

SPRING IN HIERON 18: A SIMPLE ANSWER

Transcriber: Cole

(Recap)

Austin: Samol is dead. Magic is dying across Hieron starting at the far edges of the map and moving inwards. What else? Arrell, you learned has some sort of conduit here in the University that allows him to teleport people here. Allows him some sort of magical reach. And Ephrim, you've begun hearing the sound of Alyosha's forge in your head. Basically, in time with the growth of these trees. More people are showing up, and they're showing up from all over. Like- and maybe this is the way that you learn that Marielda has already begun to have been invaded by the Ordennans. Marieldans start showing up. People from Marielda begin to show up who are looking for home.

[Jack de Quidt's "[Something](#)" begins playing in the background]

Janine (as **Adaire**): There's been some problem with thieves.

Austin (as **Samot**): Has there?

Janine (as **Adaire**): So...

Austin: He grins. [**Austin** laughs]

Janine (as **Adaire**): I think most of the- most of them [Janine laughs ooc] Look, most of them have gone. There's some kids. I've been working with them. They're pretty cool, but they would definitely take your money is all I'm saying.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): I'm not gonna give Isaac Adelton a place here, and I'm definitely not going to accept him here after what he's done specifically to the gnolls. So, we can see what we can get out of him.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): I mean, you- how do we even know we can trust anything that we get out of him?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): I mean, we can't. But it's worth a shot.

Austin (as **Rosana**): Hadrian. [sighs] You need to take the armor off when you're with us.

Art (as **Hadrian**): [sighs] I wore- I wore it for 5 years.

Austin (as **Rosana**): I know.

Art (as **Hadrian**): I mean- I don't know-

Austin (as **Rosana**): And that's why you get to take it off now.

Art (as **Hadrian**): I don't know how to talk to people who aren't gods anymore.

Austin (as **Rosana**): Most of us aren't gods. Just practice. And also, it doesn't make us any less capable. That's what I've learned.

Austin: You can feel and see from this bird's eye view magic leaving Hieron, right? You can feel it shriveling. You can feel it turning to dust effectively, right? But there is one part of the map where that is not happening. The far northeast, Alcyon. This like, this set of islands is fine. The magic isn't leaving. Even though it is literally at the far northeastern corner of this map. Um, it's not only not leaving, it's not like, receding at all.

Keith: Huh.

Austin (as **Isaac Adleton**): It's funny because the only thing I can think of that would be a conduit strong enough for that is a living one, you know. It's- someone who has been totally just- Someone who has already allowed Arrell to make them a conduit or maybe not specifically a conduit, but someone who has had a magic ritual performed on them. Like me. And so, it's funny cause you said, 'Oh, there was this thing that happened.' I thought maybe cause I was here. But uh, I guess maybe- Did Arrell ever put anybody else in a bubble?

(End of recap)

[Music finishes playing]

Austin: Alright, who else has stuff going on?

Keith: Is there something that I can do with Isaac's staff?

Austin: I don't know.

Dre: Ugh, I got to go talk to Hadrian now, too.

Austin: Yeah, I bet. Let's save that for when they're back from the trip. From the camping trip. Does anyone have non-Hadrian business while this was going on?

Keith: Um, has Ephrim done the Samot meeting?

Sylvia: Yeah, I-

Austin: Uh un.

Sylvia: Yeah, no. I need to do the Samot meeting still. Um-

Austin: Let's do it.

Sylvia: Alright. Do I just find him in- up in his room still?

Austin: Yeah, I think he- at this point, he's in his room, for sure. And he's reading at his desk. Or he's writing at his desk. Um, and you knock, and he says,

Austin (as Samot): Come in.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Hey. Uh, Adaire told me you wanted to speak. Is everything alright? Recovery is going well?

Austin (as Samot): Slow, but steady. I appreciate your hospitality, Lord Ephrim. Take a seat.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Alright.

Sylvia: And Ephrim does so.

Austin (as Samot): You've done well by this place. Trust me. It means a lot to me that this is a- a home for people again.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Thank you. Thank you. Um, we- it's- it's been a group effort. [laughs softly] In so many ways.

Austin (as Samot): Of course. So, I speak to you as- [sighs] from one ruler to another. What are your plans for this place now that things are the way they are?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Well... it's alw- that's a- that question has gotten much - much more difficult as time has gone on. Um, but the goal has always been to find refuge and a way to stop what's happening to the world here.

Austin (as **Samot**): Of course.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Um, somewhere safe. But our- if your talking goals, short-term, I imagine finding a place for all our new- our new refugees and citizens is kinda the big one.

Austin (as **Samot**): In some senses, I am also a refugee here. If it's true that the Ordennans sacked my home. [sighs] And my people flee here. I am a king without a throne. And I need to know whether I can stay here or if I should find [sighs] court elsewhere. The stars to the east, I suspect, would have me, if you would see us go.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): I- In all good conscience, I cannot tell you to leave. I- you one, you have been a- you've been a help since arriving. The treaties and such. Although with Marielda being under attack-

Sylvia: Actually, would I know? Would Ephrim know it's called Marielda?

Austin: You would- you would- yeah.

Sylvia: Sorry to interrupt myself mid-character.

Austin: You would know it was called Marielda because uh-

Sylvia: Ok. Right. Yeah. Marielda.

Austin: -the Uklan Tell story.

Sylvia: Right, yeah. I always forget that.

Austin: But you- Yeah, but you using that phrase- you using that word would actually like- you saying that, like you can see on Samot's face as you call it Marielda, it's an old name. You know?

Sylvia: Hm, yeah.

Austin (as **Samot**): I haven't- I haven't heard it called that in quite some time.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Yeah. Well, uh, I guess with them- the way the university has been preserved, we find ourselves going back to a lot of the older names.

Austin: I think we get like-

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Easier to find books on those.

Austin (as **Samot**): It is.

Austin: And I think we get like the shot of him looking at you, and then like, behind you coming into focus is the- the painting of him, Samothos, and Maelgwyn. Young Maelgwyn.

Austin (as **Samot**): The old names are good. There's nothing wrong with them. I understand you don't rule this place alone, but I wanted to speak with you because you are, of course, a man of the cloth, and I thought we would have some overlap there. Before you brought it up with Corsica.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Uh huh. Yeah, I will- I will, of course, have to talk to her about it, but I don't- I don't see her objecting to you staying here. Um, especially knowing that you are an ally to us, too. There shouldn't be any risk with that. Um-

Austin (as **Samot**): How was he? Ephrim?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): [pauses] Now [sighs] that's kind of a complicated question because [sighs] I mean, I assume you're talking about your son, correct?

Austin: I think he- [sighs] There is like the very lightest flare of light in his eyes,

Austin (as **Samot**): Yes. I need to know if he was himself in the end. Or if he suffered all the way through.

Sylvia: Out of character, he did briefly become Maelgwyn-

Austin: He did.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Um, yeah. I'm gonna tell him.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Yeah, there was a moment where he- he was no longer Samoths, and he was who I now understand to be Maelgwyn. And uh, now there's something else in this place.

Austin (as **Samot**): Is there?

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): I've been hearing hints of it. The sound of the forge. I recognize it from when I was there. I'm not sure what's going on completely, but there's something going on.

Austin (as **Samot**): I would ask you if you were certain that my son lies dead, but [sighs] my father told me already, and he is the one who knows things... or was. And don't worry. He told me not to hold it against you nor do I. Nor would I.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): [pauses] I would regret it if I did not apologize now regardless of the situation. That would just be- beyond cruel to not offer my condolences after what I had done. So- I would like to just say that to you face to face now. Um-

Austin: He just nods.

Austin (as **Samot**): In the time before all of this, such an action would just be another chapter in a book, turned back so easily. The same stock characters trotted out again and again. In a long epic. But now, when someone leaves, they mean it. [exhales] I wonder how long we'll last, those like me. Only a few left.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Well, [sighs] hopefully we can help prolong it. Yeah?

Sylvia: And there's like a little- like, there's kind- it's kind of an awkward smile, but it's like, he's trying to be-

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah.

Sylvia: -comforting.

Austin (as **Samot**): We have to do more than prolong it, Ephrim.

Sylvia: Oh yeah. Ok. I just was remembering something really quick in my head.

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: We did tell him about the strange like, material that Uklan Tell's created, right?

Austin: I think so. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because he was the one who decided-

Sylvia: Because that was an option.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. He was like, 'No, I'm good.'

Sylvia: Yeah. Um,

Sylvia (as Ephrim): But yeah, of course. That's uh- I know that he's a bit... uh, hard to handle at times, but Uklan Tell's research, I think, is definitely going to help us with the Heat and the Dark. At the very least, he's figured out things that I wouldn't have been able to. Um-

Austin (as Samot): He is a smart man, but he is a man. [pauses] If you wish to save the world, you have to think bigger than open scars.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yeah? What would you have me do? Aside from following the few leads that we have here.

Austin: He nods his head a little bit.

Austin (as Samot): It's time to plan something bigger. I'm not sure what yet. You attend to today and tomorrow. I will look to the weeks ahead.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Before I go-

Austin (as Samot): Hmm.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): - you came here with an escort of those pala-din, correct?

Austin: He nods.

Austin (as Samot): Not only them.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Ok. Of course, of course. But-

Austin (as Samot): I lost many good people.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Of course. What- [sighs] This is hard for me to ask of you because I know that it is a well-kept secret, but Ordenna has it, and if we can't fight back- What I'm asking is if you can help us learn how to create these ourselves, if possible. And if there is some way we can use it to fight back against Ordenna, so we can hopefully stop them from doing what has happened to Marielda and in the future, take back Marielda with you.

Austin (as **Samot**): This is a big ask, Ephrim.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Yes, it is. [laughs]

Austin (as **Samot**): Hm. Maybe I underestimated you. Maybe you are capable of thinking about the future. [sighs and pauses] What you need is not here. I did not design the pala-din. My husband did. But the blueprints and the machinery to make it- then the machinery to make them does exist in the world. Each of the towers I built houses one. One in the northwest. One in the center of the Mark of the Erasure. One where my father made his home. One in the old forge, in the volcano. And one in the islands to the northeast. If you could bring yourself one of those blueprints, you could build yourself an army. I could even help you build the machinery necessary to make them here, but the blueprint itself.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Alright. We'll still planning for something like this. We need to- we need to make a trip out to one of those towers as soon as we can. Thank you.

Austin: He nods.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Is there anything else you needed to talk to me about? Or should I leave you now?

Austin (as **Samot**): I like your style, Ephrim. Too many boring kings in history.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Well, technically I'm a baron. [Sylvia and Austin laugh lightly]

Sylvia: And yeah, that's a- that's a genuine smile is when he says that one. Yeah.

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah. Good. He nods, and says um,

Austin (as **Samot**): That's all. Thank you.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Let me know if you need anything to help with your recovery. You should be able to find me pretty easily. It seems like everyone around here's able to find me pretty easily.

[0:15:00]

Austin; I think like, at that moment, you hear someone coming up the stairs and is like,

Austin (as **unnamed person**): Lord Ephrim? Lord Ephrim?! There's a problem with Mortimer! The duck!

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): I'll talk to you soon, Samot. Apparently I have business to attend to.

Austin (as **unnamed person**): [overlapping] The- there is a- it's a- They can't decide what to do with the duck!

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): I'm coming!

Keith: I don't remember this duck.

Austin: This is the first time I'm introducing Mortimer, the duck. It's-

Keith: Ok, great.

Ali: Hmm.

Austin: It's a prize-winning duck.

Jack: The way you said it- [laughs] The way you said it sounded like it wasn't 'Mortimer' but it was 'Mortimore' [**Austin** and **Sylvia** laugh]

Keith: Yeah, I like- I mean I was-

Austin: Mortimore, the duck, yeah.

Jack: Extra bits of the duck.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Oh, I mean, well, I hope he's ok. Honestly.

Austin: Uh hm.

Art: Mortimer deserves it.

Austin: Mortimer is a great duck. It's a prize-winning duck, and one of the halflings thinks it's been stolen from him. So, you know.

Jack: Wait. [laughs] Wait, wait, wait, wait. Is this duck in your notes prior to this moment?

Austin: Yeah. This is number 28. [**Sylvia** laughs] A member of the halfling coalition demands an investigation into the theft of his family's prize-winning duck, Mortimer. Because of his family's prominence, this is being treated as an issue of great importance among the halflings. Everyone else thinks this is ridiculous. Quote: 'A duck is a duck. Give them five coin and move on.' And then there is some- there are some repercussions depending on what you choose to do with this duck.

Janine: Austin, I swear if you kill this duck off camera... [**Austin** and **Keith** laugh]

Jack: He's showing us the barrel of the gun.

Austin: I'm showing you the barrel of the gun. There's a duck. It's an important duck.

Sylvia: Showing us the bill of the duck.

Austin: [laughs] The bill of the duck. Thank you, Sylvia¹.

Keith: It's the bill, yeah.

Jack: Well, ok.

Austin: And again, important. It's not just this family that's mad, the halflings want this duck back. Anyway, who else has things to do?

Keith: Who gives a shit about the halflings? [**Jack** laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Ugh.

Jack: I want to go see Emmanuel.

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

Austin: Ok. That sounds good. Where do you find Emmanuel right now? I don't think at the farm. I think the farm is on pause.

Jack: Just because- because the tree is just-

Austin: Because-

Jack: Because of a combination of like, because of a combination of the water and the fact that there's just a gigantic tree?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Ok. So, where do I see Emmanuel? Let me look at the map. Where- where would Emmanuel be?

Austin: Remember we can add stuff. We can always add stuff to this map.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Probably in- I would- I would almost wager the kitchen of the meeting hall.

Jack: Oh, right. Yeah.

Austin: Right? Like, I think he's probably defaulted back to like, 'Alright, well I tried working the fields. Now I'm going to go back to being a cook.'

Jack: Is that what it is? Or is it- or is it, 'I can no longer make myself useful in point A, and so-'

Austin: Yeah, it's- it's that. It's like, 'Here's where I can be of use.' Yeah.

Jack: Right. Right. Rather than just like-

Austin: Especially because like, there is limited food, right? It's like a lot of like-

Jack: Right.

Austin: -'How do I make enough food- How do I take what I have here and stretch it as far as I can?'

Jack: And this is- this is like, presumably like working on a pirate ship. This is the skill of a pirate chef.

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Jack: Of just like, 'I can take 1 barrel of things and make 6 barrels of things.'

Austin: Yeah, totally. Um, so yeah. You know, has an apron on. Has like a- his hair in a hairnet, and like a- what do you- like a bandana upside down around his hair, you know? And I guess like, probably sees you moving around the meeting hall, and like, just speaks to the side and asks his supervisor if he can take 5 minutes off- or his coworkers if he can take 5 minutes to go catch up with you. And they're like, 'Take 10.' [Austin and **Jack** laugh lightly] And he comes out to see you. Um, and gives you a big hug, as soon as he sees you.

Jack (as Lem): Hi.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Hi. Uh- [exhales]

Jack (as Lem): I'm back.

Austin (as Emmanuel): You're back.

Jack (as Lem): Yeah. It's-

Austin (as Emmanuel): [quietly] Oh, thank god.

Jack (as Lem): You're back. You're cooking.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Hm, it's all I can do.

Jack (as Lem): Are you enjoying it?

Austin (as Emmanuel): [exhales] It's busywork. Sit. Let's sit. Let's sit.

Austin: And he sits across from you at like a long, picnic table style, like cafeteria table, you know? Which is to say, like there's some distance. Like, I want to- I want to paint that picture. There is actually physically-

Jack: Right.

Austin: We get like the side- like the shot that like, shows the width of the table separating the two of you. [exhales; **Art** laughs quietly in the background]

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): It is good to see you safe. I heard the moon- everything. I saw it.

Jack (as **Lem**): Yeah. It was bad. It was bad up there, but I mean- your farm got destroyed.

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): Yeah. [breaths in and out deep] Yes, it did.

Jack (as **Lem**): I'm sorry about that.

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): This one was not your fault, I gather?

Jack (as **Lem**): The moon? Everyone keeps saying this. [**Keith** laughs in background]

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): We only have history to go on, Lem.

Jack (as **Lem**): No, the moon wasn't my fault. The... Although, if I'm honest, we didn't try and stop it. But, but it's- We didn't really know where to start there. Um-

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): I tried to send you word. This box.

Austin: And he takes out the little fidget-cube messenger box, and he's like,

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): I don't understand it much.

Jack (as **Lem**): Right. Well, hang on. You've- you've- It's kind of off right now. You've kind of turned it off somehow.

Austin: He says like- he just like puts it on the table in front of- between the two of you.

Austin (as **Emmanuel**): I- [pauses] I would prefer that we just speak the way people speak.

Austin: [jokingly as Emmanuel] I've seen a lot of Black mirror, and I think phones are ruining Hieron society. [**Keith** and **Jack** laugh]

Keith: We need a break from screen time.

Austin: Yeah. We need- [laughs] Yeah.

Jack: I send one message on an orcish box, and a gigantic tree ate my farm.

Austin: And then the moon fell.

Jack: Right from the mind of Charlie Brooker.

Austin: 'I'm Charlie Brooker.' Yeah. [laughs hard] [**Jack** laughs] Ugh.

Jack: No, I think Lem kind of just like- I think Lem goes to take the box-

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: -and then kind of takes his hand back and is like,

Jack (as Lem): Ok.

Austin (as Emmanuel): You see though, yes? You- you told me it would be fine. That you would be safe. And then you went to a place where the moon fell. Lem, that is the furthest thing from safe. I'm glad that you are ok. [sighs] I saw you return, and I was thrilled to see you walk back through the gates, but I could not bring myself to run to you for fear that you would leave tomorrow. I don't understand this impulse you have. The world is not only ending out there. When my farm flooded and that tree grew, I did not say, 'Ah, I should go start a new farm somewhere.' I came to the kitchen. There is work to be done here.

Jack (as Lem): But surely somebody has to go. Somebody has to go outside.

Austin (as Emmanuel): There are lots of somebodies. Surely someone has to go outside. Surely. But it does not need to be you each time. [deep breath in and out] And if it does, then that is... a decision you have to make. I have asked you many times now to make the other one.

Jack (as Lem): But I mean, what can I.... What can I do here?

Austin (as Emmanuel): [scoff] That man, Samol, was here for a few days and brought joy and comfort to so many people. Lem, I've- Right now, I see they are building a-somewhere to make printed material. You could hand out soup to people. There is work to be done. It is not glamorous. But even if you must care first and foremost about [sighs] the Heat and the Dark, there are things to study here. Laboratories to work in. I know the power you have. I know what you do. I have seen it firsthand. Isn't the entire point of pattern magic that it can be done as well in a warehouse as on a battlefield?

Jack (as Lem): I don't have a great history with pattern magic, Emmanuel.

Austin (as Emmanuel): What do you have a good history with then?

Jack (as Lem): Well... well, I can tra- I can travel. [**Keith** and **Art** laugh in background]
And- and-

Austin (as Emmanuel): Hm.

Jack (as Lem): I can read. [**Keith** laughs again] I like to think I play the violin pretty well.

Austin (as Emmanuel): You do.

Austin: [laughs] Janine, in the chat, says 'Everyone did get super into guitars while Lem was gone. [**Jack** laughs] And he's terrible at those.'

Jack: He's just- he is- he is- The dice say Lem is terrible at guitars.

Austin: [laughs] Yes.

Jack (as Lem): I- You asked me if- you asked me if I did the moon. And you weren't joking, were you?

Austin (as Emmanuel): How could I be? [exasperated laugh] When I met you, you were on a ship, and we did magical battle. And then, I saw you inadvertently lead the Ordennans into my home and destroy it. And then when I saw you again, a star fell from the heavens and wrecked the canyons of Rosemerrow.

Jack (as Lem): Then why should I stay?

Austin (as Emmanuel): I have spelled it out so clearly. You should stay because I'd like you to. Because I am here. And I cannot travel. I cannot go on these adventures you do and live. Because you will go out again, and soon enough, will not return. [sighs] You are not a walking curse. But here whatever trouble you raise, I can help get you out of it. There- there you will come back eventually only as a word from Fero. 'I'm sorry about Lem.'

Jack (as Lem): Ok. Ok. But- but what if- what does this look like, Emmanuel, if- if I go again? [**Austin**/Emmanuel exhales a sigh] I just- I just want-

Austin (as Emmanuel): You tell me. What it looks like is I will not wait again. And I will not rush out and take my break at work. And I will see you around, and we will be friends perhaps. I will hope that your life goes well. And I will find other ways to- [sighs] to hope. Other people to put that in.

Jack: I think Lem is just um, destroying a- a grass ring around his finger.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Just pulling- just like-

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: -slicing it in half with his nail. And then slicing it in half again. There's just like, a little pile of grasses on the table in front of him.

Austin (as Emmanuel): You could rush out again at first-

Jack (as Lem): I'm not gonna rush out again.

Austin (as Emmanuel): -opportunity. Just try. Stay for a while. A week. 2 weeks. 3 weeks. A month. See.

Jack (as Lem): You- you went from a week to a month, Emmanuel.

Austin (as Emmanuel): For most of us, the difference disappears in years. I have been here over a decade. You cannot string together 10 days.

Jack (as Lem): Ok. Ok. Let's do a week. Let's do 2 weeks. Let's do... let's do 2 to 3 weeks.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Let's do a month.

Jack (as Lem): Let's do a month. And then at the end of the month, this- this isn't me saying that I'm gonna go, and it's not me saying that I'm gonna stay. I can't make that promise to you now at this- [stammers a little] But let's do a month.

Austin (as Emmanuel): I know it seems like I risk nothing in this. Please just know that is not the case.

Austin: [**Austin**, **Jack**, and **Ali** laugh] He can transfer, Hella. He can do work from here. From the home office. Hella says, 'Emmanuel being all like, "Quit your job to be with me." Get out of here. I'm an official Emmanuel hater.'

Ali: I'm on a board. Write me down on a list.

Austin: God damn. Damn.

Jack: I suppose I- the thing is-

Austin: Emmanuel trying to get his boyfriend not get killed.

Jack: I think this is actually what Lem says, is like,

Jack (as Lem): What should I tell Hella... and Fero? [**Ali** laughs]

Austin (as Emmanuel): This is not a hard answer. There is work to be done here. There is work you can do. You spent years reading books in a sword.

Jack (as Lem): Who are you to say that this is not a hard answer.

Austin (as Emmanuel): [pauses] Fair.

Jack (as Lem): I was the one who got onto the boat with them. Multiple times. And this isn't me saying that I- you know, that I want to go running off with- with Hella and Fero. Lord knows, you know- [**Austin** laughs]

Austin (as Emmanuel): I've heard the stories, yes. You tell them well.

Jack (as Lem): They're all true. They're the worst. But I have to- I'm gonna have to tell them something.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Hadrian stayed.

Jack (as Lem): Hadrian's a father.

Austin (as Emmanuel): Adaire stayed.

Jack (as Lem): And Adaire's a weirdo. [**Austin** and **Keith** laugh hard]

Austin (as Emmanuel): Lem, I hate to tell you this. You are also a weirdo. [**Jack** laughs]

Jack (as Lem): Maybe I'll talk to Hadrian.

Austin (as Emmanuel): That seems wise. He seems... That seems wise.

[0:30:00]

Jack (as Lem): A month. A month then.

Austin (as Emmanuel): A month.

Jack (as Lem): And maybe by the end of ot that, you'll have stopped working in the kitchen, and- and you can plant a market garden or- or... I don't know. What do people do? What do people do when they're not fighting a- a crocodile that is tied to a turtle?

Austin (as Emmanuel): You're telling me a story again. **[Ali laughs]** I'm going back to the kitchen. You save this story for later. We'll get dinner. You can tell me about the crocodile tied to a turtle.

Jack (as Lem): Ok.

Austin: He takes the cube back and puts it in his pocket and then stands up. He has like, a pocket in the apron. **[sighs]**

Austin (as Emmanuel): Dinner tonight.

Jack (as Lem): Dinner tonight.

Austin (as Emmanuel): I'm cooking.

Jack (as Lem): Oh, dinner tonight!

Austin (as Emmanuel): Yes.

Jack (as Lem): Yeah, absolutely. **[Jack laughs]**

Austin: **[laughs]** Why does it sound like a lie?

Jack: **[laughing]** I think I inflected it as a question instead of as an emphatic statement of excitement that Emmanuel is cooking.

Austin: Yep. That is what happened! [laughing] Ugh, ok. Alright, what else do we got going on?

Keith: I've- I've still got stuff if no one else is going right now.

Austin: I think everybody might still have stuff.

Keith: Yeah, I think everybody still has stuff, so I don't know who the last- long-

Ali: Who hasn't gone?

Keith: Who's been waiting a long time?

Austin: Throndir did investigation stuff. Uh, I guess, **Art**, you went first?

Keith: I didn't- I didn't end up helping with that. I was- Was there anything else to uncover? I guess not, right? I guess I'm-

Austin: I mean, you're in a magic university. There's always more to uncover. But there's not more about how Arrell is doing magic here.

Ali: Yeah, I think we got the answer there.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Austin: Which means right this moment, Arrell cannot do magic here because Benjamin isn't back yet.

Ali: [laughs] Uh, that'll be fun.

Janine: I have like, stuff, but it's like, such non-stuff that I don't know where it goes or what it looks like.

Austin: Like what?

Janine: I gotta embroider a handkerchief. [**Ali** laughs]

Austin: Wait, what's that look like?

Janine: And maybe get a letter. Like, I don't know. Those are the only real things on the list. Adaire doesn't like- I don't want to- I don't want to exhaust the Rix and Rowe well.

Austin: Sure.

Janine: So that there's like- there's not a lot of things that- Adaire, still doesn't have a lot of like, connections happening.

Austin: Uh huh. Uh huh.

Janine: In general.

Austin: What's the- Tell me about the handkerchief.

Janine: Um, so she was gonna- Her whole thing was like she had to um, deliver that letter to Samol, and I think I explained at the time of just like, to her, the thing you do when you give your parents a letter is your also suppose to like, give them a gift or something.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: You're supposed to like, have something for them. And like, obviously he's not her dad. But like, she's giving this letter from someone who is his child, so like-

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: -it felt weird to her to not- But then she didn't have time, and she felt bad- so she told him like, she told him that. And he's like, 'Oh, you should just make the handkerchief anyway and give it to someone.'

Austin: Right.

Janine: I think he said to give it to a gnoll.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Uh, and like, she's- She takes that- She's taking that seriously. Like, she's doing that. That's a priority for her.

Austin: Ok. So, do you like, go to get some like, thread in the market or something to embroider with? Do you have like- What's the- what's the process? Break down the process for me. I have a thing I'm looking to see where I can inject the thing.

Janine: Ok. Um, yeah, I imagine she would need to get the thread and the cloth, and then like, a hoop or- I mean, you could do it without a hoop it would just look shitty. But she would probably want to try get something like that-

Austin: Ok. So, I think-

Janine: -to stretch the fabric over. A frame.

Austin: Yeah. I think- so like, one thing that's interesting is like, I think that like the prices on fabric are affected by the refugee situation.

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: I think they've probably blown through a lot of the cheaper fabric, and I don't know what the effect would be on the more expensive stuff because like, they would just be out of a lot of the cheap stuff, and so it's like, does that-

Janine: She could always just salvage it from somewhere.

Austin: Totally. Totally. Yeah, you could be doing that. That's fair.

Janine: Like, I could imagine her cutting a corner out of her bedsheet because like if it's the bottom corner, I'm not gonna miss it or anything.

Austin: Yeah, I want you out in the world for this thing is the thing. I need you to not be in a room-

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: -cutting a bedsheet up for another character to show up. [**Janine** laughs] Um, so maybe it's like- maybe it's a very particular thing. Like, maybe you're looking for something to like, a little extra flourish of something, you know? Cause I don't want to say that's not what she does, you know? Uh, I was- I was just trying to add some flavor to this fabric shop, you know?

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: I was just like, 'What's happening in this fabric shop? Let's- let's reflect the fact that the world is changing.' Um, while you're out shopping for something to do this embroidery, um,

someone.... Someone next to you says like the first part of a- what you immediately understand is like some sort of call and response signal. Which is like, um,

Austin (as Moonlighter's Guild thief): The moon is bright tonight.

Austin: But you don't know the other half of that signal because you're not part of the Moonlighters' Guild.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And when you don't res- Do you- do you say anything in response?

Janine: I probably say,

Janine (as Adaire): It's 3 pm.

Janine: [laughing] Or something like- What time is it?

Austin (as Moonlighter's Guild thief): It's 3- It's 3pm? ..

Austin: And like looks at you, and is like,

Austin (as Moonlighter's Guild thief): Oh, I-

Austin: And it's Blake Bromley is looking at you. The thief and Moonlighters' Guild member. Who is like,

Austin (as Blake Bromley): I thought you were joined up.

Janine (as Adaire): Why did you think that?

Austin (as Blake Bromley): Your skill set, and uh- Can we-? It's nice to see you, first of all. Uh, second of all-

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): -don't worry about the thread. I gotcha

Austin: And does like, a little wink. Um- [laughs] And-

Janine: So, it's thread and not threat, right? [laughs]

Austin: Thread. Thread. Yeah.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: Yes. Yeah. Um, and then says like,

Austin (as Blake Bromley): Can we go talk somewhere?

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah. Uh, sorry. Are you gonna steal the thread?

Austin (as Blake Bromley): [whispers] Already did. [**Keith** laughs in background]

Janine (as Adaire): I have- I have money. Like, I'm- I'm good right now.

Austin: They give you like a- they squint at you.

Janine (as Adaire): A god gave me a bunch of money. It's fine.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): Ok. Sounds like things went well for you.

Janine (as Adaire): They extremely didn't. I'm just gonna pay for this thread, and then I can go.

Austin: Ok. Take 1 coin for this thread. Um, they lead you- or they like, they wait outside for you, and then this is definitely like a walk and talk around the like, ratskeller and the gaming rec hall and the trade house. Like, it's that neighborhood probably- or I guess it could be outside the wall, near where the outhouse is. And all that. That could also be a good place for it. Um, in fact that probably makes more sense because that's where you would be getting shopping done. Um, so they are like,

Austin (as Blake Bromley): Yeah, sorry. I thought- [sighs] I must have been misinformed. I had heard you'd been working with our agents here. And so I figured you must have been in, you know, brought in. How are you doin'? It's been a long time.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah.

Austin: Uh, for those of you who don't remember, Blake Bromley was the one who helped break in to steal the gnoll constitution. The gnoll-halfing constitution. And also who ended up being one of the people- the person who Adaire got out of prison during the Rosemerrow

investigation. And who also left this place during Cold Winter and left with the rest of the Moonlighter's Guild.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Did- did you get my letter?

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Your- uh- [sighs] No, I- No. What was the letter?

Janine (as **Adaire**): Uh, [sighs] So, I sent you a letter like, a bit after I got back here. Um, I sent it through-

Janine: Oh god, I don't remember his name.

Austin: Was it Celador?

Janine: Yeah. 'Cellar-door'.

Austin: Uh huh. The one who you threw a fear dagger at?

Janine: I think I- I don't remember if I threw it or if I just like, slammed it.

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah, he didn't deliver your letter, Adaire. [laughs]

Janine: [sighs] God damnit. You can't- you just can't trust people you scare into doing things anymore. [**Austin** laughs]

Ali: I know. Isn't it getting tough these days, Adaire? [**Keith**, Ali, and **Austin** laugh]

Janine: God damn.

Ali: It's- [laughs] It's a bad market for threats.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): But I- what I did hear is that you- the kids and all that. I thought maybe you came in from a different branch and had taken over-

Janine (as **Adaire**): The kids aren't- the- the kids aren't Moonlighters, are they? Aren't they just wannabees?

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): I mean, they're associates. They're- [**Janine** sighs] You know, we said we weren't gonna-

Janine (as **Adaire**): They're kids.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): We were kids when we started. I was, anyway.

Janine (as Adaire): Didn't make it good.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): No. But it's not- I mean, it didn't make it bad.

Janine (as Adaire): It- Yeah, it did.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): I'm not askin' them to do anything dangerous.

Janine (as Adaire): Uh, hmm.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): I'm not! We didn't- we- [sighs] Adaire.

Janine (as Adaire): Just cause you ask them not to do something dangerous, doesn't mean they're not gonna try to do something dangerous to impress you. That's how it works.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): Ok. I see the years have changed you. Jeez.

Janine (as Adaire): [sighs] I mean, also I have lived through less years than you because of some weird stuff, so like, not really.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): I thought you looked good. I was gonna say, you look good, but I didn't want to- [exhales]

Janine (as Adaire): Hmm. I was in a sword. Um-

Austin (as Blake Bromley): You were in a sword? [laughs] Excuse me?

Janine (as Adaire): I was in- Yeah. I started like, a store. I kind of miss it. Um-

Austin (as Blake Bromley): You started a- You started a store?

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): Adaire Ducarte started a store?

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah, it's really easy to get people's money when you just ask for it, turns out.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): No, that part I know. Believe me. I've run those- those scams.

Janine (as Adaire): Well, no. But I mean, like- it's- Ok. Um...

Austin (as Blake Bromley): Stores are scams, too, Adaire. We both know that.

Janine (as Adaire): Yes. No, yeah. They are. I know. Mine especially was.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): That's why I don't feel bad when I steal from them.

Janine (as Adaire): This is different. This is- These are like, little- These people don't have stuff. Like, they- [sighs]

Austin (as Blake Bromley): No one has stuff right now. That's the thing.

Janine (as Adaire): Are you- Who are you tied up with?

Austin (as Blake Bromley): The Moonlighters' are tied up with everybody. Everybody needs to get things done that they don't want to get done themselves. There's no one we don't work for.

Janine (as Adaire): But some of the stuff people are trying to get done these days is not in your best interest. It's not in anyone's best interest.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): Don't tell me what's in my best interest. That's the whole thing. That's why we're independent. We decide if a given task is in our best interest, and we pursue it if we think it is. If the deal is right.

Janine (as Adaire): Obviously, 'in your best interest' mostly just means scamming money. That's, I mean, that's what it usually means.

Austin (as Blake Bromley): I- well- and I- you know- There are people I don't personally work with anymore. I learned my lesson in Rosemerrow. I personally don't mess around with the Dark Son, and I thought you didn't either-

Janine (as Adaire): Uh-

Austin (as Blake Bromley): -which is why I was surprised to hear you messed around with Rix and Rowe who I knew were doing some work for the Dark Son.

Janine (as **Adaire**): That's cause they're kids. They don't know.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Well-

Janine (as **Adaire**): They're doing that shit because they think it'll get you in- get them in with you.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): They're not gonna get them in with- That's not gonna get them in with me personally, but are there other people in the Moonlighters' Guild who take those contracts? Yes.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Whatever.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): I can't make the other people in the guild decide not to take some else's money. We do odd jobs. Odd people need odd jobs done. Most of us don't have stores.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I mean, I don't have a store now either.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Fair.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I'm just- [exhales] I'm worried that the shit I'm hearing is...you know you're- [exhales] I don't even know how to phrase it. You know you're selling your winter coat in summer. You know what I mean? Like-

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): It's spring, Adaire. And you know what? If it ain't winter anymore, sometimes you gotta sell your winter coat.

Janine (as **Adaire**): [sighs] You're taking it too literally. I mean-

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): No, I mean it in a metaphorical sense. Like, you're right. There are things that benefitted us before and could benefit us again sometime in the future, but some of us don't have the choice to hang on to those things just because they might be valuable again someday. Some of us have to make risky-

Janine (as **Adaire**): Again, you're being- you're being so literal.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Some of us- sometimes we have to make risky choices. We have to take the buck today instead of the ten in a month.

Janine (as **Adaire**): But what I'm saying is if you take the buck today, there isn't a month. There isn't anything in a month.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Ok, well that's not the metaphor is about winter and summer. That's a different-

Janine (as **Adaire**): Cause I'm saying if you sell your winter in summer than you freeze to death in the winter.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): But I'm saying, I'll get another coat before winter.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I'm saying there might not be winter. [Ali starts laughing]

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): There might not be a fall, if I don't- if I don't sell this coat today. I'm not gonna make it to fall if I don't sell the coat today.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Ya might.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): I know how. I could sell the coat. And in the fall, I can get a winter coat. It's like that. I'm sure it's like for those kids. I'm glad you're looking out for them. It sounds good. I'm glad- [whispers] if- if they're not caught up in Dark Son shit, then that's better for them. So-

Janine (as **Adaire**): I don't think- that's the- I can't keep them out of it because they think that's the way... [exhales] I don't know. I don't know what they think.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): I'm not- I can't- [laughs] We are a guild of independent operators. I can't go in and say 'No more workin' with the Dark Son.' Most of what they want isn't even- it's- it's guarding shipments. It's- we're not assassins. It's a stealing book here or there. And frankly, better that we steal it than they come in and try to take it by force. Less people get hurt.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I just [exhales] I don't know. It's-

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): You ok? You doin' alright? You're feelin' ok?

Janine (as **Adaire**): I've had a bad one.

[0:45:00]

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): The sword thing, I guessin'. The sword thing?

Janine (as **Adaire**): No, that was- that was actually not bad. I thought it would be, but- I mean, parts of it were bad. Hindsight- it makes it complicated. Um-

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Are you still runnin' around with those cops?

Janine (as **Adaire**): They're not really- if they were cops, they'd be terrible cops.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Are you still runnin' around with those terrible cops?

Janine (as **Adaire**): [laughs] I- I mean, mostly, I guess. Like, on paper, at this point. [sighs] That's been weird, too. I don't know. I... I feel bad about that guy dying. And-

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Which guy?

Janine (as **Adaire**): The guy. I guess you didn't- It doesn't matter. The guy died. Um-

Austin: They're giving you a look like, 'You're sad about a guy dying? Ok. That's-'

Janine (as **Adaire**): He was cool. I don't know.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Was he family? Like what-

Janine (as **Adaire**): No. He wasn't my family.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Well-

Janine (as **Adaire**): He was like, family of some other guy that I knew.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): I gotcha.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Who was also pretty cool. Um...

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Well, um-

Janine (as **Adaire**): You know. That's just how it is sometimes.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Yeah, it sucks to bury people. I'm not a monster. I get it. Well, I hope it um- passes. What was this guy-

Janine (as **Adaire**): That's like, not the best word choice right now. [laughs]

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Well, you didn't- I'm not- [**Keith** laughs in background] I'm not a professional talker. You know. What- what was this guy like? What made him cool?

Janine (as **Adaire**): You know when- you know when you like, eye someone up on the street, and they look like they're gonna really give you a hard time?

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Yeah.

Janine (as **Adaire**): And so you kind of play it like they are. And they're actually just kind of cool. Like they just kind of- they know what you're about. They- they know what you're there for, but they-

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): They see through you, yeah.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Like, they kind of- they don't really mind it. They're not gonna like- they're not there to make your day harder.

Austin: They nod.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Yeah. One of those. Someone else who's workin'. Maybe not the same game.

Janine (as **Adaire**): I don't know-

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Maybe not the same hustle, but they know what it is.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Maybe.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): That's what it sounds like to me. I don't know the guy, but- Well, I'm sorry you- you lost this guy. Uh... I wish I had somethin' to offer. Um, if you ever need any work, you know, like get your head clear, focus on something, let me know.

Janine (as **Adaire**): You know what you can offer me, Blake? I know you can't do shit about what other people do, but just- I just want to hear you tell me that you'll try to play

it smart. That you'll try to... you know. If you get into shit and you need help and you like, need to sell that coat, you know what I mean? I would rather you reached out to me.

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Alright. Yeah. I can agree to that.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Ok. You stole the curtains out of this place, huh?

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Oh yeah. Every one of them.

Janine (as **Adaire**): Why?

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): Curtains are useful in our line of business. You put up some curtains. You close them. It's darker inside. Let's you sneak around better.

Janine (as **Adaire**): So, you just- you're bringing your own curtains to people's houses, and hanging them up, and then robbing them?

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): A lot of people don't have curtains anymore. It's like a gift. I leave them behind and then they're like, 'Oh, what are these new curtains?' And they don't even notice the jewelry box is empty.

Janine (as **Adaire**): That's a weird racket. [**Keith** laughs]

Austin (as **Blake Bromley**): You know? I think you might be right.

Austin: Alright. Who else has stuff goin'?

Keith: Have we done anything with the construction yet?

Austin: No. Not yet. Um, I- it's happening. Like, I don't want to- we should draw it on this map-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And we should figure out what you're doing with the outhouse also. Are you just like, sliding it over, closer to the [laughs] to the cemetery and rebuilding it there? Are you-

Keith: No, no. I think that I'm- I think that I'm gonna try to readjust the- the river.

Austin: Oh....

Ali: Hm?

Keith: Yeah, I'm gonna push the river back. It's not that flooded. I could push that back. Make a dam.

[crosstalking begins]

Jack: I tried this-

Janine: Uh, you have to roll to make dams in this game.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: So-

Austin: You have to roll to make dams. How- I don't know that Fero knows how to make a dam or redirect a river.

Keith: Or like, I can turn into an- I can turn into an ox and push the mud.

Austin: You- There is so much engineering work that goes into figuring out how to reroute rivers.

Keith: I grew up on a farm, that probably something I could do.

Austin: That's no-

Jack: Is it Blades in the Dark where you can like, start a long term project?

[crosstalking]

Austin: It is. I think redirecting a river would absolutely be a long term project-

Keith: Ok, well, as long as we're doing-

Austin: -and it would have to begin with, 'How the fuck do you move a river?'

Jack: Uh, Chicago, right? No, they reversed it.

Keith: You take- Ok. I- I think of it this way. Here's what it is. This is a temporary river, This isn't like an established river, right?

Austin: What?

Keith: I mean, like the-

Jack: There's 2 kinds of rivers.

Keith: Temporary and established, yeah.

Austin: The river was alw-- The river has been there for years because Lem opened a faucet.

Keith: Ok, but like-

Austin: And then-

Keith: Rivers are usually somewhere for thousands of years. So, the- so first of all, part of the river's only been- the main part of the river's only been there for a decade.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: The other part of the river has only been there for a week.

Austin: I only made this river a little bit bigger is the thing to understand. So-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Which is the say-

Keith: But here's what I want to do.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Here's my- here's my basic gist. And if we're turning this into a long term project, maybe I can help out the above-ground farm, too. So- Take the- take- turn into an ox. Basically have ilke, a thing where I can push the mud off the other- off the other side. Extend the bank on the other side, and then retract the bank on the- the tower side. The university side. And so then, all the water just shifts over.

Austin: Wait.

Keith: It's not gonna be easy.

Austin: Doesn't that shift it close-

Art: How does one ox do that?

Austin: One, that.

Keith: No, no.

Austin: Two, doesn't that move it closer to you?

Keith: No, no. So, there's- take this and put it here.

Austin: Ok. Yeah, yeah. Ok. I-

Keith: And then take this and put it here. So, the river has the same amount of volume, but the entire shoreline is shifted.

Austin: Why is the mud not just washing away in the big river?

Keith: I don't know. Maybe it's like- it's a nice, solid clay?

Austin: These are the reasons why I don't think Fero knows how to build a dam or move a river.
[laughs]

Keith: Well, uh, let me get in there and figure shit out.

Janine: Could you put the outhouse on stilts?

Keith: I have- I haven't gotten in there. I need to figure it out. Listen. I'm just spitballing. This is the idea phase. No bad ideas. First thought, best thought. [**Ali** and **Janine** laugh]

Jack: No bad ideas. I'm gonna turn into an ox!

Keith: I'm in character. [**Austin** laughs] This is in-char- I'm in character.

Austin: I understand. I under- Keith, you don't have to yell. It's- we got it.

Janine: What about houseboats?

Keith: It's not Keith! It's Fero! I'm in character! [**Austin** laughs]

Janine: You could do like an Amsterdam thing.

Austin: You could. That'd be nice.

Keith: That's what I'm saying! Amsterdam!

Janine: No, houseboats could be an-

Keith: Hamster- Hamsterdam, is what I'm sayin'.

Janine: What?

Austin: That's the drug one.

Ali: Ooo, houseboat.

Austin: That's the drug one from The Wire. [laughs] Are you starting a place where you're allowed to do drugs without cops getting mad? Cause that's also-

Keith: Uh, that's this place already.

Austin: That is this place already, yeah. It's true. Um, I think this is some sort of long- long term clock.

Keith: I mean, there's another thing I could do- You know, you could- yeah, you could lay down logs along the shoreline and then move the logs over and over and over and over and over as the water recedes. Or you could push the bank as, you know- as beast of burden.

Austin: I think- This is a big- I- I mentioned that the boat was surging down river before. This is a big river, as this point. This is not a-

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Like, you should- I- the river that you're pointing at, I want to be clear, on- just on the map we're talking about, is- there- the part that has flooded the outhouse is bigger than like-

Keith: Half the outhouse.

Austin: Half the outhouse is bigger than big parts of the university. Like, the first wing could fit in the river. All of the cemetery could fit in the river.

Keith: All the cemetery could fit in the river, but only half the cemetery could fit in the half of the outhouse that is-

Austin: That's cause you drew the outhouse extremely big. Which is why it flooded.

Keith: Yeah, it's big. There's a lot of- you know.

Austin: Yeah, I get it. I'm fine with it being big. I'm fine with it being like, this very big, cool place. I'm just saying, stopping a river of this size will require multiple, multiple, multiple rolls over the course of like, the rest of this game. It is hard to move a river.

Keith: Yeah. Well, let me see if that's- Let me see how worth it that is. Let me think. Let me do the math.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: If I- if we're talking about also helping out the farm-

Austin: Yes.

Keith: -then I'll agree that we should still do it.

Austin: I think it would help the farm a lot. But I mean, what I will say also is- that might not be- that would help the farm, except there's a giant tree on the farm also.

Keith: Oh, yeah. Good point. I forgot about the giant-

Austin: Which I need to make- Yeah, it's-

Keith: I can see the giant tree, but I forgot about that that was also gonna be a problem.

Austin: And this- this tree is not to scale. This tree should be way bigger than this.

Keith: Ok. I'm- Then I'm gonna go- then I'm gonna go with my original idea which was to- to spend time to try and populate this river now with um-

Austin: With fish.

Keith: With- with yeah, with fish that can survive in the brackish water. Maybe something that can survive in the brackish water now and still when it stabilizes.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: Um, and then- then also move the outhouse.

Austin: That makes sense to me.

Keith: Or put it on stilts. Maybe we could put it on stilts.

Austin: That I think is what **Janine** was saying.

Ali: Oh yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Or were you saying something else?

Janine: Yeah. I was saying like, stilts or like, little houseboats or something like floaty.

Art: Stilts would also be hard to build in a raging river.

Austin: It would be. It would be.

Keith: I mean, hold on now. Now, this is- this is interesting because now this is starting to seem a lot like my failed creature that I tried to make with Samol when Samol showed up on the nboat.

Austin: Which is fish.

Keith: Which is a fish boat- a fish platform.

Austin: Wh- I don't- I don't-

Janine: What?

Ali: A fish platform?

Austin: I don't remember the platform part of this.

Keith: Oh, you don't remember the livable- the livable- the giant, livable creature?

Ali: It was like a school.

Jack: No, it like-

Austin: Of fish. But it was- I thought it was just like, they were all one fish.

Keith: It was a- it was a panther of fish.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. yeah. Tha- that part, yes.

Jack: And then it turned out to just be many fish.

Austin: Many fish is what you made.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. Right.

Austin: Which is fine.

Keith: And too many-

Austin: Is your- is your premise here like, you want to- What did you roll on that one? You failed that roll, right?

Keith: I- I did fail that.

Austin: Ok, well, let's make- Do you want to try to make that roll again?

Keith: Um, no. I do want to go down that path.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: I want to- What I want to concentrate on now is the outhouse.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: And then concentrate on what can I fill this river with that will help.

Austin: Separately. Ok.

Keith: Will help forget- yeah.

Austin: I'm not gonna make you roll on moving or fixing the outhouse here.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Like, I think that's a thing that's like, you want to fix the outhouse, as long as it's not like- as long as your premise here is like, 'Ok, I'm building this thing, either I'm moving it or I'm setting it up so that- I'm getting help to set it up so that like, it's-' Cause I think the community of people who need places to stay would help you like, try to make the outhouse a things that works here.

Keith: I think so, too.

Austin: You know?

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Now more than ever. Though actually, there's also this other thing which is weird. Which is like, who gets to stay in the outhouse now that there's way more people, and it's not just for people who are passing through?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Um, cause there are people who are like, 'Cool, I'm gonna live here now. Fuck off people who live in tents outside.'

Keith: You know, I think that part of the- I think it's not moving. It's expanding. I think I have to build- put a big addition onto it.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: Instead of just moving it.

Austin: Um, cool. What's- so, is it- is it now just like, one more place people can come and live, basically?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Ok.

Keith: Same rules as before.

Austin: Bring food, leave food?

Keith: It's temporary housing. Yeah. Eat the food that's there and then pay it back when you can.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Like, in whatever. Like if you- you know- if you have some- if you end up going hunting, you can add that to it. If you end up having a garden that produces something, you can add that.

Austin: Right.

Keith: Just whatever. Like, you take an egg, you don't have to replace an egg.

Austin: That would be very specific.

Keith: Yeah, that's- uh, yeah. That'd be bizarre. That's be bad.

Austin: Alright yeah. I think- feel free to redraw this outhouse, either somewhere else or change it in some way to indicate that there's been an addition or that's it been adjusted cause of the river.

Keith: Ok.

Austin: Um, what else is going on? I guess they're- they are building and Hella, you've been helping.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: Are building this printing shop- this print shop.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Uh, what else?

Keith: I also agreed to help there, too.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. I think that's all just like, montage basically.

Ali: Um, I want to do the Jer- Uh, Jerod stuff?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: You know, I- It's tough to know where to start, but I think it's like, Hella like, going to Jerod's room to start and like, looking through her actually like, stuff, right?

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Um, I think this is Spout Lore with a +1 forward cause you have all of her stuff with you. So, it's a roll + INT. Um, so you're just like, going through journals and going through- You can probably- you're not the first person to go through this place, for sure. But like, it has been basically kept as it was after she died, after she sacrificed herself to save people.

Ali: Yeah. There are any like, specific names that I would know of people she just like spent a lot of time with within the university?

Austin: Um, Like I think it's just other people who we would know the names of, right? So, it's like Sunder Havelton-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And Uklan Tell. And Morbash. And like, you know? Like, um, or various Ordennans that are- were in her employ probably. And I mean, like part of the question is like, did she keep correspondence with any of the stars, right? So like, that's stuff you'll know-

Ali: Right.

Austin: I will let you know if you find that stuff, you know?

Ali: Well, so I rolled and I got a 5, but that's without the +1, so that's a 6.

Austin: That's a 6. Is anyone there helping Hella pick over this person's stuff?

Keith: I-

Austin: You are busy building stuff right now, for sure.

Keith: Oh ok.

Janine: I have like, some experience picking over people's stuff.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: But I don't-

Ali: Oh, that is something I would ask Adaire for-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -help with.

Austin: So then, go- go ahead and give me an aid/interfere if you have a bond, add that plus. What is- And also, tell me what your bond would be? Or what it is.

Janine: I do have a bond. 'Hella's loyalty is a tremendous and unreliable asset. Cultivate it actively.'

Austin: Yeah. That's in line with this.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: So, 2d6 +1.

[1:00:00]

Ali: Oh my god. I'm so mad.

Austin: Oh my god.

Janine: That's a 4.

Ali: Oh my god.

Austin: That's a hard fail. Ugh.

Janine: My head's not in the game. I'm sorry.

Austin: Yeah, like-

Ali: Damn. Yeah.

Austin: [makes do-do-do noise] What were you looking for specifically?

Ali: Oh, I'm so mad. Ok. [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh. There are things Hella is good at. This is not one of them.

Ali: Yeah, I know. I know.

Austin: You have people in the party who are really good at researching stuff.

Ali: Sure. Um, what was I looking for? I- I think it's like looking for a- It's the basic stuff of like, looking through her appointment books-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -trying to look through letters. Like, I imagine that like, Hella has like, a fucking like, planner or whatever that she keeps for herself. [laughs] And just like, re-writing down like, copying down things again to be like, 'Oh, I should look into this later.' Or like, 'Oh this is what she was up to. This is who she talks to.'

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: 'This is where she travels.' Whatever else.

Austin: Um, so I think you actually discover something. Uh, it's just not- The thing is you- what you failed at here- the lower you- the- you did not find what you were looking for which is um, a.... Why? Jack, why are you saying that Lem is at dinner?

Jack: That's why he's not here to help. He's at dinner with Emmanuel.

Austin: Ok, Gotcha. Right.

Ali: Oh, see? Emmanuel's haters club. [laughs]

Austin: Oh my god. Um, so- [laughs] You don't find any information about the stars or about what their relationship was. In fact, I think you see that like, 'Oh, Jerod actually wrote in code about that stuff.' She wrote like, explicitly like, hiding that information in her journals because that stuff seems super important, and also she doesn't necessarily trust that people would take that information that she had a positive relationship with them positively, you know? Um, and so, all of-

Ali: Right.

Austin: And also, it's just like, if you know secrets about the weird star citadel out east, you keep that secret. What you do find though, and this is- this is why it's a double failure is, [Ali snickers] um, there has been already operating inside of the university a Cult of the Dark Son like- like a sect. Like a cell- [Ali gasps] -among regular people. They worship in secret. They have built a secret shrine somewhere. Um, and Jerod was trying to ferret it out during her like, time here. She didn't tell anybody because she didn't know who to trust.

And now you don't know who to trust because there are people here who are part of the Cult of the Dark Son. Um, and she died at this point, like so long ago that like, who knows what the condition- what the situation is with it. Um, obviously you know that they are doing some work with the Moonlighters' guild, but it seems as if maybe they have closer representatives here than even that. And so, what you basically read in her journals is not only were they here, but like, they were gathering popularity and there are many people for whom the- the god- the dark god, Samoths, is who they worship and pray to. And they owe loyalty to the dark son.

Um, and the thing that she- like, one of the last entries she wrote before she died was that there- that the long term plan, and now this is a plan you know about was that eventually, the cult would come to call here and would turn this into its homebase. And those who were here who were already loyal would turn and would reveal their loyalties and would effectively you know, enthrone them as their new leaders, overturning whoever happened to be in control at the time. [Ali gasps again]

So, and that- and that specifically, their specific like, way to do this was by providing for people who were hurt and people who were um, hungry and in need. And to basically run a sort of underground um, you know, aid system. And basically make it very clear that this comes from the Dark Son. That you know, 'Oh, the locals aren't taking care of you. The Dark Son is taking care of you, and if you have faith, the Dark Son will provide.'

And so, in a moment where there are lots of refugees here who are in desperate need, you also have this group who you know at this point is either wildly misguided or else utterly fraudulent because we know about what happened to Maelgwyn. -To Maeloths. They are- they are really gonna start pushing this really hard right now and taking advantage of people. And you know, helping people also. You know, like, it's a-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: It's a real double-edged sword. This is not a- The people who are working with them, and I think Jerod makes this clear in her journals like, she understands why people- when it is

this cold out, why you take food from whoever has food, you know? Um, and if- if there is a failing of the structure to like, not provide food for everybody, then like, it's hard to- it's hard to argue with individuals about why they would do that and who to trust there. But, this is a thing you've now uncovered, which is in some ways, a positive. On the other hand, it is- it is bad news because this is actually at your doorstep.

Ali: Yeah. I think Hella is just staring at Adaire, like from across the room, like wide-eyed when she comes across this. Um, and fills her in, obviously.

Ali (as Hella): We should go to Ephrim about this and Rosana. Like, right now, right? Like, right now.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah. I was gonna like, make a joke about like, 'Oh no, you found-' but that's not really funny. We should just go.

Ali (as Hella): Wait, like found what?

Janine (as Adaire): I was gonna- It's- [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Great. I'm glad I said, 'you can't trust anyone', and Adaire's first maneuver was like, 'Haha, well...'

Janine: [laughing] That's the thing. Uh,

Janine (as Adaire): Nevermind. Let's just- [**Austin** laughs] We'll just-

Austin: Wait, Adaire, are you compromised?

Janine (as Adaire): Sorry, I thought- I thought it would be a joke, and then I thought a little bit more about it, and it didn't feel like a good one.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah, you tell weird jokes. It's fine. [**Keith** laughs]

Austin: God.

Ali: Yeah, and I would like to do that. And like, in terms of the star stuff being encrypted, like-
[crosstalking]

Austin: Yeah, you can work on this in the future. Yeah.

Ali: I imagine that will be a long-term thing. Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Totally.

Ali: Yeah. But yeah, like, not wasting any time like, 'Hey. Rosana and Ephrim, can I talk to you right now alone? Right now.'

Janine (as Adaire): Maybe just Ephrim.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah.

Janine (as Adaire): Rosana helps a lot of people.

Ali (as Hella): I know, but like-

Janine (as Adaire): That's what they do is help people.

Ali (as Hella): I don't know she seems- No, she seems-

Keith: Anyone helpful is suspicious.

Ali (as Hella): She seems connected.

Janine (as Adaire): Exactly.

Ali (as Hella): You think she's connected to this?!

Janine (as Adaire): I don't- I'm just saying we could start with Ephrim, and then put in that in Ephrim's hands and uh- whoever he tells, it's on him.

Ali (as Hella): No, I trust Rosana. And she should know about this. What if this is people work for her? This is all- you know, church stuff.

Janine (as Adaire): This sure is. Ok. Let's go. **[Austin and Ali laugh]**

Austin: Oh boy.

Ali: Um, yeah. These 2 dipshits show up. **[Several people laugh]**

Austin: God. It's so fucking funny.

Ali: With like a- like- Just imagine Hella Varal coming up to Ephrim with a book in her hand and being like,

Ali (as Hella): It's very important.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Oh, o- ok. Um, don't have time to read this right now. Could you tell me what the-

Ali (as Hella): Well, no, no, no, no. But like, can we be alone? Can we talk alone somewhere.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yeah, yeah, yeah. Of course. Of course. **[Ali laughs]**

Janine (as Adaire): We can point you to a page, it's fine. We just need to talk about it.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Alright, yeah. Come on.

Sylvia: Um, and I guess he takes them to like, the audience chamber room?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: I can't remember what we call it.

Austin: That's fine.

Keith: I have-

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I have a real quick question about this scenario here. Are they operating under any false information? Did I just miss it? Or is it-

Austin: No, absolutely not.

Keith: Is- the failed roll was just that this is a bad situation that we know about.

Austin: This is a bad situation, and they know it.

Keith: Ok. Got it. Cool.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ali (as Hella): So, hi, Lord. [**Austin, Keith,** and **Jack** laugh]

[crosstalking begins as everyone continues to laugh]

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Uh... Hey, Hella.

Jack: Edmund Hitchcock.

Keith: God, Hella is such a cop. [**Ali** laughs]

Austin: God. On a long enough timeline- That's like the lesson of this fucking game. [**Ali** laughs]

Ali (as Hella): Um, I- I told you I was looking through Jerod's stuff, and I was. And I uncovered something that like, seems like kind of a really big deal. Do you... do you remember much stuff about the Dark Son? [**Austin** and **Sylvia** laugh] The cult. The cult. Remember the cult? That we-

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, Ephrim- Ephrim's face, like the second you say that is like, uh like all the color is flushed out of- He's like,

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yes, I'm very aware of the Dark Son.

Ali (as Hella): Um, they have like, a hold here. There's like a bunch of them here in like, secret. And they have like a whole plan to take over the whole place, and like, it seems like a big deal.

Janine (as Adaire): Also, this information seems kind of old, so it could either be way better or way worse.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Ok. You guys don't have any idea how old this information is, right?

Austin: I could tell you.

Ali (as Hella): I mean-

Austin: When did Jerod Shiraz die? Year...

Janine: Yeah.

Sylvia: Fuck. I'm trying to remember what year. [laughs] Um-

Ali: I mean, if I was looking through a planner, I have the dates of each development.

Austin: No, no, no. But I'm just saying it's always up to date-

Ali: Ok, how old it is. Yeah.

Austin: -as when she died, and I'm trying to figure out when she died.

Sylvia: Yeah. I- It's-

Ali: Ok. Oh, which year. That's right.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: At least a few years-

Ali: Um, it was later.

Austin: It was late- it was late.

Sylvia: Ok.

Ali: I think it was like year 5 or 6?

Austin: I don't have it written down in our scratch sheet. I think it was late. I think it was pretty late-

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: -but I think it was still a couple of years ago cause your storeroom wasn't recovered until the beginning of year 8, so- So, let's just say a year ago, maybe, is like- Maybe it was like one of those things where like, she had up to date information through a little bit past when she died, but it's- it's at least a year out of date is what I will say.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Um, ok. Thank- Thank you for telling me this. This is very serious. Ok. Um, there are a few things we need to do with this. First of all, we are playing this close to the chest because we one, don't know who could be involved, and two, I- the last thing we need is a panic here.

Sylvia: Um, Austin, refresh my memory. Do we know what the Dark Son's relationship with Samot is? Cause I'm trying to figure out if he is at risk here. And I-

Austin: Not- Not really, right? I think this has come up once or twice.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And the answer is like, it- [sighs] It is not- it has never been made clear if there even is a universal answer there, right? To the degree that the Creed of Samoths- or sorry, the Creed of the Dark Son is just the- the kind of parent church of the Church of Samoths, as Hadrian and Rosana knew it. Then we know that it's taught that the other Sam-gods are aspects of Samoths, right? To some degree.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: That like, 'Oh yeah. Of course there is- there is Samontine and Samol and these are all just different aspects of the one true Samoths', right? Um, and so, that might be what it is. But we've also seen- we have also seen Alyosha debating other- other church leaders about how Samoths hooked up with people. [Ali and Sylvia laugh softly] So, we know that romance to some degree is at least taught at the high level. So like, it's not clear. Or it's especially not clear the difference between what, for instance, a prelate of the faith knows versus what a- what a you know, just a lay person in the church would know.

Ali: Can I ask a follow up question? Which is like, I can't think of the words, but if we know them as people who are like, trying to speed up the end of the world-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -would they think of Samot as like, a road block within that?

Austin: That's-

Ali: Or is that like, something you would have to research within-

Austin: You'd have to talk- you'd have to re- you'd have to talk to them, right?

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Like, I mean, especially given now that their god is dead, right? Like, do they think- there's a lot of things they could think. You'd have to talk to them. And I bet-

Ali: Ok.

Austin: And as always, I bet the answer is actually, there's probably disagreement internally.

Ali: Ok.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): I think- Ok. Here's who I- we should let know about this. Like, first of all, everyone in like, our immediate group. Like, Throndir, Hadrian, Fero-

Sylvia: I'm gonna like- We got a lot of names here, so I'm just gonna like, do it in an etcetera there. Um,

Sylvia (as Ephrim): But we also need to let- I need to tell Corsica about this. Um, and I need to- we need to let Samot know that he might be in danger. We don't know if these guys have the same abil- like, we don't know if they have the same abilities that the Ordennans do and the resources- the same weaponry that they do, but there's always a chance. And he just had- he just survived an assassination attempt.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): And I think we should at least tell him that there is a danger. [pauses] That said, yeah, we need to handle this with just like, the most inner, inner circle here because the- [sighs twice] they could be anybody. And I- the thing we need to be incredibly careful of is, I don't want us jumping to conclusions with anybody- Honestly any citizen here, but especially anybody who has ties to the church cause we can't just assume that they're part of this because of that. Have you considered talking to- I mean, you probably considered talking to Rosana, right? That's-

Ali (as Hella): Oh.

Sylvia: And this is when Sylvia, the player, does a big wink at the camera. [Ali laughs]

[1:15:00]

Ali (as Hella): Yeah, I um, I thought she would have been a part of this conversation, but yeah, I- I just couldn't find her. Um- but she should know.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yeah, I think I remember hearing something about a camping trip. I'm not sure if they're back yet, but we'll uh- we'll clue her in for sure.

Ali (as Hella): Oh right.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): I mean if Hadrian's gonna know, she'll probably end up knowing, too.

Ali (as Hella): I mean, we should tell her.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yes, we should. That's what I'm saying. We should tell her. But like, what I meant was, in the long run, she'll find out either way, so we should just tell her now because also I trust her.

Ali (as Hella): No, no, no. Yeah.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yeah.

Ali (as Hella): It- is there something we can do bigger? I mean, if- [sighs] If the plan here is the take advantage of people, to find people who are vulnerable and convince them- [sighs]

Sylvia (as Ephrim): There's a lot of vulnerable people here right now is the thing. And as much as I wish I could say we need to make sure that they're- we're making sure everyone isn't- is taken care of and not at risk of this, it's- with what we have available, it's gonna be hard to make sure 100% that there's not people that could be influenced here. Um, I think what we should focus on is [exhales] They're trying to take over the settlement, right? So, what we need to do is basically make people think that- there's no reason to change the way we have things here. We have all- like, [sighs]

Sylvia: I'm wondering if I- now I'm like- This is out of character- I'm wondering now if I should warn the gnolls about it, too.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Well, it's tough if- cause if it's like, 1 or 2 or 3 people saying like-

Sylvia: Yeah.

Ali: -'Hey, I'll give you some money, and you know, just read this book about this guy.' You know? [laughs]

Janine: Yeah, I-

Sylvia: Yeah.

Ali: You know how cults do.

Janine: There's some conversations I could have here certainly about uh- Adaire, I think, knows where to start looking into this, for sure.

Ali: Yeah, I think Hella would actually address that, too.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Being like,

Ali (as Hella): Adaire, isn't the thing that you do talk to people and like- **[Austin and Keith laugh]** know about them?

Keith: What's that talking thing you do?

Janine (as Adaire): That's one of the things I do.

Ali (as Hella): Well, yeah, you do a lot of things, and that's one of the things you do.

Janine (as Adaire): Just like you swing that swordy thing around, and people sometimes- **[Austin laughs softly]**

Ali (as Hella): Yeah, I do do that.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Would you be comfortable, Adaire, asking around a bit.

Janine (as Adaire): I already have some- I-

Ali (as Hella): Oh.

Janine (as Adaire): I have some folks that I can ask that I think might be able to provide some leads. It's kind of come up before.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): That would be-

Ali (as Hella): Oh.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): That would be monumentally helpful, honestly. If you could do that, I- I would really appreciate it.

Janine (as Adaire): Yeah, sure. I mean, no problem.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Thank you. Um, alright, we should probably go tell the others about this.

Ali (as Hella): Yeah.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Is there anything else you guys need to tell me before we- **[Austin laughs quietly]** go?

Ali (as Hella): No.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Ok.

Ali (as Hella): Um, thank you for your time. I know that it's precious.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yeah.

Janine (as Adaire): You should bow, Hella. It's polite.

Ali (as Hella): [whispered] Should I?

Austin: Wow.

Ali: Should I? **[Janine and Ali laugh]**

Janine: She's been away for a little bit, I just thought-

Ali: I think Hella actually bows. Don't punk me. **[Austin and Janine laugh]** I trust you.

Sylvia: Uh, y'all know that like, one-

Keith: You said don't punk me, but it worked. [**Austin, Janine, and Ali** laugh]

Ali: That's what I'm saying. Be nice to Hella Varal.

Sylvia: You guys know that one like, Veep gif of Julia Louis-Dreyfus going like, 'What the fuck?'
[Everyone laughs in background] Well, that's Ephrim right now. Um, cause he's very confused.
But, you know, appreciates it.

Austin: Uh huh. We should- we should wrap- we should start wrapping up here. I think like, the Cult of the Dark Son is a bigger problem than we can wrap up in a down time.

Jack: [nearly inaudible] I like that we-

Austin: But, but I saw a couple of things that need to- conversations that do need to happen here before we wrap. Um, I think one of those, um, Ephrim, have you- have you done anything about this tree yet?

Sylvia: Right. That seems like, kind of a big deal.

Austin: A little bit. A little bit. And like, I don't know that you're gonna solve it before you go on this new trip that you're planning, but like, wha- What are you- what- have you looked at this tree again?

Sylvia: Yeah. So, I should definitely get a closer look at it. I think Ephrim's probably been spending a lot of time around there, honestly, when he can.

Austin: Ok. Are we just getting shots of him just like, pacing around the circumference of this tree?

Sylvia: It's like pacing, and then a jump-cut to him just like, staring at it with his hand on his chin, and then like further away, doing that like, thing where you like frame it between your index fingers and you thumb.

Austin: Ok.

Sylvia: It's a lot of investigation of this thing while he's trying to figure out what to do with it.

Austin: God, that's so funny. What is the- So, wait, actually- Oh, go, go- you say what you were gonna say.

Sylvia: It's just really stressing him out. Like, he can't figure out how to get it to stop, and he's trying to figure out how much it's growing. Like-

Austin: Ok, well, the thing is like, if you're- if you're spending that much time actually investigating this thing- What is the move that you have with fire?

Sylvia: Uh, I believe it used to be called Lore of the Flame, and we've changed that to Lore of the Forge.

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: I should- Should I read the description of that one?

Austin: Yeah, read the description of that.

Sylvia: So, when you stare into the source of a fire, looking for answers, roll plus wisdom. On a hit, the GM will tell you something new and interesting about the current situation.

Austin: Ok. So, I'm gonna- I'm gonna actually edit this, because I think you can still use it with fire. The Heat and the Dark is after all still kind of- down where the forge is, but it's also when you stare into- the source of fire or um, you know, a- an ex-- I'm not gonna say an exceptional- I'm just gonna say, a plant from Alyosha's Spring or flora from Alyosha's Spring, looking for answers.

Sylvia: Ok.

Austin: You certainly are doing that, so, when you do it, do it. Roll wisdom. What's your wisdom? You have a good wisdom, right?

Sylvia: Uh, my wisdom's a 14, so I got a +1 modifier. So, it's alright.

Austin: So, plus 1, alright. So 2d6 +1. Oh, that's a 6.

Sylvia: That's a 6.

Austin: And I don't think this is a thing where anyone can really help you. You don't have a +1 forward from anything, do you?

Sylvia: Uh un.

Austin: Alright. So, I mean, this is nice because you don't get to ask- well, you can ask me a question, right? Um, I guess. Yeah, I guess it's actually I give you something new and interesting about the current situation is what would have happened if you'd succeeded. You have failed, so 2 things happen. One is I think I'm gonna finally trigger that thing- the devouring flame that is supposed to only hit you when you- when you summon fire, but this is the first time this is happening. You- you lose one HP permanently, so drop down from 21 to 20 HP.

Sylvia: Alright.

Austin: As this effect draws you a little too close to the Heat and the Dark. And I think, you know, physically, emotionally, you feel yourself being pulled back to the forge. The same way you did when you reunited the crescent blade. And you are there, and you can hear the woosh, clink of the forge being worked on. And you see the outline of a figure there, surrounded by vines and you know, kind of low-crawling vines below the forge, growing out of this pool of blood and also kind of flowering upwards and in kind of hanging vine shapes. Along with just like, ground cover and all sorts of small flowers that turn and almost- you cannot tell if they're bowing to you or if they're- they're kind of bowing, but in a way that pulls them back a little- almost like they're rearing backwards, you know? Like, are they gonna snap at you?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Um, think of like, tulips getting ready to bite.

Sylvia: Yeah, I was kind of thinking of like, almost the shape that like, a cat makes when it's about to pounce, but with a stem.

Austin: Exactly.

Sylvia: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Exactly. Yeah. And you see a figure in front of you who is I guess like, wearing- actually probably shirtless- let's keep the forge shirtless thing goin'- uh, but who has some scars on his back, but a very built, strong muscle-y back at this point and a grey ponytail. I guess it's grey by now probably. Yeah. Or greying. I think probably brown- brownish-grey. Um, and sweat and just doing his work. This is Alyosha. What do you do?

Sylvia: I think I'm gonna call out to him. I think like, I call-

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Alyosha!

Sylvia: Like, I call his name. Try to get his attention.

Austin: Yeah. I think he drops the hammer- er doesn't drop- you know, he hits the forge one more time, then you hear him place the hammer down. Actually, you know what? I think you see him place the hammer down for a second, but his hand doesn't leave it. And then he picks it back up and kind of like, almost- he like puts it into a belt- into a sash around his waist- or his like, waistband, and then turns to look at you. And he says,

Austin (as Alyosha): Ephrim, yes?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Yes.

Austin (as Alyosha): We've only met a few times. [pauses] You are still tied to this place, then?

Sylvia (as Ephrim): It appears so, yeah.

Austin (as Alyosha): Hmm.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Why- How... Why are you here?

Austin: His eyes are like scanning the area, and as a reminder, like it is hanging over the Heat and the Dark, as if there is a sea below you. Um, but much of the sea is now filled with almost like in serpentine shapes, new plant life. Including some that is literally serpentine and moves through the Heat and the Dark like, you know, like an eel or something. He says,

Austin (as Alyosha): I doing what must be done. I am finally filling this world with something that can truly push back the Heat and the Dark. Something that has the power and the life. I ask you, do not get in my way. We were both deceived, and I will make it so that no one can perform such foul sin again.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): You- you have- Hold on. You need to- you need to explain what this is. You need to explain what's going on with this tree in- within our borders. People are getting sick.

Austin (as **Alyosha**): And they will continue to. And then, soon- sooner than I even thought possible, new life will sprout. Life as vigorous and varied as our own. And we are a strong people. Especially with leaders like you, Ephrim. You will find new ways to live just as our so-called Lord once gave us new tools, new structure to live in. You and yours will find new ways of life. And those ways will not be tainted from the start that way ours were. There will be loss and suffering, but there would have been anyway, and had been. And all of it, Ephrim, was for naught. And there are deceivers still. There are still those who use his name. I feel there is another who has a connection to the depths here. Who does not walk the forge, but who was built here. The Dark Son yet rises. Be wary.

Sylvia: I think what Ephrim does is instead of trying to- before he tries to respond, he's gonna try and reach out to like, grab him by the wrist or something. Like-

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Wants to bring him back, basically.

Austin: Yeah. I think when- so, when you touch his- when you touch his wrist, um, you feel the- a familiar- I guess, you don't know this. Um, but when Fero previously- previously tried to talk to the plants of Spring, he heard them- he heard like their minds being kind of this obsession with growth and consumption and expansion. And when you feel it, you feel like- when you touch his wrist, one, you feel his pulse just going nonstop. Just like, boom- boom- boom- boom- boom- boom- boom. His blood is just- is just going.

Um, and two, I think you get a sense of that here. I don't think it's as empty or as simple as the compulsion that Fero felt, but there is a- a single track dedication to this. And maybe you even see it in a flash, the vision of what he wants to build. You see all of these trees blossoming and combining into a sort of network of world trees.

The new world will be built on these. And there will be countless of them, and they will fill the sky. And people will live on them and creatures you cannot comprehend right now. Beings made of plant life will walk alongside humans and alongside, you know, wharvers and elves. And there will be a new type of life, and there will be less of the people like you in it because you will not be built for that world. But the new life will also be brilliant and filled with love and creativity.

[1:30:00]

And filled with behavior that you and I cannot comprehend because it will not be human life. They will not be built in the same individual structure that you and I are. But in Alyosha's vision and you can, you know, Ephrim will have to decipher, is this a vision of the future, is this a vision of what Alyosha hopes for, or what is this? Um, it is not a- it is not an uncaring future. It is a dangerous one. It is one where you don't see many cities in the traditional human sense or mortal sense. But it is- it is a vision of life unconstrained. And he lets you grab him by the wrist, and he says,

Austin (as **Alyosha**): Ephrim, I cannot go. I have so much yet to do.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): So, you're going to stay trapped here, like he was.

Austin (as **Alyosha**): Only until my work is done. And I move so fast.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Too fast.

Austin (as **Alyosha**): If I move slow, it will consume us. This is not the time for slow movement. You understand this. **[Sylvia/Ephrim sighs]** I do not ask for your blessing. And if you ever need speak with me, simply call. We are, both of us, sons to a- father who hated us and who used us. Maybe our paths diverge, but we come from very similar places. We carry similar wounds. I will not be convinced of a slower path.

Sylvia (as **Ephrim**): Then I'll just have to find a different one and prove you wrong.

Austin: He grins.

Austin (as **Alyosha**): I would like that, Ephrim. Prove me wrong. Now I have to get back to my work.

Austin: And at this point, the flowers do bow to you very clearly. And kind of- I think like, new flowers grow behind you as a pathway to a door at the other end of the forge. And they kind of grow up in a flowering arch around the doorway, offering you a path out. I'm guessing you take it? Or do you do something else?

Sylvia: Yeah, I take it. I'm trying to think if it's- my question is, is it messed up to take a flower because are they like, living? If they are, then I'm not going to do it.

Austin: Yeah, this is-

Sylvia: Cause- that- if they are all animated and moving, it's not happening.

Austin: I think- Ok, well like-

Sylvia: If there's one that's like fallen, I'll take it.

Austin: Is Ephrim- is Ephrim thinking this here?

Sylvia: Yeah, Ephrim's definitely like- cause it- like I- the way we described the flo- the way the flowers move is like-

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like animals and-

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: We've seen animal life- like I've seen- at this point, Ephrim's interacted with like, Blue J's little like-

Austin: Yes, little fox.

Sylvia: -little buddy, for sure. So-

Austin: Little buddy. Yeah, yeah. I think at this point then- I think- I think- So, you know, Alyosha is a human. Alyosha is a person who has a magical forge and a magical hammer and the blood of a god, and a very specific plan for the future. Um, so is not like, reading your mind, but is noticing your attempt to kind of make sense of this place. And he says,

Austin (as Alyosha): If you wish a symbol or a-

Austin:-not a familiar, what's the word he's looking for?

Austin (as Alyosha): If you would like to bring something back with you, please. Someone here will volunteer.

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Alright.

Sylvia: I kind of like, like a little, like- it's something small. It's almost kind of like a daisy maybe just kind of like, flutters down.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: And Ephrim catches it, and he's like,

Sylvia (as Ephrim): Thanks. Just needed a souvenir to make sure this wasn't another dream. Been having too many of those lately.

Austin: He smiles and says,

Austin (as Alyosha): The dreams guide us forward. If you can take a souvenir from one, all the better. It will be a compass for you.

Austin: And it spins in your hands as he says it. And um it is like alive. It is a living daisy that will act as some sort of navigational aid. We'll figure out what the stats are for it later, but like- it is a living thing that you can consult for directions, basically.

Sylvia: Oh, awesome.

Austin: Yeah. So add that to your sheet.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And then when you leave, you're just back in front of the tree. Alright.

Sylvia: No sign of like, any door behind me?

Austin: No, no, no.

Sylvia: Awesome.

Austin: Totally.

Sylvia: I love that. I love that. Ok.

Austin: Super good. Alright. Um, god. What else? Alright, um, Hadrian, I think this has been the longest, short camping trip ever. But I think by now you are probably on your way back.

Keith: Two days there, two days-

Art: I feel like we've been back for like, 36 hours.

Austin: Ok. Just hanging?

Keith: What's it- If it- If you had a week, it took a couple days to get there, a couple days to get back. I'm sure you stayed for at least 2 days. That's 6 days just if you spent 2 days there.

Art: 2 whole days? [overlapping] Camping sucks.

Keith: [overlapping] Camping, yeah. [**Austin** laughs]

Art: No one likes camping.

Jack: The problem with camping is-

Keith: [laughing] But- Hold on.

Jack: -sleeping. All the other- and food.

Keith: Why did you take your family on a bad vacation?

Art: Because that's what Hadrian does. Hadrian goes on bad vacations all the time. Hadrian's vacations-

Janine: Where do you take someone on a good vacation right now?

Art: -are going with you lot to do horrible things in uncomfortable places.

Keith: I just-

Ali: Oh.

Keith: I mean, yeah, I mean the- My general rule is don't spend longer getting to a place than you spend at the place.

Austin: Hmm. Fair.

Art: The journey is part of the trip.

Austin: Also, fair.

Ali: Hmm.

Austin: These are things that make you think.

Jack: He's such a dad. He's such a dad.

Austin: He is. He is the-

Art: Well, cause you spend a night- you spend a night. It takes 2 days to get there, so you spend a night. That's a camping night. Then you get there, you spend a camping night. You go home, and it's 3 nights of camping.

Austin: And a day of travel each way, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Or like a half a day- like, I don't-

Keith: You had said about- you said a couple days.

Austin: Wild. That's far.

Keith: Yeah. It's far.

Austin: Um, you're back, regardless.

Keith: You're back.

Austin: Um, I know that Throndir needs to tell you about the Benjamin stuff. What else? Before we do that, like, is there anything Hadrian else- anything else Hadrian is off to do?

Art: Um, no? I mean, I think- I think Hadrian's about to learn a lot of stuff.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Um, but I don't have any other specific Hadrian downtime goals.

Austin: Alright. Um- [**Jack** laughs]

Art: Yeah, I'm not missing- oh yeah. [**Austin** laughs]

Jack: There's also- This is- [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: It's wild that Lem was like, 'How can I help?' and Emmanuel was like, 'You know, do work. Work in the kitchen.' And Lem's now like, 'Root out the Dark Son'. [**Austin, Ali, Sylvia** and **Keith** laugh]

Austin: Right, I mean, I guess that's the thing is like, we kind of are- can begin- I mean, let's have the Throndir-Hadrian conversation, then we can- we can wrap and talk about what's next.

Keith: I would like to do my Samol thing, too.

Austin: Ok. If- Are-

Keith: Er- Samot thing.

Austin: You're leaving, right? So, yeah, you do now need to do your Samot thing. Um, let's do the Hadrian convo, and then we can breathe a little bit after cause it might be a hard convo. So, let's go with- Also, Hadrian just hasn't been onscreen in a fucking long time, so- Um, so Hadrian and Throndir. Where do y'all talk?

Art: That's a great question. Context is so important for how this goes.

Dre: There is almost a- [clears throat] part of me was thinking that like, Throndir would run out as soon as learning this news and try to like, meet them outside of the city.

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: But if we're saying that they're back already, then we can do it there.

Austin: I- I could go either way. It's up to y'all.

Art: I mean, I would just be really careful [**Austin** laughs quietly] about- about optics.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: Like, you're- you're gonna- you're gonna really get the- I just- I just want to read something off of- off of my character sheet really quick which is that um, 'Choose 2 things that make you

burn with righteous anger when you encounter them.’ And one of those is ‘Threats to your loved ones.’ And I just- it’s just really important for this scene to go well that it not seem like a threat.

Dre: [laughs lightly] I mean, like, out of character, that is not Throndir’s intent whatsoever.

Art: I know. I know it’s not.

Dre: Ok.

Art: But you have to- you really think about what it looks like if- if you try to like, intercept-

Dre: Yeah, ok, fair. Fair.

Art: Incept us and tell them- tell us like, ‘well you can’t- you guys can’t come home.’ And I just- I just- I just hope that Throndir is cognizant of-

Austin: Let’s just see how it goes. Let’s just make it happen. [**Dre** laughs quietly]

Art: Alright, so where do you want to do this. What’s happening?

Dre: Uh, let’s do it after you all get back. I don’t know. Where is a place where like, Hadrian hangs out where he is by himself to be approached?

Art: I mean, I think we’ve established that Hadrian likes shopping for housewares at the market. [**Dre** laughs]

Austin: Oh, good. Perfect. Good and great.

Art: And did not buy the big spoon last time. [laughs]

Austin: Back to buy the big spoon.

Art: And- and might be back to- at least consider the b- Cause you know, there’s- time’s passed. You’ve noticed- He’s noticed that he didn’t really miss the big spoon, but he wanted the big spoon.

Dre: Well, I mean, imagine when you’re camping and you’re trying to stir up that campfire stew, you could probably use a big spoon.

Art: Yeah, with just a regular spoon, it’s- it’s hard.

Dre: Then maybe it opens with Throndir coming in while Hadrian is weighing the big spoon in his hands. [laughs]

Art: Oh no. Is the- [laughs] I don't think there's that much demand for big spoons, and- and these are- these are spoon craft people we're dealing with. **Keith** in the chat asked if they held the big spoon. And they didn't because Hadrian dropped it. We established that Hadrian dropped the spoon.

Austin: Just on the ground?

Art: Well, I mean, just next to the-

Ali: I thought he picked it back up. He picked it back up, and he put it-

Art: I came back and picked it back up and put it on the thing, but-

Austin: Right. Ok. Right.

Ali: Yeah.

Art: -there was no time to ask after the fate of the spoon.

Austin: Sure.

Art: I just have to hope that it's still available or that the spoon craftsmen um, has made a second big spoon. Maybe I'm commissioning a spoon. It's- Really let your mind wander with the particulars of the spoon.

Keith: Maybe there's a nice, new medium-large spoon. Where it's easier to handle, but maybe can't scoop as much.

Art: Hmm. Isn't the scooping the whole point?

Austin: Oh my god. How are we not having the conversation yet? [**Keith** laughs a bunch]

Art (as Hadrian): Hey, Throndir! What do you think of this spoon?

Dre (as Throndir): That is-

Art (as Hadrian): Too big?

Dre (as Thrandir): Uh... no. I- You- Listen. Treat yourself, right? [**Austin** laughs]

Art (as Hadrian): Yeah, maybe I should.

Dre (as Thrandir): Um, I hope I'm not catching you at a- at a bad time, but I- I really need to talk to you.

Art (as Hadrian): No, I'm- I'm just- I just really can't decide if I want this spoon. What do you- what do you want to talk about?

Art: And Hadrian hangs the spoon back- back up. Turns his back. Peeks back over his shoulder at the spoon. [**Dre** laughs] And then [laughs] shakes his head, and turns back towards Thrandir.

Dre (as Thrandir): Um, it's really a conversation we should have somewhere private.

Art (as Hadrian): Oh- Ok. Um... uh, where at? I mean, um- my house is crowded, but it's just family. Um... wherever you want really.

Dre (as Thrandir): Ok. I- I can kinda- I'll- Yeah. Let's- let's go there.

Art (as Hadrian): Alright.

Austin: What's this look like?

Art: Um, I think we get back to the house and Hadrian comes in, and I assume that- that- what time of day is this? Does anyone know or care?

Austin: Thrandir should know.

Dre: Um, I don't know. Like, morning.

Austin: Alright, then I think-

Dre: Morning's a good time for spoon shopping.

Austin: Yeah, I suspect the house is empty then.

Art: Sure.

Austin: Rosana's definitely busy, and I'm sure- I'm sure Benjamin's studying at class.

Art: Sure. We don't get a shot of- of Rosana then like, seeing that the- that Hadrian didn't buy the big spoon and being kind of like, 'Oh my god, with the spoon.' But we can save that for next time.

Austin: What we get is- what we get is- we actually get is that Rosana left a little hook- There's normally a spatula hanging on this one hook, there's nothing hanging on it just in case you bought the big spoon and want to hang it there. But you didn't buy the big spoon. So-

Art: Maybe next time. Aw, that really fills Hadrian with regret. [**Austin** and **Dre** laugh]

Dre: What a terrible start to this conversation. Ok.

Art: That feeling of disappointing your partner, you know, when you didn't mean to. [**Ali** breathes deep and laugh quietly]

Dre (as **Thrandir**): Ok. So, what I'm about to tell you only Hella and I know.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Ok.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): So, you know that Samol told us that Arrell had some sort of magic that he was working here in the university.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Yeah.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): [sighs] Ok, so Hella and I talked to um, Isaac to see if he had any sort of insight.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Ok.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): He said that Arrell is capable of casting powerful magic through the use of conduits that he can create by performing-

Art (as **Hadrian**): Great! Let's destroy- let's destroy these conduits. [**Austin** and **Keith** laugh half-painful 'oh' - **Ali** nervously sucks air through the teeth.]

Dre (as **Thrandir**): Oh, that he can create by-

Art (as **Hadrian**): I just love having a simple answer here.

Keith: [laughing] Oh boy.

Art (as Hadrian): I hate when this stuff gets complicated.

Dre (as Thrandir): [exhales deeply] He can create by performing magical rituals on someone.

[Jack de Quidt's "[The Conduit](#)" begins playing in the background]

Art (as Hadrian): But Arrell hasn't.... Arrell hasn't been here. You'd- you would have told me if Arrell had- had come here while I was gone. So, how is he performing rituals on people?

Dre (as Thrandir): [quietly] Hadrian.... I'm worried it's Benjamin.

Art (as Hadrian): [sighs]

Art: Hadrian just like deflates. Like Hadrian goes from being like, looking tall to- to not looking tall.

[1:45:00]

Dre (as Thrandir): Listen. I came to you first because I want this to be... This is your decision.

Art (as Hadrian): [pauses] Ok, great. Um, we'll just deal with it. We can maybe feed... Arrell fake information. And we'll just keep on keeping on.

Dre (as Thrandir): I mean... I- Can we do that?

Art (as Hadrian): I... I don't see what other choice we have.

Dre (as Thrandir): I mean... Yeah.

Art (as Hadrian): We could ask Sunder. But we'd have to be very sure we can trust Sunder.

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah, I mean- I feel ok about that, but like I said, I wanted to tell you first.

Art (as Hadrian): I mean... I want- I just don't want to mince words. We would have to be prepared to kill Sunder. [drum beat and three claps sound in the music]

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah. No, I- Yeah, I get that. [drum beat and three claps]

Art (as Hadrian): Ok. Then yeah, that sounds like a great first step.

[music hits a slow piano part]

Dre (as Thrandir): Do you want to tell Benjamin first?

Art (as Hadrian): No. No, I don't.

Dre (as Thrandir): At all?

Art (as Hadrian): Not first.... Sunder first.... Then- then we'll talk to Benjamin.... Is Hella around?

Dre (as Thrandir): Probably. Can probably find her.

Art (as Hadrian): Hella should come with us. [**Austin** laughs]

Ali: [laughs quietly] Yes.

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah, ok. Yeah.

Austin: Fuck.

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah, ok.

Art (as Hadrian): Thank you for telling me. I appreciate your discretion in this matter. We're gonna get through this. [music claps] Together. [music claps] All together.

[music finishes playing]

Dre: [laughing] That's not as- that's not as reassuring as I think you wanted it to be.

Ali: Oh, it's very reassuring.

Austin: Let's get Fero and Samol... Samot. [**Ali** laughs] Which will be lighter-

Keith: Well, I'll be doing that till the end of time.

Austin: Uh huh, yeah.

Keith: Hey, at least it's not Lem and Fero.

Austin: Yeah, fair. [**Jack** laughs] Where do you find Samot? Um, Samot's staying indoors for the most part while healing. But-

Keith: Ok.

Austin: But uh, I think... God, where- where is he today? Caught him in his bedroom. Caught him doing some painting. Um, I think he's alone in like, the war room looking at maps. And eventually you're directed there if you're looking for him.

Keith: Yeah, I'm looking.

Austin: And he looks up, and he like- He's never met you before, right?

Keith: No. Nope.

Austin: Um, and so he's like, trying to place you as you come in. And he's like-

Keith: And I- I barely know anything about him.

Austin: Yeah. Ah, you know the story. You know Marielda, right?

Keith: Yeah. I know the story.

Austin: But that's about it. Like, you know the story of Marielda. Um, he's like,

Austin (as **Samot**): I'm sorry. We haven't met. My name is Samot. How can I help you?

Keith: I- I squint. I sort of look him over. And I think- I think Fero's trying to figure out just by looking at him what Samol meant by like, when he was like, 'give him a chance.' [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Uh huh.

Keith: Uh, but I sort of- I guess I sort of like, walk up to him and like, reach my hand like, up to like, shake his hand.

Austin: [laughs] Uh huh.

Keith: Like,

Keith (as Fero): Fero Feritas.

Austin: He reaches his down and shakes your hand.

Austin (as Samot): Samot, again. I'm sorry, I- I feel- I- Pleasure to meet you, Fero Feritas. Are you looking-

Keith (as Fero): Sorry. I knew- I knew your dad.

Austin (as Samot): Oh.

Austin: And I think like, you see his body relax a little bit and the glow softens, and he says,

Austin (as Samot): I didn't see you at the... You- Right. You returned. Right.

Keith (as Fero): I was up north.

Austin (as Samot): Yes. I do- They- they told me.

Keith (as Fero): He stopped by the boat on his way here.

Austin (as Samot): Oh. Well, that's... Take a seat. Would you like anything to drink?

Keith (as Fero): Sure, whatever you got.

Austin: Um, he goes to reach into his purse and remembers he doesn't have his purse anymore. [Keith laughs]

Keith: And he gave the bottle back.

Austin: And he gave the bottle back, but he has a bottle of something else across the room, or he spots a bottle of something else across the room, and comes over and pours you a glass of wine. And pours himself one. And he just says, like,

Austin (as Samot): Fero Feritas, would you do me a great honor and tell me about my father and how you knew him?

Keith: Um, yeah. I- I'll tell him pretty much everything.

Austin: Yeah, and I think that's-

Keith: Yeah. I think I'll even end on the part where he was like, 'Give him a chance.' I'll tell him that. [laughs]

Austin (as Samot): Give me a chance. [stammers a little] I am known to take as many of my own chances as I need before I make a good impression on someone. Give him a chance.

Austin: And I think we get like, a lively Samot that we have not seen. We've like, reserved and sullen Samot, but Fero brings out playful, party Samot, and it's just like, he wants to tell stories, too. You know? So, he's gonna tell- He tells you stories about- about Samol also. And you know, shares ridiculous times that his dad did weird stuff. Like turn into a big, purple sea monster or how he- his dad taught him how to play guitar, but he's really bad at playing guitar. But he always- he's like,

Austin (as Samot): I'm always good at playing guitar at a party, but I can never play by myself. In like, I can't ever really learn how to play it, but I can play- put enough chords together to impress a party.

Austin: And you know, I think we just get the 2 of you reminiscing about this person who was important to both of you. Um, I think he tells you. He says like,

Austin (as Samot): I'm really glad that he had you. That- that you had each other through the winter. It sounds- it sounds like it was a diffic- a difficult time for you both, and one made brighter for the other's presence. [pauses] You know... I see their mark. Severea and Galenica. I suspect you don't have as warm a relation with them as you did with my father.

Keith (as Fero): They were really mean to me one time.

Austin (as Samot): They were mean to me once, too. Though I suspect I was mean to them first.

Keith (as Fero): I ain't rude or nothin' to them.

Austin (as **Samot**): We have a strange- We meaning- they- us- People like me have had- have strange relationships to loyalty and time and forgiveness, and spats can last for centuries. And I think for both of them, they are so far from people. Neither... neither quite works on the scales that you do.

Keith (as **Fero**): The scales?

Austin (as **Samot**): The scales of time. The scales of... emotion. Even Galenica, whose role is to protect people, is rarely among them in the way that I am. And so, what might seem like a small poke from one of them can feel like a massive insult. Or what can seem like a life misguided on a mortal scale for- could for them feel like nothing at all. I don't think this is a positive quality for those like me. It is a thing I would like to change. And so I suppose what I will do is say, carry my father's last wish of you forward to them, and I don't expect you to change your opinion on them necessarily, but if the time comes where you may give them another chance, consider it. And if they fail you again, then it's no worry.

Keith (as **Fero**): [exhales] I'll consider it.

Austin (as **Samot**): That is all anyone can ask. [pauses] Another drink?

Keith (as **Fero**): Yeah, I've never had this stuff before.

Austin (as **Samot**): It's good.

Keith (as **Fero**): It is good.

Austin (as **Samot**): You never had wine before?

Keith (as **Fero**): Nope.

Austin (as **Samot**): I'll pour you another glass then.

Austin: [laughs lightly] Alright, um, does anyone else want anything before we wrap on the- this Sunder-Hadrian-Hella-Throndir thing? Uh, Jack-

Keith: Were they not telling anyone else, I thought?

Austin: I think they're not telling anyone else yet. They're telling Sunder first.

Jack: I thought I wanted a scene-

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: -but I don't.

Austin: Ok, You're sure.

Jack: I just- Yeah, I think I just want to let this play. I don't think anything that we would get in this scene-

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: -would add to what we're about to see.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Um, yeah. I don't need anything. The only thing that I'll say is that- cause we're about to close it out, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I do want to announce spending time uh- sort of brainstorming and practicing something for the- some for the river for food.

Austin: Ok. Cool. So, where is this conversation happening? Is it in Sunder's- is it in Sunder's place? Like her lab? Or study?

Art: Yeah, I guess so. Is there like a pine barrens around?

Austin: Like... the woods?

Art: [laughs lightly] No, uh-

Keith: Like lords of the trees?

Austin: Yeah, you could go to the woods. That seems- that's a weird thing to say to a person.
[Keith laughs]

Art: It's probably fine. Nevermind. Yeah, we'll just go to her. We'll just- we'll just meet her where she is.

Austin: Um, she is busy. What is she researching right now? Um, I think she's probably actually working on this problem, right? Like, this is a big problem, and it's one that she's looking into. Um, and so she's like looking at teleportation spells and distances and stuff when the three of you come in.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Uh, hello. Sorry I- I wish I had better news to share. Nothing yet on my front.

Art (as Hadrian): Oh, that's fine. Um, actually Thrandir do you want to do this?

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah.

Art (as Hadrian): I feel a little close.

Dre (as Thrandir): Ok. So, Hella and I have news.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Congratulations?

Dre (as Thrandir): Yeah, it's not great. **[Ali and Sylvia laugh]** It's not great.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Oh.

Ali: Um, we- **[laughs]** Sorry. We didn't do the like- really quickly- we didn't do the like, Vin Diesel gear up scene for Hella.

Austin: No. Are you geared up?

Ali: **[laughs]** No, but there's- there's a precision that Hella has here. Like understanding the ask.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: **[laughs]** Um, I think that Hella's standing by the door and has her arms crossed.

Austin: Oh my god. Wait, I thought you said there was a precision, and then what you described was the gesture of- the sledgehammer of gestures. **[laughing]** Was like- Jesus Christ.

Ali: Well, like, I wat- Remember when I watched the first Fast and Furious movie to get in prepared for Hella for this season?

Austin: Yes.

Ali: I think that there's like- there's Hella when she's on. And there's Hella when she's off.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: And like, being able to stay near an exit is like, a clear- This is not the Hella who bowed for Ephrim. [laughs]

Austin: Right. Fair.

Ali: Um, yeah. [laughs] And then when Thrandir says her name just like, nods.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: This is exactly why I said I wanted Hella here.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Uh huh.

Art: This is exactly right. This is on- exactly on brand for this conversation.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): What is happening?

Dre (as Thrandir): Listen. We got some really shitty news. And ok, so we talked to Isaac. Isaac says that Arrell is capable of using people as conduits for his magic.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): People like Isaac himself.

Dre (as Thrandir): That most like-

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Where's Isaac now?

Dre (as Thrandir): He's gone.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): He gone? You lost him.

Dre (as Thrandir): No.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Where is he?

Dre (as Thrandir): He's gone.

Ali (as **Hella**): Lem's tracking him with the- the plant. Do you remember the plant?

Austin (as **Sunder Havelton**): Yes, I see. But he's not here, so Arrell can't use him as a conduit then.

Art (as **Hadrian**): That's true.

Austin (as **Sunder Havelton**): Well, that's good.

Art (as **Hadrian**): It is.

Dre (as **Thrandir**): There is still someone here who has been touched by Arrell's magic.

Austin (as **Sunder Havelton**): You? Who?

Dre (as **Thrandir**): No. Benjamin.

Austin (as **Sunder Havelton**): [exhales]

Austin: And then like, she like scans the room and realizes why three people are here. [**Art** laughs lightly]

Austin (as **Sunder Havelton**): I see.... Benjamin.

Austin: Does she know about Benjamin being in the bubble?

Dre: Hmm.

Ali: I mean, is that a thing Benjamin would share if he's like-

Austin: Probably not.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I don't think so. Uh- Hm.

Ali: I mean I think of her as like his teacher, right? Like-

Austin: Yeah, totally. That's totally true, but I still don't know-

Ali: Ok yeah.

Austin: I don't know- I'm- Like, I think that was a choice that would have- He would do whatever the people or the adults around him would have done when he was still a kid, right? He came back young.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: You know what I mean? And like, he wouldn't unilaterally be like, 'And then I spent this time in a weird, alternative universe', if the model for him had been to not share that information earlier. Um, and I feel like, I don't know that it's- it's such like a weird thing, right?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I think she asks

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): When would Arrell have turned Benjamin into a conduit?

[2:00:00]

Art (as Hadrian): A long time ago. Um... um, I was very concerned about danger in Velas, and I thought it was a good option. It didn't work out.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): It- [sighs] You trusted Arrell?

Art (as Hadrian): He had until very recently at that point been a companion- well, you know- I didn't- I didn't, at the time, understand the difference between Arrell and Fantasma the way I do now.

Dre (as Thrandir): And that's partially my fault, Sunder. It's not all on Hadrian.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): [laughs lightly] I'm glad there's blame to go around, but that doesn't solve the problem for us. Does it? [pauses] What are we to do?

Dre (as Thrandir): I mean, we need to find a way to reverse this.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Reverse it.

Dre (as Thrandir): A counterspell or something?

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): And in the time between then and now? At any moment Arrell could reach in with all these people here? Could come himself? Could bring who

knows how many. We don't know what he has. We know he is working with the Creed of the Dark Son. He could bring them here, if he wished.

Art (as Hadrian): Yeah. I understand and appreciate that this is putting us in danger, and I think we should fix it. But... you need to tell me that it's possible without harming my son.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): [sighs] You come to me and tell me that your son is a walking bomb. And then ask me to move with care.

Art (as Hadrian): Yes.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): I am the only one here perhaps who could find a solution. [exhales] And you come with a walking sword. **[Ali/Hella sighs]**

Art (as Hadrian): I came with my best friend.

Dre (as Thrandir): It's his son, Sunder.

Ali (as Hella): We're as interested in your opinion of how to fix this as much as we were afraid of it.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): It is something to be very afraid of. [whispers] As soon- Is he here now? We cannot talk about this. Do you understand?

Art (as Hadrian): No, it's just the- it's just the four of us.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): [whispering] If Benjamin is here somewhere, then he could be listening right now.

Art (as Hadrian): You mean, in this room? There's no one in this room.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): In the university. He was not in the room... Conduits like that have a great deal more range than the eyes and ears of those they are planted in. Benjamin was not in the room when the counselor from Velas was summoned away, was he?

Art (as Hadrian): Ok, great. We'll have this conversation real quick, and we'll count on the fact that Arrell probably isn't spending every waking moment listening to everything in every room of this university.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Probably not, but he is probably listening to us specifically.

Art (as Hadrian): Cause that- that's how it works?

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Magic is a very powerful ally, Hadrian. And he knows what to look for. He knows me well. He knows- he's traveled with all of us.

Art (as Hadrian): Yeah.

Dre (as Thrandir): So, we get Benjamin away from you, while you work on this.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Yes. Yes. He cannot be here. It is too dangerous. But I will work on a solution as quickly as I can.

Ali (as Hella): Is there anything you need from us for that? Besides space?

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): No, but... tell- tell Ephrim. Tell Corsica. That way if there's something that comes up, I can request it.

Art (as Hadrian): What if we tell Ephrim and not Corsica?

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): As long as one of them knows, and I can go to them for resources.

Art (as Hadrian): Great. And I just want to thank you in advance for your discretion on this matter.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): I understand. And I apologize. It is... terrible news. And I'm sorry that your- that your son is at the center of it.

Art (as Hadrian): Yeah, don't worry. We'll get through this. Um, so I can't- Can I tell him? Or do you think that would be bad?

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): You are his father. I'm his teacher, but [exhales] this is more your domain than mine.

Art (as Hadrian): No, no, no. I'm asking you a technical question. If I tell him, is that gonna be-

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): I see.

Art (as Hadrian): Could that negatively affect the- the hoo-doo?

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): We don't call it that, one. [laughs] Two, I suspect it depends on the nature of the thing. And without knowing the nature of it, without knowing whether or not Arrell can read the boy's mind, can hear his thoughts, it's- I can't be sure if it's safe. There is risk. As there always is.

Art (as Hadrian): Sure. Ok.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): But- perhaps you tell him and you leave with him anyway. You get some distance away. And then we wonder. Perhaps with distance, I could find a solution, and with no conduit here, then Arrell could not interfere until it was too late. Until we had the solution. Though I do also-

Art (as Hadrian): Sure, yeah. Stop- stop talking about the solution until we're well out of town.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): Ok.

Art (as Hadrian): I appreciate you're gonna work on it.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): No.

Art (as Hadrian): I appreciate the help.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): But-

Art (as Hadrian): But if you're saying he's listening, we should- we shouldn't talk about it.

Austin (as Sunder Havelton): What we don't want is for there to be a visitor while you are away either. It would do- It is not time- I don't- Hadrian, you and your friends are very strong, but there may be challenges you are not ready for yet.

Art (as Hadrian): O-k.

Austin (as **Sunder Havelton**): Caught alone in the wilderness?

[Jack de Quidt's "[Something](#)" begins playing in the background]

Art (as **Hadrian**): Yeah.

Austin: She's like looking, like nodding, like, 'Do you understand what I'm putting down, please?'

Art: Uh huh.

Austin: Ok.

Art: I think so.

Austin (as **Sunder Havelton**): I'll begin at once.

Art (as **Hadrian**): Great. I'll talk to you when I get back.

Austin: She nods and like, puts this book back in the shelf and grabs a different one.

[Music plays out to end]