wrong- there you go.

DRE: No, it is 'Library'. It has to be 'Library.'

AUSTIN: Library. Okay.

KEITH: That's what it- that's what it's called when it's on a tree.

AUSTIN: Alright, I need you to draw- [*Dre bursts out laughing*] I need you to draw [*Dre continues laughing in the background*] the farming community being built, I need you to start drawing this library, or whatever it's gonna look like.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: On this tiny map. This very very- this- we got a lot of space here, we just gotta get to it, you know? Gotta get out there in the world a little bit. Um, alright. Sylvia!

SYLVIA: Alright. Let me draw this card...

[*pause*]

AUSTIN: Ooooooh. Ooooooh...

JACK: Ohh- [*laughs worriedly*]

SYLVIA: Ohh man...

AUSTIN: Ah. Ah, the Quiet Year! I see. Yes. Here it is. [*Sylvia heaves a huge sigh*]

SYLVIA: So I got the Ace of Summer, which is: 'A contingent within the community demand to be heard. Who are they? What are they asking for?' or 'A contingent within the community have acted on their frustrations. What have they damaged and why did they damage it? Is it permanent?'

AUSTIN: Hmmm...

SYLVIA: This- I think I'm leaning towards the first one, just so we can introduce that tension as opposed to immediately just having it-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: -happen. Um...

AUSTIN: So what is it?

SYLVIA: I think there's people- like, I think it is a group of people in the community who think we should join up with the Grey Duke, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: That makes the most sense to me, at least. And they're-

AUSTIN: Me too.

SYLVIA: They're asking either to do it or they're trying to convince people to come with them to leave, basically-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: -I think is the way I see it.

AUSTIN: I think- is that the, is that the specific thing is like: 'Listen, either we all join up together, or we're leaving and some of you should come with us.'

SYLVIA: Yeah. I think that's the- the crux of their argument, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Why do they want to join with the Grey Duke?

SYLVIA: They're scared. Like it's- this is still scary even though we are starting to adapt to it, like, we've been here for, I'm assuming a couple months at this point.

AUSTIN: Yeah it's been a bit- it's been in fact, we can say for sure, twenty-two weeks- plus three months before that. Um, so, that's quite some time.

SYLVIA: And I feel like the Grey Duke is the one thing that has a semblance of similarity to the way old stuff worked in Hieron, right?

AUSTIN: Yep!

SYLVIA: They have a system, they have a structure. So yeah, it's not a huge jump for me-

AUSTIN: *[over Sylvia]* Yeah!

SYLVIA: -for them to want to go.

AUSTIN: So who is that group? Is- I mean- Chatterchin already made some noise about it. Um... who else?

SYLVIA: Yeah I- I think- *[sighs]* I think it's a lot of the people who were- I don't have a specific like, demographic in mind, but it's people who were hit very hard by what happened at the end of like, old Hieron.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

SYLVIA: In like, the Last University specifically.

AUSTIN: So it's probably a lot of those refugees-

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -who'd already lost a lot. What else?

SYLVIA: People who've lost, like, loved ones- and then also I think there's like a contingent-

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: -of just people who were already like, 'This was always going to be temporary.'

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: 'Staying here.' Like, you know.

AUSTIN: Right, and the Grey Duke is saying like, 'Listen, you can come back with us. We- the Buoy still exists out there. It's still-' You know, the Grey Duke's long-term project is to make the Buoy the centre again, right? Is to make the Buoy the heart of culture in whatever this new Hieron is. And to make everyone who remembers old Hieron loyal and unified around this singular idea. And to effectively enclose this big, weird, chaotic world possibility, into one of familiar boundaries, borders, and identities. And so, I think a lot of people, that appeals to. Even people who- I mean you've got- think about someone like Chatterchin and the Gnolls. They already didn't have it good. You know? They spent most of their lives like that, and then suffered through the Winter with y'all. But like, hey, you know- this isn't- this isn't going great still. So yeah, I think that that is- I think it's- it's a very softspoken Chatterchin. It's a Chatterchin who's like, trying his best to be a spokesperson for this group that does not feel like they are represented in the war council specifically. And I think he just kind of brings it up in that way. And we don't need to zoom in on it because- because otherwise we will be here for the next- the next year of our lives. But the thing-

KEITH: *[quietly]* We'll have our own Quiet Year.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* So I guess- so my question then, Ephrim, for you is, what specifically are they asking for and what does- what do Ephrim and Corsica do in terms of what that ask is?

SYLVIA: I think-

AUSTIN: Is there anything that would make them stay at this point?

SYLVIA: I think it's like, is guaranteeing their safety, right? Like, there is an extent to which the Grey Duke can do that. They have a military force, they've shown that they can fight off these giant bugs. It's like, 'We want you to show that you can protect us, and if you can't, we're leaving.'

AUSTIN: Right. I think that's- that's fair. 'We can deal with- we can deal with the fact that the Library's taking a little longer. We can deal with the fact that people left and that we don't necessarily- we're not able to fly. But the big bugs are still right out our door.' And also for that matter, so is the Grey Duke. Right? So. Safety.

SYLVIA: It's like, they spent most of their time in the University worried about Ordenna, and-

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

SYLVIA: -like, stars, and-

AUSTIN: Yep. And starving, also, for a while.

SYLVIA: Starving, and just, nothingness. Like- I feel like-

AUSTIN: Yeahuh.

SYLVIA: At this point they're like, 'What if we just go with the military that's threatening us so we don't have to stress out about this anymore.'

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Alright.

AUSTIN: Alright. Um, then clocks tick. Library, Community, Saboteur School, Silk Farm, Flight Project- completes! Jack!

JACK: Hell yeah! A glider crashes into one of the arms *[Keith bursts out laughing]* and everybody cheers. It ah- it was launched from up where the- you know, where the bug was.

AUSTIN: Uhuh?

JACK: Ah, and had its head chopped off. So I guess a glider was like, dragged uncomfortably up the staircase- up along the branch where our farms are, um. And kind of pushed off- and it was unmanned, and it flew for like, you know, forty or fifty feet and then crashed into the side of a building. [*Austin laughs*]

KEITH: I have a question.

JACK: Yes, Fero?

KEITH: You say push- oh this is out of character- you say pushed off, but if it's-

AUSTIN: Uhuh...

KEITH: We've established that it's difficult to push things off of these branches-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: -because they have gravity that goes all the way around.

JACK: That's a great point. And so when we say 'push', what we actually mean is- do you remember the sprangaroo?

KEITH: Yeah, uh, I- how could I forget? [*Austin laughs*]

JACK: Ah, so what if built someth-

KEITH: I turn- Fero turns into a sprangaroo.

JACK: -some kind of, like, wooden ah... sort of sprangaroo-esque structure, like a rapidly unconcertina-ing ah... sort of hinge, that flung an object like a- more up than outwards-

KEITH: Right. It would have to be portable because then once you've flung yourself somewhere you wouldn't be able to flung back.

JACK: It is connected to the glider.

KEITH: Okay.

JACK: It's part of the glider's, I guess like, what we are calling landing gear? Um...

KEITH: But it's really not, it's really take off gear.

JACK: It really is take off gear, you crank it with a crank.

KEITH: [*over Jack*] And maybe it is a little bit like crashing.

JACK: Yes. Well... so this is the thing. We crashed one into the- I guess a tree, but there was nobody on that, and it proved that really, you know, it's probably time to start manned tests.

KEITH: Yeah. It was a slow crash.

JACK: It was more like when you crash a paper plane rather than a complete obliteration.

AUSTIN: Oh okay, that's good.

JACK: And so I think over the next, you know, few days- and this is probably what we've seen you know, during the past five steps of this clock. Initially test flights with no people, and then very short flights with people on them, and then gradually longer flights. We- you know, we attach a rope to someone and have them see how far down they can go and then haul them back up again. And we don't have a lot of these things, because you know, we don't have a lot of tools. And also they are time consuming to make. But we have maybe four or five gliders that can support quite a lot of weight, and we have the plans and tools and knowledge with which to build them.

KEITH: Nice.

AUSTIN: Nice work.

KEITH: You know else- you know what else that we forgot to mention when we talked about all the ways we are probably pretty good at building gliders? Is that we've been on a glider!

JACK: True! We have! Wasn't that more of-

AUSTIN: That's true.

JACK: -a balloon?

AUSTIN: No, no no, it was a glider.

KEITH: No no no, we went on a glider! Yep.

AUSTIN: The balloon was something else. Where was the balloon? There was a balloon.

KEITH: I think there was a balloon. I rem- the glider was leaving- leaving the Floating Isles.

AUSTIN: Yeah, because you crashed it.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I remember that, that was not a crashed balloon, that was a crashed glider.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But I do have in my mind a balloon, huh. Weird. Anyway.

JACK: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Nice work. Nice work, Flight! So where is this at, do you think this moves Flight into less of a Scarcity?

JACK: Yes. It is not a Scarcity. I don't know that it's an Abundance, but it is now very plausible to say, 'I want to run something over there-'

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: 'I want it to take me ten terrifying minutes instead of forty-five extremely boring minutes.'

AUSTIN: [*laughing*] Yeah. Yeah. Alright-

KEITH: Although honestly I could see a world where you feel much more safer in a glider than, like, jumping and climbing on massive branches-

JACK: [*over Keith*] Yes, yes-

AUSTIN: [*over Keith and Jack*] -branches, yeah, totally. Okay, ah, Sylvia's turn still, right?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What are you doin'?

SYLVIA: I'm also gonna start a project.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: And what I wanna do is I wanna begin excavating the alloy, or at least like-

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: -like, trying to refine it in some way-

AUSTIN: Sure.

SYLVIA: -that we've found. So, um.

AUSTIN: I'm down with that.

SYLVIA: If we wanna- huh?

AUSTIN: I said I'm down with that.

SYLVIA: Ah, okay. Yeah, so, ah, I'm not sure how long we should make that, if we want to include the refining part of it, or if we- if it sounds more like a two step of excavation and then refining it? But-

AUSTIN: I would say let's just do it as one.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: To get it and use it. Because even unrefined I bet you could start immediately start using it, and once it's refined it's like, you know- you can get those tools again.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Once it's- once it's refined. So I say let's... let's- you- do you generally know how to get metal, is the first question? Now I'm thinking like, hmm, I'm talking myself out of it. How do you get your alloy out of the ground?

SYLVIA: [*over Austin*] It's one of those things where Ephrim- Ephrim doesn't, but I'm sure people in the community were miners, like-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: There's-

KEITH: Maybe Hella knows.

ALI: I- yeah.

JANINE: I feel like if there's a primitive technology video on it then it should be on the table. And there's definitely for sure a primitive technology video on metal.

AUSTIN: Of getting ore alloy out of- right, yeah.

JANINE: It's mostly like you, you heat it up.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Right?

AUSTIN: No, I meant getting it out of the ground, like, do you have the tools to get it out of the ground safely? Once you have it I believe you can-

SYLVIA: I think-

AUSTIN: -do some shit with it, I mean you all have some-

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -you all have- like, Stornras is there and he's a blacksmith and someone who does metalworking and shit. I'm sure you- I'm sure he has other people who work with him, so. Yeah. So what do you think, a six?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I think a six would work.

AUSTIN: Alright.

KEITH: Ah... yeah, there are some primitive technology videos on this.

AUSTIN: Ah, you know what? Here we go. Oh- put the name on there, and then I need to actually change that name real quick. Ah, it should actually be, 'Nu Metal Refinery' like with a U?

SYLVIA: Oh hell yeah.

AUSTIN: Uhuh, there we go.

SYLVIA: So much Korn. *[Keith bursts out laughing]*

AUSTIN: Yeah, uhuh. *[Keith continues laughing]* Actually wait, you know what, I'm gonna- I'm gonna fix it again. Get that umlaut in there. *[laughs]* *[Sylvia bursts out laughing]* And a hyphen.

ART: Can you get a backwards R on 'Refinery'?

AUSTIN: Ah, backwards- is that a thing? Can I get that? Backwards R, let's see. Yeah, there it is. There it is. I'll put that right there. It would be very funny if this crashed Roll20. There we go.

[*Sylvia laughs*] [*Keiths bursts out laughing again*] [*Sylvia continues laughing uncontrollably*]

AUSTIN: Love it. You love to see it.

ART: For the- for the people listening to this, judging by I think the average age- ask your parents who Korn were. [*Austin bursts out laughing*] They probably played at their high school prom or something, I don't know.

KEITH: Honestly, Refinery is a great nu metal band name.

AUSTIN: It is. I bet that's a real thing already.

JACK: With a backwards- with a backwards R?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, with a backwards R.

SYLVIA: Always R backwards. Lowercase as well.

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, alright. Good, good- sorry- I just stumbled into a band called 'Riff-finery'-

SYLVIA: Ohh!!!!

AUSTIN: -like finery for riffs? Their breakout-

KEITH: [*over Austin*] Do they improvise or-

AUSTIN: They're a cover band.

DRE: [*quietly, laughing*] God. The just- pure excitement that was in Sylvia's voice! [*Keith and Austin laugh*]

SYLVIA: I didn't even, like- [*Dre continues laughing*] Riff-inery, that's sounds- I should join that band.

AUSTIN: You really should. Ah-

ART: Where are they based out of?

KEITH: [*over Art*] What do they cover?

AUSTIN: Well, good- here's a video ah, from November 4th, 2018. Little bit of I Love Rock and Roll slash Cherry Pie slash Pour Some Sugar On Me mash up from Friday night?

KEITH: Is my old guitar teacher in this band? [*Ali chuckles*]

AUSTIN: Is your old guitar teacher from Melbourne?

KEITH: No, no, he's not, but he did- he did stop being my guitar teacher to tour the country in an Aerosmith cover band.

AUSTIN: [*drawn out*] God. This is not good. Also-

KEITH: So that's Dave Roach, if he's still teaching guitar.

AUSTIN: Shout out. Shout out, Dave. Alright. Uh... Alright.

ART: Let's get this freak back on a leash.

AUSTIN: That was- [*Keith burst out laughing*] Your turn, Art. Draw a card.

[*pause*]

AUSTIN: Oh boy.

ART: I got the Two of Summer.

AUSTIN: Well.

ART: 'Someone new arrives. Who? Why are they in distress?' or 'Someone leaves the community. Who? What are they looking for?' Do you have like a quick list of like people who are still alive and not here?

AUSTIN: [*sighs like a horse*] You know. What- who-

ART: The Austin Walker List of People Who Are Alive?

AUSTIN: [*sighs*] It's a big list. Um. But I've- what type of person are you looking for? Cause the answer is like, people from the different societies you've visited, right? So, which is to say, someone from Alcyon, but there- I guess I wouldn't count that 'cause Alcyon is technically part

of this community. Someone from the orc- like the Archive bandit camps? Um, someone from the Mistral? Though they mostly left with Severea. Someone... other people alive. Galenica: still alive, not here. People from old Marielda, or the City of First Light, or Maul's Fist. People from the Buoy, or from lower strata- formerly lower strata. Just trying to think, are there any other major characters who are not here? Janine says the nervous innkeeper from below. I don't know, probably still- [*someone laughs*] -probably still home at the Buoy. Oh, Isaac is *extremely* dead-

ALI: [*over Austin*] [*inaudible*]

AUSTIN: -Sylvia.

SYLVIA: I forgot.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: There's-

JACK: He got *shot* from the *sky*.

SYLVIA: Right! Okay. [*Austin sputters laughing*] I forgot.

KEITH: Honestly, it's such a bummer-

AUSTIN: [*over Keith*] He's dead dead. He died.

KEITH: [*over Austin*] -that he's dead, 'cause as- me as Keith would love to have another scene with Isaac. [*Austin laughs*] [*Sylvia laughs*] Those are so fun.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

[*pause*]

KEITH: What a little shit.

ART: Oh... maybe it's someone leaves?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Hey- hey I've got a-

ART: [*over Keith*] How- hmm. This is definitely singular?

AUSTIN: I don't- uh- no? I would say it could go either way, it could be one person, it could be multiple people. It could be one person who's kind of, you know, a stand-in for a larger group.

ART: [*sadly*] Oh, I just don't- I don't know that I have the courage to pull this trigger.

AUSTIN: Which trigger?

ART: What if, um... Benjamin and Blue J leave?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Looking for...

AUSTIN: Yeah. They're adults.

ART: ... you know, looking for adventure, looking for their own life, looking for-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: -the horizon, you know. I don't know if horizon still makes any sense when you live on a giant tree like this.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: I mean the word horizon prolly still exists.

AUSTIN: Right. No. And in that intro or the outro I talked about there being a lot of horizons. There is not a singular horizon in that same way. They could leave. On one hand it's like, I definitely think you're right, that it's- I could see them both leaving. On the other hand I do know, with Red Jack being sick, it's like, is there a conversation there? Have they spoken to him? Is it a situation where they're like, they don't wanna go, but Red Jack is like, 'No. You should not feel like you're stuck here with me.'

ART: And I mean it's- there's all sorts of, you know- everyone has a different reaction and-

AUSTIN: [*over Art*] Yeah, of course. Yeah yeah yeah.

ART: -to, to having a parent go through that. If parent is really the right word.

AUSTIN: No, that's- Red Jack is definitely Blue J's dad. Yeah.

ART: Yeah. Yeah I guess. [*Austin laughs out loud*]

AUSTIN: [*still laughing*] Hadrian is not allowed to criticize other dads.

ART: Well, no, I was- I'm just, I'm just being a- I guess I'm just being too exacting in language.

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure.

ART: And incorrectly, you're right. [*Austin laughs*]

AUSTIN: I like that. I do like the idea of like, Blue J and Benjamin being like, 'What is this world? The best way we can serve anyone is to go figure it out.'

ART: And that's what their- that's continuing in the footsteps, right, that's...

AUSTIN: Right. Taking up the mantles and seeing- and going beyond them in some ways, right? Like that's the- for me part of it is like, I can imagine Benjamin being like, 'So what am I gonna do, I'm gonna stay here and be another wizard in another university.'

ART: But I'm taking two- two fun pieces off the board, and I-

AUSTIN: I mean, nothing says they can't come back, right?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Is this a scene between Benjamin and Hadrian? What- you know what I mean- like, when Benjamin shows up to tell you and Rosana this.

ART: Oh, it sucks.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Because Hadrian can't say don't go.

AUSTIN: I think he's like,

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): Alright. Mom, Dad? Um... I've been thinking a lot about some stuff, and ah- me and Blue J have, ah, some news. Um, we really wanna- [*sighs*] So. We know where Alcyon is, and um, you know obviously, um, the bugs, and the canyon. And Adaire's weird spy school. We've got all that down. Um, we know there's like little communities all around us, and we know there's Velas kind of off in the distance. Weird Velas. Um... but- and we know the Buoy is out there somewhere. We know that part 'cause of the Grey Duke. Ah, we know about the big spider, also. And the ant, um, and, um, probably some other stuff that I'm forgetting right now. Ah- the- uh- uh- the Weaver King! Of course! The Weaver King and the Sapkin. Um. But we're pretty sure there's

more. And... [*sighs*] we just wanna go see it. We- I don't- this place is- I love you both so much.

ART (as HADRIAN): But this doesn't excite you anymore.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): It's not about excitement, it's-

AUSTIN: And Rosana, like, crosses her arms. And just like, gives him a look. And he's like,

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): I- it's a little bit about excitement. [*Art/Hadrian chuckles*]

AUSTIN: And she says, like,

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): It's dangerous. We don't know- honey- it's not about whether or not you're capable, but it's- it's- it's-

AUSTIN: And he's like,

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): Ah- I- I don't know that I'm capable, actually! I don't know! I wanna find out.

AUSTIN: And she says, like,

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): That's not the answer you- [*sighs in exasperation*] You could both get killed.

ART (as HADRIAN): That's very true.

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): And then where would we be?

AUSTIN (as Benjamin): Don't- Dad used to run off all the time on weird adventures! Think about how many *swords* he came home with. [*Art/Hadrian chuckles*]

ART (as HADRIAN): Lotta swords. [*Austin bursts out laughing*] [*Keith bursts out laughing*]

AUSTIN: [*over Keith's laughter*] Rosana just gives you a glare. [*Art and Sylvia join the laughter*]

ART (as HADRIAN): The kid's right! I have more swords than anyone should have in their life. [*Austin laughs*]

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): [*sighs*] Where are you gonna go?

ART (as HADRIAN): I can't- oh.

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): No, go ahead.

ART (as HADRIAN): I can't- I can't tell you not to do this. Your mother can. [*Austin laughs*] And she's gonna. [*Sylvia laughs*]

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): Don't count on me to do it.

AUSTIN: [*laughing*] -she says to you.

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): Listen-

ART (as HADRIAN): I don't have- I have- I have no high ground here! He's right, I did it, and it was- it was sometimes the worst choice I ever made and- and sometimes I saved the world.

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): I'm gonna be up... every night, worried.

AUSTIN: And Benjamin says,

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): Don't- don't guilt me about it!

AUSTIN: And she says,

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): I'm going to guilt you about it, you're going to leave us- [*sighs*] How do you know *we'll* be here when you come back? The Grey Duke is knocking on our door.

AUSTIN: And he kind of like, slumps his shoulders, mirroring the same position that his father made weeks ago, months ago now, with Samot. And he goes,

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): You have Dad. You'll be fine. Everyone here's gonna be fine.

ART (as HADRIAN): I don't know about that. I don't even have a sword anymore. I'm out of swords.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): You had so many swords, Dad.

ART (as HADRIAN): They keep- they- it's- it's really not my fault- it's not- it's circumstance.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): Alright, what if I go, and then we only go out so far that once the season changes, we're gonna come back. And then we- like, a season away, a season here. Or like, once a year we come back-

AUSTIN: And Rosana's like,

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): A second ago it was once a season, now it's once a year?

ART (as HADRIAN): And everyone has a plan until they get trapped in a sword for eight years.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): We're- I'm not gonna get trapped in a sword for eight years. I'm gonna stay away from magic swords.

ART (as HADRIAN): You can't stay away from- they- I've- *honestly*, if I've taught you nothing in life, there's no way to stay away from magic swords.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): [*laughs*] I just can't... I'm only gonna be this young once, and I don't- I walk around this place and I see people who are so *bitter* about- some stuff they couldn't control. But like, a lot of them just got stuck. And I'm not mad at it, but like, I don't wanna get stuck. I don't have a kid. And like, me and Blue J are tight, but we're not planning on kids anytime soon.

ART (as HADRIAN): I don't know if that's how that- how that works in their family.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): W- We could adopt.

AUSTIN: -says- as Rosana says,

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): They could adopt!

AUSTIN: Suddenly like, yeah, absolutely, ready to be a grandma.

ART (as HADRIAN): I'm not- I'm saying the other way- how do we know they're not just gonna wake up one day and there's a bunch of little-

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): Spore babies.

ART (as HADRIAN): -tiny- yeah- tiny Blue J's. I've never asked Red Jack about that because I don't want to know.

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): I'm sure- I'm sure it's very interesting, I'm sure- we could have Red Jack over for dinner, we could have a conversation.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): [*loudly*] Anyway, uh!

AUSTIN: -says Benjamin,

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): Ah.. the point is. The point is- like, this is my home. It's not gonna not be my home anymore if I go on, like, a vacation. Like if I go- [*Art/Hadrian chuckling in the background*] -see... I don't know, what if there's like, another cool city- what if there's like another university? Who knows?

ART (as HADRIAN): You write your mother every week.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): Who's gonna deliver it?

ART (as HADRIAN): I just assume all that still works.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): Oh, Dad. [*Ali laughs*]

AUSTIN: Rosana's like,

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): Hadrian- [*laughs*]

ART (as HADRIAN): We still have a mailbox out front! Nothing comes in that?

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): Only local. That's like if you order a spoon-

KEITH: Benjamin doesn't know a magic letter spell?

ART (as HADRIAN): That *is* how we got the spoon.

AUSTIN: Benjamin might, but like. I mean, so that's the other half of this that- that is- maybe Benjamin should say out loud is like,

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): I have to figure out how to keep magic going. And I- all the books here got turned into leaves.

ART (as HADRIAN): You're going to save Red Jack?

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): [*sighs*] I'm going to save- Blue J thinks we could, but that's not- I think we could- magic used to be- Samol. You remember Samol?

ART (as HADRIAN): Mhmm.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): And like, Severe-

ART (as HADRIAN): We met!

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): Right, I know, but I'm just saying that you're busy all the time, so I don't know if you remember him specifically. And- but like, what if there's a new centre for magic, what if we- we don't know! But no one else is figuring it out. And that's not- I'm not dragging anybody.

AUSTIN: Rosana looks at him like, dragging?

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): But someone has to figure it out, and I know about this stuff, and Blue J's gonna make sure no big insects eat me.

ART (as HADRIAN): I can't believe you're so old and I just don't think that you can defend yourself against a giant insect!

[*Austin laughs*]

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): I don't have any *swords*.

ART (as HADRIAN): Well no one has any swords anymore!

AUSTIN: I think he comes over and like, gives you a hug, and hugs Rosana, and is like,

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): I'm gonna stay for the week, I'm not leaving until things get like, a little less hot. Waiting for one of these suns to set a little bit, I guess. And then- and then, we won't be gone long. Like, three months, four months at *most*, before we come back.

ART (as HADRIAN): Don't make a promise you can't keep. Come home when you can.

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): No! I'm gonna make a promise, and then if I- if I break it I'm gonna feel really shitty about it! But I'm gonna make the promise! That way I have like, a goal.

ART (as HADRIAN): Okay, I'm not gonna get into what a promise is versus goals. You tell- you go and have a similar conversation with Hella before you leave. I want Hella to know you're going, so that-

AUSTIN (as BENJAMIN): [*over Dre bursting out laughing*] You want *Hella* to know??

AUSTIN: Rosana's like,

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): You want *Hella* to know?

ART (as HADRIAN): Yeah! Well, I'm- we should have- we should have some people on alert.

ART: Wink wink.

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): What are- honey, what are you winking about? [*Sylvia laughs*]

ART (as HADRIAN): You should- Adelaide should know.

AUSTIN (as ROSANA): Oh, *Adelaide* should know. That makes sense.

KEITH: It's grim. That's grim.

AUSTIN: [*laughing*] It's grim.

KEITH: [*at the same time as Art*] It's not a thing to wink about, I don't think.

ART: [*at the same time as Keith*] It's not appropriate?

AUSTIN: It's appropriate. [*Keith, Austin, and Dre laugh out loud*]

KEITH: We should let- keep the Grim Reaper on alert! [*makes winky noise*]

AUSTIN: Just real quick, just some great comments here from the chat. Ahh... going- going back for a long while- wow there's just too many of these, actually. Ah, Keith: 'Hadrian can't keep his swords from becoming plot-relavent.' Janine: 'Back for Samsmas and Samsgiving.' Ali noting that Benjamin said that he was *tight* with Blue J, quote 'from the Hella Varal *cool* of affection.' [*Ali laughs*] 'School of affection.' Um, Janine says, 'Go out and don't come back unless you've got me four to ten grand kids.' [*Keith cackles in the background*] Ah, 'Hadrian's character arc is coming home with swords to coming home with spoons.' Sylvia: 'That's how you know when they're ready to be a father, when he brings home the spoons. Unfortunately Hadrian did this when his child was an adult.' [*quiet laughter*] Ohhh... Janine, those are dark. [*several people laugh*] But true.

JANINE: Y'all started it, I didn't-

AUSTIN: You know, you're right.

JANINE: I didn't- that wasn't conversation direction I chose.

AUSTIN: You're right. You're right. Okay. And I think he will talk to Hella, and I think he will- he and Blue J will leave, after this next week. Unless the card is like, 'Two people who planned on leaving don't leave.' [*laughs*] Ah, advancing clocks, let me not forget that. Including this Nu Metal Refinery. Alright. I like that these clocks are all very close to each other. Ah, Hadrian, what do you do this turn? Hold A Discussion, Find Something New, or Start A Clock?

ART: Am I having too many disc- am I holding too many discussions? This is going to be my second discussion-

AUSTIN: [*over Art*] Discussions are great.

ART: -in three turns. Okay.

ART (as HADRIAN): Hey everyone. Um... how do we- how do we feel about Corsica?

[*long silence*]

ART: Or I guess, let me- let me re-

AUSTIN: Yeah, give me- give me- uhuh.

ART (as HADRIAN): Corsica. Prudent planner or dangerous potential despot?

AUSTIN: Let's start with Lem.

JACK (as LEM): We should be careful that Corsica's ambition does not drive her to making decisions that the rest of us here at this war council do not agree with.

AUSTIN: Hella.

ALI (as HELLA): I think we owe a lot to Corsica. She's been a big help for a really long time. Um... I also think that it's tough to be in her position, and to like, not... I want to say be good at the things that you're good at anymore, and it's not that- but it's like, close enough to that. That, um, we should maybe talk to her, but you know. We're still cool with her.

AUSTIN: Um. Victoria Solomon at this thing? The Golden Lance? I'm asking. Hadrian?

ART: Sure, why not. Yeah, anyone- anyone with a- with- anyone who controls the flow of disintegration can-

AUSTIN: Sure. [*Sylvia laughs*]

ART: -be in our war council.

AUSTIN: I think she says,

AUSTIN (as VICTORIA): For as long as we've known her, Corsica and we have been aligned in our pursuit of justice and order. I don't think that that has changed. If it does, we will waste no time in correcting it.

KEITH: [*quietly*] Also grim.

AUSTIN: Fero.

KEITH (as FERRO): I think Corsica Neue is a potential despot, but I don't think that she really has much purchase right now.

AUSTIN: Adaire.

JANINE (as ADAIRE): You know, I think we're in a situation now where Corsica's here, and there are certain checks and balances, like all of us having this conversation right now, that are helpful in terms of making sure Corsica doesn't become more of a problem than she currently is. If we like, cast Corsica out for instance, we don't really have that oversight anymore. And like, granted, we can't- we can't like tell her what to do or whatever, but it's still nice to know? It's still nice to be able to see what's going on and- and react. And if we kick her out we lose that ability pretty quick. Also it would be harder for us to kill her if she does become a problem if she is like further away and more powerful outside of our influence. Kind of speaking a little bit to Victoria's point.

JANINE: Um. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Ah... Throndir?

DRE (as THRONDIR): I don't necessarily agree with the directions Corsica wants to go in, but I think we've been through way too much with her and I'm a little uncomfortable that we're having this level of a conversation behind her back.

AUSTIN: Ephrim.

SYLVIA (as EPHRIM): As much as she doesn't want to admit it, I think she's- Corsica is both afraid of our new situation here, and also the threat that the Grey Duke poses. And I- I'll do my best to make sure that she doesn't act out of that fear.

AUSTIN: Hadrian, final word.

ART (as HADRIAN): I guess I'm- I'm mostly convinced that Corsica is a- a general good who we should be supporting, and perhaps even getting more involved with, so we don't feel like we're playing catch up in these regards. Thanks everyone for comin' out.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Alright.

JACK: He's learned a lot from that diplomacy book, hasn't he? *[several people laugh out loud]*

SYLVIA: Did we meet at the booth- the diplomacy booth?

KEITH: We all dropped in on our way.

AUSTIN: *[over Keith]* Yeah, has that grown at all?

[pause] *[Ali giggles]*

ART: No, we all met at the booth, but it is exactly the same size.

AUSTIN: *[in a defeated voice]* Okay.

ART: It's just like, eight people around this booth that, let's be honest, barely holds two when one of them is Hadrian-sized. *[Austin and Jack laugh]*

AUSTIN: Alright. Lem. Draw the final card of Summer.

JACK: *[sighs worriedly]*

AUSTIN: I'm pretty sure it's the final card. Wait that's not- that might not be right- there might still- nope, that's it!

KEITH: You're right. See, another one here that says 'Draw Summer.'

AUSTIN: *[over Keith]* Yep that's it. Um... no

JACK: Oh shit, I drew a line. Sorry Austin.

AUSTIN: You did draw a line. I will take- I will get rid of that line. Uh... actually one second. First, I'm gonna- nope, no I'm not. There we- there we go. Yeah, no, that's the last card. *[someone makes noise of fear]* Here you go.

JACK: Oof, okay. 'The Jack of Summer: Predators and bad omens are afoot. You are careless, and someone goes missing under ominous circumstances. Who?' or 'Predators and bad omens

are afoot. What measures do you take to keep everyone safe and under surveillance? Do not reduce project dice this week.'

AUSTIN: Safe and under surveillance. Love it.

JACK: I know, God- it's very-

AUSTIN: [*over Jack*] Love to have that- uhuh. Neither of these are great.

JACK: Nope. Noooo. Okay so the projects that we have going right now are the Farming Community, the Library, the- the Nu Metal Refinery, the Silk Farm, and the Saboteur School. Is there others that I'm missing?

AUSTIN: I think that that is it. I'll move this- woooof- that is it. Uhuh.

JACK: 'Predators and bad omens are afoot. You are careless and someone goes missing.' Or-

AUSTIN: Under *ominous* circumstances, which is even worse.

JACK: Oh God, I have- I have a thing here, but again, like Art with Benjamin and Blue J, I don't know- I don't know if I wanna pull the trigger on it.

AUSTIN: It is- this is the last card of Summer.

JACK: And- and- and! This isn't the end of this person, this is- this is- we are- we are bringing to the end the second act of the story, right?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Uh, although, the fourth act might be weird. And like-

AUSTIN: The fourth act could end instantly, we've no idea. [*laughs*]

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: As a reminder, for people who haven't listened to The Quiet Year before or played it, in the final season, once you draw the King, the game just ends.

KEITH: [*over Austin*] Which could be the first card or last.

AUSTIN: So you could draw that- it could be the first card, yeah. Or anywhere in between, to be clear.

JACK: [*noise of distress*]

KEITH: What was the thing that you're not so sure about, though?

JACK: How do we feel about it being Red Jack?

AUSTIN: [*sadly*] Yeah.

DRE: [*quietly*] Oh.

JACK: I'm- I'm really cautious of how we are choosing to play Red Jack's illness, in the sense that, it's like- you- you accentuated, I think both Austin and Janine, that this is still definitely Red Jack-

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: -you know, Red Jack is still going fine.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: [*slowly*] He's just... he's losing track of... other Red Jacks, right? If that makes sense, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, and I- I do think to some degree it's very clear that I'm drawing on- in my characterization, and I suspect in Janine's, but certainly for mine, drawing on history with people who in later years, their memory starts to go. I'm drawing from people who are close to me now, and that is why I got choked up while describing that experience. Um, but it is also a distinctly different thing.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Because- because Red Jack is a distinctly different being. I don't think that those two- in the same way that Samol was not literally dying from cancer-

JACK: [*under Austin*] Yes.

AUSTIN: -because Samol is a god who can change the world-

JACK: [*under Austin*] Absolutely.

AUSTIN: -etcetera, but also, there is active metaphor at play that is- that is irresponsible to deny. And the right play is to like, be mindful of what's happening there.

JACK: Yeah. Absolutely. Um... Careless is such an interesting word. I'm- I'm- I'm interested in talking about the narrative implications between the word- essentially, are we s-

AUSTIN: I think once you-

JACK: Is there a conversation about, like, is this related to Benjamin and Blue J leaving?

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Is in part what I'm asking. And-

AUSTIN: I think we'll- go ahead, finish your thought.

JACK: And whether or not that's a beat that we want to hit.

AUSTIN: Right. So I think one is, we- whether or not it is related to them leaving, we would, I think, to be honest players and writers, would need to play Blue J as believing that they were responsible, right?

JACK: Yes. Absolutely.

AUSTIN: Regardless. Which is- which is a really tragic feeling.

JACK: Yes, and a very difficult- a very difficult piece of storytelling to-

AUSTIN: Totally- which it doesn't mean we should retreat from it necessarily-

JACK: No-

AUSTIN: -but it is something to be like, hey, we want to do this, and so we're gonna do it. Versus just kinda being like, well, actual play! Shrug, ha ha ha. Like, that doesn't fucking fly. The... the other thing to think about here with the word 'careless' specifically is I do- this is a moment where- where it is worth remembering that as written and designed, this is a game not about playing characters. This is a game about- about- as it's designed, about playing as a sort of indifferent narrator, and collaborator, storyteller.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: In which the *community* is careless. Right? In which it is about systems failing, it is about not having plans in place, it is about the sort of like, larger communal actions and missteps. And so, to some degree something like this does not carry that same connotation if you're just playing a game of The Quiet Year, the way it's designed. You know?

JACK: Right. Right.

AUSTIN: In the same way that reading 'What measures do you take?' would not mean 'What measures does Lem take?' [*laughs*] 'To keep people safe and under surveillance?' [*Jack laughs*] You know?

JACK: Yes. [*Keith laughs quietly in the background*] Limited and ineffective measures it would be, in that case. Yeah. I- I guess it's a broader question for everybody else at the table. Is this a beat that we want to explore?

KEITH: Can you- just which beat specifically was it?

JACK: The- the narrative implication that comes from Red Jack going missing due to some kind of societal or personal- and personal carelessness, ah, and the ways that intersect with Blue J and Benjamin leaving, and the kind of broader metaphor of Red Jack's illness.

[*pause*]

AUSTIN: Right, because like, in the adaptation of this, it's the shots of Blue J and Benjamin leaving, and then whatever the shots are that indicate Red Jack going missing. Right? And like-

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And that's to say, regardless of- because of the proximity at this point, we have- to make it natural-

JACK: [*over Austin*] Yeah- we're talking about proximity- a structural parallel, right?

AUSTIN: Right, we're talking about a structural parallel, or a structural connection, regardless of if we say 'Those aren't related.' We would have said the same thing, but because of the proximity to the scenes that *just* happened...

JACK: Mhmm.

AUSTIN: That proximity creates meaning.

JACK: Yes. And to be clear, I think this is a story that is narratively interesting-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: -it's just a question of whether or not this is something that we want to begin to tell at this point. I say begin to as though we haven't been telling these kinds of stories for ages but like, you know.

AUSTIN: Totally.

[*pause*]

JANINE: There's like a version of this that makes me really unhappy.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: There's a version of this that I think is- is interesting, compelling for the characters, and there's a version of this that is still kind of those things, but as a participant in this story, makes me unhappy in a very real way.

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: And that version is that Red Jack forgets that Blue J left.

AUSTIN: [*knowingly*] Mmm.

JANINE: And goes to find them.

AUSTIN: I don't- I wouldn't want to play it that way. Because we know-

JANINE: [*over Austin*] Good, 'cause- yeah-

AUSTIN: This is- again this is about- this is about the like-

JANINE: Yes, it's about- it's about losing a connection to- to previous experience-

AUSTIN: Right, we-

JANINE: -and not current experience.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I- I would not wanna play it that way.

JANINE: I'm just putting that on the table since no one else was talking, that's like- that-

AUSTIN: No, I appreciate it.

JANINE: -and things in that vein make me sad in a way that-

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: -that makes storytelling not be fun anymore.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: Mhmm. Yeah. I agree.

AUSTIN: And I think there's a way to do it that's a different way but that's still honest about something here, right? Um... I mean- there's a degree to which it can be Red Jack, for other reasons, right?

JACK: Yes. Yes. I don't want to take away Red Jack's decision making here.

AUSTIN: Right, Red Jack is still Red Jack, right? Like Red Jack still has- Red Jack would still be making decisions that are Red Jack-like decisions. Which are often-

JACK: [*under Austin*] Which is to say-

AUSTIN: [*over Jack*] -foolhardy decisions!

JACK: [*laughing*] Yes.

AUSTIN: Right?

JACK: Yes.

JANINE: And sometimes Red Jack just leaves.

AUSTIN: Right! Yep.

JANINE: Often, Red Jack just leaves.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Surrounded by all these new kids, who are growing up...

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, to what degree is this being like, 'Well, Blue J and Benjamin-' is this the other side of this, right-

JACK: Yes- yes!

AUSTIN: -is this *Eat, Pray, Love* Red Jack? [*Keith cackles in the background*] [*Dre laughs out loud*] [*Jack and Keith laugh*] Ah, is this like, Red Jack- which is still-

JACK: God, *Eat, Pray, Love* is actually- just taking those verbs is very Red Jack.

AUSTIN: [*yelling through laughter*] All very Red Jack! Yeah, it is. If only. If only the real *Eat, Pray, Love* was more Red Jack. The- yeah, is it that direction?

JACK: It's not 'My work here is done'-

AUSTIN: No!

JACK: -because Red Jack a) doesn't really think like that-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: -and b) I don't know if that's necessarily the most interesting angle to go. But! It's- and, and, it might also be a conscious decision to be like, 'One of the ways I might be able to get closer to this thing that I am getting further away from' [*Austin makes sound of understanding*] is- Hadrian had that great line about like, maybe we should actually involve Corsica in this, instead of just like, continuing to exclude her from stuff-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And I wonder if Red Jack is kind of just like, 'What if I actually have to go and seek this out?'

AUSTIN: Right. Right.

KEITH: Like as a way to- like, it- 'I could just go get the thing that I feel that I'm losing'? Like is that what you were...?

JACK: Or 'I could try and find it somewhere.'

AUSTIN: Or find *something*, right?

JACK: Here's the other thing about Red Jack: if Red Jack goes out there and kills a stag beetle the size of a fuckin' skyscraper [*Keith laughs*] he's gonna be stoked.

AUSTIN: Right- right. Right. [*Dre chuckles*]

JACK: Regardless of his connection to previous Red Jacks he's gonna be like, 'Yes!!'

KEITH: New armour. *[Austin laughs]*

JACK: So I think- I think- I think it's hot. I think it's so hot. And there is an intensity to the heat that suggests that it is fleeting. This is the heat of late summer, not midsummer. And predators and bad omens are afoot. You know, we have, there are like, bluebottles the size of your fist, in the- hanging around in the sky, snatching smaller bugs, and it's-

KEITH: *[quietly]* What is a bluebottle?

JACK: -they don't like, bother you. Ah, like, house flies.

AUSTIN: Ah yes, the- and the pollen hail was coming down hard that day. *[Jack laughs out loud]* The sun was shining.

JACK: Well the sun is shining-

AUSTIN: The holidays were here- whatever that line is-

JACK: Well, the suns were shining, the holidays were here. And I think that there is- everyone is woken up very early in the morning- and it's already very hot- by the sound of a tree falling? Somewhere in the distance. It's just this massive, awful sound, that is instantly recognizable as, you know, a falling tree. But just so vast and earth-shaking, that it must just be the case that some branch the size of a city has tumbled and fallen deeper down into the Rhizome somewhere. And then after that is the sound of hoofbeats. And the sound of like, Red Jack singing out in the courtyard as he puts Ace's tack on and swings himself up onto the horse. And... goes. And I don't know that he has necessarily communicated to people, what we just talked about his decision making involving-

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: -because I want to be clear that the card says 'goes missing' instead of 'leaves'.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah yeah.

JACK: So I think a lot of people are like, 'Fuckin' hell, what? Where's Red Jack gone?'

AUSTIN: I mean I- I do think we have to go a little harder in that 'missing under ominous circumstances'. Like, does someone find something? Is there some- because this is- what you're describing to me still feels just like, oh yeah, Red Jack.

JACK: So the original version of this that I thought of but- but didn't- is that- is that Ace is here but Red Jack isn't.

AUSTIN: Mmm.

JACK: But I didn't know that was now too hard, in the other direction. Is-

AUSTIN: No, that's really good.

KEITH: No, I think that works. I mean, because there's a way to read that where it's like, 'Well, what is Ace gonna do on these branches? How useful is that going to be as a method'- like, that's the positive spin on it, but it's also like, 'Wow, Red Jack is gone, and Ace is here. What does that mean?'

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: Yeah. So then it's- it's Ace in the courtyard. We don't actually even see Red Jack leave. We hear the sound of the tree fall, and then hoofbeats in the courtyard. And it's just Ace, not wearing any saddle or anything, just wearing probably like a bridle or something.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: And Red Jack is nowhere to be found.

[*pause*]

JACK: But the good news is that we do get to reduce project dice this week!

AUSTIN: Oh wow, love it. I'll do that right now, in fact. Boop. Boop. Library's one away, Nu Metal is four away, Silk Farm is only one week away. Alright, everything is up- is updated. Um, what do you do this turn, Lem? Or Jack?

JACK: Um... hmm. I would like to start a project.

AUSTIN: Okay! What are you startin'?

JACK: We have seen- Benjamin and Blue J have headed off in one direction.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: Red Jack has gone missing.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

JACK: With the help of Adaire's mapmaking, we have at least some kind of confidence moving, and so, I am going to- Lem is going to put together a crew- including the gliders that- using the gliders that were built- to try and head down into the Velas that we saw.

AUSTIN: Oooh. Okay.

JACK: I think this a four step clock? 'Cause most of it's going to be falling?

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Is this like, multiple attempts to do it? What is- why does it take four weeks? Tell me- tell me why that? I'm not saying it should take less, but.

JACK: Ah, 'cause it's unbelievably intense and frightening.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: First you have to get people who are willing to do it, cause Lem isn't. And then there has to be like- presumably like a lot of maths, like exactly how far away does this thing seem to be?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: How are we gonna make sure we hit it? What are we going to try and hit?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: So I don't think it's like, they push off from the top branch and it takes them a full month to get down into the city. But I think that the amount of planning that goes into this operation is intense.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Alright, added four steps.

JACK: Oh yeah, I don't know if- Janine in the chat says, 'I'm picturing a lot of test gliders with sack of rocks being dropped into Velas with "sorry" on them.' I wonder if the figure with the bullhorn has been seen or not.

AUSTIN: Good question.

JACK: Like, I have no idea what's going on there.

AUSTIN: We have not zoomed in on that.

JACK: That might be part of why-

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah.

JACK: -we're sending folks down.

AUSTIN: Are the- do the gliders have like, ropes attached to them, so that you can pull them back when you miss? You described having five of these.

JACK: Uh, we are presumably also like- I think part of this plan is we want to build some to replace the ones we lose.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Yeah.

JACK: But I think the way they have ropes on is they have- they can like, checkpoint themselves. So the glider can drive a big spike into the branch that they take off from-

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: -that will then let them get back to the branch that they took off from, but no further.

AUSTIN: Right right right. Yeah.

JACK: And so they go down in kind of, stages.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that makes sense. It's like a- you're gliding from like- from point to point, it's not one big glide.

JACK: No, although there are presumably huge gaps between some of the branches, which means that-

AUSTIN: And also-

JACK: -a big glide has to happen.

AUSTIN: There are definitely people who are like, 'I could do it in one big glide, for sure. I'm definitely gonna figure it out.'

JACK: *WHAM!*

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. [*Jack de Quidt's 'Under the Boughs' starts playing*] Not at all. Get picked up by some like, other branch's- giant branch's gravity and end up landing in a third Velas. [*Jack laughs*]

KEITH: And you land upside down-

AUSTIN: Right-

KEITH: -too probably, cause it'd like, pick you up- it'd pick the glider up-

AUSTIN: Oh, who even knows!

KEITH: -above you.

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* And lift you, yeah, totally.

[music finished playing out and episode ends]