

## Sangfielle 52: Six Travelers: Lyke

Transcribed by: Iris (@sacredwhim)

AUSTIN: Sangfielle is a series that draws on elements of dark fantasy, horror, and Gothic fiction. As such, a list of content warnings will always be made available in the episode description.

[MUSIC INTRO BEGINS - [“Six Travelers” by Jack de Quidt](#)]

AUSTIN (as NARRATOR): The so-called Junk Mage, Lye Lychen, has had quite an arc, hasn't he? Or perhaps that's the wrong word, arc. He calls to mind the bend of a rainbow, or the dramatic curve of a tragic protagonist's rise and fall. See, I know culture. I've been to the theater. But the word is wrong for Lyke, isn't it? Lyke is all build. I'm not saying that there hasn't been setback or comeuppance, I'm just saying that the intensity has yet to give up. It keeps rising. There has been no denouement, not for Lye Lychen. The man makes me think of an old saying 'round the way: “if you absolutely got to spit into the wind, learn to do it at an angle.”

[RECAP]

KEITH: My name is Lye Lychen. He's a Junk Mage. You can call him Lyke.

[STITCH]

KEITH (as LYKE): If someone had some vessel that already had a god in it—I'm just—again, just spitballing—and that it's one that we know isn't trying to, you know, howl, you know, machines, and that isn't trying to kill us—

[STITCH]

ART (as DUVALL): Is this—is this safe?

KEITH (as LYKE): Yeah, yeah.

ART (as DUVALL): Is this still a secret?

KEITH (as LYKE): No, no. Well—

[STITCH]

KEITH (as LYKE): You have got—you can't just be eating people that come in here like that.

[STITCH]

KEITH (as LYKE): Is there—can I pick something up?

[STITCH]

KEITH (as LYKE): No, I—it was like, trapped. I wanted to help it. I wanted to—you know. I wanted it to be able to live its life, I guess.

[STITCH]

KEITH (as LYKE): Anything *could* turn out bad, and that doesn't make it the same as doing something bad on purpose!

[STITCH]

KEITH (as LYKE): Everybody but you agrees that what you're doing is terrible.

[STITCH]

KEITH (as LYKE): I tried to kill Chine to save everyone's life, and it just so happened that a big bad wolf did it for me, and then it was over, and now we're—it's all fine.

JANINE (as ES): Until the wolf comes back.

KEITH (as LYKE): *I* didn't give me the wolf!

[RECAP ENDS]

[MUSIC INTRO ENDS]

AUSTIN: Okay, Lye Lychen. Do you know where you're going?

KEITH: Uh, no. I have no idea. Not specifically. I guess maybe up. Let's go up.

AUSTIN: Like north?

KEITH: Yeah, north.

AUSTIN: Not like 'I'm gonna start climbing ladders.'

KEITH: The technical term.

AUSTIN: Not like 'I'm going up into the mountains.' You're going north, towards, like—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] No.

AUSTIN: —the Pale Magistratum, parts of the Republica, et cetera.

KEITH: Oh, but up into the mountains is fun. Maybe northwest.

AUSTIN: Maybe both. Yeah, northwest. Let's say northwest. That's fun. So across the mountains and towards the Republica, a place where you know there is a lot of magical power, certainly. Right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I guess, loosely, it feels like the thing that you're interested in is something to do with Aterika'Kaal and Alaway. Some sort of—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Something you could use to get a leg up, or information—

KEITH: There's a sort of personal urgency to, you know—I don't think I can say that Aterika'Kaal was my friend—I don't even think I can get close to saying that.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: But I think—but there is something, some sort of, uh... like, I guess ‘steward’.

AUSTIN: Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KEITH: I guess that’s what I feel. I feel some sort of stewardship, personally—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And then also, sort of more broadly, I’m—I kind of feel like the Alaway thing is extremely bad and dangerous.

AUSTIN: It is. Yeah.

KEITH: Like, for the world.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Like I sort of—the mood that Lyke is in right now is sort of like ‘well, we got ourselves out of the circus prison, but we are still in this second larger Alaway prison.’

AUSTIN: [CHUCKLING] Mhm. Yeah. I’ve drawn two cards. Card one and card two. Which one of these do you want to be your above card, “that which will flavor the fortunate, positive, and hopeful?” First one or the second one?

KEITH: Um—ooh, the second one was—you can’t see these yet, right?

AUSTIN: I cannot see these. Neither of us can see these, yeah.

KEITH: You’ve just drawn—okay. So the one on the right, initially, was a little bit higher-up, so I’m gonna have that be my higher-up card.

AUSTIN: Okay. That’s your higher-up card. Do you want to reveal that one first, or do you want to reveal the bad one? The below which flavors “that which destroys and hinders?”

KEITH: Uh, let’s—

AUSTIN: Bad news or good news first?

KEITH: Let’s have the good news first.

AUSTIN: Alright. Good news first. Flip that card. The four of clubs. Can you give me—do me a favor and roll a d6—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —so we can get some specifics on the four of clubs?

KEITH: 4.

AUSTIN: Alright, so a 4 with a four of clubs is fun. The four is “a specter, baffled and fixated.” And the 4 inside of that is “a skeleton tollkeeper, monitoring and cataloguing all who pass.”

KEITH: Ohh.

AUSTIN: You've got some sort of skeleton person with you.

KEITH: The ghost of a skeleton. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. I think this is a skeletal—like a specter metaphorically. I guess I should say this too—

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: We can think about these metaphorically where it makes sense to, and literally where it makes sense to. So do we think this is—do you—do we have any skeleton tollkeepers in mind?

KEITH: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Who?

KEITH: We have a whole lake full of skeletons!

AUSTIN: I mean, yes, but I didn't know if you had met a particular one—I mean, we—I know you did meet two skeletons that time.

KEITH: Yes. Yeah.

AUSTIN: And they did kind of—they were kind of tollkeepers to you, weren't they? In a sense.

KEITH: They were. And they—then they did, like—

AUSTIN: Like, they required something to pass in all of that. Right? They did that whole like—they were kind of in your way.

KEITH: Yeah, they made me solve their riddles three.

AUSTIN: They did make you s—[LAUGHS] What a weird season this has been.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Right, it was Fendleton<sup>1</sup> and Brace, of course. Fendleton is here. Fendleton will be your—Fendleton's just going in this general direction. You know, actually, in Ali's, in Marn's thing, she talked about there being at least a few skeletons from the lake who came with her on the journey to get out of Blackwick. Kind of being like, 'you know what, I'm sick of it all.' And so I could imagine Fendleton being, maybe not in that literal group, but being in the same situation. So yeah, okay. You're going to run into this—we'll see where it comes up. In the first destination, Fendleton will be there.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Alright, bad news time. Get ready to roll another d6 here.

KEITH: Yeah.

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<sup>1</sup> Spelled Phendleton in a previous episode.

AUSTIN: The eight of spades.

KEITH: Oh, it's double the four. That's bad news.

AUSTIN: It's double the four and the other black suit. Ah.

KEITH: A 4.

AUSTIN: Another 4. Interesting. "The tradesmen on a break at a bloodied project site." And 4 is, "a trades guild excursion of punished members seeking redemption." Ooh. Interesting.

KEITH: Well, hold on, now, that doesn't sound all that bad. I mean, I guess they are gonna hamper by definition.

AUSTIN: I know, well—but like, maybe their redemption is about, like, stopping you in some way. You know?

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or maybe they're—maybe part of—

KEITH: Wait, read it to me again?

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure. "The tradesmen on break at a bloodied project site." The only one of those that I can think of off the top of my head is Bluestone, which you moved through—

KEITH: Yeah. The light rock.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KEITH: The Seventh Sun.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. And then "a trades guild excursion of punished members seeking redemption." It kind of reads to me that like, you passed through there, you rescued the Knights of Virtue, and your group would go on to kill Uno Riscano to the north back in Blackwick. I mean, you didn't do that—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —but they don't know that. You know? And Dayward YVE, who was funding their project. And it's easy for me to imagine that it's a group of peop—in fact, there is a—I like, know the name of the—we never really got him onscreen.

KEITH: Do you have a foreman?

AUSTIN: I do have a foreman, Keith. I'm glad you were able to get there. His name is, uh... Karston Leberge.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: He is the Sergeant of Bread inside of the structure of the Wrights of Zevunzolia. Which, there is, you know—we've got the—this is the deck of bread. The suit of bread, and he is the sergeant in it, which is like the knight-tier member. So yeah, Karston Leberge being punished for having let you all slip.

KEITH: Many sergeants? Is this a pyramid?

AUSTIN: No, just the one sergeant.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Inside of the—inside of my season seven Google Doc—there is—there are six suits of the Wrights of the Seventh Sun deck, and that's puppets, bread, chairs, blades, wheels, and cards, and they each have 1-6, then a Traveler, a Knight, a Wizard, and a Noble.

[10:00]

So a Noble is like, way early on in the season, you met—not way early on, mid-way through the season—you didn't meet this character, but the other side of the party did at the time—met Queen Mabriella du Feza, who is the Noble of Puppets, the Queen of Puppets, and then Uno Riscano was the Count, the Noble, of Cards.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: And so you've met a few people here and there. Sheriff Maleister Price is the Knight of Puppets, for instance.

KEITH: Yes. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Who I believe Pickman wants to try to deal with, we'll see if that works out. Anyway, I think this is good color here. We have Fendleton, the skeletal toll-collector, who if I remember [EMPHATIC] 'talks like this!' Like, very, like—

[KEITH CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: The way, in my mind, skeletons—

KEITH: They were cartoon characters.

AUSTIN: Yeah, they're cartoon characters. Skeletons in like, medieval paintings talk like this. If you hit the little button next to the painting that says 'hey, how's this painting sound?'

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: A skeleton will say—

KEITH: And then they lost that technology for hundreds of years.

AUSTIN: They lost it. I mean, that's why it's called the Dark Ages, it's because there was a—

KEITH: Yeah. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: We lost the information, part of what we lost was the button that goes with every painting that says—also scratch and sniff. People don't know this, all of the paintings from the medieval ages were scratch and sniff, but it's all just worn out, it's been so long. So.

KEITH: Yeah. And that actually goes back to, like, you know. Greek statues and stuff, they were—

AUSTIN: Yes, yes, yes.

KEITH: They were brightly colored and if you sniffed their butts it smelled like shit.

AUSTIN: It smelled like shit. Yeah. A hundred percent. Alright.

KEITH: Yeah. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Here it is, the first card in your journey. Unbelievable. [AWAY FROM MIC]  
Unbelievable. There's only two of 'em in here!

KEITH: [LAUGHING] I was stepped away!

AUSTIN: Well, I gotta open the fuckin'—

KEITH: What does it—ooh, what does it mean?

AUSTIN: "The Heart itself. When you draw the Joker, invoke the power of the Heart itself. Depending on your game, your players, and your own inclinations, you might immediately think 'aha! I know exactly what I want to do.' If so, spectacular, carry on. If not, here are a couple of ideas on how the Heart itself—" for us, the Heartland, the truth of the Heartland—"might manifest on a Delve. One, complication: set up a Delve obstacle as normal, but invoke Pulse at the same time." A Pulse is like a season change in the world of *HEART*, so for us it would be like a huge seismic event, right?

KEITH: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: And that's, you know, maybe we could do that, we could draw a second card and just say it's extremely fucked up—

KEITH: Is it on par with something like the dust storm, or?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that for us would be a Pulse, or like—I think for us, things like that, things that go into the Moon-touched Woods feels kind of Pulse-y to us.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Big weird shit. You know? The—

KEITH: The Virtue stuff.

AUSTIN: The Virtue stuff. Or like, even before Virtue, the Oratorio trying to consume and change the city.

KEITH: Yeah, I'm sort of mashing that stuff altogether.

AUSTIN: Yeah. But also, it can also be a little bit smaller. It can be about how, like—like, let's say suddenly there was a seventh sun. You know? That would be a Pulse. Or even, it's festival time, and everything feels weird. That's a Pulse in *HEART* terminology. Some of them are worse than others. Sometimes it's just like, 'ah, everything kind of smells nice right now.' And other times it's like, you know, 'the world itself is made of flesh and nothing else.' Right? 'The thin layer of beauty has been peeled away to reveal the terrible—' anyway, that's complication. Second one, confrontation.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: “Something that a Delver (or Delvers) have been putting off, avoiding, or otherwise anxious about, has been made physically manifest in front of them. The Heart draws upon their fears and their worries to force the issue and see what happens. A wronged loved one, an old nemesis, a betrayed confidant, a job left undone. Is it the real thing? Just a meaty illusion? Does it matter?”

And then three: “Invocation: Take a moment to make the experience of the table truly weird within the bounds of the safety mechanics used at your table. Invite the players to trade character sheets for the remainder of the Delve, play the rest of the game outside—”

KEITH: That would be fun.

AUSTIN: “Set *HEART* aside for a brief moment and play another short game to dip into some new aspect of the Delver’s experience. Don’t force the issue and take your players’ interests into account, but consider what you might do to make this particular moment truly different.”

KEITH: Those all rule, all of those.

AUSTIN: Yeah, this whole book is so good. This is *ICHOR-DROWNED* [PRONOUNCED ICK-COR] or *ICHOR-DROWNED* [PRONOUNCED EYE-COR], an unofficial supplement for *HEART: The City Beneath*, by Sillion L. and Brendan McLeod. It’s super good, people should check it out, it’s on itch. And this is the Delve Draws subset, like bonus mechanic, basically, here. Do you have strong feelings about what this could be?

KEITH: Um... Okay.

AUSTIN: It’s hard for me not to just say it’s Alaway and Aterika’Kaal, but I really want to know what you think.

KEITH: So that was my—that was my second, like, thought, was, oh, this is like, either literally the thing that I’m working towards happens way sooner than we thought it was going to, which then opens up, like, well then, what is the rest of the thing, or like how does that—

AUSTIN: Yeah. If you make it there, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I mean, like, I should be clear to you, my plan is not to make you have to roll any dice to succeed at anything, because that’s not the point of these. These are supposed to be simple vignettes, you are gonna tell me—the way this is supposed to work is you are gonna get three events, and each event, you name a Skill, a Domain, or an Ability you would use to overcome it.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Kind of crossing off Skill, Domain, Ability, so that by the end you’ve used one of all three. But, I—you know. If you were like ‘I want to fight Aterika’Kaal and Alaway—’

[KEITH LAUGHS]



AUSTIN: I mean, like, we could do it for real. We could do it for real. But boy, I don't know that I like your chances.

KEITH: I believe I would lose.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHING] I believe so, my friend. Do you have any other thoughts, though?

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: God, I wish I had a game to just suggest, like, right now—you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I wish we could just like, slip—like, part of me wants to throw this whole thing out for Lyke and literally play something else different, and like, we are in—have you seen—

KEITH: That would be great. I mean, I did gravitate towards those, like, as a solution for what the Joker is, is like—there's no other character here to trade sheets with, that's null and void.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

KEITH: We live three hours away from each other, so we can't go play this outside.

AUSTIN: I mean, to be fair, it would be so funny if—if I had a car and was stupid—

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: I would get in it and be like 'meet me halfway, we'll find a diner and record something in person.' Because it's three hours on a good day, it's raining, it's night time, I have work tomorrow, you know, you're sick.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: You're not so sick that you can't record.

KEITH: Yeah, and we're on a time limit, like—if it was like, 'I could take a bus this weekend,' but—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Right. Totally. But we have to actually finish recording this, unfortunately.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But—

KEITH: Do we play another game?

AUSTIN: Yeah, maybe. One second, I might have—wait, what's this? Let's see what this is.

KEITH: As a show, that, I think, would be the most cool thing.

AUSTIN: Me too. I also think this.

KEITH: Having Alaway and Aterika’Kaal show up when they were going to show up later anyway—you know. I think.

AUSTIN: Right. Is fine.

KEITH: Is fine.

AUSTIN: But I mean, okay—but we could also do both of these things if we wanted to. Right?

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I think—okay. Here’s my pitch for you.

KEITH: I—okay.

AUSTIN: Okay. What were you gonna say?

KEITH: I had a—okay, well, I had a stupid one.

AUSTIN: Oh, give me your stupid one.

KEITH: If—’cause there—’cause—we could add a game of True War.

AUSTIN: That’s extremely funny. That’s extremely funny. I actually have—

KEITH: But if there’s a real game—

AUSTIN: I have a real game to pitch that would like, put money in someone else’s pocket if they wanted to go—if people wanted to go buy it.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: There’s this game called *Anamnesis*. It’s A-N-A-M-N-E-S-I-S which I guess would be—

KEITH: ‘Ana-nesis?’

AUSTIN: *Anamnesis*. *Anamnesis*. There’s actually a pronunciation guide at the top of the book, which I should have—

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which means ‘a remembrance of the past, or in Platonism—” like Plato philosophy— “the recollection of innate knowledge from a previous existence.”

“*Anamnesis* is a solo journaling game about self-discovery, reflection, and identity. You play as an individual who has woken up with memory loss. You do not remember who you are, where you are, or what you care about. As you draw tarot cards, you fill in the blank spaces of your past and learn more about your present. To play, you need a deck of tarot cards and a way to record your thoughts (pen and paper, audio recording, etc.) Safety: While the prompts in *Anamnesis* are not dark or frightening, its themes may lead you to journal about serious topics. If the content of your journaling ever becomes too heavy or disturbing, prioritize your mental health and step back from the game. You can always revisit the game

later or make changes to the narrative. If you ever draw a card that makes you uncomfortable or that you do not want to journal about for any reason, discard it and draw a different card.” There’s rules here about separating cards out and stuff, so you’d have to give me like, 5-10 minutes to build this in our—in Roll20.

Basically, it would be—there are a couple of acts—there are five acts, and each act uses a different deck of cards from the tarot. And you draw a card, there’s a prompt, and those prompts are things like “you talked to a friend yesterday; who was the friend?” Or “your walls are adorned; what’s hanging from the walls of your home?” Or “you destroy one of your belongings; what do you destroy? Why?” Very genre-agnostic stuff here. Some of this stuff is stuff that I think would work really well with Lyke. And my pitch for you is, you do stumble into Aterika’Kaal and Alaway, and it goes just terribly wrong. And then you wake up in a strange house, attended to by Fendleton the skeleton toll-master who found you, and was like, ‘oh, you’re that guy. You’re that guy I met.’ And like, begins to nurse you back to—

KEITH: ‘You’re the guy that I pledged my sword to your friend.’

AUSTIN: Yes. A hundred percent. And so like, as part of that, we’ll take care of you, and you’ve woken up in this Kafkaesque home somewhere. You know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You down? You think that’s fun?

KEITH: Oh, yeah. I think that’s fun.

AUSTIN: Alright. Let’s—

KEITH: Yeah. The game sounds cool.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Let’s—and again, this is, spelled for people, A-N-A-M-N-E-S-I-S.

[20:00]

I gotta tell you, fuckin’ nobody does it like this. [CHUCKLES]

KEITH: [CHUCKLES] Yeah.

AUSTIN: Nobody else is like, ‘oh, we’ve spent literally a month just’—

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: People on the outside don’t understand the degree to which—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] No.

AUSTIN: —there was anxiety, and stress—

KEITH: This is the most fraught—

AUSTIN: Yes, easy.

KEITH: —you know, six weeks in Friends at the Table history in terms of, like, everyone as a group not knowing what to do, and how things should go.

AUSTIN: 'What the fuck are we doing?' And so, of course, the thing that we're gonna end up doing is at least for one of these, [CHUCKLING] inventing a whole new thing on the spot and doing something else.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Ridiculous. Okay. Can you go over the Bluff City Roll20, which is extremely funny?

KEITH: Yeah. We're literally—we're almost—we're changing universes.

AUSTIN: We literally are!

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Again, you can find this game—

KEITH: I like the art on—the cover art.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's really good. You can find this game at [blinkingbirchgames.itch.io](https://blinkingbirchgames.itch.io).

A-N-A-M-N-E-S-I-S, which, again, I'm doing my best to read this, it's *Anamnesis*. Which is by Samantha Leigh, with editing by Marx Shepherd, and layout by Thomas Manuel, and art by Victor Winter. And again, that's at [blinkingbirchgames.itch.io](https://blinkingbirchgames.itch.io), I don't remember if I said that or not. But yeah. Okay.

"Separate the tarot cards into the five decks. The 22 Major Arcana—" alright, well, that's actually easy. That's this one here. It's called 'Enchanted Tarot'. The Pentacles, the Swords, the Cups, and the Wands. So basically I just need to break down the other ones... Alright, game is ready. Or the decks are ready, at least.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: "Separate the tarot cards into five decks; the 22 Major Arcana, the Pentacles, the Swords, the Cups, the Wands. Shuffle each deck. Set aside the four Minor Arcana decks. Draw one card from the Major Arcana deck." Do you want to do that? Do you want to draw it?

KEITH: Sure.

AUSTIN: It seems important—

KEITH: Is that this here, the Enchanted—

AUSTIN: The bottom right, the Enchanted Tarot, yeah. You've drawn the Hanged Man. "This card is your shadow and represents who you were—" okay, wait. Pause. Before we get to the Hanged Man, which represents "your shadow, and who you were in your past, keep your shadow face-up next to you, use this card as a guide for uncovering your past," we should talk about what happens here. Before we get into our card game. How—where do you stumble onto Aterika'Kaal and Alaway? Is it while you're doing your dive into various Boundless Conclave—you're doing your—what is the name of that move? Why have I blanked on it?

KEITH: Uh—

AUSTIN: Stone Chorus, Sanctum of the Stone Chorus.

KEITH: Yeah, Sanctum of the Stone Chorus.

AUSTIN: Are you just trying to like, chase them down?

KEITH: Um, yeah. I—

AUSTIN: Or you—or is it while you're out looking for something?

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] I don't know, maybe I caught them—I think maybe it's a—like, more in the mountains where I was.

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure.

KEITH: Like, I've been actively looking for them, but actually they've sort of stopped into a—maybe—I want to say base, but—sure, base. They have like a—yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Some sort of—yeah.

KEITH: You can't bounce from conclave to conclave—

AUSTIN: [AWAY FROM MIC] Forever.

KEITH: Without—yeah, without a little bit of a, you know. A vacation.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I gotcha. Sorry, I was picking up this big book of tarot cards I have, or tarot stuff next to me just in case I needed to reference anything. So you stumble into—I mean, I think you know it immediately, right? Because it's—in some ways it's like an echo of the weather room.

KEITH: I can smell it.

AUSTIN: You can smell it. Yeah, you can. Of course. You immediately smell it. Because you know exactly what Aterika'Kaal smells like—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I'm sure you know what the Heart of the Mother-beast smells like, and you know what Alaway, at this point, smells like, but really it's the Aterika'Kaal. What does—do we know what Aterika'Kaal smells like?

KEITH: I'm gonna overwrite whatever I've said in the past and say it smells like fresh ginger.

AUSTIN: Ooh, that's fun. I like that. And you see—you know, you see some of Aterika'Kaal's vines and in this kind of more corporeal form, stretching out, you know, through the—there's like a cabin, basically, right? And some of the vines are like, crawling out of the windows, and from underneath the door, and like, popping up roots outside of the house, and so you know immediately. You're like, 'ah, fuck, here it is.' What do you do?

KEITH: There's a big part of me that is like, 'well, I can't go in.' I have not really prepared to find them, like I just sort of like—

AUSTIN: Right, right.

KEITH: You know when you look for something, and you don't actually expect to find it? Like, you just are looking because you, like, you know. 'I can't not look for my keys, I know that I left them at the restaurant, but I've still gotta tear the house apart looking for them.'

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah.

KEITH: I think it's sort of like that, or it's like—I didn't expect to find them so soon. And so I'm just fundamentally not prepared to deal with it.

AUSTIN: Right. Nevertheless, you go in.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because, like when you lose your keys, you have to find your keys.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I think, you know, again, in a little echo, we get a meal, except this time instead of eating the Heart of the Mother-beast, it's a much simpler meal. We see Alaway, whose skin seems to have returned overtop of this—the metal flaky form that we saw before, I think maybe that's still like, bubbling underneath, but his, you know, skin has returned.

KEITH: His real skin or is it a magic trick?

AUSTIN: I mean—it's a magic trick, probably, at this point. You can smell it, you know?

KEITH: Yep.

AUSTIN: And he's literally walking with a watering can from pot to pot—

KEITH: Is Alaway vain? Do we know that about Alaway?

AUSTIN: I've played Alaway as thinking that his ideas are beautiful, and I imagine he increasingly sees himself in that. Right?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: I think—you know, again, I'm using he/him for Alaway pretty consistently now, because he's taken a form that he feels particularly comfortable with, and I think part of it is about the beauty of this form. Which is probably very similar to the original form—I don't remember if we've talked about—we have not talked about this in at least seven months or something since we did the Yellowfield arc, and you weren't even part of that, but there was a wizard that used the—that lived in Yellowfield pre-Panic, when it was called the Xanthic Domain, or the Xanthic Demesne. And that was the original—

KEITH: The Xanthic Domain?

AUSTIN: Yeah, very yellow domain. And so, the—that wizard is who eventually turns into Alaway as a vampire and takes many forms, but I think that that wizard probably looked a lot like Regan Alaway, the priest, the preacher that we saw. And so I think it's him—that's the version he likes the most. And he—and I do think that part of that is about beauty and vanity. I think he's in his like, preacher get-up. Right? I think he's in his blacks here. He's taken a great deal of ironic joy in slowly devouring the Boundless Conclave from the inside out, and

he's walking around with a little watering can, and he's literally pouring the blood of various gods into potted plants where Aterika'Kaal has spread out. You know, humming a little tune like before. And then, like, turns as you come in, and is like:

AUSTIN (as ALAWAY): Ah. Mr. Lychen, take a seat.

KEITH: Was I trying to be sneaky and he just totally noticed? Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, I think—we are—it's what you said before. There is an outclassed situation here, which is just like, you're not ready for this.

KEITH: Yeah. Um... this is a—there's no real reason for this, but I'm seeing Alaway very much as sort of like a Perfect Cell.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah. No, I think that that's totally—[LAUGHING] that is extremely on-point in a very weird way.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: But like, think about it. What have we seen? We've seen Alaway combined with, now, the Heart of the Mother-Beast, enter into at least a sympathetic relationship with Aterika'Kaal.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It does not seem like a complete, you know, consumption thereof—

KEITH: Because Aterika'Kaal is Android 17.

AUSTIN: I think so. Exactly. And then—but the two of them have been consuming gods. Other gods, to become their Perfect Cell version.

KEITH: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah. Exactly.

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: [CHUCKLES] Very fucked up.

KEITH: And he was just a monster and he's trying to be hot again.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah. Exactly. Yeah. Which Perfect Cell is. We all know this.

KEITH: Right. At least the hottest Cell form.

AUSTIN: Oh, easy. Well—yeah. Mm—yeah. I think that's true.

KEITH: It's a weird scale to grade because the previous thing that happened was the Frieza arc and Frieza's hotter than Cell.

AUSTIN: Right. That's just true. I gotta tell you, I really like that version of Cell—I like Imperfect Cell kind of a lot, also.

KEITH: Yeah, with the big head?

AUSTIN: With the big weird head. I like all the Cell forms. Cell is cool. Cell is a great character. Anyway.

KEITH: Oh, am I misnaming my Cells again?

AUSTIN: I don't think so.

KEITH: What's the one between Imperfect Cell and Perfect Cell?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah, what is that one called?

KEITH: That's what I—when I think Imperfect Cell, I'm like—

AUSTIN: I think that that's Imperfect.

KEITH: —one less than—no, Imperfect one is the one that like, Tien almost kills.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's the one with like, the thin face. The buggy—the most buggy cell.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I like that one a lot, actually. That's like my favorite regular Cell character design, but it doesn't have any of the, like, you know. It doesn't have any of the vanity that you're talking about, necessarily.

[30:09]

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: I don't remember the name of the form. "Semi-Perfect Cell." Okay.

KEITH: Semi-Perfect, okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: With the big features.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Anyway. He's asked you to take a seat.

KEITH: Um... God, do I... okay. If—if Alaway is Perfect Cell, then I'm—I've gotta be Krillin.

[AUSTIN LAUGHS]

KEITH: Lyke has to be Krillin, there's no—like, I can't be—I can't even be Vegeta here. There's not—just not—

AUSTIN: Oh, damn. Brutal.

KEITH: Like, I'm not there.

AUSTIN: You're not there yet.



KEITH: No. And *HEART* is a game where you can be Vegeta for half a second, and then you die. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: And then you die. Yeah. Mostly you're a Yamcha, if we're being honest about—

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Not you, but in *HEART*. I think Lyke is a Krillin.

KEITH: Well, okay, but that's a good question, because Yamcha sits, but Krillin throws—

AUSTIN: Throws a Destructo Disc.

KEITH: A Destructo Disc.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

KEITH: And so, it's sort of like, 'well, where is Lyke right now mentally? Am I a Yamcha or a Krillin?'

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And I think that just being here makes me not a Yamcha, because Yamcha would just be like, in the gym being sad about Bulma.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHS] I need you to know, Keith, that less than a week ago, in the Transcript at the Table discord—'cause, shoutouts to the incredible team of transcribers—I want to say that someone was like, 'I did my best to transcribe this, but there were a bunch of *Dragon Ball* references I don't know, so I didn't know what to do.'

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: It was that or it was Gundam, but it was one or the other, and—

KEITH: That's so funny.

AUSTIN: It's so funny. Anyway.

KEITH: I feel like I talked about *Dragon Ball* recently.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we talk about it a lot. Anyway.

KEITH: Yeah. It's very relevant, I feel like.

AUSTIN: I agree. So, you don't take a seat. You're casting some sort of spell. You're doing something—

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. And then in the face of this, it's sort of—the idea that I would use my Red King Fire Blast is like, almost silly.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: But it's also like, what else do I even have?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: And it's—there's nothing else.

AUSTIN: I mean, this is not a Ravening Beast situation. You're not doing that, right?

KEITH: I don't know how that works.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. Right. So in this moment, you're relying on something you know, the way Krillin relied on the Destructo Disc. A signature maneuver, if there ever was one.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Cool. [CHUCKLES] So the fire sprouts from your hands, and like, flies across the room, and I—you know. I think he just lets it hit him, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's the Perfect Cell thing to do, is just like 'yeah?' And it does—it pulls the skin away and you can see the flaky silver underneath. He doesn't even hide it from you, right? He starts to heal it, and then he's like, 'that's a waste of time.' And then he says:

AUSTIN (as ALAWAY): So you won't take a seat, then? That's a shame. You came here alone, again, even after last time. For a student of magic, doesn't seem you learn much. [PAUSE] Nothing to say?

KEITH: I think Lyke—yeah, Lyke still says nothing. Maybe sits, though.

[AUSTIN LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: I think he like, paces over bit by bit. The—at this point, the—you can start to make out the kind of—where the collection of Aterika'Kaal's vines is closest to a body. And there's a feature you haven't seen before, here. And halfway to stepping over to you, one of Aterika'Kaal's kind of trunkier vines, the kind of heavier ones that still has some motion, but is so thick that it seems to be more of like a core structural integrity type of thing—a bunch of flowers blossom, of different types, you know? It's senseless, in a way, right? It's like, oh, there's a lilac here next to a rose, you know, next to some sort of lily, and an orchid, and an azalea, you know? And some of them start blossoming, and other ones start closing up. And you can tell—the smell changes in the room as this happens, and you catch the whiff of a couple of other gods. And Alaway stops walking towards you, and then steps back, and says:

AUSTIN (as ALAWAY): You're right. We don't know if he has a secret. Hm.

AUSTIN: And it seems as if there's a new communication method the two of them have devised. And he just kind of stands two table lengths away from you at this point, and says:

AUSTIN (as ALAWAY): So what is it that you want, Lye Lychen?

KEITH: Hm. So... it seems to me—this is in Lyke's head—Lyke is thinking, like, did Alaway say something about that I have some secret and—

AUSTIN: It seems as if Aterika'Kaal—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] Aterika'Kaal's like 'no, he doesn't have a secret.'

AUSTIN: No, it's the other way. Aterika'Kaal was like 'oh, wait a second.' Aterika'Kaal is—what's happened here, I'll just be as plain as possible, is like, Aterika'Kaal has consumed those gods, and those gods have each turned into a type of flower that blossoms on Aterika'Kaal. And Aterika'Kaal is using them like language. So it's like, if Aterika'Kaal has eaten part of the god of wealth, you know, or prosperity, or something, you know, it will bloom the wealth flower. To be like, 'ah yeah, this is a good idea.' And by combining different types of god-flowers, it can communicate increasingly complex ideas to Alaway. And Alaway can both smell and see these flowers blooming across its body. And so Aterika'Kaal straight up was like, 'ah-ah-ah, don't get too close, Lyke might have something up his sleeve if he's walked in here this way.' You know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alaway was kind of like, not giving you the credit of that possibility. Aterika'Kaal is. Because—at the end of the day, you did nurse Aterika'Kaal back to health, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Aterika'Kaal might not have any loyalty to you—or, I don't know, you tell me. You know, maybe Aterika'Kaal—maybe don't tell me, but let's leave it ambiguous. Maybe Aterika'Kaal is doing this to prevent you from getting fucking killed right now.

KEITH: Yeah, that's—I'm gonna say that regardless of what the reality is of their little communication, what Lyke is gonna pick up on this, isn't that Aterika'Kaal is, you know, telling Alaway to keep his distance, but instead is like, 'oh, you know, don't kill him, he's not worth it.'

AUSTIN: Right, he's not worth it. Right.

KEITH: And then also—and I'm taking that as a positive sign.

AUSTIN: Of course. Of course. So again, the thing Alaway does ask is like:

AUSTIN (as ALAWAY): What is it you want?

KEITH: Lyke... in a—you know. It's not totally honest, but I think like, just says:

KEITH (as LYKE): I don't want anything.

KEITH: Like it's not, it's—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Lyke doesn't think that anything that he wants makes sense to Alaway, so it's not worth even having the conversation.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And so then I think the room flexes around you. And Alaway says:

AUSTIN (as ALAWAY): Then I'll give you nothing.

AUSTIN: And you find yourself becoming woozy as a new smell—actually, it's like the eradication of smell, right? It's like one by one—and again, Aterika'Kaal is this just amazing

collection of smells at this point because of the gods that it's killed, and just 'cause it was already a really powerful smell.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And so those all start to fade as, you know, I think Alaway simply like reaches out a hand—this a moment where I'd have Alaway snap his fingers, but fucking Thanos took that from us.

KEITH: Oh, I didn't even know that. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Wow. Living—wow. What a life. The dream.

KEITH: Yeah, I've never seen a single second of an Avengers movie after the first one.

AUSTIN: You don't know about like, the snap? That hasn't filtered out into...?

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: Incredible life. Incredible. I'm not—you know. It is what it is. I just think it's remarkable to be able to, like, not have been inundated with that meme and that image. In any case, Alaway, I think, then, just kind of quietly closes his eyes, the way like a hypnotist does, to like—that kind of sympathetic, you know, response.

KEITH: Is this our transition to—

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so.

KEITH: Is there—do I have time to do something?

AUSTIN: Yeah, what's the thing you want to do?

KEITH: Okay, I have a couple—I have a couple different ideas of like—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: My first impulse was like, Alaway has approached me. Maybe I have time now to maybe use the formerly-Aterika'Kaal-now-Ravening Call move.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: Just 'cause I know—

AUSTIN: You just want to know what happens.

KEITH: I know it was a touch move, it's sort of a desperate—sort of, almost like a flailing—

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah.

KEITH: I do also have a move that I took that I never used, just 'cause of how the last thing was.

AUSTIN: Right, how it worked out. Yeah.

KEITH: So that's what I was thinking of in terms of moves. I was also thinking, you know, just sort of Lyke brain of like, I have my Aterika'Kaal ritual knife—

AUSTIN: Right. Sure.

KEITH: And what would happen if I were to give a sort of blood sacrifice to Aterika'Kaal, one of these open plants?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: I don't know what that would—I literally don't even have an idea of what—

AUSTIN: Let's do it. Let's do it, and—it opens a door for the future, is what I will say. You know?

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: As you're fading, the last thing that you do is make this blood sacrifice to Aterika'Kaal. Your own blood. This is the last thing you remember as Lye Lychen. For now, at least.

[40:08]

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: As we now transition into this other game. Let's tab over to this other game. Alright. "Draw one card from the Major Arcana deck. This card is your shadow, and represents who you were in your past."

KEITH: So I put that next to me?

AUSTIN: "Keep your sh—" yeah, put that next—it's next to you. Exactly. "Keep your shadow face-up next to you. Use this card as a guide for uncovering your past." Do you know anything about the Hanged Man?

KEITH: So, the thing that I know about some of the worse-seeming tarot cards is that they all have meanings beyond just like, Death not meaning literal, like—an omen of death.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

KEITH: But my impression is that the Hanged Man is a little bit more just like, it's not that great of a card.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I've now pulled up a couple of different write-ups of it. Here's the tarot.com one. I'm sure I'm gonna read some stuff that people are like, 'that's not right.' Because that's just how this works, and I'm not an expert, right?

KEITH: Yeah. It's tarot, there's no—right.

AUSTIN: "The Hanged Man upright meaning: the Hanged Man usually indicates a lack of ability to help oneself through independent action. The energy is arrested and awaiting judgment. With this card, there is no avenue for the will to regain control until the situation

has passed. This represents a good time to be philosophical, to study and meditate upon the position you find yourself in, and to form resolutions for the moment you become free again.”

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Another one that I’ve pulled up here, the first one that I pulled actually says, “upright means pause, surrender, letting go, new perspectives. The Hanged Man shows a man suspended from a T-shaped cross made of living wood.” Which it literally does. It is literally—

KEITH: Yeah, it does. There’s—it’s covered in vines.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. It’s covered in vines. “He’s hanging upside-down, viewing the world from a completely different perspective, and his facial expression is calm and serene, suggesting that he is in the hanging position by his own choice. He has a halo around his—”

KEITH: He does have one leg sort of dangling, like—

AUSTIN: He does, yeah. Almost playfully.

KEITH: He looks comfortable.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It does. This is a very Fero card to me, actually, more than—I mean, there’s some overlap, but like—you know what I’m saying?

KEITH: I mean, look at him. He looks very Fero to me.

AUSTIN: He does. This is what I’m saying. “He has a halo around his head, symbolizing new insight, awareness, and enlightenment. His right foot is bound to the tree, but his left remains free, bent at the knee and tucked behind his right leg. His arms are bent, with his hands behind his back forming an inverted triangle. The man is wearing red pants, representing human passion and the physical body, and a blue vest—” Ours is a green vest. It is red pants though, or red leggings.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: “—a blue vest for knowledge. The Hanged Man is the card of ultimate surrender, of being suspended in time, and the martyrdom and sacrifice to the greater good.” That’s interesting.

KEITH: Okay. And also interesting in relation to what we just did, which was absolutely not surrendering despite—

AUSTIN: Right, yes.

KEITH: Essentially no recourse, so.

AUSTIN: Right, yes. Yes. You know, here is—[thetarotguide.com](http://thetarotguide.com) says “General meaning: In a general context, the Hanged Man tarot card indicates that you’re in a situation you are not happy with. You may be feeling like you’re stuck in a rut, or trapped in a situation or frame of mind that’s not making you happy, but you have the power to release yourself. This may involve walking away from the situation or simply changing your perspective on it. It may

signify that you are facing a dilemma, you're unsure what path to take, et cetera." And I wonder—

KEITH: This is a very Fero card.

AUSTIN: It is, yeah. Well, and then this final one, I'm gonna read this from *Meditations on the Tarot: A Journey into Christian Hermeticism*, afterword by Cardinal Hans Urs von Balthasar, which was a gift from a friend I have not spoken to in quite some time. And it's a long—it's like a big—this is like a 30-page thing, I'm not gonna read this whole thing.

KEITH: Christian Hermeticism, huh? That sounds interesting.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh. "Dear unknown friend," it begins, "here before us is the card of the 12th arcanum of the tarot, the Hanged Man. It represents a young man suspended by one foot between two trees, with branches cut close to the trunk from a transversal beam that they support, thus forming a porch." Then it's further descriptions here. There's a section I definitely want to read, but I just wanted to skim the beginning to see if there was like, an initial assessment where it's saying first. Uh... you know. It's all the stuff that we've kind of talked about before, posing desire, psychic and spiritual evolution, but then it ends—let me get to this last little bit that I was reading earlier—

"Both imaginary visions and visions due to over-refinements of the senses, experiences of the senses, moral and logical reasoning, the study of all the sciences, and even hallucinations if they happen without you having arbitrarily sought and provoked them: trust them. Do not scorn anything or reject anything if you have authentic faith. It is this, and this alone, which renders everything truly useful and gives them value which they would not have without it. This is the essential message of the Hanged Man, the upside-down man whose feet are above and whose head is below. Whose zodiac-sized will is an authentic witness to the truth of the 12 Articles of Faith, and who lives suspended between two opposed fields of gravitation, heaven and earth.

"Who is the Hanged Man? Is he a saint? A righteous man? An initiate? He can certainly be regarded as all three, for all three have in common that their will is an organ of heaven. But what he is most especially, what he represents individually, is neither sanctity nor righteousness, nor initiation, but something which is their synthesis. The Hanged Man is the eternal Job, tried and tested from century to century, who represents humanity towards God and God toward humanity. The Hanged Man is the truly human man, and his lot is a truly human one. He is the representative of humanity found between two kingdoms, that of this world and of heaven."

So you're, you know, caught between things, Lyke.

KEITH: Tarot is wild.

AUSTIN: Tarot's wild!

KEITH: Tarot is so wild. I was already thinking that—just when we were playing it with cards—

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh.

KEITH: I was already thinking, like—on top of the weirdness of—'cause it's like—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: You know, it's a made-up life, and you're drawing cards—

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: And I'm like, 'oh, that's just like the skeletons—'

[AUSTIN LAUGHS]

KEITH: 'I'm getting skeleton. Does anyone in the audience—does skeleton mean anything?' And it's like 'yeah, skeleton does mean something!' [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: [LAUGHS] So yeah, reading this thing from this book of Christian Hermeticism that is just about Lye Lychen being caught between the realms mortal and godly is—like, it's just like, oh, well, that's obvious. That's obviously right.

KEITH: Yeah. It's such—from start to end—like, besides the like, specific Christian flavors of it—

AUSTIN: Yes, yes.

KEITH: Is literally Lye Lychen.

AUSTIN: Unbelievable.

KEITH: Unbelievable.

AUSTIN: So, you know, for your guide, you should use Lye Lychen. You should emphasi—I guess, really, what we should think about is, really emphasize this part of Lye Lychen that is torn between things very mundane. Junk Mage, right? Junk Mage. The lint in your pocket, the spring in your step. Or, I mean, the spring in your pocket, also.

KEITH: It's even the two halves of the original conception of Lye Lychen and the end of our conception of Lye Lychen.

AUSTIN: Right!

KEITH: It's even—it is literally the arc of the season for the character.

AUSTIN: Right, right. From, just putting things together, dirt beneath the fingernails, to 'I'm building a—'

KEITH: Getting a thing of the ghost water in the—yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes, yes, in the very first adventure that you did. Yes. Alright, here we go. Five acts. Each act uses a different deck. The beginning of an act, you're gonna draw three cards from the corresponding deck. You're gonna place the three cards face-down in front of you. I will handle this because it will be weird otherwise, potentially.

KEITH: Okay.



AUSTIN: Then we'll flip over the cards one at a time, reading the prompt associated with the card. "Make a journal entry, remember your shadow." We'll talk through what would be your journal entry. "Then flip over the deck's card, continue until you've made journal entries for all three cards, then move onto the next act. After you read a prompt, draw from the Major Arcana deck. Use this card to answer the question to the prompt. For example, a prompt might be the following: You talked to a friend yesterday; who was that friend? What was your conversation about? For this prompt, the Major Arcana you draw represents the friend you spoke with, and/or the topic of conversation. At the end of each act, shuffle the Major Arcana cards back into the deck. How you interpret the Major Arcana cards is up to you. You could use the traditional meaning of the cards as found in tarot guides, or you could find inspiration from the name or design of the card. There is no wrong way to interpret the cards." So, I'm going to—let's find the first—

KEITH: By the way, I do want a full disclosure just 'cause it's funny—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: When you first said 'Christian Hermetics,' I forgot about the other meaning of Hermetics and was just thinking about hermits.

AUSTIN: Ah, yes. Sure. [CHUCKLES]

KEITH: It's like, this, you know, I guess that's just what you call the study of—you know, the act of being a group of hermits.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I mean it's—you know. That is tied to that. You know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: One comes from the other, I believe. So again, I think—I'll keep up one of these tarot guides if we have that question of like 'hey, what's this mean in tarot?' But I also do want you to feel free to just take general inspiration as we begin to draw these cards, if that makes sense.

KEITH: Yeah. I've never heard a tarot thing—not that—I don't know almost anything about tarot.

AUSTIN: Your limited—right, right, right. Yes.

KEITH: But I've never heard a tarot thing that like, did a full analysis of what a card means based on the pic—like, the minutia of the image of the card before.

AUSTIN: Sure.

KEITH: That worked for me. I liked that.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's fine. That's a fun little detail.

KEITH: I was like, oh, that—he is relaxed. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Yeah, he's hangin'. Literally. Alright, so—hm.

KEITH: That's really the realm I'm going to be confined to, not knowing anything else about tarot.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Pulling from. Yeah, I think that that makes sense. Yeah. Alright. I was gonna say something else here and I was gonna—I don't remember what I was gonna say. Oh—the thing I was gonna say is, if you're listening to this and you're like 'this is wild,' there's an entire genre of journaling-based games out there, if you go to something like itch.io or DriveThruRPG, but I think probably more itch these days for these, and search for—go to the 'physical game' section and search for 'journaling', or 'solo', you'll find a lot of games like this that are really fun writing prompts to play with, so don't sleep on it. We actually did—Janine and Ali did *Thousand Year Old Vampire*, which is a really interesting journaling game, for our Live at the Table—it was like a not-live Live at the Table a couple of months ago, basically. So go check that out for sure.

[50:09]

Alright, page 10 says: "When you are ready, take a deep breath and wake up. Act 1: Pentacles." So let me hide—so I'll leave that deck and then I'll also show this other one. "You wake up in an unfamiliar place, seemingly within a town or city." I also wonder if this is like a Marrowcreek echo, right? And Marrowcreek is one of those cities—one of those little towns that is very much in a Friends at the Table—there's a lot of other towns over the course of Friends at the Table that are very similar to Marrowcreek in my mind. I don't know if you've ever been to any of them, but there was definitely one in Twilight Mirage—

KEITH: That sounds familiar.

AUSTIN: —that was a—the Polyphony arc, there was—

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, I was there.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay. And then there was one—um... there's definitely at least—oh, I think Aubade is kind of one of these—

KEITH: [QUIETLY] Aubade...

AUSTIN: —in Hieron. You know, this is a—

KEITH: I don't think I was there.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I don't think you were there. But, again, like this type of weird town.

KEITH: It's hard to—'cause sometimes I'm like, oh, I listened to it. Was I there, or did I just listen to it?

AUSTIN: Yes. And for me, they all come from a sort of—there's a heritage here, which is the—have you seen *The Prisoner*? You should watch *The Prisoner* if you haven't seen *The Prisoner*.

KEITH: No, I haven't seen *The Prisoner*.

AUSTIN: You should see *The Prisoner*. We can't get distracted here, but I'll link you to some stuff about *The Prisoner*.

KEITH: *The Prisoner*...

AUSTIN: It's an avant-garde sci-fi—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] Oh, we've talked about this.

AUSTIN: —spy show by the guy who played—by Patrick McGoochan, who previously had been on *Danger Man* in the—throughout the 60s. And—

KEITH: Yes, we had a conversation about this or something. Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm certain we did. And so the village in *The Prisoner* is a big touchstone for me, and then also—

KEITH: Is the thing about *The Prisoner* that it just ends abruptly? Like, there's a—

AUSTIN: It has a wild ending, especially for 19—late 1960s, is what I would say. Which we'll—I don't want to spoil it here. Like, it's that wild compared to most things of its era.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: And then another touchstone for me is the village in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the Murakami book, which—again, like, has its fuckin' issues like everything Murakami—but that village is great, so. Anyway, “you wake up in a—” and also Kafka, which is like a huge influence for me. “You wake up in an unfamiliar place, seemingly within a town or a city. You cannot remember who you are or why you are here. All you know for certain is that you are not in your home. Draw three cards from the deck of Pentacles.”

Alright, I'm gonna draw these out. There's one, there's two, there's three. And so then, I guess I'm gonna make sure I understand these rules. Let's see here. “Place the three cards face-down in front of you, flip over the first card—” uh... And then after we read the prompt, we'll then draw an Arcana, a Major Arcana card, to emphasize or to give you some direction. So let's flip this first one. You wanna—can you right-click these? Are these clickable by you?

KEITH: Yes, I can flip. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, so flip the left one for me.

KEITH: Seven of Pentacles.

AUSTIN: The Seven of Pentacles. So you wake up in a room—

KEITH: The Seven of Fives.

AUSTIN: The Seven of Fives. My favorite Borg. You wake up in this room, and it's like a little—I'm gonna say it's like a little inn room, or a tavern room, that you are in. And the first thing that happens as you wake up here is “there is a word on the tip of your tongue. Which word is this?” And I will draw you and flip you a Major Arcana card to go with this.

AUSTIN: Your Major Arcana card, after reading the prompt, is the Tower. Can you describe what the image is?

KEITH: Uh, these are people jumping out from the top of a tower that is on fire.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I just recently watched *Escaflowne* as we prepare to go to our fantasy mech season next season with PALISADE, and the Tower is an important—I mean, the tarot comes up all the way through it, because the main character is like a girl who knows the tarot and who does some fortune-telling and stuff, and the Tower is a bad card, is my understanding. It means something terrible is about to happen.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which I think you identified because the tower is on fire.

KEITH: Yeah. And the people are jumping out of it.

AUSTIN: And the people are jumping out of it, yeah.

KEITH: [CHUCKLING] And there's lightning in the background.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's not good. It's bad back there.

KEITH: It's not good. Yeah. Okay. And so the question is, 'what is the word that—'

AUSTIN: The prompt is "what is the word that's on the tip of your tongue?" And remember that you don't know who you are. Right?

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: I didn't super emphasize this, but the point of this game is you've woken up, you don't know who you are, you've lost your memories, you don't know where you are or 'what you care about,' it says specifically.

KEITH: I don't know who I am, I don't know what I care about. Word—I don't know how long it's been.

AUSTIN: You don't know how long it's been. I don't think Fendleton is here quite yet.

KEITH: No. I mean, an empty something.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: It's so hard—'cause it's—it's hard to pick a word that is the right way betw—at the right point between, like, 'too on the nose' and 'random word generator.'

AUSTIN: Yeah. What's the thing that you—look at this picture. What's the thing that comes to mind? 'Cause this is like, a way to think about maybe a place Lyke's mind is in in this moment.

KEITH: In the Tower or Seven of Pentacles or both?

AUSTIN: Both, both.

KEITH: [EXHALES] Dirt.

AUSTIN: Is that the word? Dirt? That's a good word. I like that quite a bit. You wake up and you go 'dirt.' I'm gonna flip this—or, you flip this next card.

KEITH: There you go.

AUSTIN: The Three of Pentacles. These are all gonna be Pentacles, as a reminder.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: “You open your mouth and hear yourself speak. What is your voice like?” And your second card here is the World.

KEITH: The World.

AUSTIN: Describe what you’re seeing?

KEITH: Can I get some info on the World?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. What are you—describe the card as I pull up a meaning for you.

KEITH: So this is—looks like some sort of divine being surrounded in a laurel, holding two lit double-sided candles, like floating in the clouds, and there’s an image of a man, a bird, an ox, and a... cat-person. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Rabbit, maybe? Oh, yeah. Or a cat-person. Probably a cat-person. Oh, that is of course the tetramorph, symbolic arranging of four differing elements. In this case, it is the four creatures of the Evangelists, maybe. It is a lion, a bull, a man, and an eagle, apparently.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: So it’s a lion in the bottom-right.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Do you want to know what it means? This is according, now, to labyrinthos.co.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I like this—this page is really good. “To encounter the World in your cards is to encounter a great unity and wholeness. It symbolizes the moment when the inner and outer worlds, the self and the other, become a single entity. In some traditions, this state is described as enlightenment or nirvana. There is a recognition that the individual self is profoundly linked with all other things, and that we all dance and sway along to the flow of life of one rhythm. Not only do you hear this rhythm, but you participate in it, following the dips and the rises, the joys and the sorrows.” So what’s your voice sound like as you say ‘dirt?’ It’s like you’re hearing a person—a different person say it at first, you know what I mean?

KEITH: Right, I’m meeting my voice for the first time.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

KEITH: Um... [SLOWLY] I think that it sounds quiet, level. Like not—you know. From an observer, not the voice of someone who’s been unconscious for an extremely long amount of time.

AUSTIN: Right. So, quiet but steady.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Love it. Flip your third card.

KEITH: The Nine of Pentacles.

AUSTIN: “You realize you have an intense craving for something. What are you craving?” And our Major Arcana card, I took. I took away by mistake. Hold on, I’m gonna bring it back. Bring it out. Here we go. Flip the card. The Hermit, which is like a wizard walking around with a staff and a lantern.

KEITH: Yeah. And the Nine of Pent—we didn’t describe the Three of Pentacles, it’s sort of a—

AUSTIN: No.

KEITH: Someone carving a piece of art into stone?

AUSTIN: Fero is there again, a different Fero is there.

KEITH: Yeah, a different Fero is there, yeah. Yeah. And actually, in the third one, that’s another Fero.

AUSTIN: That’s a third Fero, yeah, uh-huh. I appreciate it.

KEITH: Yeah. The bird this time.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Fero is a character Keith played in our Hieron season, who was a druid, and so, can take many forms. But these all do have very Fero elements.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Anyway, you want to know about the Hermit or—you kind of get the vibe, right?

KEITH: I kind of get the vibe of the Hermit, but I don’t get the vibe of the falconer in the Nine of Pentacles.

AUSTIN: Neither do I, but I kind of want to just—let’s roll with it, because—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Otherwise we’re gonna be here forever, but, I mean, I’ll do a quick look to see if it’s anything interesting, right? But the Hermit is a seeker of knowledge, right? Wandering into the dark with a lantern and a walking stick, you know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And again, your prompt was that you have a taste for something. You have a desire, an intense craving. Not necessarily a taste for a classic consume—

KEITH: Sorry, which one gave me the desire?

AUSTIN: That’s the Nine of Pentacles.

KEITH: Oh, this one.

AUSTIN: That's the actual prompt, yes.

KEITH: Right, yeah. I want... I want my stuff. I want all my stuff.

AUSTIN: You want your stuff—do you not have your stuff? You can look around the room—

KEITH: I don't know, I don't even know what the stuff is.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's interesting.

KEITH: I just know that I have—

AUSTIN: Right, you don't—

KEITH: I know about possessions, and I know that I want mine. But I don't even know what—like, if someone gave me a bag and said 'this is yours,' I'd have no way of knowing, except, you know, possibly just the—I would know just by knowing.

AUSTIN: But you—right.

KEITH: Like, 'ah, this feels right.' But I couldn't name any of them.

AUSTIN: Okay. So, now it is the end of this act. Quick act. Easy. Simple. I want to make sure I'm not missing any steps. Done that, flip up the next card, continue. At the end of doing this, we re-shuffle all of the Major Arcana back in, which I'll do.

[1:00:05]

I can recall those. Boom. I'm gonna move these up, I don't wanna lose them. I want the whole journey when we're done, you know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So I'll move these up to the top of the screen here, but I don't want to fully get rid of them. And then I can hide the Pentacles card, or deck, and bring out the second one, which is Act Two: The Act of Swords. "After getting your bearings—" what's that look like? What's getting your bearings look like here? I guess I'll finish the sentence: "—you walk around the town." So talk to me about getting your bearings in this tavern room, and then on your way out, what happens here?

KEITH: I think there's like, an immediacy to the three first things, like it all ha—I mean, it took us a half hour to do it, but—

[AUSTIN CHUCKLES]

KEITH: [CHUCKLES] You know, it actually describes like ten seconds of life. And so I think the next thing is like... I know that this is wrong, like I shouldn't be waking up not knowing who I am, normally you wake up knowing who you are, so I check to make sure that I'm not injured which I'm... not?

AUSTIN: Mhm. You're not, yeah.

KEITH: I'm not. And so I remember about, like, my body, and then I get out of bed—like I don't go like 'ah, now I remember what I look like,' I just like, remember about like, 'oh, legs.' So I get out of the bed and I, like, sort of—I think I'm like looking for someone, like I know that a house—

AUSTIN: Well, good news. 'Cause Fendleton comes in at that moment.

KEITH: Oh.

AUSTIN: You're looking for someone. Fendleton comes in and says:

AUSTIN (as FENDLETON): You've awoken!

KEITH (as LYKE): What's going on?

AUSTIN (as FENDLETON): I found you upon the mountain and brought you here to safety. Here, a coat and pants.

AUSTIN: And tosses you those two things.

KEITH: I put those on, and while I'm putting them on, I say:

KEITH (as LYKE): Who are you?

AUSTIN (as FENDLETON): I am Fendleton. We've met once.

KEITH (as LYKE): Oh.

AUSTIN (as FENDLETON): Many months ago.

KEITH (as LYKE): What's my name?

AUSTIN (as FENDLETON): I wish I could tell you this, but you did not offer it when we came upon each other north of the lake.

KEITH (as LYKE): I don't remember anything.

AUSTIN (as FENDLETON): Ah, it is as I feared. When I found you, you were awake, but unfeeling. I'm glad the rest has brought words back. Come with me. Perhaps the vision of the town will raise your familiarity with yourself, hm?

KEITH (as LYKE): Okay.

AUSTIN: This is a skeleton—it's a skeleton man, by the way? It's a person who's just a skeleton. Which I guess seems fine.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay. "You walk around the town. You know this town, you know it well, but you cannot remember it. Draw three cards from the deck of Swords." I'll shuffle those, and then I'll lay out another spread. One, two, three. You wanna go ahead and flip this first one?

KEITH: Sure. Flip card.



KEITH AND AUSTIN: [IN UNISON] The Knight of Swords.

AUSTIN: So you've walked out of this inn, downstairs is dead, no one is there. "Someone asks for direction and you're able to correctly point the way. Where was this person trying to go? Why do you know the route so well?" And the associated tarot deck, or the associated Major Arcana, is the Moon.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Can you describe what you're seeing in the Moon? Kind of a cool card.

KEITH: It is kind of a cool card. You have three—

AUSTIN: What if we fucking got into [CHUCKLING] tarot?

KEITH: Yeah, what if we became just, a tarot podcast? I love the—there's a dog, a wolf, and a lobster?

AUSTIN: I think that's a lobster. It's a crawfish, apparently.

KEITH: And I don't know if that's traditional.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm—me either.

KEITH: Alright, I gotta know. What do you have on the moon? Although—

AUSTIN: We gotta know about the moon. You tell me—

KEITH: Playing this last season, I have a very good idea about what the Moon is.

AUSTIN: What do you think the Moon is?

KEITH: Well, there's a couple things. I'm thinking of the Long Moon.

AUSTIN: Yeah, the Long Moon.

KEITH: And I'm thinking of the Moon-touched Woods.

AUSTIN: The Moon-touched Woods, and Marrowcreek, and yeah. All that, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: 'Cause that's in the Moon-touched Woods. Yeah, that's a crayfish, is what that is. Like, traditionally, in the Rider-Waite tarot deck, which seems to be a major one, it's a crayfish emerging from the water. It's very funny.

KEITH: That's ver—and a dog and a wolf.

AUSTIN: And a dog and a wolf. Those are also—and also those two towers on the left and the right are also—like, this is all very—

KEITH: Does the dog and the wolf mean anything? Is that another Hanged Man, you know, two halves of something—

AUSTIN: I mean, I bet. You know. I'll tell you what this—I really just like the presentation on labyrinthos, so I'm using that, but maybe it's bad—

KEITH: They are physically separated by this river.

AUSTIN: They are physically separated. I like that. That's a good note. "When we encounter the Moon, we see a path that leads off into the distance." Is that a river, or is that a path? In my mind that looks like a—oh, it's a path.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: There is a river. The crawfish is coming out of the river, but then it's a pathway going forward.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: But I like that ours looks like it's a river. Let's say that that's a river for us. "On either side of the path stand a wolf and a dog, representing our animalistic nature. One is civilized, the other wild and feral." I'm glad that the—

KEITH: Well, the dog is the one that's begging at the moon, so that's the wild and feral one—

AUSTIN: Oh, I see.

KEITH: —and the dignified wolf who just stares at—

AUSTIN: Right, that's the Ravening Beast. Yeah. Uh-huh.

KEITH: It feels no compulsion to howl at the moon, because it knows it's a wolf.

AUSTIN: You're right. Yeah. "There is a crawfish that's crawling out of the pond from which the path stems from. In the distance, we can see two towers flanking the central path, once again alluding to the double vision in the card. Everything in this card seems to echo the other, as if to allude to two possibilities. When we walk down the path, we walk the fine line between conscious and unconscious, between the tame side of the civilization—" of the dog, it says— "and the forces of nature represented by the wolf—" [SARCASTIC] Yeah, right.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: "The towers," they say, "represent good and evil, and their similarity in appearance can allude to the difficulties we face in distinguishing between them—"

KEITH: Even the people who had to just figure out what this card was about confused the two.

AUSTIN: Exactly, yeah. "On the one hand, the Moon can symbolize your imagination taking the best of you. In the dark of the night, you are taking a path that you are unsure of. There could be danger lurking in the depths. You are the crawfish embarking on the path of the card. The moon's light can bring you clarity and understanding, and you should allow your intuition to guide you through darkness." That's—

KEITH: Fuck yeah, I am the crawfish.

AUSTIN: You're the fucking crawfish.

KEITH: Is that the moon? Now that we're talking about it, it does also look like a sun.

AUSTIN: It could be a sun for us, for sure. I think it's the moon, for us. I think it's—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] It's also looking at the one they say is the good tower.

AUSTIN: It is. That's true.

KEITH: So its like, 'I'm the moon and I'm telling you.'

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. So where do you—so again, the prompt here.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Was, "someone asks you for directions, you're able to correctly point the way. Where was this person trying to go? Why do you know the route so well?"

KEITH: Okay. So, to interpret the Moon literally, would be to say that we're either in the, you know, the town that the Moon-touched Woods town was based on—

AUSTIN: Right, Marrowcreek. yeah.

KEITH: Marrowcreek, or we're just back in the Moon-touched Woods version of Marrowcreek—

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Or, we're in—why am I blanking on the name of the city?

AUSTIN: Sapodilla?

KEITH: Sapodilla.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Or—

KEITH: Which is where the Long Moon stuff for me happened.

AUSTIN: Started. Right, right, right. Yes. And that's if we go into the moon stuff, right. I think that that that's—yeah. Those all make sense to me.

KEITH: So—

AUSTIN: You could also be just in Blackwick, which is very funny, but I don't think we're in Blackwick.

KEITH: I—yeah, that was sort of my gut reaction of like, 'how would I know where something was?' 'Cause I would be in Sapodilla. But no, I don't think so. I don't know, do you have any—

AUSTIN: It could be the clinic?

KEITH: Do you have any—I don't want to be in this place, I would rather not do Moon-touched Woods.

AUSTIN: No, I like the Moon-touched Woods. I like—or, I like being in Marrowcreek and not knowing which Marrowcreek it is. I mean, we don't even know if there is a real Marrowcreek.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Right? There was one on the map, but like—

KEITH: But not knowing which Marrowcreek you're in is extremely the Moon card.

AUSTIN: A hundred percent. A hundred percent.

KEITH: So, let's say that. We're in Marrowcreek.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And so, there's the clinic, that is my suggestion in terms of place. You know a couple places around Marrowcreek at this point, right? So.

KEITH: Yeah. Although I do—just real quick, is it worth—I didn't look at the Knight of Swords almost at all—

AUSTIN: Yeah, true.

KEITH: And I don't know what this could say to me. "Big changes, opportunities, seize the moment, jump in, arrival and departure." I'm just—this is not an impress—this is just like, an extremely quick and dirty tarot thing, so.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I gotcha.

KEITH: So yeah, I feel good about where we landed despite not really incorporating Knight of Swords into it.

AUSTIN: Cool. So you're just like, 'oh yeah, it's south or whatever.'

KEITH: South, yeah.

AUSTIN: 'Go down this long road and then you'll find it.'

KEITH: Yeah. That sword signifies my arrival and also my quick answer despite like, my—I was unthinking.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: You know. Maybe if I thought about it for five seconds I'd be like, 'I don't know how to get there,' even though my sort of subconscious brain is like 'no, it's—obviously it's that way, of course you know.'

AUSTIN: Yeah. Give me that second flip.

KEITH: Flip.

AUSTIN: Ooh.

KEITH: Ace of Swords. Very cool card.

AUSTIN: Ace of Swords. “You take in the sights, sounds, and smells of the town around you. How does the town make you feel? Does it feel like home?” And then the Arcana card is the Sun.

KEITH: The Sun. Oh, we got the Moon and the Sun.

AUSTIN: We got the Moon and the Sun.

KEITH: This is—this is also a very cool card. Lot of stuff happening in this card.

AUSTIN: There’s a—is this a baby? Are we saying that’s a baby?

KEITH: This is a—this is a baby, maybe with a crown, riding a donkey, waving a banner, with a very stern-looking sun.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: S-U-N.

AUSTIN: S-U-N.

KEITH: The baby doesn’t have an S-O-N son. And a bunch of sunflowers.

[1:10:03]

AUSTIN: You know? “The sun presents a feeling of optimism and fulfillment. The dawn which follows the darkest of nights. The source of all life on our planet represents energy itself.”

KEITH: Wow. So what’s our prompt here?

AUSTIN: “The child is depicted playing joyfully—” This was “you take in the sights and sounds and smells; how does it make you feel? Does it feel like home?” And like, everything I’m reading is like, this is a positive card.

KEITH: That’s a positive card.

AUSTIN: Like, upright, when you draw it upright. “Strength, vitality, you feel the rays of the sun on you, there’s a bunch of joy and happiness coming to you. Personal fulfillment; you provide others with joy.” So like, is it just you and Fendleton talking as you explore Marrowcreek, like walk around Marrowcreek?

KEITH: I—so—okay, yeah, and I think that there’s—

AUSTIN: “People are drawn to you, they see the beautiful energy which you bring into their lives.”

KEITH: Maybe there’s a sense of that, like, being in—it’s as if there’s a familiarity to this place—obviously, I knew where to go—but I literally know nothing about anything that’s happening and so—but maybe there’s a comfortable familiarity to being, like, out of my depth.

AUSTIN: Oh, right.

KEITH: And like, walking around an unfamiliar place is actually a familiar thing in itself.

AUSTIN: Right. Especially this unfamiliar place, which was so, you know, convoluted in time, and so perplexing. There's a familiarity in the bafflement, in some way. You know?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: 'Cause even when you first came here, it was that sense of you knew where to go immediately, even though you couldn't possibly know where to go. You know?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Not literally, but like, that was the sort of vibe in some ways. Alright, third card. Flip that third card.

KEITH: Do I see any of the mean—before I flip this, there was a meanness to—[CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Yeah, I don't know.

KEITH: To the original, uh—

AUSTIN: I don't think so.

KEITH: Marrowcreek. Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I don't think that that's happening here at this moment.

KEITH: That doesn't seem very 'the Sun' to me.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly. And, who knows? Maybe that's just the moment we're in, right?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Maybe all that's one card flip away. But your initial response here is, you know—

KEITH: Yeah. Maybe it's a nice town, or maybe what the Course wants to give me is an easy time. A really easy time.

AUSTIN: Exactly. An easy time right now. Exactly. Go ahead and flip it. The Page of Swords.

KEITH: The Page of Swords.

AUSTIN: Which I guess is a—yeah, there we go, Page. I'm looking at the wrong—I'm looking at cups. Alright.

KEITH: This guy looks like a page.

AUSTIN: As you walk through a park, you realize you've been here before. What happened here? And our Major Arcana—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] I know what happened here.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

KEITH: I saw a music performance here.

AUSTIN: I just drew the World again.

KEITH: What?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Which again, connection, connectivity, you are part of everything else, et cetera. So yeah, what happened here?

KEITH: I saw a band playing music here.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I wonder how much of it I remember, but that's what I remember.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I remember at least that.

AUSTIN: You don't remember the rock-throwing—

KEITH: I—yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Or the fruit-throw—it was fruit, it wasn't rocks, to be clear. But—fruit, but still.

KEITH: It was—it was rock-fruit, though.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHING] It was, it was.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Oh... what a fucking weird season. Alright, um... wild. How's it make you feel? As you're walking through this main thoroughfare.

KEITH: I think it feels like I'm, like... that the only thing that I can do is try to figure out the questions that I have, and that I've taken a few steps to do that. I think I've—you know. Like, every little thing that feels familiar is like, 'okay, good you can use that.'

AUSTIN: Right. You're gonna come across a house here, or a building. The facade is unfamiliar. I'm just gonna read it. "You manage to find your home. You fish the key out of your pocket and open the door. Draw three cards from the deck of Cups."

KEITH: That's good, I like that.

AUSTIN: It's real good. Let's show these, let's shuffle these. Come on, let me shuffle. Shuffled. Alright, new spread.

KEITH: I'm gonna wait until we flip, but I feel very strongly about what—

AUSTIN: About something—about—yeah. Okay. Flip that first card.

KEITH: Yeah, I love this.

AUSTIN: The Seven of Cups. What a wild—

KEITH: Visually, this is perfect.

AUSTIN: *Please* describe this.

KEITH: Okay, so this is a Seven of Cups, and there are—there's—

AUSTIN: Holy shit.

KEITH: There's a person looking at seven golden cups, like goblets, plain, and each one—I'll tell you what it looks like they're filled with. One, the severed head of a man. Two, a ghostly specter in a dark cloak. Three, a snake. Four, the unburned tower from the Tower. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: Five, is that maybe fruit or a crown, like, maybe it's jewelry?

AUSTIN: It's jewel—it's a treasure hoard.

KEITH: It's a treasure hoard, okay. Six is a laurel, and then seven is a whole dragon, but small.

AUSTIN: [CHUCKLES] But small, it's a whole little dragon!

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: It's a whole fuckin' dragon!

KEITH: Or, maybe these cups are in the distance and all of these things are the size of a dragon.

AUSTIN: Right, and then there's a person in the foreground looking up at them, right?

KEITH: Looking at those. And it has a sort of—having the, like—it looks almost startled.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: You can't see their face, but they look like, taken aback to me.

AUSTIN: I just want you to know lightning just started happening outside my apartment.

KEITH: Oh, wow. Strength.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Strength is your Major Arcana card.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Do you want to describe what that one is?

KEITH: This is a very loving lion being pet by an infinity angel.

AUSTIN: It is an infinity angel. It like, truly just is.

KEITH: Yeah. Again, wearing a laurel. A lot of laurels in tarot, I guess.

AUSTIN: Yeah, apparently. Apparently.



KEITH: That's what that is, right? I'm not just making that up?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's a laurel.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You're right. Mhm. There are—it turns out there's some dispute about what the seven symbols in the Seven of Cups means, would you believe that? Duh, I guess. But Strength—

KEITH: There's some dispute about what in the Seven of Cups?

AUSTIN: About what they mean. What the seven things mean.

KEITH: Oh, I—

AUSTIN: The exact—I mean, in tarot. You might know what they mean.

KEITH: I know exactly what they mean.

AUSTIN: Okay, I think I might even know what you know. We'll see.

KEITH: Maybe. Maybe. I won't—okay, I'm going a little abstract, so I don't—I would love to hear after.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. Same. Yeah, we'll talk. The Strength tarot card—do you want to know what Strength means, or does 'infinity angel petting a cool lion' mean enough to you?

KEITH: I would love to know what it means, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. I guess it's actually not an angel, just a woman, but she's angelic in some ways. Do you know what I mean? She has white on, and she has a halo, or the sun behind her.

KEITH: Yeah, there's a setting sun that looks very much like—like a medieval Christ.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, I agree with this. Alright. "Despite the fact that the lion looks menacing and strong, the woman seems to have dominion over it. What is captivating is how gracefully she controls the lion. She's calm and collected, which is representative of her being controlled and disciplined—"

KEITH: The artist of this card series has decided to just make the lion seem like the nicest lion of all time. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: It's extremely good and cute in my mind, yeah, a hundred percent. The infinity symbol is so funny to me.

KEITH: Yeah. Is it just a wobbly—

AUSTIN: "Fortitude, strength—"

KEITH: Like, is it just the perspective and it looks like an infinity thing, but it's just—

AUSTIN: No, it's an infinity symbol.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: I'm looking at it again, a version of it from forever ago, and it's still—or, not even—not forever ago, but from the early 1900s, and it still has that infinity symbol. And it is the thing you're thinking it is. I mean, it's a symbol of inner strength and fortitude during moments of danger and distress.

KEITH: Um—

AUSTIN: So what do you think this is?

KEITH: I—

AUSTIN: Wait, what was the—did I read—I didn't read the thing. But you tell me—

KEITH: For Seven of Cups? Oh, right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. But you tell me what you think the house is, and then I'll read the—

KEITH: Okay. So, this happens to me all the time in dreams, where you're in a dream location that feels like your home, feels extremely real—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: But then it's all—then you wake up and you're like, well, it was the kitchen from my grandparents' house, but the entire upstairs was the upstairs of my childhood home—

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Oh, that's so fun. Right.

KEITH: But it was the house that we live in, even though it was those other things.

AUSTIN: Rooms. I love that interpretation.

KEITH: And so, I'm thinking like—'cause I was like, well, what does home mean for Lyke? And my first—my instinct was to be like, well, it's the Blackwick, like, office, right?

AUSTIN: Right, right, right.

KEITH: And then my other thing was like, oh, but what if it's like, the—you know, the, like—his like, study from Concentus.

AUSTIN: Oh, right, right.

KEITH: Like, at the university. Concentus?

AUSTIN: Republica. I mean, we don't—

KEITH: Unschola Republica.

AUSTIN: Concentus is the city—we never really decided if the school was in Concentus or if it was beyond Concentus in Republica, like, main area.

KEITH: Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: But yes, that's fun. The thing I was gonna suggest—and maybe there's an element of it here, is—remember there was that alchemist that you visited.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Specifically in there that had that like, weird back room where she heard these other voices, and there was like stuff all over the place—the seven prompt is “the walls of your home are adorned. What is hanging from the walls of your home?” You know, you open the door and walk in, and there's stuff on the walls. What is it? How are your walls decorated?

KEITH: Um... It is my overstuffed coat, my Aterika'Kaal ritual knife, Tombo.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Like up on shelves, and up on—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's just your stuff. Your stuff is here.

KEITH: It's my stuff.

[1:20:01]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm. Alright, flip that next one.

[PAUSE]

KEITH: The Ace of Cups.

AUSTIN: Ooh, Ace of Cups.

KEITH: This looks like a good positive card.

AUSTIN: Mhm. “You stroll around your home, a place you do not remember. Which emotions bubble to the surface?” There's a hand holding a sort of goblet or grail as a dove falls—flies into it with what I would call a host wafer in its mouth.

KEITH: It does sort of look like the Eucharist, yeah.

AUSTIN: It does. And then you've drawn the Star as your Major Arcana.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which, I don't know how to interpret the Star. Nothing like jumps out to me—I mean, can you describe the Star?

KEITH: Yeah, the Star is a person with two jugs, filling and pouring from a pool of water covered in lilies and flowers, and they do have—I can't tell if it's a smirk, like a condescending smirk—

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Yeah, there's a facial thing happening. Yeah.

KEITH: Or if it's a peaceful—like, it might just be the pixellation, where it's meant to be just like, a contented eyes-closed smile, but it looks kind of like—like, ‘ha, fuck you, water!’

[KEITH AND AUSTIN LAUGH]

AUSTIN: I have an important note, which is apparently in a lot of these decks, this is straight up a naked woman. Our version does not have that—

KEITH: Of the Star?

AUSTIN: Of the Star. But both of the versions I'm looking at have her as naked. So, in each hand she holds a jug. From one jug, she pours liquid into the water, in the other, she pours a liquid onto the land." Apparently, accor—okay, so Wikipedia says "new hopes and splendid revelations about the future, insight, inspiration, encouragement, enlightenment of the spiritual self—"

KEITH: Is that—

AUSTIN: "Body and mind are converging."

KEITH: Star or Cups?

AUSTIN: Star.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Star. "Hope, renewed power, fulfillment. Fulfillment's already in you. All you need is courage to actualize that fulfillment. To see this card is a message to have faith, for the universe will bless you and bring forth all you need." Do you want to know the Cups thing? Do you want to know what Cups' vibe is? With this strange—

KEITH: Yeah, I gotta know what Cups is.

AUSTIN: "Symbol of possibility in the area of deep feelings, intimacy, attunement, compassion, and love. In divination, it shows that a seed of emotional awareness has been planted in your life, though you may not yet recognize it. When it sprouts, it could take almost any form. It might be an attraction, a strong feeling, intuitive knowing, or a sympathetic reaction. On the outside, it could be an offer, a gift, an opportunity." So, something could be coming. An opportunity's approaching you either as who you are, or literally some sort of invitation might be coming. You know?

KEITH: Okay. Yeah.

AUSTIN: And again, the prompt on this is "you stroll around your home, a place you do not remember. Which emotions bubble to the surface?"

KEITH: I remember the—without remembering the details of the event, I remember the satisfaction of planting Aterika'Kaal in my domain.

AUSTIN: Interesting. I love that. The seed, yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Possibility. Alright, flip that last one. Of Cups.

[PAUSE]

AUSTIN: The Nine of Cups.

KEITH: Nine of Cups. Look at all those cups.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Nine of 'em.

KEITH: This guy's lousy with cups.

AUSTIN: [CHUCKLES] And Justice as your Major Arcana card. Can you describe Justice?

KEITH: Justice is a—some sort of royalty on a throne, with a crown, but a simple crown, holding a sword—again, a simple sword—in one hand, up, and a set of scales in the other hand, very classic set of scales. You know, the exact sort of scales you're thinking of.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you know the scales.

KEITH: Unless you're thinking of bathroom scales like a weirdo. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Not that one.

KEITH: Not that.

AUSTIN: I keep having trouble finding Justice—there it is. Yeah, okay. Appears in early tarot, da-da-da-da-da. You know. You can probably guess on this one, right? "Justice, karma, consequence, equity, a symbol of truth, fairness, law. The clarity and thought which is required to dispense justice is symbolized by the square on the crown. Decisions that you make now have long-term effects in all things both for you and others."

KEITH: Wow.

AUSTIN: "There will always come a time when you will be judged."

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: "The Justice tarot card appearing in a reading signals that judgment will be made fairly and accordingly. The decisions that you have made in the past will be carefully weighted with fairness. Your feelings around this card may differ depending on your situation. If you've been wronged, this card's appearance may bring you relief. On the other hand, if your actions caused pain to others, this card serves as a warning. Her appearance represents a chance for you to change your actions now for a better future. When a tarot card reading shows the figure of Justice, it is time to account for your actions." And the Nine of Cups says: "You stumble upon a collection. What did you collect?"

KEITH: Did you see my good joke there?

AUSTIN: I do. Did you never say that one? What is it?

KEITH: A-tarot-ka'Card.

[KEITH AND AUSTIN LAUGH]

AUSTIN: A-tarot-ka spelled A-T-A-R-O-T-K-A like Aterika, like tarot, and then 'card.' Yeah, uh-huh. Great. It's judgment time, baby.

KEITH: It's judgment time.

AUSTIN: What did you collect, as this ambivalent judgment approaches?

KEITH: Oh, sorry, what was the prompt? I don't know if I even got the prompt.

AUSTIN: Oh, you missed this—"You stumble upon a collection; what did you collect?"

KEITH: What did I collect?

AUSTIN: What did Lye Lychen collect? You stumble into some room in your house, and there is something there with all of your stuff collected. There are so many answers for this for me.

KEITH: There's so many.

AUSTIN: I'm looking at you.

KEITH: And this could be good or really bad.

AUSTIN: Or really bad. I mean, yeah. It could be good or bad.

KEITH: It could be good or bad.

AUSTIN: 'Cause this could be—this could be Aterika'Kaal and the Ravening Beast, it could be every resource you ever had this season. 'Cause like—again, we both know this is true, you had more resources than anybody else because you were the player who was most resource-focused in that way. It could be—

KEITH: Yeah. I had moves that consumed resources, and then—

AUSTIN: Yes, yes.

KEITH: And then I had a sort of char—the class was designed around picking stuff up and using it for weird things, and then...

AUSTIN: It could be all of the things you took from Boundless Conclave realms.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Remember, whenever you visited, you were like, 'oh, is there a little low-cost resource thing I can just take?' A pamphlet, or a candle, or a little statue, or a little carving or something. Remember those?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: That was—I think that's a thing you collected in a real collect-y way.

KEITH: I did, yeah. I just wanted to have them and I was—I missed out on things because I had those and didn't want to give them up. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Mhm, mhm.

KEITH: And then—

AUSTIN: Magical stuff in general, right?

KEITH: Nine of Cups, though, we didn't read this. "Wishes coming true. Contentment, satisfaction, success, achievements, recognition." Uh... "Nine of Cups symbolizes the finding of self-satisfaction after a long journey."

AUSTIN: Mhm. "You've struggled to find purpose and joy after loss. You've tasted different things that life offers, and you've left comfort in order to find greater heights. Here you have found them, and you are indulging yourself as you celebrate this new stage of your life."

KEITH: Can I have an ordeal?

AUSTIN: Is there a definition of ordeal I don't know?

KEITH: I'm using the very strange definition of ordeal—

AUSTIN: Ah, yes.

KEITH: —put forward by the first few episodes of *Yu Yu Hakusho*.

AUSTIN: We are only referencing classic anime here today, of course.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I haven't even been watching these things, it just is on my brain, I don't know why.

AUSTIN: This is—yeah. What—okay, well you tell me what you—tell me what that definition of ordeal is and then I will read this other definition. I bet it's the same definition.

KEITH: So, I mean it extremely literally.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: In *Yu Yu Hakusho*, the protagonist Yusuke is given a spirit egg to—he was accidentally killed before he was meant to be killed, and so he gets to—he has an ordeal that he must undertake/pass, and he's given a spirit egg, and if the egg is full of positive emotions and caring and selflessness and love, then it hatches into a companion that grants him his life back, but if it's filled with negative emotions and hatred and judgment and violence, then it destroys him and his soul.

AUSTIN: Right. This also, of course, references the classic definition of ordeal, the historical, which—it's the same. This is the same thing as the *Yu Yu Hakusho* thing. Hakushu thing. "An ancient test of guilt or innocence by subjection of the accused to severe pain, survival of which was taken as divine proof of innocence." This is, of course, your trial by fire, your—a real—a witch would float? Or not float? What's the classic—

KEITH: If you float, then you're a witch and they kill you.

AUSTIN: And they kill you. Right. Of course.

KEITH: If you sink and drown, then it's a tragic mistake.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] And drown, then you are—then it's tragic. Yes, of course. So those sorts of things, those are ordeals. Those are—you know. 'Hey, can you live through this burning oil' or whatever, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So do you want—you want a new thing? You want a new—what is your request for an ordeal? This is what Justice is offering you, effectively.

[1:30:03]

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What is—do you have an idea for this?

KEITH: As a player—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I am torn—I try my best to just, like, feel what I feel my character would feel, it just helps me—it helps me to be on their side, you know? Like, as a character.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I getcha.

KEITH: But there's al—you know, there's always questions, right? And so, there's a big part of me that when I see Judgment, I would go like 'well, obviously, I would judge me innocent for my Aterika'Kaal adventures.'

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: The—you know, if—if like the chain of consequences is a string, then there's a part of Lyke that feels very strongly and rightly that the deaths of the people in my—why am I forgetting the name of that move again? The Sanctum of the Stone Chorus.

AUSTIN: Sanctum of the Stone Chorus, yeah.

KEITH: Like, that string doesn't lead back to me, and it almost doesn't really even lead back to Aterika'Kaal.

AUSTIN: Well, the—what about the ones that—the pre-god ones?

KEITH: Yeah, that's what I'm talking about.

AUSTIN: Oh, you're talking about those ones. You're talking about just like, the regular—because, or like, the ones that Aterika'Kaal's killing now lead to Aterika'Kaal.

KEITH: The one that I first saw the last time that I was in Marrowcreek.

AUSTIN: The 'loose body.' Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, that was the first time that happened, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, that's one perspective, you're saying there's a second perspective.



KEITH: Right, there's a second perspective, which is that I was deeply involved in setting up the scenario in which people died, and they did die.

AUSTIN: Right. So when you ask for this ordeal, do you want something—do you want the ordeal as an opportunity to be judged in that Yu Yu Hakushu way—Hakushu. Hakushu?

KEITH: Hakusho.

AUSTIN: Hakusho. I said—okay, yeah. Hakusho way, of like—I'm putting something in your care. You find something in this room, this collection, that—you know. You come in, you see all your stuff. It's your collection. It's all your stuff. It's all the other stuff that wasn't in that main room on the walls—here is the TNT that you had briefly, here is the Aterika'Kaal ritual knife, here is this, that, and the other thing—here's all the shit you've had all season. And then there's something new here, and you do want that to be the thing of like, 'and how I take care of this will reflect—what happens with this is, in effect, the thing that will represent my judgment.'

KEITH: Yes.

AUSTIN: Do you want me to tell you what that thing is?

KEITH: Yes. Do you know?

AUSTIN: The blood—yeah.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: It is a jar, of mostly air, but wriggling around inside of it, is that original cutting of Aterika'Kaal that you found.

KEITH: Yeah. We're on literally exactly the same page.

AUSTIN: Except it's made of your own blood. It's the blood that you lost as you made that blood sacrifice to Aterika'Kaal.

KEITH: Sick.

AUSTIN: So, it's not just Aterika'Kaal. You're in there now, or you're connected to it in a similar way. Maybe it's not Aterika'Kaal at all. Maybe this is all a cosmic joke being played on you by the Course, who knows? But what it looks like is, that's the cutting of Aterika'Kaal, except it is literally made of like, liquid blood that can take a solid form. You know?

KEITH: Yeah. It would be very funny if it was a joke, because since it's the Course it technically can tell a joke, but it's just not predisposed to telling jokes.

AUSTIN: Yes. Exactly.

KEITH: In that it's not predisposed to doing anything. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Right. Exactly. But it does make a—you know, a carnival was part of it, so if it can make a clown, it can tell a joke. Right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, we're going onto our final—

KEITH: That classic saying.

AUSTIN: A classic—people always say that.

KEITH: 'If it can make a clown...'

AUSTIN: 'If it can make a clown, it can tell a joke.' [CHUCKLES] Alright, we're going—I'm moving these up again here. Very excited that we have all of these cards laid out, this is so good. And we're moving into the final step here. Which is—

KEITH: I'm so glad that was the prompt for that last one, because like—

AUSTIN: Me too.

KEITH: I almost put Aterika'Kaal in with the middle thing, but I think we really earned it with that Judgment card.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we waited for the right thing

KEITH: Oh, and the Nine of Cups card really worked with that, too.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Really perfect. Alright, so now, finally, we're going to Act Four: Wands. Not finally, there's five acts, but. "Act Four: Wands. You've learned so much about yourself; take some time to reflect. Draw three cards from the deck of Wands," which does need to be shuffled, I'll shuffle it twice just to be sure, and then one, two, three. Then I'll shuffle the Major Arcana. Alright, flip that first one.

KEITH: The Five of Wands.

AUSTIN: The Five of Wands, oh my god. A lot is happening here.

KEITH: A lot is happ—yeah. Or one thing is happening five times.

AUSTIN: What do you think is happening here, visually speaking?

KEITH: Um, there is a stick swordfight happening.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And there's two main combatants? Two tertiary ones, and then a ranged attacker. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Yeah, that does seem—that seems about right. That's how I would describe what we're seeing here, yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then your Major Arcana card.

KEITH: Judgment? Oh, Justice?

AUSTIN: Ahaha! It's Judgment again! I shuffled it twice! I shuffled Major Arcana twice!

KEITH: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: We know what Justice means already. You want to know what the prompt is?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: “You seek out conversation with someone; who do you reach out to? What do you want to discuss?”

KEITH: Um—

AUSTIN: You want to know more about the Five of Wands?

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah, let’s see the—yeah.

AUSTIN: You think that will help a little bit? Because I don’t know shit about it. That’s—

KEITH: “Conflict, fighting, arguments.”

AUSTIN: Ah. Uh-huh.

KEITH: “Disagreement, struggle, opposition.”

AUSTIN: Yeah. That adds up to me.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It’s all these people fighting, you know? Holding their own wands, brandishing them—it may be an argument of show rather than force.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: It may be there is something potentially playful, I saw a description of this as being youths, you know, brandishing them as if in sport, or strife, so it could go either way.

KEITH: I’ve got a good sentence here from ‘thetarotguide’.

AUSTIN: Yeah, go for it. Is this from labyr—oh, this is thetarotguide. Okay.

KEITH: Yeah, I’ve been bouncing between them.

AUSTIN: You were just doing a search, yeah. Uh-huh.

KEITH: “In a spiritual context—” this has it listed out of like, what it means generally, what it means in love and relationships, et cetera.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

KEITH: And for spirituality, which I saw only because I was reading the health one above it about successfully fighting off an illness: “In a spiritual context, the Five of Wands indicates you are experiencing a great deal of spiritual conflict that is clouding your ability to see your path. If you are attempting to develop your intuitive side, you may find it difficult to put aside your ego and the negative voices that discourage you. You need to find harmony within yourself first.”

AUSTIN: Mhm. "From the image on the card, the symbolism suggests this is conflict in one's life. It may be existing conflict, or one that is brewing and may eventually blow up in one's face. It may also depict a problem in communication; for example, in a situation where no one really wants to listen to the other, meaning that no agreement or understanding takes place."

KEITH: Is there—

AUSTIN: "The five men may signify problems in a group of people who are not patient enough to listen to what anyone else is saying. They only want to be heard, and since none of the others will listen, they all argue at once." That's interesting. What were you gonna say?

KEITH: Is there—if my—if Lyke were struggling with internalizing instead of rationalizing self-doubt, is there an avatar in the town for the arg—like, my own internal arguments for internalizing the self-doubt instead of rationalizing it?

AUSTIN: You met that doctor at the time.

KEITH: Yeah,

AUSTIN: Who is the one that was telling you that the Ravening Beast was part of you. Do you remember that?

KEITH: Yes.

AUSTIN: And was like, 'no, this is in you, are you sure you want me to cut this out? 'Cause I'll cut it out if that's what you say you want, but...' And her name was—I believe it was she/her, let me see if I can find this and double-check it. The link on this search does not work, so give me a second.

KEITH: I forgot about the doctor, I was sort of like 'is this where the alchemist comes in?'

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Did you have somebody else in mind? Oh, right. There was the alchemist, but I feel like the alchemist was more...

KEITH: I just couldn't—I couldn't remember exactly—I remember it being a positive.

AUSTIN: Yes, that was a positive one, but I don't think that was someone who would argue with you.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That was someone who would playfully banter with you more, you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh, right. Remember—wasn't—her name was tied to... wasn't it? Let's see if that's right. It's Yersa something. Yersa... Yersa Mallow. Remember? Because one of the things that someone told you was that the town was named after her. Mallow—it was supposed to be Mallowcreek, but it went down on the map as Marrowcreek. Her name is Yersa Mallow.

And I think that that's—that's a person who you might go to. But you just sent someone else to the clinic, right? So maybe you would find yourself back there.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And what's the argument that you're having? Or what's the—what's this—what's the—are you asking about whether you're guilty, or are you asking—

KEITH: I think this is—

AUSTIN: Or is there a metaphor happening here? What is this?

KEITH: Well, I guess, does she remember me? Because that's a good question.

AUSTIN: Is this where you learn your name?

KEITH: What's that?

AUSTIN: Is this where you learn your name?

KEITH: It's—

AUSTIN: Like, if you come in, and she goes 'ah, Lye Lychen.'

KEITH: 'Cause this is still, maybe, a place I've never been to, technically.

[1:40:03]

AUSTIN: This is true. Yeah.

KEITH: And so—

AUSTIN: Do you want to keep that ambiguity for now?

KEITH: I do.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Yeah. And so, I guess the conversation that we have would have to be, like, an allegory.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And not literal.

AUSTIN: But you're not saying 'hey, am I guilty for this stuff,' you're instead saying—

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: There's some sort of sideways conversation about, you know. You bend your knee, and it's—

KEITH: Right, it sounds philosophical even though it's—I'm—

AUSTIN: Sure, okay.

KEITH: For me, it's like—or maybe—I'm not even—I'm also partial—largely not even aware of the details of what I'm struggling with.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Can I actually—let me interject something here, and bring something back from our original game that we were playing.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What if you don't get there? Right? Because I'm thinking about this conflict card, the Five of Wands.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: People who want to be heard, they don't want to listen. What if we get the sheriff I talked about—or not the sheriff, the foreman I talked about before shows up? To judge you. And argue—like, you're literally outside the—you know? And it's like—and he rolls up, and he is like 'we've been looking everywhere for you, boy.' And it's him and four other people, right? And begins to outline sins you've committed that don't make any sense.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Because like, you certainly—you don't remember your name, let alone 'you broke the Knights of Virtue out from underneath our tower, and then you killed one of our own. Uno Riscano was a count, you know.' And it's like 'I don't—what are you talking about?'

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This is Karston Leberge, the Sergeant of Bread, who is trying to throw you off—I mean, is trying to like, surround you and make you feel bad about stuff you don't quite understand. Again, what was our actual—our actual thing was "you seek out conversation with someone; who do you reach out to? What do you want to discuss?" You don't get that. This is that bottom card showing its face and intercepting you before you can go get your answer from somebody who might be able to help you, and you get the—in a way, I'm playing that card inverted. Right? I'm playing—instead of it being the fair and equitable justice, right?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: It's the version of it where someone wants to hold you accountable for things you literally—not only things you literally didn't do, but even your association with them, we as a show, they're good. You saving the Knights of Virtue and opposing the Wrights of the Seventh Sun, that's all good stuff.

KEITH: Yeah, but I don't even know.

AUSTIN: So they're judging you unfairly—but you don't even know!

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So it's just people show up, brandishing weapons and shouting at you. And I think that they have like—one of them—this main guy has a pickaxe, I know that for sure. Other ones have just like, hammers and clubs.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: All blunt weapons.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And improvised. Right? These are tools, a crowbar, et cetera. What do you say and do here?

KEITH: Uh...

AUSTIN: Or do you want me to draw the next card and see where this goes?

KEITH: Yeah, let's draw. What's the prompt for the next one?

AUSTIN: I mean, that's what I'm saying. Do you want to flip the next one?

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: And then we'll use that as a way of knowing if it's—'cause that's when we'll know what the prompt is.

KEITH: Oh, the cards give us the prompt.

AUSTIN: That's correct.

KEITH: Oh, I totally didn't get that. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Yeah, there's a bunch of prompts we have not—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] I just now understand the rules of this game. So—

AUSTIN: Yeah, like you didn't get 'there's a dent in one of your walls' or 'you open a drawer to find a journal' or—you didn't get 'people are looking at you and whispering.'

KEITH: So the way—

AUSTIN: So if you think these prompts have been—

KEITH: I don't think this changes anything about the game, but the way that I thought this was working was that each act had its own question—

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Yes.

KEITH: —and I was just using the card to inform my answer.

AUSTIN: No, no. This is why I'm—this is why I wasn't so serious about getting information on the numbered cards, was because the prompts sort of are guidance on that.

KEITH: Right. Yes. Okay.

AUSTIN: And I should have been more clear about that. But like—I mean, given that, like, it's pretty wild you got the ones you got. You know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You didn't get this one about watching a couple walk in front of you. Which, no offense, Lye Lychen is just not—that's—we have not had a lot of—I mean, we would have figured it out.

KEITH: Damn, a couple? [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: We would have had some good scene around that. Yeah, like 'damn, a couple!' Exactly. You know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or a marketplace, or—you know, there's other stuff here we would have responded to.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But, anyway. So, do you want to see what this next prompt is and see if that inf—like, helps you decide what happens here?

KEITH: Um—no, I'm gonna argue my innocence. That's what Lyke does. I'm gonna have—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I'm gonna use this as a proxy for a more productive conversation—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: And instead it's just an unproductive version of the same conversation—

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Where I'm being—instead of like discussing the actual feelings, I'm just—

AUSTIN: Yet again.

KEITH: I'm just like, forced to deny these things I know nothing about.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Right, right. Which again, reinscribes, also, Lyke's worldview in a way.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Where—'I try to go do the deep conversation, but something outside of me prevented me from doing it!'

KEITH: Right, right.

AUSTIN: And it feels that way to you, because it is what literally is happening, in this case especially.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Maybe you make your way through, other people gather around, there's something here—I mean, we'll see what this next card is. I'm assuming you're not going to be killed by these people here in this moment. Let's flip this next card.



[PAUSE]

KEITH: Oh, sorry.

AUSTIN: That means you. Nope, you're good.

KEITH: Flip. The Knight of Wands.

AUSTIN: The Knight of Wands.

KEITH: This is a very funny—this reads very Don Quixote to me.

AUSTIN: It does. There's like a—is that—what's up with the armor? What's happening here?

KEITH: Yeah, it looks like the—it looks like he's wearing normal knight armor, except the shirt is like Fred Flintstone's shirt.

AUSTIN: It does. Or like—yeah, I don't—maybe it—I guess it doesn't really say what the—the one I'm looking at does not really say what the knight outfit is supposed to look like, necessarily. Armor, da-da-da-da-da... "Yellow-patterned shirt on top of metal armor." It doesn't say much about that. Alright, let's flip the Major Arcana.

KEITH: Yeah, I guess it's just sort of like a thing—that's a real thing that people did with armor. You know, you'd have like, armor underneath a thing that was like—oh my god.

AUSTIN: You drew the Tower. Your prompt on this knight is "there is something you're desperate to learn. Which question haunts you? How do you seek this information?" Visually, and narratively, these people are still hounding you, they're shouting at you, I think they start to pick at the ground with their big pickaxes and their staves and shit, they're like, attacking near you and taunting you, but "there is something you're desperate to learn. Which question haunts you? How do you seek this information?"

KEITH: They know who I am and they won't tell me, and—

AUSTIN: And they won't tell you, yeah.

KEITH: Or maybe even they're lying to me.

AUSTIN: Right. I think that they—

KEITH: Like maybe they've picked up—they don't care that I—

AUSTIN: Oh, right.

KEITH: Like, maybe I'm convincing that I don't know what they're talking about, I don't know who I am, and—but they don't care, because they don't—they don't want to punish my—

/AUSTIN: And they're just making shit up. 'Oh, you don't remember? You're the mayor of Blackwick!'

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: And you're like, 'what's Blackwick?' The Knight of Wands—

KEITH: Yeah, so I'm trying to think of any real useful piece of information about who I am.

AUSTIN: Do you want to know what the Knight of Wands' meaning is?

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: "Symbolism is straightforward. When it appears, it means it's a great time to get away and travel. You should feel charged up and full of life, you gotta get out of here, you gotta get things done. You can find fun things to do no matter where you are." So, you know.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: it's the energy to get out there and change things, except the Tower is the Arcana card, and we know the Tower is not good.

KEITH: Hey, from a certain perspective, those two people—they're just charged up to get away from that tower.

AUSTIN: That's exactly right. So what do you—the question is who you are, and they're taunting you. That's part of the Tower, right? Is they have the information—they have like a, you know, someone gave them a dossier on you, right?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: But instead, "upright Tower, sudden upheaval, broken pride, disaster."

KEITH: Yeah, at the very least, they know my name, they know the names of the people that I was with, they know the name of the Blackwick Group, they know about Blackwick—

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Yep, yep, yep.

KEITH: And they know that I came from—uh... fuck.

AUSTIN: The Republica? Or—

KEITH: No, the city.

AUSTIN: Sapodilla?

KEITH: Sapodilla, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, right. And they know that you're confused, and they're using it against you. They're taunting you.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: They recognize, like, you know, all the—they don't call you a wizard, I think that's probably too dangerous, but someone very much is like 'oh, you don't have all your books with you now, do you? Huh, little nerd?'

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Alright. Last of this Wands.

KEITH: Or I do have my books and they smack 'em out of my hands like it's high school.

AUSTIN: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah. Real nerd shit. Yeah, exactly. What, uh—let's see this last card.

KEITH: Okay. Queen of Wands.

AUSTIN: The Queen of Wands.

KEITH: Nice little cat, nice little flower.

AUSTIN: This is very fun. I want to do a hard cut. We see all that happening. You—that same absence of smell happens. You're back in your room. You wake up. Queen of Wands. "You sit down to write a letter that you will never send. Who is this letter for? What does it say?"

KEITH: Oh my god, what could that even be?

AUSTIN: The Fool. This is the Arcana card we've drawn.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: You wanna know what the Fool means?

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] What is—what could this letter be?

AUSTIN: The Fool means: "innocence, new beginnings, free spirit, beginnings... The Fool depicts a youth walking joyfully into the world. He's taking his first steps. He's exuberant, joyful, excited. He carries nothing with him except a small sack, carrying nothing for the possible dangers that lie in his path. Indeed, he is soon to encounter the first of these possible dangers, for if he takes just a step more, he will topple over the cliff that he is reaching. But this doesn't seem to concern him. We are unsure whether he's just naive or simply unaware. The dog at his heel barks at him in warning, and if he does not become more aware of his surroundings soon, he may never see all the adventures that he dreams of encountering.

[1:50:00]

"The Fool card is numbered zero, which is considered a number of infinite potential. Consider him a blank slate, for the Fool has yet to develop a clear personality. He is the symbol of innocence. His journey to come will shape his character yet. To see the Fool generally means the beginning of a new journey, one where you will be filled with optimism and freedom from the usual constraints in life. When we meet him, he approaches each day as an adventure in an almost childish way. He believes that anything can happen in life and there are many opportunities that are lying out there in the world, waiting to be explored and developed. He leads a simple life, having no worries, and does not seem troubled by the fact that he cannot tell what he will encounter ahead.

"To meet him in a reading can also be seen as a call to the risk-taking part of your own character. He inspires courage, for he understands that every day is a chance to open up new areas in your life, and with that comes a mixture of anticipation, wonder, and curiosity.

The Fool is there to show you that you can never really tell what lies ahead, you can only greet it with joy.” But again, there is that cliff you’re about to walk over in this picture.

KEITH: Yeah. Um... Actually, this is just the Joker card, and it means we’ve gotta zip back to finish the other game.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHS] I mean, it is sort of the Joker of these cards, in a way. I mean it isn’t literally, because I’m sure there’s another card that actually is closer in meaning to the Joker, but it is a joker. It is a fool, right?

KEITH: If you google ‘joker tarot—’

AUSTIN: Is the—yeah?

KEITH: They all say the Fool.

AUSTIN: It’s all the Fool?

KEITH: It’s all the Fool, yep.

AUSTIN: That’s incredible. That’s so funny. So we end here on it, on top of starting with it. I mean, I guess there’s still one more step after this, is what I should say.

KEITH: Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: But—so, who is the letter you are writing for? And why will you never send it? And, you know, I want to completely allude what happened between them beginning to assault you in the street and where we are now. The camera does not see what happened there. We don’t know if they are alive or dead, we don’t know if you got knocked out and woke back up here and Fendleton dragged you back, we don’t know if Fendleton arrived with a giant claymore to help you fight them off, we don’t know.

KEITH: Fendleton’s fuckin’ sick of dragging my ass back to that bed. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: [LAUGHS] We don’t know, we don’t know. All we know is you woke up and your impulse was ‘time to write a letter.’ To someone.

KEITH: Um... Maybe this is a letter—maybe this is a flash of memory, and I write—I start writing a letter to someone that Lyke was close to, that never shows up in Sangfielle. This is a pre-Sangfielle relationship. And—

AUSTIN: Right. I mean, this is so interesting, because I was thinking about this a lot at the end of the season with Lyke. Because I was thinking about how in the past—this is true for all players. There are times when player characters get into the shit, and then what happens is we get a conversation between an important NPC—or maybe not even an important NPC, right? There’s a character named like, the Fisherman who shows up in the middle of Twilight Mirage and Jack’s character has some extended conversations. There’s a character at the beginning of Winter in Hieron—is that right? No, the beginning of Spring in Hieron, that you have a character who talks to him, and there’s like long conversations about a bunch of shit that’s very interesting. There’s a bunch of, like—this happens a lot in the show, where we get some sort of one-on-one with a major person who’s close to you, to kind of like—to do the thing Lyke wanted a moment ago, right? Which was like, ‘hey, let’s work through this stuff.’

Right? And I realized going into the—one of the last—you know, the last arc, that was like, Lyke doesn't really have that here. Like, you talked to Stanislaka a little bit at one point, the nun, at the Boundless Conclave—

KEITH: Yeah, we didn't spend enough time in Blackwick to develop—

AUSTIN: We didn't. Exactly. And none of the player characters were like super close with Lyke, either.

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: Except for close in this rivalrous way.

KEITH: I was thinking of this from a different perspective, which is that it's very funny that I had so many seasons in a row where I'm just playing a character that just, due to the events of the season, and also I think probably my tendencies as a player character, they've been, you know, alienated from the party that they're in.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

KEITH: And so, one of my things with Lyke was to just sort of suspend that—like, suspend disbelief on like, having to deal with questions of why should these people be together, and just—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. And nevertheless...

KEITH: Yeah, and then it was the season where everybody else decided to do that, and—

AUSTIN: Yep.

KEITH: So—[LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Yep. So this is maybe a letter, then, to someone we've never seen before.

KEITH: Never seen before, and it doesn't get sent—

AUSTIN: We don't know their name—right.

KEITH: I think, because I forget what I'm writing before the letter's finished.

AUSTIN: Oh. There's like, a knock at the door, or like, then Fendleton comes in and says, 'ah, the musicians are going on, quick!' Or, something catches your eye out the window. Or a cat or a dog barks and—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There's a little, you know. There's a little Ravening Beast you have here or something. I don't know. There's like—but like, something distracts you, you know?

KEITH: The Ravening Puppy.

AUSTIN: The Ravening Puppy, yeah. What's the content of the letter that we see, if we see at all? Or what's the character, the emotional content? You know what I mean? We don't need to get the words, but like, what's the—

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: What's the expression we see on Lyke's face as he writes?

KEITH: I think it's a—it's almost like... I don't know how to describe what I mean, like a mental flashback of like—like, I've decided to write a letter out of time, you know? I almost forgot my situation now and have put myself into, you know, the me of six years ago, and have written a letter like I might have written a letter then. Not urgent, not—it's not a big, you know.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: There's just a—almost like a casual sort of letter that you would write in the normal course of events—or the course of events a hundred percent different, and also it was years and years ago.

AUSTIN: Right. But you're just like, 'oh, I'm in this town, you know, I saw some music, and—' Just basic letter-writing letter.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you don't finish it, and it gets pushed to the side, and your attention gets pulled away, and maybe you leave the room. You put your jacket on and leave the room, and you put your, you know, your quill down, your pen down, to come back to it, but you don't ever come back to it. Act Five. "Your past may shape your experiences, your thoughts, your desires, but it does not define you. You are in control of your own path. The road ahead may be built from the stones that you've gathered, but these fragments of your past do not dictate where it leads. It's time to move forward. Return your shadow arcana to the Major Arcana deck." Which I guess I did by mistake, but it was the Hanged Man, as you recall.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: "Now, choose one of the Major Arcana to represent your present self. Do not draw from the deck. Choose freely among the cards."

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You are in charge of your own identity. Who are you, what do you do next? And I'll just draw these out and you can see them all and pick them? Is that—does that make sense to you?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Let me make this easier to do. Let me open up Enchanted Tarot.

KEITH: Despite having three repeats, I think there's—

AUSTIN: I just drew the World again by mistake.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Which is just wild, as the first of these. So then I draw—I want...

KEITH: Yeah, we had three repeats, so I think that there's still quite a few that I didn't see, right? There's like 20 or something, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so. I'll draw these around the table here. The World, the Empress, the Hermit, the Lovers, the Sun, the Wheel of Fortune—

KEITH: Dude, Satan is like watching these lovers.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah? Word?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There's the Devil. There's the actual Satan here.

KEITH: Oh, there's—oh, okay, yeah, that's a much worse devil.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. The Magician, the Emperor—trying to put these in a way so you can kind of see everything here. Strength, which we know, of course. Star, Temperance, The Hierophant, Death, Judgment—which is different than Justice—

KEITH: Yeah. I think I called the Justice card Judgment like twice, but.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fine. The Hanged Man, the Chariot, the High Priest—or sorry, the High Priestess—and the Moon.

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: Did you have one in mind even before we were drawing?

KEITH: So, I did sort of have like a very normal impulse of like, Lyke is the Hanged Man, it was such a Lyke card that it was like 'no, this experience is not transformative—'

AUSTIN: It has not shifted you, yeah.

KEITH: Like, the Hanged Man was so descriptive of Lyke's personality, that it didn't feel just like a momentary part of the game, it felt like we drew the Lyke card.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And so, part of me was like, the honest thing to do would be maybe to just admit to being the Hanged Man.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: In an almost permanent state.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: But it's definitely worth looking at some of these that I have no idea what they are.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Which ones are you curious about? That we haven't looked at before.

KEITH: I'm curious about the Magician.

AUSTIN: I figured. That was the first one that I—I also am like, 'huh, the Magician.'

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And like, not only because, you know. Lye Lychen's a junk mage, but—

KEITH: Well, it's a second infinity character.

AUSTIN: It is. It is a second infinity character. "Willpower—"

KEITH: He's got a gun in front of him.

AUSTIN: What?

KEITH: Oh no, it's the hilt of his sword. It looks like a handgun.

AUSTIN: It does look like a—yeah, it does.

[AUSTIN AND KEITH LAUGH]

[2:00:00]

AUSTIN: "Willpower, desire, being—" I mean, the gun existed by the time this most famous tarot set existed, they could put a gun in there. "Willpower, desire, being resourceful, skill, ability. The Magician is one tarot card that's filled with symbol—" [AMUSED] "The Magician is one tarot card that's filled with symbolism," says labyrinthos. Oh, word?

KEITH: Oh, the first one. They put one with symbolism in there?

[AUSTIN AND KEITH LAUGH]

AUSTIN: "The central figure depicts someone with one hand pointed to the sky, while the other points to the ground as if to say 'as above, so below.' This is a rather complicated phrase, but its summarization is that the earth reflects heaven. The outer world reflects within; the microcosm reflects the macrocosm; earth reflects god. It can also be interpreted here that the Magician symbolizes the ability to act as a go-between between the world above and the contemporary human world." This is awesome to me.

KEITH: Can—

AUSTIN: "On his table, the Magician—" Yeah, uh-huh?

KEITH: Sorry, finish the awesome thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That part. That part is the awesome to me.

KEITH: Okay. Okay.

AUSTIN: Because of how it's the—the Hanged Man was caught between the worlds above and below, and almost was like the bridge between them.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Whereas the Magician goes between above and below.

KEITH: Yeah.



AUSTIN: Right? The Magician is the ability to move between those spaces. “On his table, the Magician also wields all the suits of the tarot.” That’s what’s happening there.

KEITH: Ohh.

AUSTIN: It’s the sword, the cups, the pentacle, the coin—

KEITH: That’s sick.

AUSTIN: And then the wand in his hand. Uh-huh.

KEITH: Is tarot sick?

[AUSTIN LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: “The infinity sign on his head indicates the infinite possibilities of creation with the will. The Magician is the representation of pure willpower. With the power of the elements and the suits, he takes the potential innate in the Fool, and molds it into being with the power of desire.”

KEITH: This is blowing my mind.

AUSTIN: “He is the con—” [LAUGHS]

KEITH: We just drew the Fool!

AUSTIN: We just drew the Fool. “He is the connecting force between heaven and earth, for he understands the meaning behind the words ‘as above, so below,’ that mind and world are only reflections of one another. Remember that you are powerful. Create your inner world, and the outer will follow. When you get the Magician in your reading, it might mean that it’s time to tap into your full potential without hesitation.” It’s so funny when these write-ups turn to being like, self-help-y. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: “It might be in your new job, new business venture, or a new love, or something else.”

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: “It shows that the time to take action is now, and any signs of holding back would mean missing the opportunity of becoming the best version of yourself.”

KEITH: Okay—can—so—it’s—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, I mean, you get this one. Yeah. You understand.

KEITH: So we picked it right away, we both looked at it and it was like ‘the Magician,’ it works on a lot—it ends up being so close, but so importantly different than the Hanged Man—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: But I would—where—was that just from a website for the Magician?

AUSTIN: That was from labyrinthos, yeah. That's where I was at.

KEITH: Okay. Can I really self-indulgently hear—maybe I misunderstood what this book was, but is there a Magician description—

AUSTIN: The *Meditations on the Tarot: A Journey into Christian Hermeticism*.

KEITH: Yes.

AUSTIN: Yeah, of course you can.

KEITH: I need to hear from there.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. We gotta go to 'Afterword' by Cardinal Hans Urs von Balthasar. I don't know who wrote this, does this not have a... this is not—oh, of course. This was written by Anonymous and translated by Robert Powell. When was this written? What am I looking at? One second.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: I used to know this. Is there like, a Wiki article on this? There is. The author is known, but requested to remain anonymous, apparently. That's interesting. "In order to let the work speak for itself... the author's clearly a Roman Catholic." That's us, we keep on stumbling into Roman Catholicism when we're on this show. Alright, let me find—let's see what the church has to say. [CHUCKLES]

KEITH: It's fine, there's—

AUSTIN: The church has to say that right now we're doing sin, I believe, actually. Let's see here. The Fool, Judgment, the Sun—what number is it? Do we know?

KEITH: One.

AUSTIN: One. Wow.

KEITH: Yeah. One more than the Fool.

AUSTIN: One more than the Fool. "The Magician represents the man who has attained harmony and equilibrium between the spontaneity of the unconscious (in the sense, of course, given to it by Jung) and the deliberate action of the conscious, in the sense of the id or the ego. The state of consciousness is the synthesis of the conscious and the unconscious, of creative spontaneity, and deliberately executed activity." Some stuff from Schiller.

"The first arcanum, the arcanum of practical and theoretical fruitfulness, whilst proclaiming the effectiveness of serious play (which is, of course, the complete tarot), contains at the same time a serious warning. There is Play with a capital P, and lowercase P 'play,' there is play. There is the Magician with a capital M, and the magician with a lowercase M. This is why anyone who confuses lack of concentration with concentration without effort, and streams of simple mental association with the vision with the vision without effort or correspondences by analogy, will necessarily will become a charlatan." In other words, the people who don't take magic, that you are the Magician, that you are doing capital P Play,

you're nothing but a charlatan. That's why that happens, because there's confusion of the way the Magician can transform work into play through concentration.

"The arcanum of the Magician is twofold. It has two aspects. He invites us on the path which leads to geniality, and he warns us of the danger of the path which leads to charlatanism. I must add that often (too often, alas), the teachers of occultism follow the two paths at the same time, and that which they teach contains elements of genius mixed with elements of charlatanism. May the first arcanum of the tarot also or be always present before us as a kind of guardian of the threshold. May he invite us to cross the threshold of work and effort in order to enter into activity without effort, and knowledge without effort, but may he at the same time warn us that the more we go beyond the threshold, the more work, effort, and experience on this side of the threshold will be indispensable for the attainment of real truth. May the Magician say to us and may he repeat it each day—" this is a big long quote about the church. And charlatanism.

I think in short, it's like—my read of what I just read is the true magician knows that the way to truth is through getting rid of—is to like, step into the world of play. To step away from the world of pure labor and into a world where what we do is separated from our daily mundane needs. But, that we should not give—that to give up the sort of seriousness that we bring to those things, and to go into the world of play as if nothing there matters, will keep us from finding the truth. Right? And obviously, threshold stuff hits for Lyke because of Sanctum of the Stone Chorus and slipping between those two worlds.

KEITH: Damn, that's a big one.

AUSTIN: Do we think it's the Magician?

KEITH: I—hmm.

AUSTIN: Do we think Lyke is there? I mean, this is my real question.

KEITH: That's the thing, in reading that—I'm glad that we brought that book out, because reading that makes it feel like maybe that's too much.

AUSTIN: You don't think Lyke is there yet. But this is a moment of change, right?

KEITH: it is.

AUSTIN: We've gone through this journey—and I'll reiterate what it says. It says: "choose one of the Major Arcana to represent your present self. Choose freely among the cards. You are in charge of your own identity. Who are you? What do you do next?" Are you Lye Lychen? And if you are, are you Lye Lychen the Hanged Man, are you Lye Lychen the Magician, are you Lye Lychen the Fool? I really like the Fool, the Hanged Man, and the Magician as a sort of trio.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know?

KEITH: There is a very—

AUSTIN: I also love the, like, 'Lye, Lychen, and Lyke' as a trio, you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What were you gonna say? 'There is a very...'

KEITH: There is definitely something between those three that is very interesting for Lyke. And just in general, honestly.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I mean, to some degree it's like, part of me—I could go in any of those directions.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know? And we could also reject them entirely, right? Lyke can be the Hermit, looking for truth, looking for—but without the mastery of the Magician for instance, right? I don't know that Lyke is, you know, the World, I don't think that you're in that sort of, you know, grand equilibrium with everything you're touching, everything—you could be the Moon, I still like you as the crawfish quite a bit, on the path, caught between these things. But there's a—

KEITH: I do also like the Moon, yeah.

AUSTIN: There's a binary nature there that I don't love as much, but our version of the Moon is I think better than—

KEITH: Yeah, we've invented a better moon.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: Proud to build a better moon.

AUSTIN: They said it couldn't be done. Yeah. Uh-huh.

KEITH: There also is, I think, something—there's—I think that there's something, too, that it feels like a lot of what I've done on Friends at the Table play with the 'Fool, Hanged Man, Magician' throughline.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yeah, a hundred percent. Yeah. In a way that, again, is kind of remarkable that it came this way, right? Because we so easily could have drawn 'Judgment, Death, Hierophant' instead of those three. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: And we would have made that work, that would have been like 'oh, yeah, the Hierophant is like, a representative of all the times you've been up against authority figures' and blah blah blah, like, you know, that's how this stuff works.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: "Tradition, conformity, morality, ethics." I was pretty sure that's what a hierophant was, that makes sense. But like, you know. Yeah, it does—the Fool, the Hanged Man, the Magician' feels like Keith's character. You know, the 'Keith character,' as it were.

KEITH: Yeah. Or at least a part of it, anyway.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, obviously. Again, we could absolutely talk about your character in relationship to big changes, in relationship to, you know, like—Death represents change, if I recall correctly.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know, we could talk about other stuff that's there, but.

KEITH: Um... I think the Magician is fun, and—

AUSTIN: I like it as a way of moving forward with Lyke.

KEITH: That's what I was gonna say, is that the key word 'next' in the prompt, I think, lets me feel okay about the Magician.

[2:10:10]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And I think could be an exciting season two avenue.

AUSTIN: Yeah, this different version of Lyke that is more—yet unjudged, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You're still carrying the new cutting of Aterika'Kaal, the, um—we just—what was the term? The ordeal with you.

KEITH: Yeah, the ordeal.

AUSTIN: Right? And I don't know that you're—I mean, let's leave on a little bit of ambiguity. Let's sleep on it a little bit, like—do you get your name back? Do you find yourself as Lye Lychen again, or is this magician something else, someone else who's reinvented themselves in some other way?

KEITH: Yeah, I—

AUSTIN: We—yeah, I don't know.

KEITH: Part of me—I don't want to lose the fluidity of, you know, starting—you know, 20 minutes ago I was the Hanged Man, and right now I'm the Magician, and 20 minutes later I could be the Hanged Man again, you know?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: And I think, like, one of the formative things about the early season for Lyke as a character was—well, it's two things, the taking the ghost water at the Dayward YVE thing, and then, like, doing the counterpoint to Duvall's luck thing.

AUSTIN: Right, right, yeah, totally.

KEITH: And, you know, and it's like getting—like, can you get moments of the Magician out of a, you know, an episode of the Hanged Man, you know?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Where it's like, I had it—

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] I mean, another way of thinking about it—

KEITH: It's like a juggling thing where it's like—

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: When you're juggling and you're doing it right and it clicks and you—

AUSTIN: Then you're the Magician, yeah.

KEITH: Then you're the Magician, but even a good juggler will drop a ball.

AUSTIN: Will become the Fool. Or, again, not the Fool, because the Fool does not necessarily mean you've fallen of the cliff. The Tower will—you'll draw the Tower sometimes, right, and things will go disastrously.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Which, you know. Definitely not the Tower.

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: I think if things had gone 'bad' bad, you would have been the Tower.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which, by the way, I don't even see anymore? I feel like I've hidden the Tower somewhere and I can't find it anymore.

KEITH: I also don't see it, yeah.

AUSTIN: It's very strange to me. Did we just place it—

KEITH: Is it just under something else, like?

AUSTIN: It must be under something else.

KEITH: But it would have to be perfectly under it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, because—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's weird.

KEITH: That's weird, yeah.

AUSTIN: Anyway, hm. The thing that I was gonna say as like a way of thinking through it is, when we began this you were the Hanged Man.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Are you still the Hanged Man at the beginning—if we started this again right now, would you be the Hanged Man? Would we start as the Hanged Man or would you start as the Magician? And that's—because you're right that that flux will always be there, but I think that that is one way of thinking of—like, when you admit that that flux is there, that you could drop the balls you're juggling. But are you starting with the balls in the air, or are you starting with them in your pocket, you know? Are you starting—has this experience that allows you to recommit yourself to a new self left you confident and ready to become the Magician, with the acceptance that you may still have those Hanged Man moments—

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: Or are you yet still the Hanged Man? Is Lye Lychen still—

KEITH: Shit. That's the Hanged—no, it's Hanged Man.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Are you walking betw—you think so?

KEITH: I think so. Okay—

AUSTIN: You don't think you're walking between heaven and earth, you think that you're simply a bridge between the two?

KEITH: So—

AUSTIN: Or strung up between the two?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Okay, so this is a weird—a different—I was thinking earlier about *Twin Peaks*.

AUSTIN: Always. Sure.

KEITH: And there's—from the beginning, there's been a little bit of *Twin Peaks* in Lyke.

AUSTIN: Of course.

KEITH: And, you know, I think there's this part of—I was thinking about it, we were talking about the Course, like, pre-season, and when I was thinking about Lyke, and like—the moments of *Twin Peaks*, like, the wackier weirder moments of season one where it's like, you're trying to figure out how Dale Cooper tries to figure things out, and it just like—well, he just is—sometimes just pulling things, and is it real or is it fake that he's just—it just seems like he's pulling things from really nowhere. And is it luck? Is it something else that he's mistaking as real? Or is it literally magic?

AUSTIN: Right. Or is it—right. Right.

KEITH: And I don't really care what the answer is, like, I don't want to—

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: It would ruin the show for me to really figure that out.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And so—but I think that that—that is the—those moments of like, where it really feels real—*Disco Elysium* has some of this.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

KEITH: Where, you know—very minor spoilers, but one of my favourite moments in that game is when you find a blue door in the backroom of the inn that you're staying in, and he's like 'this door is gonna be important.' And it's like—[LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: [LAUGHS] Yes.

KEITH: And Kim makes fun of you and is like 'oh, yeah, this will become, like, a lynchpin of the murder case.'

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: And then you go like, 'no. It's going—' and you can say 'yeah, it is gonna do that,' or you can say 'no, it's going to become its own investigation that will become a synchronized stereo investigation.'

[AUSTIN CHUCKLES]

KEITH: And I just really like the difference between those two things.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And then because they wrote the game, they know how the game goes, there's a truth to that that feels like magic, but the reality is that they wrote the end of the game before they wrote that line in the beginning.

AUSTIN: Right, right, right.

KEITH: And I think that... That—to me, that is, like—the moments where Lyke can be the Magician is when it feels like he is—he knew the end before it started.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Where the—things click into place.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Where, again, to use *Disco Elysium* terms, is like the Shivers score has succeeded. Right?

KEITH: Right. And it's just the actual play because you know all the stuff we said when we get to the end, and you can—you get to make it be good.

AUSTIN: Right, yes. Yeah, I was literally—I sent someone a line today from *World Wide Wrestling RPG*, which I don't think you were in that game back in Bluff City season one—

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: One of the principles for GMs in that is "make it look like you had it planned that way all along; this is the key to engaging wrestling storylines. The players have agency and



the ability to change what you had planned. Your job is to take their swerves and pull the storylines back together in order to create overarching coherent narratives.” And that’s just GMing.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That’s just all GMing to me.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And yeah, you’re right, like, that’s the magic of it, is I get to try to make sense of it. Which is also what we’re both doing right now with the tarot, right? Like, that is also what’s happening.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But wow, you know? Wild.

KEITH: So I think that that—

AUSTIN: So yes, so, the Hanged Man—

KEITH: That’s the Hanged Man.

AUSTIN: But with, in your most naive and optimistic days, the Fool. And in your most confident moments, your most aligned with the nature of things, the Magician.

KEITH: And isn’t that true to a game that relies on rolling dice, too?

AUSTIN: Mhm, yes. True, isn’t it?

KEITH: The Hanged Man literally lives in the middle of the dice rolls.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh.

One more time, because this was just incredible, I want to shout out the games, *Anamnesis*, A-N-A-M-N-E-S-I-S, which you can find at [blinkingbirchgames.itch.io](https://blinkingbirchgames.itch.io). B-L-I-N-K-I-N-G B-I-R-C-H G-A-M-E-S.itch.io. And again, that was designed by Samantha Leigh. With editing by Marx Shepherd, layout by Thomas Manuel, and art by Victor Winter. What a surprise. What a cool thng to just tumble into. Alright, well.

I’m gonna send you a screenshot of this—also just as a thing, I reached—I moved stuff around to find all the right cards, and the way it turned out when I just put all the cards—so I have all of your kind of prompt cards in order from the, you know, each—the ‘one, two, three’ all stacked on top of one another, from Wands, Cups, Swords, then Pentacles, then I have the Fool, the Hanged Man, and the Magician above one, two, and three, with the Hanged Man raised a little bit higher, and then, just because of the way I just shuffled everything up on the screen, the top three cards of the other Major Arcana turned out to be the Tower, the Moon, and then Strength, all of which we’ve talked about here, and I love that as a, you know—not—an involuntary, you know, a found piece of additional color here.

KEITH: Yeah, no unknown cards.

AUSTIN: I think that's it.

KEITH: All of these we've dealt with.

AUSTIN: Yeah. All of these we've dealt with, and they all have meaning to us in some ways, I think, so there we go. That is the last shot that we see of Lye—I mean, is there one more shot of Lye Lychen? Do we see Lye leaving Marrowcreek behind, are you still in Marrowcreek when we last see you?

KEITH: Um... no, I think I go.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Or do we want to leave it ambiguous? Okay.

KEITH: I think I'm leaving.

AUSTIN: Okay. Back on the journey northwest.

KEITH: That's the—that was that act—

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: The end of act one or the start of act two of the, like, the familiarity in the adventure.

[2:20:06]

[MUSIC OUTRO - ["Six Travelers" by Jack de Quidt](#)]