

Compelled Dual

Season Three Episode Twenty-One: Echoes, Empires, And Endings

Cast:

Barry: DM, NPCs and voice of Leo

Al: DM, NPCs and voice of Phi

B: Hey Al.

A: Hey, Barry.

B: Did you hear about the dungeon master who was eating chocolate during game?

A: No. I did not.

B: It was a really big problem - he got accused of fudging the dice. It's time for Compelled Dual.

[INTRO MUSIC]

B: Hello everybody, and welcome back to Compelled Dual. I'm Barry.

A: And I'm Al.

B: And we are a single-player, co-DMed, D&D 5E actual-play podcast.

A: And, one last time... Previously, on Compelled Dual.

[RECAP STARTS]

Morlin: Oh, I would take a step away from that thing if I were you, children. You have *no* idea what you're toying with.

Phi: Neither do you.

B: Everybody roll initiative.

A: [dice noise, gasps] NAT TWENTY.

B: Fuck *yeah*.

A: No fucking way!

B: [dice noise] Nat twenty! Eat shit, old man!

A: His voice *booms* down the lighthouse, as he yells

Morlin: *Enough of this!*

A: And he casts Circle Of Death.

B: Oh, that doesn't sound like fun.

A: No, especially not when he casts it at eighth level.

B: [yells]

A: So you and Phi both instantly take fifty-nine necrotic damage.

B: I would like to use my one and only seventh-level spell slot to cast a spell called Divine Word.

A: What word do you want to use, to kill your father?

Leo: *Enough.*

A: Out of this pit, rises Elasha Dacaryn. Elasha gets up on her tiptoes, gives your father a long, lingering kiss. He starts to relax into it. And then she dives sideways and pulls him into the fucking hole.

Leo: We did it. He's gone.

Kimryl, The Lord Of Bones: This is your inheritance. And your responsibility. You *know* what to do.

B: Leoril Valcyne will *not* become his father, or his distant ancestor, or *any* of the murderous despots in between. He does not let go of his sister's hand.

A: By the stairs stands the ghost of Sorran Shakrana.

Sorran: Hey.

[RECAP ENDS]

A: Leo, we find you standing in the tower of Loex Tolgalen, having just... Well, I guess not *killed* your father - *facilitated the death of* your father, and ending the massive broken promise that has been magically powering Astraria for the last ten thousand years. And in front of you stands the ghost of your ex-fiance, Sorran Shakrana. What are you doing?

B: Leo just stares at him. He doesn't move, he doesn't say anything. He's just... frozen.

A: Soran kind of shuffles awkwardly, doesn't quite look at you, and says

Sorran: I, uh... got your message. I didn't really have time to reply, though.
Sorry.

Leo: I should have sent it sooner. And I just realized that I had forgotten what your voice sounded like.

B: And then Leo starts fucking sobbing. He has to lock his knees to keep from absolutely *collapsing* in grief.

A: You feel Phi reach out to grab you, and then, just after, you feel... something weird. There is a *pressure* holding you up, but it doesn't feel like a *person* is touching you, if that makes sense. There's no warmth, there's no feeling of anything touching you. It's kind of like... laying back on damp sand. Like, there's definitely something *there*, but... it doesn't give you the kind of sensory input you would expect.

[TIMESTAMP - 5:14]

B: He's, like, crying so hard that he can't see, but he grips at Phi's arm really hard, and jerks his head toward where he thinks the door is.

Leo: Just - [cough/sob] Just *go*, just go tell 'em we're alive, please.

A: Leo, your sister loves and supports you *so much*. But your girl is *so fucking autistic*. [laughs] She goes

Phi: *Oh thank you.*

A: And then, just - Phi-shaped cloud of dust, as she *bolts* for the door.

Leo: [laughs/sobs, sniffles] No really, don't fight me on this, somebody's gotta go out there. [laughs]

B: Leo, like, *laughs* hysterically for a second, and then goes back to sobbing again - he's in a glass case of emotion, right now.

A: You hear Sorran let out a little watery laugh, and it sounds like it is echoing down a hallway.

B: Once Phi's gone, Leo is going to let himself sink down onto the floor, just slowly going down to his knees. Is Soran, like, *corporeal*? Like, if he tried to touch him, would his hand hit anything?

A: Yes and no? He's not corporeal the way you *expect* him to be. It's almost like he is having to think about it, and consciously react to where you are putting your hands.

B: Leo, still ugly-crying, looks up at where Sorran is still kind of holding him up, where he's kneeling on the floor, and just smacks a hand into his chest.

Leo: Why the *fuck* would you die for me? You had people that needed you - *Lorelei* needed you! I let you go, and it was the hardest thing I've ever done, and you had a whole life ahead of you, and you *died* for me, and now *I* have to carry that around for the rest of my life! *Fuck* you!

A: You feel his arms wrap around you a little tighter - again, it doesn't feel like a person is touching you, it's just this weird pressure.

Sorran: I wanted justice. I felt like - no, I *knew* something was wrong. And after I started pulling back the layers, I - I just... couldn't stop. I wanted to make things right, and I wanted you back, and... [sighs]

A: You feel a finger tuck some of your hair behind your ear.

Sorran: ...It wasn't *for* you. It was for *me*. And I would do all of it again. [shaky breath] Well, maybe not the *dying* part. [laughs]

Leo: [sniffles] Yeah, the, uh, dying part's not generally advisable. I know you probably saw that there were other people, but... You know that doesn't mean that I didn't - that I *don't* -

Sorran: I know. You don't owe me an explanation for being happy.

Leo: [laughs] Do I fucking look *happy*, Sorran?

Sorran: Not right now. But you *have*. I've *seen* it. [shaky breath] I *want* you to be.

Leo: ...You're leaving, aren't you?

Sorran: Yeah, I am. [sniffles] I just, uh... had the chance to say goodbye, and I took it.

Leo: Hang on for a little bit. There's someone that deserves that chance more than me.

B: Leo takes his knife out, and casts Sending. To Lorelei. The message says

Leo: [telepathically] Either teleport up to the tower, or find someone that can teleport you. There's someone you need to talk to.

A: There's a long pause, and then a *pop* of teleportation magic, and then you hear Lorelei's voice, trembling

Lorelei: [breathing shakily] Sorran?

A: Sorran turns away from you, gets to his feet in one fluid motion, and just says

Sorran: [sighs] *Lorelei.*

[TIMESTAMP - 10:07]

A: You watch Lorelei sprint across the room, and just dive into a hug, and Sorran wraps his arms around her super tight. Lorelei is just *sobbing*.

Lorelei: [sobbing]

B: Leo's not gonna interrupt their moment. He just stays there, curled up on the floor. But he feels more alone than he ever has in his life. All of that grief that he hasn't had the chance to acknowledge, ever since he found out Sorran died, is just a raw, gaping wound, right now. But he holds it together, because breaking down in front of Lorelei is not gonna help the situation any.

A: Lorelei is still just crying. You see Sorran - one semi-translucent hand just patting her hair down

Sorran: Shh, it's okay. It's okay. It's okay.

A: And Lorelei just goes

Lorelei: [sobbing] You were gone and I didn't know what was going on and nobody would tell me what was happening - [gasping] I *missed* you.

A: I am gonna roll on the wild magic surge table for Lorelei really quick. [dice sound, upset noise] Lorelei starts glowing. It kind of hurts your eyes to look at her. She is still crying, but just... glowing like a lightbulb, now. Sorran is still just patting her hair down, squinting a little bit now.

Sorran: I know, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, I love you *so much*. [sniffles, exhales] I just - I needed to say goodbye, I'm so sorry I didn't say goodbye.

A: Lorelei pulls back a little bit, goes

Lorelei: [gasping] G-Goodbye? No, no, no, don't - *stay. Please* stay.

A: Sorran pulls her back in, buries his face in her hair.

Sorran: I - I *can't*. I can't stay, I - [deep, shaky breath]

A: He looks at you over her shoulder.

Sorran: [exhales] I am still *so angry* about everything that happened. And I think, if I stayed... I - I wouldn't be able to hold onto everything? And I don't know how to stop being angry. I'm afraid that eventually the only thing that would be left would be the anger, and I *don't* want that - [sniffles] I *don't* want that. I love you *so much*. And whatever comes next, I - I *need* to be able to keep that.

B: It takes Leo a really long time to get to his feet. It's like he's got a ten-ton weight on his shoulders. But he walks over, and just pulls Sorran down, until their foreheads are pressed together.

Leo: Okay. Just, before you go... Did I do it?

Sorran: ...Do what?

Leo: Did I make you proud?

Sorran: [sobs] You never needed to. I love you.

Leo: I love you too. Goodbye, Sorran.

A: He reaches down, kind of pries Lorelei off of him, and nudges her toward you. She latches on super tight, still sniffing. And then he says

Sorran: Goodbye. Take care of each other?

B: Leo nods, and then leans down to just bury his face in Lorelei's hair for a second.

Leo: We will.

A: There is no response. When you look up, he's gone.

[TIMESTAMP - 14:41]

B: Phirora Valcyne walks out the front doors of the tower of Loex Tolgalen, and into an entirely new world. The reigning Archduke of Astraria is dead. The lies, and secrets, and dark magic that have kept her family's dynasty afloat for millennia are gone. And the world as she knows it has effectively been saved. So, what my big question is to *you* now, Al - what does Phi *do*, in this brave new world? Her adventure is over. What does she want?

A: I think that every *grand plan*, and every title that Phi has ever had... has been forced on her. So I think... she wants peace and quiet. If they can do it without The Captain getting arrested, she would like to settle in Pearlport. She gives up her title as pirate queen. I think she'll still spend as much time as she is *needed* out with the fleet, but I

think her greatest ambition now is to find a community that she can be a part of, and that she can help, and... live a quiet, unremarkable life.

B: Phi, we find you several years after the battle of Loex Tolgalen. You are perched on a barstool, at the Rusty Cutlass tavern, on the island of Parlay Cove. Surrounded by the loud jubilant sounds of pirates from across the world drinking and laughing and fighting and singing. There are several other members of the crew around you, in this barroom - you see Boots and Pelican canoodling in a corner booth. You and Glasses - both looking a little bit older than the last time we saw them - have commandeered a pool table in the far corner, and are going at it. They're both cheating. Doc is sitting down at the far end of the bar, with a book propped open in one hand and a double whiskey - neat - in the other. And Ascot is fluttering back and forth between everybody with a clipboard, trying to make sure that you've gotten all your supplies. From the open seat next to you, you hear a groan as somebody sits down and plunks a drink down in front of you, followed by

The Captain: [sighs] Where in Kiva's name is Sabine? We've gotta be upstairs in five minutes!

Phi: Not everyone else is here yet, dear. And you *know* you have to tell her an hour earlier than when she needs to show up, when she's on mission.

B: The Captain looks mildly perturbed for a second, but then cracks a smile. He's back in the full swing of his duties as pirate king of the Zephyr Isles, after... *all of that* ended. Mostly, these days, the fleet is preoccupied with helping to reestablish the supply chain to Vog Voldhur that was demolished by the Astrarian blockade, and also helping with rebuilding efforts in and around Pearlport, after the city was sacked. He rolls his eyes, and leans over to give you a little kiss on the cheek.

The Captain: I did, this time! I've already tried the rings - do you want to give it a shot, and see if she'll answer you?

A: Phi grins, and then reaches down to twist the wedding band around her finger, and feels the *buzz* of magic in it.

B: A sort of modified Sending spell ripples out through this artificed ring that Glasses made for the three of you. You can't send *words* through it, it's not like an *actual* Sending spell, or like your Beacon coin, but it sort of just makes the other rings glow, whenever one of you moves it around, or triggers the magic in it. You don't get a response on the ring, but there is a light like a flashbulb from the empty barstool on the other side of you, and Sabine appears there, sitting very primly - in juxtaposition to how *absolutely covered* in blood and soot she is. She's in her black leather Beacon armor - a

few strands of hair have come loose from the slate-gray braid crown around the top of her head... And she looks very calm, all things considered.

Sabine: Hello, dears. Sorry I couldn't answer the ring, I had a knife in someone's throat.

A: Phi is not even phased by this. She takes a sip of her drink, and goes

Phi: Oh, we assumed it was something like that. Did everything go well?

B: Sabine digs through the front of her armor and pulls out a coin that she puts down on the bartop, and nods at the bartender - who starts making her usual - before turning back to you and The Captain with a big mischievous grin, her one gold canine sparkling under the lights of the bar.

[TIMESTAMP - 20:11]

Sabine: Well, I mean, it depends on who you ask. The *facts* of the situation are that the professor that had been embezzling from the archeology funds at Northridge University in Gimtarum has been... eh, *neutralized*. And all of those missing artifacts got repatriated back to Daurir. So I'd call it a net success!

B: With the mystery that it had been founded to solve pretty much done and dusted, the Beacon - under Sabine's leadership - has taken on a new role in the world at large. It took a long time for the wounds of the schism to be repaired, and for everything to work itself out, but *now* it mainly functions as a big international espionage society that focuses on rooting out corruption? So, yeah, you're not phased by this. This is another Tuesday, for Sabine. The bartender comes back over with her drink, and she takes a swig out of it, and reaches down to squeeze at your knee.

Sabine: I didn't miss the meeting, did I?

Phi: No, but you cut it pretty close.

A: And then Phi leans over to give her a kiss.

B: She kisses you back, and then stands up off her barstool, and grabs her drink.

Sabine: Oh well, I can just take this one to-go. Let's get upstairs.

B: She goes to walk past you, and The Captain pouts at her, and goes

The Captain: Oi! Equal distribution of kisses, please.

B: Sabine rolls her eyes, but does lean in and kiss him too, and then the two of them stand up and start moving for the stairwell. Are you going?

A: Yeah, for sure.

B: You all head up to the upper room of the Rusty Cutlass, that serves as the meeting space for the pirate court. Most of the other pirate monarchs are already up here, seated around this round table. The pirate Queens of Torduun - Beatrix Stillbranch and her wife Ingrid - are both sitting there, talking amongst themselves. Agrippina The Red is a little further around the table, smoking a long-stemmed pipe. Next to her, the new pirate queen of Daurir - Tsarra Venvyre, this young Wood Elf woman in the equivalent of like her late teens, early twenties - is whittling at a piece of wood. Katya of clan Mistfoot, She-Who-Rode-The-Snapping-Turtle, pirate queen of Oscaea, is just chilling. On Katya's other side, there are five empty chairs - three of which are for you, Sabine, and The Captain.

A: Phi turns to The Captain with her eyebrows raised, and says

Phi: I *told* you they weren't here yet.

B: He scoffs and flops down into his chair, kicks his heels up on top of the table.

The Captain: Aye, leave it to the Astrarians to be late.

B: And - out this still-open door, in the hallway - you hear a brassy voice reply

Eleanora: Heard you were talking shit.

B: Into this room strides Eleanora Ashthorne, outfitted in sturdy sailor's garb, dark curly hair in a long braid down her back, an empty scabbard at her belt - because nobody's allowed to have weapons in Parlay Cove. She flicks The Captain in the back of the head on the way past him, and then folds herself into one of the two empty chairs.

Eleanora: Sorry we're late. Her majesty the pirate queen couldn't decide what color feather she wanted to put in her hat, this morning.

B: And then, into this room walks one Kalessa Petris. She is dressed so ostentatiously. She's got, like, thigh-high leather boots with elaborate jeweled buckles, this very well-tailored overcoat of damask and gold trim, a *bigass* tricorn hat atop her head with a fluffy purple feather in it, and her hair - still jaw-length, still very curly - has been dyed purple to match the feather. On her shoulder sits a crackling fire spirit that you know to be Burnie Cinders, but he has transmogrified himself into a smoky fiery parrot. And, at the base of her throat, pinned through the fabric of this frilly pirate shirt that she has on, is the brooch that belonged to Defiance, the round red gem gleaming softly. She gives you and Sabine and The Captain a one-armed hug and a quick kiss on the cheek, before she goes to sit in the empty seat next to Eleanora, and perches her elbows on the table with her chin in her hands.

[TIMESTAMP - 25:15]

Kalessa: Okay, everybody's looking fabulous. We should get down to business, I think several of us have somewhere to be pretty soon after this?

Phi: Indeed we do. Uh, where's Lorelei?

B: Kalessa kind of smirks, and reaches up to scritch Burnie Cinders on top of his fiery parrot head.

Kalessa: Yeah, well, I was gonna bring her along for, like, first mate training, so she could learn the ropes and everything, but she saw Glasses downstairs and refused to move, so...

Phi: Ah, young love.

A: Phi turns to the table at large, and says

Phi: Uh, just to start us off - not to speak over *you*, dear -

A: She says to The Captain.

Phi: - but we've had a rash of Astrarian ships bound for Pearlport with relief supplies getting raided, and we would appreciate if that would stop. Also, my brother's being insufferable about it.

B: Agrippina The Red stops with her pipe halfway to her mouth, and her cheeks go kind of dark.

Agrippina The Red: Ah, uh... My bad.

B: And this entire tableful of pirate monarchs breaks out laughing. The Captain, cackling, slings an arm around your shoulders, and Sabine - trying to look dignified and failing - reaches down to squeeze at your hand. Phi, you are surrounded by friends and loved ones. And the extent of your problems is such that they can be solved by a joke and shared laughter. You are happy.

A: Our camera zooms over the fields and gentle, rolling hills of central Astraria, and into the city of Velunthal. Leo, it's been a few years. What have you been up to?

B: [exhales] A lot. Following the events on Loex Tolgalen, Leo *does* assume the throne of Astraria and become the Archduke - but only for the purposes of facilitating a complete dismantling of the Astrarian monarchy and government and theocracy - all of it. He's just there to facilitate that, and ensure a peaceful transition of power, and then he's done. I think, after that, his goals are basically to spend a couple more years with

Zed adventuring around and cleaning up whatever messes are left, and then he just wants to settle down and... Have a home. And *be* a home, for the people that he loves.

A: Our camera zooms into the bedchamber of one Archduke Leoril Valcyne. It's... not *super* early in the morning, but about time to be rising, and you hear a pounding at your door, as Kalessa Petris yells

Kalessa: Rise and shine, sleepyhead - it's your last chance to pull a runaway groom!

Leo: [sleepy grumbling] What time's it? Go away.

B: Leo tries to roll over and just bury his face in Zed's neck.

A: Uh, Zed is not in bed next to you.

B: Okay, Leo's awake now. His eyes snap open, and he sits up in bed like a Jack-in-the-box popping up.

Leo: ...Huh. Be out in a minute!

Kalessa: Alright, we still got a full day planned!

A: And then you hear footsteps down the hallway, and Kalessa whistling a Fantasy Wedding March™.

B: Before I get ready to go, can I roll an investigation check to see if and when Zed came back last night, and if he left any evidence?

A: Yeah, go ahead.

B: Um, I still have proficiency from my Phantom thing -

A: No, you don't. After *everything* with the ghost hole - Leo, you lost all of your levels in *Phantom* Rogue. I will leave the option up to you whether you would like to go straight-leveled cleric, or just change your rogue subclass.

[TIMESTAMP - 29:46]

B: Yeah. It doesn't really make sense to get rid of all his rogue levels, 'cuz that's, like, mechanical, physical things he learned - like sleight of hand and being very stealthy. So I'm gonna change my subclass to mastermind. So, with the amount of rogue levels that I have, I don't actually get that much - I'm able to unerringly mimic the speech patterns and accents of any creature that I listen to for up to a minute. So... Leo's really good at impressions now? And also I get proficiency in another gaming set and two more languages - I'll take proficiency in playing cards, and I will learn Orcish and Sylvan. And

also, I can use help as a bonus action. So I only get plus three to this investigation check, now. [dice sound] Twelve!

A: I'm gonna be honest. *You are not* the most organized person at the best of times, and for the past few months, you have been mired in wedding prep - both because Leo wants his wedding to be good, and because, since you are the Archduke, it *has* to be a public event, you did not have the option to do it privately. So the room is just *full* of wedding detritus, and Zed is *way* more careful about putting his shit back where it goes than you are. So you don't know that you can tell the difference between *oh yeah, Zed was in here yesterday morning* and *oh yeah, Zed was in here this morning and just left before I woke up*.

B: Leo narrows his eyes, gets out of bed, puts on a black satin bathrobe that he has had made specifically for the occasion of breakfast hair and makeup - all of his groomspeople also have matching black satin bathrobes - and he's gonna go downstairs for breakfast, keeping an eye out.

A: You make your way downstairs to breakfast. Sitting at the table are Phi, Sabine, Kalessa, Eleanora, Ruvaen, Fen, your mother, your aunt Nora, and one Cellica Morren.

B: Leo sits down and reaches immediately for a carafe of coffee.

Leo: Good morning everyone. Has anybody laid eyes on my betrothed this morning, by chance?

A: Eyes immediately swing to Kalessa, who just takes a long sip of her coffee, and then puts it down, looks around, and says

Kalessa: I don't know *why* everybody's looking at me, I ditched the bachelor party once it was clear things were getting... too rowdy for me.

Leo: Oh. Things got *rowdy* at the bachelor party, Kalessa. And you didn't think to lead in with *waking me up out of a dead sleep this morning with that?*

Kalessa: They were literally with one of the two highest-ranking priests in the country, I figured Verity would handle it.

Leo: Okay, so where's Verity?

A: Kalessa puts a finger up, and then puts it down, slowly. And Ruvaen puts his head in his hands.

Leo: [deep breath, clicks tongue] You know what? No. This is my day. We are gonna have a nice breakfast, we are gonna go to hair and makeup, we're gonna look fabulous. Everything is gonna go off without a hitch, and *nothing is wrong*, because this

is my day. Mom, Cellica, so glad to see you made it. Did you get everything cleared up okay back in Torduun?

A: There is a moment of silence, and then Cellica elbows your mother in the side, and she looks up from where she was poking at something on her plate, and goes

Adhana: Hmm? Oh yes - uh, one of my students almost blew up the entire building, but it was okay.

A: You know that - for starters, your mother didn't want to come back to the palace at Velunthal, for reasons that became obvious when she was there for more than a few days - it made her extremely scattered and confused, a lot of the time. So she packed up and moved into the tower where Cellica, Talindra, and Ruvaen made their home for many, many years - although she and Cellica still won't *admit* whether or not there's something happening between the two of them. But, after you and Ruvaen both brought up the points to the two of them that, *perhaps*, being alone in the woods was not good for either of their mental health, the two of them set up a school for wizardry and artificing, near the city of Lockham, with the enthusiastic blessing of king Warren Dawnchaser. Nora, gesturing with her fork, says

Nora: It's fine. We only lost track of them for, what, six hours? How much trouble could they have gotten up to in six hours?

[TIMESTAMP - 35:00]

Leo: [groans] *Why* did you say that?! It's fine. It's fine. Everything is fine. Auntie Nora, do you know when Lark and Aydra are supposed to make it in?

Nora: Uh, probably on the midmorning barge with Linh and Camila? They sent me a message this morning saying that they had gotten into town.

A: Leo - in the last few years, your aunt Nora, your uncle Eron, and your uncle Boreas have all moved back to mainland Astraria. They didn't particularly *want* to move to Voldhur, they just all *had to* because of your father. But Lark and Aydra elected to stay back in Voldhur, because - essentially, their entire lives were there. Last you heard, Aydra is working in the Tonys' garage, and running a kind of side-hustle out of it, selling some artificed items that she makes on commission. And Lark is... doing *the most*. According to Aydra, their profession, currently, is giving tarot readings in the park and being thrown money by attractive young men.

B: Yeah, that's what they deserve! That's awesome. Leo nods, slams a blueberry muffin and a mimosa, and just gets up and claps his hands together.

Leo: Okay! Everything is cool. Everything is great. I need to go get started on my hair, or it won't be *ready* by this afternoon. I'll see you all upstairs.

B: And he whirls around on his heel and just walks out of the dining room. As soon as he is a decent distance down the hall, he's going to reach into the satin bathrobe and pull out his knife - which he did tuck in there - and cast a Sending spell *to Zed* that says

Leo: [telepathically] If you're not *dead*, you're about to wish you were! What the fuck happened last night?! You will *not* ruin this day for my mother.

A: There is a long pause. And then you get a Sending back, reluctant.

Zed: [telepathically] It's a long story. I'll be in touch in a minute to explain. I'm sorry. I love you. I'm sorry. I love you so much. I'm sorry.

B: Leo stands there for a second. His grip tightens around the knife. But then he slowly puts it back in his bathrobe, and goes upstairs to get his *fucking* hair done.

A: A little while passes. You get your makeup done, and your hair. Phi and Adhana are helping you into your robes, everyone has kind of filed in to get themselves ready. Lark and Aydra have shown up by this point - and Toni with an I, which is a pleasant surprise. Somebody tries to do *her* makeup, and she gives them the most venomous look you've ever seen. [laughs] Aydra also declines. Lark is having the time of their fucking life. Zed's mom, Linh Stonebloom - and her wife, Camila - have shown up. There's not much to do as far as getting Linh ready - she's extremely butch, she's not gonna have it. Uh, she's wearing a simple - but very nice - ao dai, and some nice pants. Camila did her own hair, her locs are twisted up into an elegant updo. She looks amazing. And everybody's just kind of chilling, when a wizard from the order of Iluna kind of shuffles in, gives an awkward little wave, and says

Wizard: A-Archduke Leoril? This is for you?

A: And holds out a Stone of Far Speech.

Leo: ...Yeah. I bet it is.

B: Leo tries to untangle one hand from where Phi and his mom are swarming around him, trying to help him get dressed, and picks up the stone and looks down into it.

A: You see Zed Stonebloom - your partner of many years, the love of your life, the man you are marrying not four hours from now. He looks extremely hungover. His hair's kind of hanging loose, he's got his face in one hand. And, as soon as he sees you, he says

Zed: Alright, listen.

Leo: I'm listening.

Zed: So, uh. Baby. Here's the thing.

B: Leo goes rigid, and bats Phi away from where she's trying to adjust something on his robes.

Leo: You don't ever call me "baby." What the hell did you *do*?!

[TIMESTAMP - 40:02]

Zed: Alright, so, uh - [stammers] things got a *little* hectic last night, and we may or may not have gotten, like - just a little bit - just like a *tiny* bit arrested, maybe, a little.

B: Oh, Leo throws both hands up and bats everybody away from him, and then brings the Stone of Far Speech back up in front of his face.

Leo: [stammers, chuckles] I'm sorry, *we*? We are getting *married* in like *three and a half hours*, Zed, who all is in there with you?!

A: Zed scrubs a hand down his face, looks over his shoulder, and then turns back to the Stone of Far Speech and says

Zed: Uh... Well - Well, Mia left. They said, and I quote, "*Bye, suckers!*" And then they turned into a fly and flew out the window. Uh, so it's just me, The Captain, and Verity.

Leo: *Verity*?!

A: Ruvaen looks up from across the room, concerned. Sweetie the skeletal sparrow starts to fly in circles around his head, as he says

Ruvaen: Uh, what about Verity?

Leo: Shut up, Ruvaen! Oh my God. Zed, that is our *officiant*! There are *three* fundamentally necessary elements to this wedding, two grooms and an officiant, and you mean to tell me that two of them are in - [deep breath] *Oh my God, you are so lucky you are not here right now.*

A: Zed puts a hand up, and makes a vague gesture, and says

Zed: Look look look look look. Look. Boss. It's fine. You just need to come bail us out. You just - You just need to come bail us out!

Leo: What did you *do*?

Zed: Well. Alright. Uh, so, we were all pretty toasty, and The Captain repeated a proposition that he had made before, vis a vis me stealing a boat.

B: Leo drops the Stone of Far Speech to his side for a second, and just stares into the middle distance before bringing it back up.

Leo: You stole a - [sighs] What *boat* did you *steal*, honey?

Zed: Th-The barge.

Leo: What barge, Zed?

Zed: [stammers] The one that is owned by the palace.

Leo: You stole the royal barge. You stole *my* boat. *My* boat, that is also gonna be *your* boat, in three and a half hours, *supposedly*.

If you wanna get technical, we got arrested for assaulting a member of the city guard, and that was Verity.

Leo: What is Verity even doing there - she's the high priestess of Kiva! How does this happen?!

Zed: She said she wanted to get wild.

A: And, in the background, you hear a long, low groan [wheezes] that is distinctly in Verity's voice.

Leo: [sighs] Yeah, and I did pass that law last week that said that regardless of political status, everybody is equal under the law. [sighs] Every time I try to do something good. Okay. Okay. Okay. [inhales] Here's what's gonna happen, Zed. I'm not gonna bail you out.

Zed: Uh, that - that seems like it would get in the way of us getting married in three and a half hours.

A: And then Zed looks off, away from the stone, and says

Zed: ...Three hours and twenty minutes.

B: Oh, Leo is a man on the edge at this point. He looks down into this Stone of Far Speech with a big, manic smile.

Leo: You heard me. *I'm* not coming to bail you out. You're gonna wish *I* had come to bail you out. Hey, Linh!

A: Across the room - too far away to hear this Stone of Far Speech, but close enough to hear you yell - Linh Stonebloom looks up from her book, goes

Linh: Eh?

A: And, from the stone, you hear Zed go

Zed: No no no no no!

B: Leo does not look at Linh. He is looking down into the Stone of Far Speech with absolutely no mercy.

Leo: Guess where your son is, right now.

A: Linh turns a page in her book, and then goes

Linh: [snorts] Jail.

B: Leo says absolutely nothing. He just reaches down onto the vanity, pulls up a coin purse, and holds it out in her direction.

A: The entire room goes dead silent for a second. And then you hear the sound of a book closing, and Linh goes

Linh: Oh, you gotta be fucking kidding me.

A: And she gets up, walks over, takes the coin purse, and says

Linh: Back in a bit.

A: And Zed, from the Stone of Far Speech, says - softly, *pitifully* -

[TIMESTAMP - 45:00]

Zed: *Why?* I thought you loved me.

B: Leo bites his tongue, and shakes his head... and smiles, despite himself.

Leo: I do. More than anything. I will see you at the end of that aisle, you *jackass*.

B: And then he hangs up the Stone of Far Speech.

A: Three hours and fifteen minutes later, you find yourself standing at the end of an aisle, in front of all of your loved ones - and also many, many, *many* strangers, who invited themselves to your wedding, because you're a public figure. And then the door opens, and in bustles Verity. Her hair is *not* done, it is a mess. She is wearing her priestess robes, and, like, adjusting how they're falling as she's walking in. Gives

everybody a big smile, and an awkward curtsy that looks like she stole it straight from Phi, and then bustles up to the altar and gives you a big thumbs up. And then, after a moment, Zed slides in. Linh is walking him down the aisle. He's sort of matching her attire, the ao dai that he's wearing is a little longer and a lot more embellished. He grimaces as he locks eyes with you, and then turns it into a big smile, gets to the end of the aisle, grabs your hand, and - in a very quiet voice - says

Zed: I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

B: Leo tries really hard to glare at him for a second, but then smiles, slowly and softly, and squeezes at his hand.

Leo: Hey. We made it.

A: His smile also goes really soft, and he squeezes your hand back, and then looks around this big chapel - at all of these strangers, again, who invited themselves to your wedding, because it's public - and then, in an undertone, says

Zed: How long do we have to do this shit, still?

B: Leo also turns around to look at this big audience, with a big fake political smile. And, through his teeth, says

Leo: I filed the abdication paperwork yesterday. Exactly six months from the moment we say *I do*.

Zed: [exhales] Thank fuck.

A: Verity, on this altar to your side, puts her hands together, gives a beatific smile to the crowd, and says

Verity: Hi, everybody! Last night I found out what jail is. I didn't like it. Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today -

A: And Leo... at the very back of this crowd, you see - leaning against the wall - a tall figure. Lanky, dark hair, dark robes. He would *almost* look like an Elf, if not for the height, the curling horns going up from his forehead, and the big, glowing, silvery-purple eyes. Kimryl, the Lord of Bones, gives you a sharp smile, raises a champagne flute, nods, and disappears.

B: Leo grins, and then turns to look at Zed, as Verity continues to prattle on. He reaches into the pocket of his robes, and wraps his hand around the hilt of Kimryl's Blade, and casts a Message cantrip at Zed.

Leo: [telepathically] Don't worry about them, okay? It's us. It's just us.

A: Zed - still with that soft, fond smile on his face - nods, and sends a message back.

Zed: [telepathically] Yeah. It's just us.

B: Phi, we find you waking up in a big, soft bed. In the late hours of the morning - you can tell by the angle of the sun coming in through the window. The mattress feels pretty empty, The Captain and Sabine aren't with you. But, as you're lying there, you hear the sounds of seagulls crying, and people milling about in the street outside. The typical sounds of a morning in downtown Pearlport. What are you doing?

[TIMESTAMP - 50:18]

A: Phi's gonna get outta bed, pull something on, and head downstairs.

B: You reach the bottom of the stairs, in this very nice cozy townhouse - where you live when you are not living and working on the Ship - and are met with the sound of food cooking, and the smell of fried potatoes and eggs. There's a living room off to your left with a couple big comfy couches and mismatched armchairs, a guitar leaning up in one corner, and a half-finished bigass jigsaw puzzle on the coffee table. And, before you can hang the right into the kitchen, somebody is pressing a mug of hot coffee into your hand.

Fen: Morning, sunshine. The Captain and Sabine already rolled out, they said not to wake you up.

A: Phi takes the mug coffee with a grateful smile.

Phi: Uh, thanks, Fen - where did they head out to?

B: The coffee is made to your exact preference - lots of sugar, a little splash of cream, caramel and vanilla, delicious. And when you look up at the person that has given it to you, Fenandrys Tormaer is standing there, in simple, sturdy clothes, in the Zephyr Isles fashion, with a hideously frilly apron tied over them. He's got his hair up in a messy bun, and the hand that wasn't giving you your coffee is already busy straightening something on an end table. This is *his* house, you and The Captain and Sabine just occupy the guest room when you feel like being on dry land for a little bit. He raises an eyebrow at you, and kind of pops his hip against the doorframe into the kitchen.

Fen: Well, um, Sabine got a Beacon call early this morning about some disgruntled ex-noble in Astraria causing problems and rallying people to their cause, so she had to go. And - to everybody's surprise - The Captain stole another boat that he shouldn't have, and had a court date. So you're stuck with us, for today, I'm afraid. Breakfast is on the table, if you want it.

A: Phi takes a sip of her coffee, and goes

Phi: Oh, *breakfast*. I owe you my *life*.

A: And then walks into the kitchen.

B: As you walk away - to your back, Fen says

Fen: You owe me your life for things other than *breakfast*, Phi. Remember the *tree* that tried to kill us? Remember the cave full of cultists? I made eggs and hashbrowns, don't patronize me.

A: Phi tosses him a two-finger salute over her shoulder, and says

Phi: Duly noted.

A: And then she's gonna go in the kitchen and get some breakfast.

B: You walk into the kitchen and dining space of this townhouse. It's... a bit cramped, but very well upkept. And, sitting at a round wooden table in this little breakfast nook, surrounded by brightly-lit windows, Duminiel Sondiss is painting their nails, occasionally stopping to take a sip of coffee. They slowly raise an eyebrow at you.

Mia: If you're not interested in the hangover special, I got several millennia of experience as an intern - which means I can always find the best bakery in a one mile radius. There are pastries on the counter.

Phi: As much as I like Fen's cooking... appreciated.

A: And then Phi is going to go grab a pastry, and a very *small* portion of hashbrown and egg.

B: Mia has bought food for a lot of breakfast corporate meetings - it's the best doughnut you've ever fucking had. You sit down across this round table from them, and before you have even truly gotten into your breakfast, this big red crystal on the edge of the table starts to light up and vibrate.

A: Phi picks it up and holds it up to her face.

B: On the big flat surface of this crystal, you see static that crackles and ripples and then solidifies - into the face of one Ruvaen Sarrel, who looks very sweaty, and very tired, but also very happy.

[TIMESTAMP - 55:15]

Ruvaen: Oh, Phi, hey. I didn't know that you all had made landfall recently. How's it going?

Phi: Uh, it's going pretty good. Well, we've been on land for a week and my husband is already in trouble with the law again, but -

A: Phi raises her doughnut.

Phi: Mia bought me breakfast.

B: Ruvaen goes through a couple complicated-looking facial expressions.

Ruvaen: Yeah, well the thing is that we were actually calling to talk to Mia. Um... I'm - I'm gonna put Aravae on the line?

B: On the other side of this Stone of Far Speech, you see the camera lens shift to big blue skies, fluffy clouds, ragged tangled undergrowth, and hear a couple mumbled exchanges before somebody else picks it up, shifts the angle - and you are looking at Aravae Enmar, who has a big excited smile on her face, goggles down over her eyes, all of the zoom-in lenses clicked in.

Aravae: Oh, Phirora! Not the person I was *expecting* to see, but I think you could have some insight to offer on this.

Phi: Uh - Hi, Aravae. Are you sure? 'Cuz Mia's right across the table.

B: Mia finishes painting their pinky nail, and goes

Mia: Nope. Too early.

Phi: I take it back, I'm the best you're gonna get.

B: Aravae shrugs, and then you see the surface of this Stone of Far Speech get blotted out, as she reaches in to tap her finger against it a couple times, and switch the camera view around. You see impossibly tall trees - big coniferous pines shooting up into the sky. You see a quick flash of *giant* humanoid bones, and then the familiar surface of a stone circle, with ancient runes inscribed around it. The place where you and your brother landed, *long* ago, right after trying to kill each other. You hear the sound of a fingertip on stone, and then the camera view snaps back around to Aravae's face.

Aravae: So I've focused my research into figuring out how to integrate the Astrarian portal system back into the international web... Florian and Syd are here, by the way - say "*hi*," boys!

B: She tilts the stone away from her a little bit, and you see Florian Jovaris in a *very* big sunhat and *very* dark sunglasses. He also looks like he has the, like, zinc sunscreen smeared under both eyes. Syd Jovaris - who is still, technically, the high priest of Kimryl in Astraria, and has apparently taken a sabbatical - is also standing there, looking *measurably* more miserable. He's got a parasol popped up over his head - he *does not* acknowledge you through the Stone of Far Speech, he just looks down at the ground and kicks a rock. The Stone of Far Speech pans back over to Aravae.

Aravae: Anyway, we're having fun. Your friend Ylva's been a wonderful guide, we just had some questions about whether you, or Leo, or Mia, could decipher some of the runes around the portal.

Phi: I'll... take a whack at it. Show me?

B: Aravae pans the Stone of Far Speech back towards this engraved circle on the ground. Uh, roll me a history check, with advantage.

A: [dice sound] That is an eighteen.

B: Okay. So, Phi, I'm looking at your character sheet right now - because of a storm sorcerer feature, you *do* actually speak and understand Primordial, which is the language that these runes are written in.

A: *What?!*

B: I said what I said! [stammers] You had your subclass switch back in season two, but the runes around the circle at the Citadel in Pearlport had been *altered*. You couldn't read them. But *these*, you can now read. And, through deduction and basic logic, you can figure out that they are older than *any* influence that Kimryl and Kiva have had on this planet. They are old as shit.

[TIMESTAMP - 1:00:20]

A: [stammers] Okay. Do you wanna tell me what they say, or should I just leave it ambiguous, and translate them for Aravae?

B: They're coordinates, essentially. It's like looking at a map and seeing latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates.

A: Huh. I relay this information to Aravae.

B: She breaks into a big grin, and whips around to look over her shoulder.

Aravae: So it *is* pre-Solean! I was *right*. Boys, break out the shovels!

B: And then there is a low magical hum, and the stone goes dead. Fen walks back into the kitchen, and sort of leans back against the wall, and crosses his arms over his chest.

Fen: Okay. So, no Beacon business for you today, no fleet business. We could use some help down at the fish market, especially from somebody that has access to a Telekinesis spell.

Phi: Uh, absolutely.

A: Phi just shoves the rest of her doughnut in her mouth, gets up, claps her hands, and does a little fingergun at Mia, and then she's gonna head out.

B: You emerge into a bustling square in downtown Pearlport. You see the familiar faces of a neighborhood you have grown to know and love, bustling around you. Several people raise a hand in greeting, call out to ask how you're doing. And you follow Fen the few blocks over and down towards the fish market. Again - familiar faces, friendly voices. You have a community. You have people that know and care about you. None moreso than the person behind the tiny hand that grips at your skirt and tugs, as you go to move your way down this street, past all of the artisans' booths and street food vendors.

A: Uh, Phi looks down to see who's tugging on her skirt.

B: You see a *tiny* Stormfolk child. Like, equivalent of two, three years old. Long, curly, dark hair that flashes with an opalescence of pink and gold in the sunlight. Solid white eyes, big and beaming up at you. She tugs hard at your skirt again, and says - in a very articulate voice -

Naomi: Where's Captain? Where's presents?

B: And then, from one of the booths off to the side, you hear

Mira: Ach, Naomi, for pity's sake.

B: And a very familiar Stormfolk woman - with similar dark, curly hair to this little girl - comes running out into the street. Sabine's friend Mira scoops her daughter up under one arm, gives you a sympathetic look, and goes

Mira: I'm so sorry. Everything is *give me, give me, give me*, right now. Adam and I are praying it's a phase.

Phi: [laughs] It probably doesn't help that The Captain's spoiling her rotten.

B: Little Naomi, from where she has been hiked up under her mother's arm like a sack of potatoes, glares at you balefully.

Naomi: I'm not rotten!

A: Phi bites back a laugh, so as to not patronize this very small child, and then kind of bends to get on her level, and gives her a kiss on the forehead.

Phi: No, you're not rotten. You're sweet, huh?

Naomi: Aye! I am!

A: Phi's gonna pinch one of Naomi's cheeks, give her another kiss, and say

Phi: We have to run, sweet girl, I'll see you later.

[TIMESTAMP - 1:04:51]

B: You and Fen take back off through the fish market, weaving back and forth between the crowds, and, as you stop at the corner right before the docks, you look up across the street, and - through this sea of people bustling around doing their shopping - you see a very tall figure. They are wrapped in a long, stormy cloak comprised of shifting colors of purple and blue and gray and dark green. They have a shock of stark white hair, cut into a very severe undercut, and big, all-iris, electric-blue eyes. Kiva grins at you, raises one hand in a wave, and then your attention is drawn away by a big group of people bustling across the street. And when you look back up, she's gone. Fen kind of elbows you in the side, and nods over at you.

Fen: You good?

A: Phi is still staring at the spot that Kiva just disappeared from.

Phi: Uh... Yeah, yeah, I'm good, um. Yeah, let's go.

B: You and Fen make your way down to the docks, which are busy as ever. It's been *years* since the sack of Pearlport, but there is still some lingering damage. Most of it, in this part of town, has been repaired - there's just a couple more piers that need fixed up, so you and Fen head down to a work crew that is getting ready to start laying down some new framework. And you feel the ring on your finger buzz.

A: Phi reaches down and twists it a couple times.

B: You look up on the sheer face of this cliff rising out of the water, that the city of Pearlport is hewn out of, and you see a familiar hole in the side of the rock. It is the cave that you snuck out of the Citadel through, when you were getting ready to fight

Defiance. [stammers] The Captain snuck out of his court date. He's hanging out inside the mouth of this little cave. You look up, see him, and he grins, winks at you, and the ring on your finger buzzes again.

A: Phi reaches down and twists at her ring again, and then she casts Control Winds, and just blows some wind right into his face.

B: By the time he makes it out of this cave and down the cliff to the docks, he looks like a member of an eighties hair metal band, thanks to that Control Winds spell. He jogs over to where you and Fen are standing, goes up on his tiptoes to kiss you on the cheek, and then kind of rocks back and forward on the balls of his feet for a second.

The Captain: So, ah... I've got about twenty minutes before they start looking for me, so I need to run back to the Ship - are you staying or going, lass?

Phi: Hmm. I've got too much to do to participate in shenanigans.

A: She's gonna lean in and give him a kiss.

Phi: I'll see you tonight, though, assuming that you don't get arrested for ditching your court date. Again.

The Captain: They've gotta catch me first.

B: He just turns on his heel and runs.

A: Phi calls after him

Phi: Good luck with that, love!

B: He doesn't turn around, but he does reach up one hand in a wave, as he sprints off through the fish market. Next to you, Fen rolls his eyes and leans down to shoulder a massive beam of wood that he starts carrying off towards the construction.

Fen: [sighs] Well, Mia's been wanting to take a vacation anyway, maybe all of us can pile on the ship and head to Eastcliff until the statute of limitations runs out.

Phi: Oh, that would be fun! I haven't seen Headwoman Rose in a while.

Fen: Yeah, and I wouldn't mind the change of scenery.

B: He shoots you a little half-smile, and reaches over to nudge at you again.

Fen: It's been good to have you home, though.

B: And you note how easily he says it. How earnestly he believes it. Fen is just as much at home, here and now, as he was that morning, all those years ago, when you two

were joking in the bathhouse, right before Kalessa made it back to Velunthal. He is home. And - after a long, hard fight for it - so are you. He nods down the docks at all these other members of your community, who are helping with the rebuilding effort, and winks over at you.

[TIMESTAMP - 1:10:07]

Fen: Come on. Let's get to work.

A: Leo, you arrive at the docks of Loex Tolgalen. You were on the mainland to handle some business, but you step off the ferry bringing people to-and-fro. Everybody on the docks waves a quick greeting to you - you are a bit of a fixture in the little village that has started to reclaim the island. You head up the road, in the direction of the lighthouse, and stop before you get there, to turn off into a little cottage with a big fenced-in yard, a little garden set up in a makeshift greenhouse in one end, a lot of big trees, a couple of goats and chickens wandering around. As you open the gate and walk in, you hear shrieking laughter and

Zed: Kallie, be careful.

B: Leo closes his eyes and sighs deeply, but then he's gonna follow the source of the noise.

A: Under one of the big trees in the yard, you see Zed standing. His hair's down, he is looking up into the tree. And, crouched on one of the branches, is your daughter Kallie. The equivalent of about three years old. She looks a lot like Zed - very round face, golden monolid eyes, little tiny points of tusks coming up from her bottom lip - but she's got a little bit of you around, like, the cheekbones, and through the nose, and very much the same, like, cool undertones that you have, although her hair is, like, *dark* dark. She's got little pigtails, and she is dressed for a party, in a very cute little dress that is now thoroughly grass-stained and covered in dirt. She sees you before Zed does, and giggles, and yells

Kallie: Daddy, look!

Leo: Oh, I'm looking!

B: He walks over to stand next to Zed, and looks up into the tree.

Leo: I really can't leave you two alone for more than an hour, can I?

A: Zed - looking extremely embarrassed - says

Zed: I was *watching* her, she just... wanted to come out and play, and... scampered up the tree.

A: And Kallie, from this branch, *beams* and says

Kallie: I'm big.

Leo: No, you're not. What you are is *about to break your neck*. Baby, jump down. Daddy'll catch you, come on.

Kallie: [huffs] Okay.

A: She jumps out of the tree. Zed catches her very fluidly, and gives her a little kiss on top of the head, and goes

Zed: Alright, kiddo, there we go.

A: She is still beaming, she goes

Kallie: I got *super* high up!

Leo: Yeah. You did. And your dress is *not* looking so good, huh, baby? Which you don't care about, because you're a toddler. Okay. Kallie, you wanna help us with something really important?

A: Her face goes deadly serious, in the way that only little kids can.

Kallie: Okay!

Leo: I know for a fact that your aunties and your uncle are gonna be here *very* soon. I had to stay on the mainland a little bit longer than I thought I would, and we don't have dinner started, yet. I need to talk to Dad about something *really quick*, so can you be a *great* helper and go inside and get *all* the potatoes out of the pantry, for me?

A: Kallie nods, very solemnly, and says

Kallie: 'Tatoes. Okay.

A: And then looks at Zed, and goes

Kallie: Put me down.

A: Zed pauses for a second, and then says

Zed: Do we say "please"?

A: And Kallie sighs, dramatically, and kind of flops backward in his arms.

Kallie: [huffs] Down *please*.

A: And Zed sets her on her feet, and she bolts into the house.

B: Leo watches her go, and waits until she gets back in the house and shuts the door before turning back around to Zed.

Leo: I know I promised to be back sooner so I could baby-wrangle while you cooked dinner, but... *Come on*, man, we both saw her. What did you let her do, roll around in the chicken coop?

[TIMESTAMP - 1:15:06]

Zed: [laughs] Listen, I take full responsibility for the fact that she goes stir-crazy if she doesn't run around in the dirt every three hours, but the point stands that if I didn't take her out she was gonna break something. And it wasn't the chicken coop, it was just the ground next to it.

Leo: [chuckles] I'm not even mad. I'm fondly amused, if anything. But. Like, really, I had a couple appointments back on the mainland that ran long, and I did see the Ship and the Banshee coming in when I got back to town, so. Can you handle dinner by yourself? 'Cuz I have to go clean her up. She's gonna need a bath and everything.

A: Zed gives you a sideways look, and says

Zed: Implying that I wasn't already gonna be handling dinner myself.

A: He pulls you in to give you a little kiss on the cheek, and says

Zed: Boss, you've got many skills. Cooking is not one of them.

Leo: You don't have to be a dick about it.

B: I think, despite himself, Leo's kind of shifting back-and-forth nervously, and he is gonna take a second to look over his shoulder into the kitchen window, and make sure that Kallie isn't destroying anything.

A: You watch Kallie very deliberately walk outta the pantry, holding one potato, and stand up on her tiptoes to put it on the counter, and then walk back into the pantry.

Leo: [chuckles, sighs] Potatoes.

A: Zed puts a hand over his mouth, so he won't start laughing super loud.

Zed: [stifled laughter] Potatoes. You asked her to get the potatoes.

A: And then he scrubs that hand over his mouth, and says

Zed: You know, my mom always used to tell me “*one day, you're gonna have one just like you.*” And I used to think it was a threat, but now I realize that it was a *curse*.

Leo: [hysterical laughter] *Yeah.*

A: Zed is still, like, looking through the window, smiling fondly at your daughter, but he pauses, swivels ninety degrees, and gives you a look.

Zed: Uh. Are you... good, boss?

B: Leo goes from staring into the middle distance back to looking through the kitchen window and watching Kallie pile up her potatoes on the counter.

Leo: Oh no, yeah, I'm great. Your mom was right, we got one just like you. You ever wonder what would happen if we tried again?

A: Zed snorts, and says

Zed: Yeah, maybe we'll give it a shot once our daughter's old enough to be reasoned with.

Leo: Um, I - I don't think we have time for that.

A: There is a long moment of silence, as Zed buffers.

Zed: Come again?

Leo: Yeah, uh - I went over to the mainland this morning, 'cuz I had a couple of healing appointments set up - couple folks that needed my help. But... I also needed to go to a healer, so I went to see Verity about a hunch that I've been having lately, and it turns out I was right.

A: Another pause. And then Zed says

Zed: Seriously?

Leo: Oh yeah, as serious as it gets

A: Zed fully scoops you up.

Leo: Okay, I appreciate the enthusiasm, but - you know that I get nauseous, and besides, I'm delicate. According to Verity, there are two of them.

A: Leo, you are unceremoniously dropped to the ground.

B: I think he fully falls on his ass in the dirt, I'm not even gonna roll a DEX save for it. He just glares up at Zed.

Leo: What part of *delicate* didn't you get, asshole?

A: Zed has paused to buffer again, hands just kind of up. And then he goes

Zed: Ah, shit, sorry.

A: And then reaches down to help you up.

Zed: Alright. Dinner. Yep.

B: Oh, Leo reaches out and gets him by the back of the vest before he can get *any* closer to the house.

Leo: Oh no no, hold up. If you mention this to *anybody*, tonight, you're sleeping with the goats. Got it?

A: Zed stares into the middle distance for a long moment.

Zed: I am being so silent. I'm gonna go make dinner.

[TIMESTAMP - 1:20:02]

A: And then he reaches back and delicately untangles your hand from his vest, and goes inside. What are you doing?

B: Also going inside, to give Kallie a bath and get her into a new set of clothes, but then heading down, back into the village and out to the docks, to get ready for all of our people who are coming in for Equinox dinner.

A: The Ship and the Banshee dock, well before anybody else is supposed to get in, and you see Sabine, Phi, and The Captain, all standing on the docks next to each other, and Kalessa and Eleanora heading down the gangplank of the Banshee, with Lorelei Shakrana on their heels. As you get down there, Phi spots you first, and gives you an excited wave.

B: Oh yeah, Leo's running up to give her a big hug. He probably hasn't seen her since this time last year.

A: She squeezes you super tight, laughs, says

Phi: [chuckles] Yeah, it's good to see you, too.

Leo: Is it? Is it good to see me? Stop robbing our boats.

B: And then he lets go of her, moves down the dock, gives Sabine a big hug and a kiss on the cheek, and then pulls The Captain into a bro hug.

A: The Captain gives you that bro hug, and, as he's doing it, he's saying - scandalized -

The Captain: We're certainly not robbing the boats.

Leo: I mean, I don't believe that, but I guess technically it's not my business anymore, is it? That's liberating. I like that. I like things not being my business.

B: And then he runs to the other side of the docks to pull Kalessa, Eleanora, and Lorelei into a big group hug.

A: They all go into this group hug with you - Lorelei makes a little *meep* noise as she gets squished in the middle. Kalessa is the first to extricate herself from the group hug, and she goes

Kalessa: Yeah, yeah, it's great to see you and everything. Where's my baby?

B: Leo squints, and kind of side-eyes her.

Leo: I don't know. My baby is back at the house, having just been changed into a fresh set of clothes, because she spent the afternoon rolling around in the garden and getting dirty and grass-stained. But she will be very excited to see you. Everybody else should be teleporting from Velunthal up to the new circle in the lighthouse any minute now, so let's just go. We're walking, we're walking.

A: Yeah, everybody walks up the road to your house, with you. As you walk in, you hear the sounds of a knife very quickly going across a cutting board, and Kallie chattering. Kalessa walks in, throws the door open, and yells

Kalessa: Junior! Auntie Kalessa's here with presents!

A: And Kallie shrieks and runs from the kitchen. Kalessa scoops her up and carries her into the, like, main living room. Eleanora watches them go with a big, goofy, fond smile on her face.

B: Leo walks through the living room and leans up to give Kallie a kiss on the cheek, where Kalessa's holding her, and then turns to kind of glare over at big Kalessa a little bit.

Leo: You didn't bring her anything *explosive* this time, *right?*

A: Kalessa pauses, where she had her hand reaching into her bag, slowly pulls it out, and says

Kalessa: No, I did not.

Leo: Okay. Proud of you.

B: And then Leo's gonna walk back through the kitchen, out the back door, and go to make sure that all of the tables are set up outside - 'cuz they are about to feed a *lot* more people than their house can have inside it.

A: As you step out in front of the house, all of your people are starting to file down the hill, from the lighthouse. You see Aydra a little bit ahead of the pack - just because the slope down from the lighthouse is a little hard on her chair, and she ends up going a little faster than she means to, every single time - and Toni not far behind her, Lark pretty much keeping pace with her, on their heelies. You watch your aunt Nora call something after them - you can't quite make out the words, but you assume it's something to the tune of *please slow down*. Linh and Camila are there, your mother and Cellica are there, Aravae and Florian are arm-in-arm, whispering to each other, while Syd just - head down - charges ahead of them. Mia has Fen by the hand and is just towing him down the hill. [giggles] At the back of the pack, your aunt Nora gives up on yelling after her kids. Next to her are walking your uncle Boreas and your aunt Jorana - this tall, willowy Elven woman with dark hair up in an updo. She looks a little awkward - this is the first time she's come to one of these since leaving her husband, because he was *not* allowed to attend. Cutting through to the front of the pack are Ruvaen and Verity. Verity has their son, Journey - who's the equivalent of about four - by the hand, and is, like, bent down saying something - like, narrating as they're going down the path. And Ruvaen has their little baby daughter, Cherish - who is, like, a *baby* baby - just, like, in kind of a Fantasy Baby Bjorn™. And he raises a hand and waves at you, as they go down the hill. You don't know *who* they got to be the donor - Verity carried both of the babies, but they look, like, a fair bit like Ruvaen - uh, Journey has very dark blue skin, a veritable *cloud* of coily dark hair, and little deer-like ears sticking up. And you can't really tell much about Cherish's features, just because she's so small, but she has, like, a very similar hair texture, very similar ears. Looks a *lot* like Verity, so far. Her hair is, like, stark white.

[TIMESTAMP - 1:26:21]

B: Leo jogs up the path towards the lighthouse, towards all of them, and just navigates the massive group hug as best he can. I think he mostly just takes it one at a time, but, once he gets to Verity, he pulls her in, puts his mouth right next to her ear, and goes

Leo: Tell. *No one.*

A: Verity makes a little *meep* noise next to your ear. And then extricates herself, and - she's still got Journey by the hand, and she just goes

Verity: Okay, and we're walking down the hill, and we're about to get to the house. Remember, we look *both* ways while we're going down the road.

A: And Journey just goes

Journey: Both ways.

B: I think, before Adhana and Cellica get any further down the road, Leo does dart over and give his mom a really big, tight hug.

A: She squeezes you back, super tight. And, in your ear, she just very quietly says

Adhana: Congratulations.

Leo: [pained noise] Yeah. Can't figure out what kind of humor it is that I should have seen that coming.

A: She gives you another squeeze, and then pulls away, and gives you a little kiss on the cheek. And then she's gonna grab Cellica's hand and keep going down the road. Your entire extended family - found and otherwise - gathers at your house. For a nice dinner, and a quiet evening together. Verity looks so tense about talking, for, like, so *much* of the night. She is trying *so hard* not to spill the beans. She is just staring into a cup for, like, half of the night. Ruvaen keeps giving her, like, weird looks [wheezes] and she says *nothing*. Zed *also* looks extremely worried that he's going to accidentally say something. He makes eye contact with Verity a few times, and they just nod at each other. Towards the end of the evening, you find yourself standing on your front porch. Everybody is kind of chilling out, talking amongst themselves. Phi is standing next to you, and, in the front yard, Journey and Kallie are chasing Dexter, who is just, like, stopping every couple seconds to puppy play-bow and then run the other direction. Phi leans over and elbows you in the side.

Phi: Hey.

B: Leo elbows her back, and then leans over to put his head on our shoulder.

Leo: Hey.

A: Phi reaches an arm out to squeeze your shoulders, and says

Phi: [exhales] This has been really good, huh?

A: And you know she's not just talking about tonight. You stand there with your sister, looking over a world that you have helped to save, and an island that you have helped make a home again. The sounds of your family all around you. Your daughter, laughing and unafraid. Dark times that you thought you wouldn't make it out of firmly in the past, and the future stretching out in front of you. Unknowable, mysterious, a little bit scary, but ultimately... hopeful.

[TIMESTAMP - 1:30:11]

B: Leo loops an arm around his sister's waist, and looks up the hill towards the lighthouse that starts to gleam. A beacon against the dark.

Leo: Yeah. This has been really good.

A: And that is where we are going to leave the Valcynes to their bright, happy futures. That is the end of our first campaign.

B: [exhales] This was a good story. Let's tell another one. We'll see you all soon.

A: On Compelled Dual.

[OUTRO MUSIC]

B: Hey everybody, Barry here with the final post-script of campaign one. And, for the first time -

A: I am here, too.

B: I'm not gonna go through all of the usual stuff, because, if you're listening to this, you've heard it all before. Instead, what we would like to do is say a few very, very sincere thank yous.

A: We're gonna start out by thanking all of our patrons. Thank you Honey Pots, Hannah Jones, KitCat, MorbidSimplicity, Erin Genereaux, Lily Weeks, Laurel Sleeper, Sam.I.Am, Summer Rose, yillylilly, Wren Wilde, Anthony, Zoe Olson, cherryskulls, Alex, Corinne Dowell, and peculiar wizard. The financial support has really helped us - with everything from upgrading our recording setup, to paying for our hosting fees so we could keep publishing the show, to paying for our auto-transcriptions so I didn't have to spend hours and hours typing out every word of every episode. Seriously, thank you so much.

B: Another huge thank you goes out to our *amazing* cover artist, Aries Jimenez, who has given us three-seasons-worth of absolutely awesome art to use for the show, as well as some really kickass commissioned official art.

A: And speaking of art, thank you to all of the other artists that we've gotten official portraits from - those are on our website and on all of our social medias, we've gotten official portraits of Leo and Phi, and Sabine, The Captain, and Zed. All awesome. And thank you to everyone that has made any fan content for the show, it's been really awe-inspiring and humbling. You all rule.

B: Thank you to my amazing, talented, beautiful, and, most of all, *patient* wife, Chelsea, for basically being the third member of our two-person production team, throughout the

entire making of this campaign. She has done everything from website maintenance to guest-starring in bonus episodes as Kalessa a couple times, to helping with the Patreon rewards, helping with transcripts, being a sounding board when we're trying to get something figured out - she's done it all. And this show would not be here without her. So thank you so much, Chelsea.

A: Thank you to our close personal friends that we... basically used as a test audience for the first few episodes. They've been with us for the last two years that we've been working on this campaign, and it has meant a lot.

B: You guys know who you are. Thank you for the advice, and, most of all, the encouragement. We would not have been brave enough to do this without you.

A: And, most of all - if we haven't mentioned you already - thank *you*. Everyone who has listened has been an instrumental part in us getting here, and we can't thank you enough.

B: So you may find yourself asking, here at the end of all things... what's next? Good news: there *is* something next. Kind of bad news: we don't really have a concrete release date for it. There's lot going on, we're getting ready to move, things are absolutely bananas right now, so we don't wanna make any promises that we can't keep. But you should look for the beginning of campaign two to start rolling out sometime around -

[STATIC]

[door opens, closes, and locks]

???: [heavy, wheezy breathing] Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, *fuck*.

[footsteps]

???: Fuck. Shit. Okay.

[furniture creaks]

???: [catching breath, long inhale] *Okay*.

[phone headset being picked up, dialing, two rings]

???: [deep breath] Pick up, pick up, pick up, pick up.

[phone rings]

???: *Fuck, come on, Kae, pick up.*

[phone continues ringing]

???: Shit, Goddamn it! [shaky breath] Pick up, come on, c'mon.

[phone rings]

Automated Voicemail: Your call has been forwarded to an automatic voice message system.

???: Is it...? Oh shit, it's recording - [stammers] Kaelen O'Connell.

Automated Voicemail: Is not available. At the tone, please record your message. When you have finished recording, you may hang up, or press one for more options.

[BEEP]

???: [softly] *Fuck*. Hey. It's me. Obviously. Um... [sighs] L-Long time no see? No, that's. Stupid. I don't know why I'm trying to be funny. [nervous laugh] I don't even know if this is working, or if I'm just talking to fucking nobody and - [deep breath] No. No. Um, I - I don't know where I am. I keep trying to get out, but it's - I don't know if it's this place or it's just *me*. I don't think I'm doing so hot, if you couldn't tell. You probably could. Uh... [shaky breath] I'm trying to get out, I - I need you to believe that I'm trying to get out. I need you to believe that I'm *gonna* get out. I wanna go *home*. Sorry. Sorry. Uh... [sniffles, deep breath] Hoo. I'm sorry, I - I know I'm not making sense, I - ...Oh. I - I think I need to go. I - I need to go. Uh - I love you, I'm sorry.

[phone hangs up, footsteps, door unlocks, opens, and closes]

[STATIC]

[CAMPAIGN TWO THEME PLAYS]

XLNKVOOVW WFZO: WVHVIG HLMT

XLNRMT HLLM

COMPELLED DUAL: DESERT SONG

COMING SOON