

Marielda 14: The Killing of the King-God Samoths By The Traitor Prince
Maelgwyn Pt. 4

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AUSTIN AS SAMOL: You ever have one of those long days? *[MUSIC - ONE OF THOSE LONG DAYS - BEGINS]* When nothin' seems to fall into place? Huh? Where it feels like everything you work for, everything you touch ain't *nothin'*. Or reverse that, that it *is* nothin', that nothin's is all there is. 'Cause I feel like that. I felt like that for more than years than you know. And when we feel like that, we rush for cover. It's like an involuntary defense. Who or what can we blame for this?

Maybe, maybe we blame somethin' immaterial. Sin. Evil. The machinations of things greater than us. And we seek salvation in action, in prayer. In holy violence. Is that what you were lookin' for, Hadrian? When you killed that man, Jericho?

Or maybe, like a fiddler on a bad night, we blame the instrument. You know somethin' about that, Lem. Hella does too. How much you blamed on that blade? That Blade in the Dark? You think that's what led you to kill Angelo? Calhoun? The son of my kin, remember. You think I miss that? Ain't a *damn* thing I don't know about, remember?

Or maybe, like Adaire, you blame others. That farmer who didn't pull his weight, the church that demanded tithe but did not shepherd its people. The village that turned on your family. Or, like me, on my bad days, you blame your family itself. It's so easy for me to do. To wonder if this cancer began when I raised Samot from shadow to light, if when I gave that boy flesh, maybe, he took somethin' from me in exchange.

[MUSIC - ONE OF THOSE LONG DAYS - PLAYS TIL 02:56]

AUSTIN AS MAELGWYN: What sword?

AUSTIN: Says Maelgwyn, behind the mask.

JACK: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Flanked by mages.

JACK (laughing): Oh, no.

ALI AS CASTILLE: Oh! You're back!

MAELGWYN: I am.

CASTILLE: Mm.

JACK: Oh, and at this point Ethan puts two and two together.

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. And he walks past you both. Nodding, but walks past you both. And goes and sits with the mages at the throne—remember, there are also the thrones inside of the dining hall. And again, to paint the picture of the dining hall, it has this big glass dancefloor. That is in the center, and then it's flanked on three sides, on the north, south, and east, by these long wooden tables, each of which has a throne for one of the gods. To the north are Samaantine and, uh, Samoths, to the south is Severeia and Samot, to the east is Samol. And as the rest of the parties walk in, they all sit with their respective, um, with the god that they kind of came with, or that they came representing. And Maelgwyn, mask and crown and cape, sits in the throne of Samot.

DRE: Oh...

JACK: Is this, does this cause any sort of a ruckus?

AUSTIN: There is a, there is a—what's less than a ruckus?

DRE: A hubbub?

AUSTIN: Higher than a hubbub.

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: More than a hubbub, less than a ruckus.

ALI (amused): Okay.

DRE: Murmuring's probably less than a hubbub.

JACK: Oh, yeah, no, you've got way [inaudible]

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Probably. Yeah, it's more than a murmuring. But it's not a ruckus, y'know? Where do you two sit?

ALI: Probably with the Samot group? So it's him in the throne, and then...?

AUSTIN: Okay. And then the four mages.

ALI: Do I...?

AUSTIN: Two flanking him on each side.

ALI (uncertain): Do I recognize any of them?

AUSTIN: They're the mages that came in before. Oh, shit!

ALI: I am a mage. [laughs]

AUSTIN (overlapping): You're Charter! Fuck! Yeah, you totally recognize them all.

ALI: Do they recognize *me*?

AUSTIN: Absolutely, right? [JACK laughs]

ALI: Yeah!

JACK: Oh, no!

ALI (amused): Is that weird? How's that going?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, it's super fucking weird! [ALI laughs] Um... God! There's... They don't know how to react when they see you. Um... I think one of them—alright, so there's four of them, I'll go over them one more time.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: There's Fester Finlay, who you know is a master of like, um... magic of life and death, he's kind of a necromancer. Big, flush body, like, he's actually—despite being a necromancer, is not like, all pale and shit. He is like the one with rosy cheeks and big full lips and nice big cheeks. Um, and close-cropped hair. And he's kind of like, he's kind of a weirdo, you have to be kind of a weirdo to be a necromancer, you just have to, like—

ALI (overlapping): [laughs] I'm not gonna argue with that!

AUSTIN: I guess maybe, as far as necromancers go he isn't super—like he isn't trying to become the lord of undeath or anything, right? But like, he... is cool working with dead bodies, and that's not a thing most people are cool with, so. Um, there's Bewilder San-Becket, and Bewilder is a master of illusion, um, and he's the one with very gaunt features, very thin. There is Garner Halisham who is kind of a... um... Garner has a sort of, um, focus in movement? And like, transportation and navigation. Garner always knows what direction is north, and Garner is the sort of person who could like, teleport your entire group from place to place. And then there

is Smolder Cunningham, and she's like all fire everything. And each of them has a bunch of research assistants with them. I think Smolder and you were probably on decent terms? I mean, I think at one point you were probably on decent terms with most of these people? Maybe one of them you weren't. Which one of them were you not on good terms with?

ALI: [laughs] Um...

AUSTIN: So it's Fester, Garner, Bewilder, and Smolder.

ALI: Which one of them would be closest to Bolster?

AUSTIN: Probably... like, closest in terms of friendship?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Probably Fester. In that like there's pure academic interest at work.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: You know, there's—a lot of the stuff necromancers do in this world is not—it's a lot of theoretical shit. Right? Like, the rules of law and the rules of just, good etiquette mean you don't go animating the dead left and right. But, Fester is still interest in how that magic works.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: And so there is an overlap there with Bolster. Plus, remember, Bolster wrote that book on the liminality of life and death.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Probably in the foreword of that book is a thank you to, is an acknowledgement to Fester Finlay.

ALI: Um, yeah, I feel like it's not a direct tension, but it's sort of like—I think she has a fine relationship with the rest of them, but like, considering—do they have any understanding of her dying, or being missing, or?

AUSTIN: Yeah! That's why they're confused!

ALI: [laughs] Right.

AUSTIN: So I think Fester is just like

AUSTIN AS FESTER FINLAY (uncertain): Charter Castille.

CASTILLE: Yeah, it's—it's [laughs] wonderful to see you all again.

FESTER: How—

AUSTIN: Maelgwyn raises a hand, a gloved hand and says

AUSTIN AS MAELGWYN: It's fine, she's with me.

AUSTIN: And then like, motions to his right to a chair, and it's a chair that Bewilder is currently sitting in? As if to motion for you to take that seat.

ALI: [giggles]

AUSTIN: And Bewilder like, grumpily stands up and slides over a chair to offer it to you.

ALI (amused): I like, wink at Maelgwyn and then sit down.

AUSTIN: The mages like, all give each other looks in that familiar like... bad guy saying "Uh oh! Uh oh! This is not going according to plan!" way. [ALI laughs] Like, [whispering] "Wh—what? What do we—?" Like, but not saying that, because they probably have some sort of weird telepathic connection where they're saying it there.

ALI: Oh, oh, oh, who's sitting next to Fester?

AUSTIN: So, Fester is to the left of Maelgwyn?

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: To the left of Fester is Garner.

CASTILLE: Um, Garner, would you be a dear and—Ethan is here with me as well. Do you mind if he sits there?

JACK AS ETHAN: Hello!

ALI: [laughs delightedly]

AUSTIN AS GARNER: Uh... that's fine. That's—that's fine.

CASTILLE: Mm-hm!

AUSTIN: And Garner slides over a seat.

[TIMESTAMP 09:53]

ALI: I think like, there's like a weird thing here, and I feel like it's when you go to your school reunion and you have a much better job than anyone? [ALI, JACK, AND AUSTIN LAUGH]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! Yep! Um, you've now slid Garner over so that Garner is seated, let's see—next to Adroit the Younger, who is the leader of the slow-moving bird people. And they are—Adroit has lots to say, and Garner is not pleased with how long it's taking. [ALI laughs] I think at this point Sige and Aubrey—so, music starts playing, some people start dancing, very light kind of, appetizers for the tables start being served. Two of the gods are here. Severeia and Samaantine are here. Samothos is not. And Primo is here, I guess, no, Primo's with Sige, right?

DRE: Uh, yeah, I guess. I mean—

AUSTIN: Or, I guess at some point Primo's like—I think at one point Primo like, calls the room up to you? Um, but he's like,

AUSTIN AS PRIMO: I gotta go, I gotta go take care of the whole MC-ing thing.

DRE: People gotta see him in that suit, I understand.

PRIMO: Exactly. Gotta look good.

AUSTIN: Um, yeah. So he leaves you. And that's about when Aubrey breaks out, right?

SYLVIA: I think that makes sense, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. So yeah, Sige and Aubrey, you're in this hallway, as people begin dancing and eating in the dining hall. And again, like, below the dining hall, through the glass you can see the fire of the volcano, and you can kind of hear under the music the tinkling of the hammer against metal. Aubrey and Sige, what do you do?

SYLVIA AS AUBREY: We have to get in there.

DRE AS SIGE: Into where?

AUBREY: Into the—we have to go to the dinner! We have to—

DRE: Yeah, but we don't have to sneak in, do we? Like, this is me out of character, we can just walk in, right?

SYLVIA: No, no, this is, that's just Aubrey in character being very, like, "We have to hurry! We have to go! We're late!"

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, totally!

DRE: Oh, okay!

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. So yeah, you walk in—

SYLVIA: Oh wait, really quick, before we go I check to see if I have my gun with me. Did they take it?

AUSTIN: Oh, you have... It was all in that room, locked up in a chest.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: But I think we maybe, like, see Sige breaking in, and as you open the chest you get your stuff back.

SYLVIA: Okay, cool.

AUSTIN: Listen, Samot is lookin' out for you. Samot has ways. Um... alright. I think maybe, actually, we even see that. Which is like— [laughs] Next to all the cutlery—you cut your, like, the belts and free yourself, and then you go to put the knife back, and there is a key with a tag on it. In the sh—not in the shelf, in the drawer. And on the tag is just like, a really fancy "S."

ALI: Is it—

AUSTIN: And then that key opens the chest that lets you get your stuff back. The ability to rewrite history is pretty fuckin' good. [pause] It's the "cool S," Ali.

[ALI and DRE laugh]

AUSTIN: Ali says "Is it the cool S?" It's the cool S.

SYLVIA: God. Oh my *God*. [SYLVIA groans as ALI laughs harder]

AUSTIN: Samoths is very cool. [*I think he means Samot here*] Alright, what are you two—so you guys just go in?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, where are you sitting?

SYLVIA: Oh, man. Where is there free—

AUSTIN: Again, *tons* of people everywhere. Yeah, where—there's free space around... um, the two gods that didn't show up. So, Samol and Samot both have some extra seats. And then, probably Samoths, actually. Like, there aren't many people here for Samoths.

DRE: Um... I'm gonna sit in the Samol area.

AUSTIN: Fair.

SYLVIA: I'm gonna sit in the Samoths area.

AUSTIN: Okay. So, to your right, Sige, is that big, gray like, creature. That big, gray, kind of like, ogre-looking guy. And then to your right is, uh, Hedy. Actually, I think Hedy's probably to your left. And she nods at you as you sit down, with her like, long neck nod. And then, the big guy to your right—it's weird, 'cause like, you're both just used to being the only big guys? [DRE laughs] And he's like, way bigger than you, still, and has like, a special chair to sit on. And as you sit down, he like,

AUSTIN AS THE OGRE (low voice, a little hoarse): Oh, sorry, I already have the big chair.

SIGE (amused): Uh, you know what, I think you need it more than me. That's fine. I'll make do.

AUSTIN: He laughs, like,

THE OGRE (guffawing heartily): Hoh-hah-hah! Oh! Sit down. What is your name?

SIGE: Uh, I'm Sige Coleburn. It's nice to meet you. What's your name?

AUSTIN: He smiles and has this, like, really fang-y grin.

THE OGRE: Sige Coleburn. 'S a good name. Good name. I'm Kindrali. A pleasure.

DRE (laughing in disbelief): You motherfucker!

AUSTIN: New listeners, there's, uh—Kindrali was in the first season.

DRE: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: He will one day be “Kindrali, He Who Remembers the Day.” Um... he’s not that yet.

ALI: Oh, oh which day? [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, what day might he be remembering?

DRE: [makes overwhelmed noise, laughs]

JACK: I swear to God!

[All laugh]

DRE: Which one?

AUSTIN: What’s up?

DRE: Which one, Jack? There’s a lot to choose from right now!

AUSTIN: Yeah, which god, there’s a bunch of gods right here!

JACK: It’s all so bad! [laughs]

AUSTIN: And, Aubrey—

SYLVIA: Mm-hm!

AUSTIN: You’re sitting in Samothēs’s area—

SYLVIA: As close to Samothēs as I can get.

AUSTIN: Samothēs isn’t here.

SYLVIA: Well, where he would sit.

AUSTIN: Alright, you sit at his right.

SYLVIA: Well, not that close, I guess.

AUSTIN: He doesn’t have—

SYLVIA: He doesn’t have a huge section? Yeah, fuck it, I’ll take that seat.

AUSTIN: 'Cause it's just—it's the, it's Silas, it's the Lance Nobles, it's y'all.

SYLVIA: Okay!

AUSTIN: You were his guests.

SYLVIA: Sure.

AUSTIN: And Primo, but Primo is like, speaking into a microphone. It, it's a cool-looking, like it's a bronze microphone or something—

SYLVIA (overlapping): Can I—can I sit like, next to where the right is? 'Cause I wanna leave that seat for Primo?

AUSTIN: Yes. Totally.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: And Primo is like, Primo has gone over like,

AUSTIN AS PRIMO: There will be menus, uh, there are three dishes you can choose from—

AUSTIN: [laughs] He's like, doing his best—[SYLVIA laughs] But it's also clear he's like, stalling a little bit? 'Cause Samoths is *supposed to fuckin' be here!* And he isn't.

AUSTIN (CONT.): Edmund? What're you doing, now? You went down into the, the next floor?

JACK: Yeah, I guess I'm descending the stairs.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, like Primo's room, which was like, packed with stuff, like Samoths's room, which was packed with stuff, this place is like—there are crates everywhere that are half open, um, there are lots of shelves with just, like, lots of weird doodads and things on them. And the light emanates from the ground. There are like, little cracks in the ground that have the same red light of the fire. And it—you're not sure how it's been treated or whatever, but it's kind of scary. And a strange thing that you notice is that it's not just a crack in the ground, it's that there's like, a sort of glass, or crystal laid into them. And they're catching the light from the volcano, and projecting it in a way that is a little unsettling at first. And then you take a step, and you realize it's not just projecting the light, but that it's transporting you, or it's like those crystals.

AUSTIN (CONT.): With one step you're in that home again, in the manor in the woods, and then another step and you're at the front lines looking at Samot's army across the field, and another step and you're *there*, in the moment that Samoths reached up and made the *sun*, and took

from it iron, so that he could make us tools. And with each step it's another vision. And you can't—there's so many of them, you can't, they're not distinct, they blend one into the other. It's incredibly disorienting. What do you do?

JACK: Am I capable of, am I still capable of walking?

AUSTIN: You can't quite tell which direction to go. You'll need to give me—

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you'll need to give me a roll of some sort to make it through here.

JACK: Yeah. I was wondering why this room was so big.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Lots of memories.

JACK: Um... I don't think I have any skills for this. I'm just looking at, um...

AUSTIN: I mean I think in this case it's just like, Study, or Survey, here. To like, get through. It's a four—it's a four-step clock to get through this place.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: And you could learn things here, too, depending on what you're trying to do.

JACK: Yeah. Um... my Study and my Survey are both zero value things. Can you give me a Devil's Bargain? Can you ask for those?

AUSTIN: You can. Um... the Devil's Bargain I have for you is like, *terrible*.

JACK: Oh. Uh... I'm less fond of it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's not great. I'm trying to think of a less-terrible one for you. For this.

JACK: I can just roll as they stand. Or take stress and get another dice.

AUSTIN: Where are you at on stress?

JACK: I'm on seven stress I think?

AUSTIN: Oh, well then you can't take—because you take two stress to get one.

[TIMESTAMP 20:01]

JACK: Oh, well then I'm on eight stress actually, because I only took one last time.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Well. You know. Right, you don't have any—you can't study or anything, can you?

JACK: I think I can, can I? I'll just be bad.

AUSTIN: You'll just be bad! Right, you'll take 2d6 and take the lower one.

JACK: But I mean also I feel that out of all of the characters...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Who are lost in a room full of memories, the ones who would probably be naturally most incapable are the Hitchcock twins?

AUSTIN: Yes. Agreed.

JACK: So this at least feels appropriate.

AUSTIN: I mean, here's a Devil's Bargain that I'll offer you and you can take this whenever you want. I'll give you two dice, if you give up control of Ethan. That might not be a thing you wanna use right now, but anytime today, that's on the table.

JACK (overlapping): Yeah, I will keep that, I will absolutely keep that in my back pocket.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: As it stands, I'm gonna roll. I think I'm gonna roll.

AUSTIN: Okay, this is Risky Standard.

JACK: Yeah. Um... and I think that I'm gonna roll Survey instead of Study. Because the... Survey to me has a more, um, has a more cartographic tone. Than Study.

AUSTIN: Yes. Agreed.

JACK: And I think that slipping in and out of these memories—I imagine many of which are meaningless, or are close to meaningless—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Well—

JACK: Or are they all my memories?

AUSTIN: No, none of them are your memories.

JACK: Okay, yeah, well, okay so a lot of them are just... I think what I'm trying to look for is a shared thing, or similarities.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: In the same way that, you know, someone on a horse looking over a landscape might try and find things in the treeline or something.

AUSTIN: Totally. [inhales] Alright, give me a Survey.

JACK: Give me a Risky Standard.

AUSTIN: 2d6, take the lower.

JACK: I love it! I love to be good at—video games.

AUSTIN (amused): That's what this is.

[JACK rolls, everyone laughs in response to the outcome]

AUSTIN: Oh, that's a one, my friend. That's—you got a one.

SYLVIA (distantly): Oh my God.

AUSTIN: Alright. [JACK laughs] Um—[exhales] hoo, Lord, why, why aren't—y'all should be—your other roll was a three, by the way, so it's not even like if you had gotten to roll 2d6 it would've gone well for you here. It was gonna go back.

JACK: God, this probably feels like drowning, doesn't it?

AUSTIN: [pauses] Yeah. Kind of a lot. To the degree that like, I want you—what's a good synonym for drowning? That isn't actually drowning, but is like, being overwhelmed, or—[typing in the background] being... submerged?

JACK (overlapping): Submerged.

AUSTIN: Submerged. Take a harm.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Just a level one, which is “submerged.”

JACK (quietly): Cool.

AUSTIN: Reduced effect. Yep. Or you can try to resist it, but don’t. Do that.

JACK: No, no. No.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, and you’re kind of still, like, stumbling around here. You’re not gonna be able to Survey your way out of this. The kind of last thing you see, or not the last thing you see here, but I think you kind of—so you said you were looking for similarities? But you end up finding like, the opposite of that. You end up, like, getting obsessed with a thing that you think will be a similarity, but is too broad of a thing to actually be a throughline? So it’s like “Ah, this memory has a tinge of green to it! I’ll find the next green memory!”

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But like, it turns out that those are the sorts of memories that exist all throughout the life of a god. Right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or like, “Oh, I’ll find the one where he’s eating good meals!” Like, yeah, well, that’s a lot of them. [laughs] So you make no progress through this hallway. What do you do? And you can hear the clanking in the distance.

JACK: Um...

AUSTIN: Sorry, you could still Survey, but you’re not gonna be able to survey with that technique. You’re not gonna be able to Survey by saying “What’s the similarity that guides me through here?”

JACK: Yeah. Do the memories change as I move? Or do they change just constantly?

AUSTIN: Yes. They change as you move.

JACK: What happens if I just stand still?

AUSTIN (overlapping): If you stand still it’s just the same memory. You’re in a memory.

JACK: Where? What is it?

AUSTIN: Give me a fate die.

JACK: Okay! That's 1d6.

AUSTIN: A failure here won't hurt you, it's just gonna help me determine what you see.

JACK: That's a six!

AUSTIN (overlapping): That's a six.

JACK: That would've been useful, Roll20.

AUSTIN: They're in tears together. Samothos and Samot. Samol is at the head of the table. It's the room, it's the room. It's always the room, right? And they're in tears—trying to hold them back, I think Samothos more than Samot. And... Samol shakes his head and says

AUSTIN AS SAMOL: Well, c'mon. You knew it was gonna come to this eventually. We're powerful, but... you know, it's *Nothing* itself. We're all headed that way. Bit by bit.

AUSTIN: And, the two of them have... no words. Samol kind of walks over to them and like, hands on shoulders. And he says

SAMOL: You *gotta* be strong. Just have a little confidence in yourselves.

JACK: God—

AUSTIN: And then, you take another step, and there is... it's the same scene, it's the same room. And it's Samothos teaching a little boy how to fight with a sword. And that boy is Confidence Alive. You, like—[laughs] He is six years old, but it looks like he could fucking kill Samothos.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: Just, like, swingin' that goddamn sword at his dad.

JACK: I guess, I guess... [sighs] Does—the sorrow that they felt—mortal things can't stand up in the face of that, right?

AUSTIN: No. Well—yes. You lost your father. The twins their father. This isn't so different. I mean, it's pretty different in some senses. The Hitchcocks' parents weren't immortal gods, but, I mean they weren't all that different, right?

JACK: Sure, but at the same time, when you see gods cry.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I mean, I think Hitchcock probably gets it too, right? That like, if what gods are are the impulses of other things, greater things.

JACK (overlapping): Yeah.

AUSTIN: If Samothēs was—came into being because Samol wanted there to be someone to protect people, then like... Hitchcock puts it together that Maelgwyn is the confidence that Samot and Samothēs couldn't have.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: At losing Samol.

JACK: And I think that, you know, someone like Ethan would probably... you know, know what to do here, or know how to face up against this, or get to the end of the room, but Edmund's soft. So I think he just sits down.

AUSTIN: Mm. Yeah, that's fair. In the party... Primo is like

AUSTIN AS PRIMO: Thank you again for that wonderful display of, uh, of dance and live interpretive performance—[ALI and DRE laugh] The, the ways of the orcs are mysterious and powerful, it's true. Everyone give Corinne Fal a hand. [clapping slowly] She is of course the orc Duchess of Wounds Forgotten, Wise Oxen, and the Warmth of Sunlight on Flesh. Congratulations, that was just beautiful. It was beautiful. [his claps slowly die out] Alright, does anyone else have any talents?

AUSTIN: He is sweating.

ALI: [makes amused but sympathetic noise]

JACK: Primo! [laughs]

AUSTIN: Maelgwyn... Not, no, Maelgwyn stays seated, but Castille, you can tell he's getting impatient.

ALI: That seems reasonable. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: He reaches out and taps the shoulder—alright, so wait, you're to his right, to his left is Fester. Ah, okay, so he turns and looks past you, Castille, and looks at Bewilder. And he gives

Bewilder a nod. And says—or, he doesn't say anything. Bewilder stands up at Primo's request for, uh... for a talent. [sighs] Bewilder steps to the middle of the dance floor and Primo says

PRIMO: Oh, good. Good, it's a mage. Uh—Bewilder San-Becket of the, of, says here, the Disciples of Samot, School of Illusion. This is gonna be good.

[TIMESTAMP 29:55]

AUSTIN: And for a brief moment, you see the world—it's like, the walls around this room disappear. It's as if the window has been replaced with, like—or the window has expanded around everything and the mountain is invisible and you can see Marielda to the southwest, and remember, this whole thing is actually rotating, this whole room is rotating slowly. If you remember, this whole mountain is slowly rotating. So you've been getting a different from this huge window the whole time. But now you're kind of like, the entire room disappears and you're sitting on nothing, you're sitting on invisible chairs. It's as if the whole thing is glass, completely see-through. And Bewilder is like

AUSTIN AS BEWILDER: I will transport you to see the *wonders* of Hieron! Live!

AUSTIN: And then like, lifts the room away from the volcano. Remember, he's an illusion mage, so this is some old bullshit. [laughs] And begins doing a kind of like, a sweep of the entire continent. And it—he does like a loop. So I'm gonna show you the like, the map of Hieron—oh, I can't show you, I don't have the map of Hieron here, god damn it. [laughs] This is like the third episode in a row where I've just wished I had the map of Hieron in this Roll20 thing.

AUSTIN (CONT.): So take a look real quick at the map of Hieron, he takes you, like, east up the entire coastline, past these little islands, and it's all rocky and craggy, and then he sweeps across the plains where you see the kind of like, huge, kind of, yurts and villages and forts of the orcs and then across these mountains, and you see a tower in the distance to the west of that that stands—like, to the south is the University tower and you can see that, and to the west there's this other *giant* tower that's in the middle of this beautiful forest, and there's a little seaside city near there, to the northwest. And then he kind of swings back down to the south to where the halfling tribes are slowly moving out of the woods and into the hills. And then he comes through those trees and shows the dwarven caves and quarries, and then he swings east. And you see the army. You see through the snow, Samot's army, as it nears Marielda.

AUSTIN (CONT.): And in that time, which is super disorienting, Castille, give me... God.

ALI: [laughing nervously]

AUSTIN: I think you're going to need to make... either a Hunt or a Survey to notice this. Again, this is just a fate die, this is not a Risky Standard whatever. I think it's probably a Survey to make note of this. So just give me a single fate die.

ALI: Okay. So this stuff doesn't—

AUSTIN: Yeah, no.

ALI: [rolls, sighs in relief]

AUSTIN: Alright. Well, you see him as he walks through, as he steps back and leaves. And you're—you notice it immediately from to his right. Maelgwyn, in the middle of this very disorienting display, steps away. And leaves.

ALI: Which way does he go?

AUSTIN: Out the—the only door.

ALI: Oh, okay, there's only the one door. Okay. Um...

AUSTIN: And there's probably this great moment of him looking back at you as this camera that Bewilder has kind of created has like, framed Samot on the hill outside of Marielda, and the two of them are like, standing next to each other for a brief second. And you see them both. And then Maelgwyn steps through the door. What do you do?

ALI: Can I follow him?

AUSTIN: Totally. Once the illusion is done, um, [laughs] there's again, *now* there is a, what did we say it was before? *Now* there is a ruckus at seeing Samot's army. People are shouting and like, Primo's like

PRIMO: That was quite an *illusion!* Please, everyone, remain calm, everything is going according, of course, to plan. We are going to have the dinner, the roast is almost done, as soon as our Lord Samoths, Ingenuity Alive—[sighs] His, the King of the Order of the Eternal Princes, uh, the Fire Which Protects—as soon as he arrives, we'll have dinner and everything will be fine.

AUSTIN: And he shoots you a look, Sige. 'Cause he kind of like, in front of Samol's—he's at like the head of the dance floor, which is near Samol's table. Um, Kindrali and Hedy and you have probably been having an alright conversation. About what, I don't know. God.

DRE: We all have seating accommodations? I don't know.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah. Ethan, you notice that Castille is gone. Aubrey, you're sitting alone at Samoths's table.

SYLVIA: Oh, that's not awkward.

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN (distressed and amused): No, it's really sad.

DRE: I think from across the hall Sige kind of waves at Aubrey and is like

DRE AS SIGE: Come over here! Come over here!

SYLVIA AS AUBREY [stage-whispering]: I don't wanna get up! It's already started!

DRE: [laughs]

ALI: There's a ruckus happening, it's...

DRE: Yeah, nobody's gonna notice!

[noises of agreement and amusement from everyone]

AUSTIN: Another couple of beats past and Primo is like

PRIMO: Uh, I'm sorry I meant—[stammers] it's time for dancing! We're going to start the music and then you can dance to your leisure as food is continued to be prepared...
[sighs]

AUSTIN: And he looks at you again, Sige, and shakes his head. And he says, like

PRIMO: It's happening.

DRE: Oh.

PRIMO (exhausted): Please, everyone, enjoy yourselves.

AUSTIN: And he steps over to the chair to the right of Samoths, next to you, Aubrey, and he slumps in his seat. And he takes off his jacket. He like, unbuttons his nice dress jacket and just like, flops it on the floor.

SYLVIA: [makes a sad noise]

AUBREY (hesitant & earnest): I think—I think you did a pretty good job. Don't stress out about it so much.

PRIMO: Yeah. I just wish it could happen a different way. Y'know.

AUBREY: [makes another sad noise]

DRE: Sige excuses himself from his table and basically runs over to Primo and says

SIGE: Okay, where is he? We gotta get there.

AUSTIN: Primo like, leans forward across the table and looks down into the glass dance floor and points.

PRIMO: He's workin' on somethin' down there. I don't know.

SIGE: Can you get us down there?

PRIMO: No, only the blood of—only the blood of Samoths can get down there. [pauses]
I mean... yeah. I—

AUSTIN: It's like he wants to say something. But he can't quite get there.

SIGE: Primo. I have two questions for you. How thick is this glass?

PRIMO: It's pretty thick! [laughs, a little incredulous] We didn't build a dancefloor you could break through and fall into the volcano, I'm not a—you know. Give me some credit!

SIGE: I'm giving you plenty of credit. But could this do it?

DRE: And Sige kind of, points to the gun.

AUSTIN: He shakes his head no.

SIGE (a little dejected): Okay, well the other question was gonna be 'Do you mind if I ruin your party?' But I don't think I can ruin your party now.

AUSTIN: (laughs) He shakes his head.

PRIMO (exasperated): Thank the lord, that would be—I already got a lot to clean up today, trust me. [DRE laughs in the background] But if you really... you could go to my forge and *jump*. I guess. [stutters] You could do that. Eh?

SIGE: Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: Alright, so I think we get this happening at speed. Maelgwyn and Castille make your way down the stairs and to the elevator. And at that point Sige—is anyone going with Sige?

JACK: I think Ethan has—Ethan knows that something very bad has happened.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay. The three of you, by the time they get to—oops, I didn't mean to move the word 'Dining Hall.' [laughs]

JACK: The dining hall is coming!

AUSTIN: Primo stays here and is continuing to—

ALI (overlapping): Schmooze, yeah.

AUSTIN: —kill time. As the three of you get to the bottom of the stairs, like at that same moment is when Maelgwyn and Castille have gotten to the elevator. And Maelgwyn takes a look back at you, all three of you at the elevator, sighs, removes the crown and mask so that the elevator will take him to Samoth's place instead of Samot's, and puts it down. And then steps in the elevator and it closes just as the three of you reach the bottom of the stairs.

[TIMESTAMP 39:56]

AUSTIN (cont): And then we get—[laughs] we get Maelgwyn and Castille in Samoth's room, um, which I guess we'll have to come back to in a second because I'm curious what's happening there, and then you get the three of Ethan, Sige, and Aubrey running down the hallway through Primo's room, and then down to the next hallway into the forge. I guess in Samoth's room, Iris and Orchid are... the elevator opens and they're like

AUSTIN AS LANCE NOBLE IRIS OR ORCHID: Finally! We've been stuck here! What're you two—what're you two doing here?

AUSTIN: This is to you, Castille, and Maelgwyn.

ALI: Um, Castille like, panics a little bit? But then is immediately is into like, 'fixing this' mode so Maelgwyn doesn't have to? And is like

ALI AS CASTILLE: Oh, we found you! Yeah, um, the dinner is starting, you should, you should get—downstairs?

AUSTIN: Upstairs.

CASTILLE: Upstairs. [laughs]

AUSTIN: I guess it's—yeah, it's upstairs. Um, give me a *Sway*. It sounds like you're trying to convince them not to stop you here.

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: You've got *Sway*. You've got 1 in *Sway*. [DRE laughs]

ALI: I... have some *Sway*... is there a positioning tier?

AUSTIN: Risky, Risky-Standard.

ALI: Okay.

[general noises of appreciation]

AUSTIN: Oh, word! Got a six! Look at that hustle.

ALI (relieved): Lord.

AUSTIN: The um... yeah. So I think, you like, sense Maelgwyn about to like, act, and then you say those words and Orchid is like

ORCHID (uncertain): Y-yeah, of course, we're just gonna leave Silas here in the bed, he got... I don't remember, but he needs to rest—we'll see you up there, yeah?

CASTILLE: Uh, yeah! Save a seat for me.

ORCHID: O...kay.

AUSTIN: And she and Iris wander into the elevator and it lifts them away. Maelgwyn and Castille make it down into the memory storage. And the second Maelgwyn steps there, the light in the room goes away. It like, the blade at his side lifts the light from the ground. And like, draws it in, and it's like as he's walking, it's almost like—cords are being lifted out of the ground and pulled, or like, veins are being lifted from the ground—it looks painful to the *mountain*. And at some point you pass Edmund, who is sitting down, stuck in a memory. And Castille, you don't get to see any of this memory stuff, because he's lifting it before you can see it. Edmund, Castille and Maelgwyn are here.

JACK: Yeah. Um... I think Edmund sees Castille first, and is just like, overcome with relief? [laughs] And then sees Maelgwyn, and—

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: And realizes *why* the memories have stopped, and gets up and starts walking towards them across the room.

AUSTIN: You're together, and Maelgwyn is just like, making a fast pace to the far end of this hallway where the other stairs leading up to the Divine Forge are.

JACK AS EDMUND: Is this it?

AUSTIN: Maelgwyn doesn't respond and keeps walking.

EDMUND: Is this it, Castille?

ALI: You don't know who I am, but—[laughs]

JACK: Oh, oh! I don't know who you are!

AUSTIN (overlapping): Oh, right, yeah, you don't know who—

ALI: [laughing]

AUSTIN: You see one of the weird mages!

JACK: Oh, no, you're right, I just see this weird lady!

ALI: Um, but no, I think when Castille sees Hitchcock sitting there, she like, is like

CASTILLE: Hey, uh, are you okay...?

EDMUND: ...no.

CASTILLE: [pauses, sighs] That's understandable, but we don't have time for this.

AUSTIN: Can I retcon something real quick?

ALI: Sure.

JACK: Yeah, go ahead.

AUSTIN: The memory that you have as you're yanked out of it from Maelgwyn walking, is just like, you're sitting on the grass watching Maelgwyn and your mother play in the manor yard.

JACK: [hums in distress]

AUSTIN: And then it's like embers lifted away. And that's when you look up and see Castille there, and have that conversation.

AUSTIN (cont): Sige and Ethan and Aubrey, you're at the Forge Mundane, and like, you're above the Divine Forge by... thirty feet? More? It's a big jump.

JACK: Oh my god.

DRE: Um, we do have climbing gear.

AUSTIN: True.

DRE: We could use that.

AUSTIN: But wait, do you? Are you actually wearing all that heavy shit in your formal wear?

DRE: That's true.

SYLVIA: Is there anything around that we could use as climbing gear? It's a workshop, there's gotta be stuff around.

AUSTIN: I mentioned that crane with that chain, didn't I?

DRE: Yep, you did.

SYLVIA: Yeah, you did.

AUSTIN: That's on the table. Give me a *Tinker*.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay. Uh, Risky Standard?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah.

SYLVIA: Oh, wait, no I have fine tinkering tools, so...

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA (in response to their roll): Are you fucking kidding me.

[noises of distress from the group]

AUSTIN: That's a three. That's a three. [stutters] ...Okay, so you set it up, and you get it in place, and the chain, um... you like, move the chain out over the lower level and you like, "I got

it!” and you pulled the switch, and the chain releases and it falls to the lower level with a clank.
[JACK laughs]

SYLVIA AS AUBREY: That wasn’t supposed to happen.

AUSTIN: Mm-mm. Um, at that moment you hear “clank!” and then there’s a door closing, and that door is the door to the Forge Mundane because the mages have arrived. And now, you are in a desperate position.

[SYLVIA makes a noise of distress]

AUSTIN: Edmund, Maelgwyn, and Castille are at the bottom of the stairs now. Edmund is probably dragging behind a little?

ALI: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Because of being way out of his own head.

ALI: Oh, that poor boy.

AUSTIN: What’re you doing, Castille?

ALI: Um, how does—Maelgwyn is still sort of like, sternly just walking forward, and...

AUSTIN: Yes. Yeah.

ALI: He hasn’t like, faltered at all like he was before?

AUSTIN: No, no. He seems to be—whatever happened, he seems to be more together now.

ALI: Okay. I think despite that Castille still, um... she like, puts her hand on the inner wrist of his free hand? And looks at him and says:

CASTILLE: To confidence, right?

AUSTIN: He nods.

MAELGWYN: Thank you, Castille. You’ve been... I couldn’t do this without you.

AUSTIN: And he like, uses that hand to reach back and gives your hand a little squeeze. And then steps up.

AUSTIN (cont.): Below you three, Maelgwyn, Castille, and Edmund have just arrived at the Forge Divine. Again, a humble place, not that different than the Forge Mundane, actually. Bigger, more filled with junk and failed experiments and... little toys that Samoths has made. And he's there at the anvil, smacking away at something. Above, the mages have arrived. What are you three doing?

SYLVIA: Is there anything else around here that's rope-like that we can see? [laughing] That's my first question.

AUSTIN: ...sure. I mean it's an, it's like an inventor's chamber so you tell me a thing that could theoretically be here that's rope-y and I'll tell you yes or no.

SYLVIA: I mean, just—is there more spare chain anywhere, is kinda the first thing I'd ask.

AUSTIN: Sure.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: But it's not hooked to anything, and there are mages here now.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Okay.

AUSTIN: Okay. In fact, I think one of the mages says to you, Aubrey, um, it's probably Smolder, she says as she like, lifts her hand and fire, the lava starts to pull from that conical kind of, um, feeder of lava that I mentioned before, she like, brings it out and starts to shape it with her hands. Like, in the air. She says:

AUSTIN AS SMOLDER: Aubrey, we'll give you one chance. If you are here with Samot, then come stand with us now. We represent his interest.

SYLVIA AS AUBREY: Y'know, as much as I appreciate it, and as much as we are probably on the same side, I don't really take kindly to listening to people who tie me up and knock me out.

SMOLDER: Well, that wasn't me. That was them, and they're rash. I understand.

SYLVIA: [makes long, drawn-out thinking(?) noise]

AUBREY: You can't hurt anybody. You can't hurt any of my friends.

SMOLDER: They're not who we're here to kill. You know that.

AUSTIN: She's like, forging a spear out of that fire right now.

AUBREY: Stop what you're doing and then I'll let you go through.

AUSTIN: She drops it on the ground and the second it hits the ground it becomes just an iron, half-formed spear, steaming hot. Ethan, what do you think about all this? [DRE laughs]

JACK: Um, uh—

AUSTIN: There is no treasure here. Or like, there's treasure, but it's not anything that you could flip easily for money?

[TIMESTAMP 49:58]

JACK: No, no there is no treasure here. I'm having several realizations at once. Um... and I am... uh, I think I am furious at lots of things, especially my brother? Because I figure Ethan has now pretty much put two and two together as to why everybody is in the forge above the forge where Samoths is and is talking about killing people?

AUSTIN (amused): Mm-hm. Mm-hm!

JACK: And I think I can also see him down there as well.

AUSTIN: Almost certainly.

JACK: And I'm not sure whether or not—I mean, maybe this is where I give you one of the brothers.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Which one do you wanna give me? [ALI giggles]

JACK: Which brother do you want? [SYLVIA laughs]

AUSTIN: I'm, I'm flexible. Y'know. Who has the map?

JACK: Edmund has the map.

AUSTIN: Did he take the other half?

JACK: From Silas? He absolutely did take the other half—well, actually, hang on a second. I say that like, 'cause I want that to be true. But I'm trying to think—he choked him out...

AUSTIN: Yeah, he could have taken it. And then he mesmerized the other two. He totally could've took it.

JACK: Yeah, I think he took it. Okay, Edmund has it and he's on the bottom floor.

AUSTIN: Then you have Edmund. And I take Ethan.

JACK: And I'm gonna get two dice on my next roll.

AUSTIN: Yes. Ethan is like

AUSTIN AS ETHAN (doing a great Jack impression without doing a British accent):
Hang on, now! Wh—[laughs incredulously] We can't *kill* Samoths!

AUSTIN: And he draws his sword. Aubrey, what do you do?

SYLVIA: [groans] Oh, God.

ETHAN: We could *rob* the man, but—we're not here to—Sige, you can't possibly—

DRE: Um...

AUSTIN: Which is the duelist?

JACK: Ethan's the duelist.

AUSTIN: Ah. Good. Oh, and he's dressed real nice. He's dressed in his fanciest, right.

JACK: He's the elder brother as well.

AUSTIN: Mm. That's good. What do you do, Aubrey? And Sige. Or how do you respond, Sige?

DRE: Um... what can I see below me? I can see...

AUSTIN: They're here. You can't see Samoths, he's under this disc, this like, this part of the forge. His forge is bigger, his disc is bigger and so like, he's under the part that you're on. But you can see as the other Hitchcock, Castille, and Maelgwyn come up the stairs to the Forge Divine.

DRE: If this is something that I can use Devil's Footsteps on, then I think I'm just gonna jump.

AUSTIN: What's that do? Tell me what that does.

DRE (reading from the book): "Take one stress to perform an athletic feat that is..." uh, basically superhuman.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. And you just get to do it?

DRE: Yeah, well, you can say I need to roll if you think I need to roll, but I still can attempt it.

AUSTIN: I think you need to roll to see if you res—you can definitely attempt it for sure. Absolutely. But I wanna see if it hurts you.

DRE: [laughs] Right. What was that—would that just be like a *Prowess* roll?

AUSTIN: That's a *Prowl*. Because *Prowl* is like, athletics also.

DRE: I only have one in *Prowl*. But let's uh...

AUSTIN: Hey, it's better than zero.

DRE: It is better. You know what? We'll see if Samoths has my back on this one.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Hey! That's a four. That's not so bad. Take the level one "sprained" or resist. I think you land hard on your foot—you manage to roll, but you still—[hisses through teeth] Your foot turns in a way it should not.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So you can either resist or take "sprained." Which is a level one harm.

DRE: I'll take "sprained."

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, Sige just jumped thirty feet down in front of you, Castille and Edmund.

[ALI and JACK laugh nervously]

AUSTIN: One of the mages lifts from the ground magically, again, let's probably stay on Smolder here. And, um, looks at Aubrey and like, Aubrey you can feel yourself being tugged upwards, but it's not forcefully. It's like "Do you want this lift? Do you want to come with me?"

SYLVIA: Uh... as in, go down to—

AUSTIN: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah, yes, of course.

AUSTIN: So like, you're lifted and you begin to float down with Smolder and, uh, let's say... I think probably just Smolder. Garner is currently like, casting a spell that will teleport the

remaining mages down there. Ethan is very confused, and is looking for a ladder, looking for stairs—he's like frantically turning things over on the tabletop looking for some way to get down there quickly. And doesn't see one. And I think he like, finally looks over the edge and just shouts:

AUSTIN AS ETHAN: Edmund!

JACK AS EDMUND: Yeah?

ETHAN: What're you *doing*?

EDMUND: I was in the house!

ETHAN: What *house*?

EDMUND: Our mother was there.

ETHAN (disbelievingly): Wh... *no*.

EDMUND: I came here thinking that... thinking that it was going to go...

AUSTIN: And you're shouting this, because this is like, a loud forge, remember. [ALI laughs]

JACK: Yeah.

EDMUND: You know, I didn't mean, I didn't mean—I was going to tell you. I was g—I thought there was gonna be a moment where I could've told you, that we could—and when I saw it in the house, Maelgwyn wasn't there anymore? It was just *her*.

ETHAN: You know that *none* of this works if we hide things from each other.

EDMUND: You're—

ETHAN: Fine.

AUSTIN: And he tosses the saber down to you.

[JACK inhales slowly]

AUSTIN: And walks away.

JACK: [exhales] Okay. I guess I'm gonna take the sword?

AUSTIN: It's not—he wasn't like, tossing you a sword, you know what I mean? He was...

JACK: Yeah, no, I know, but I guess I'm gonna take it.

AUSTIN: Okay. And Ethan, as the mages teleport away, steps into the hallway. And you lose sight of him. Oop, I made him big by mistake on the map, good job— [ALI laughs]

JACK: And you gain sight of him.

SYLVIA: 'Cause he's giant and poking through the ceiling now. [DRE giggles in the background.]

AUSTIN (overlapping): He's a giant now. Yep. So now everyone down there. And Samoth is huddled over the anvil, and he's making tiny little *clink clink clink*, [taps desk], *clink clink*, like very small hits of a smaller hammer.

JACK: Has he acknowledged any of this at all?

AUSTIN: No. Why should he. Who's where? Tell me where you are on this map. Um, Maelgwyn is—so the word "Divine" is Samoth, Maelgwyn is where he is here. Coming straight up off the steps, looking straight north at the back of Samoth. Sige, where did you fall to? Or where did you jump to.

DRE: I think the best scene is if I land in front, between him and Samoth.

AUSTIN: Alright, yeah, then you do it. Aubrey? Um, I think Smolder probably lands you here, that's kind of the easy drop.

SYLVIA: Alright.

AUSTIN: Edmund and Castille, where are you?

JACK: Slightly closer to Maelgwyn, where I am on his left hand side?

ALI: Yeah, I think I'm purposefully like, a few paces behind him?

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay! That look right? More or less? Closer?

ALI: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

ALI: Sige is in between Maelgwyn and—

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: ...cool. Cool with that. [JACK laughs]

AUSTIN AS MAELGWYN: Sige. Move. I have work.

AUSTIN: Says Maelgwyn.

DRE AS SIGE: I can't let you do that. Not with that knife.

AUSTIN: Do you know that the knife is—you know that the knife is weird.

DRE: I've held it. It was not good.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, you're the only one who's held it.

MAELGWYN: This knife is the only way it works.

AUSTIN: Says Maelgwyn.

MAELGWYN: Charter is the one who told me that. And I trust her.

AUSTIN: And he takes a step forward. At hearing that, by the way, Smolder and the other mages give each other a look.

ALI: God...

AUSTIN: And Maelgwyn takes a step forward. Sige, what do you do?

DRE: God. Um... Yeah, Sige is goofy enough to try and command a god.

AUSTIN: Yeah, give me—that worked in the first season too. [DRE laughs] Let's see it.

SYLVIA (whispering): *Oh my god.*

DRE: Um, so I think he's just saying "Stop, let's talk about this..." yeah. Is this...?

AUSTIN: That's *Desperate*. *Desperate Standard*, let's say.

DRE: Mm! A three.

AUSTIN: Aw, that's a complete failure. [exhales]

JACK: Great.

AUSTIN: He reaches out his hand and he's inside of the sprain that you have. His gauntlet. And he *closes* his fist and you feel your leg at your ankle *snap*.

[TIMESTAMP 1:00:04]

DRE: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Take severe damage. Unless you resist it.

DRE: Yeah, I'll resist.

AUSTIN: How are you resisting?

DRE: Oh, boy. Um...

AUSTIN: And again, you're in that nice suit, you don't have any armor on.

DRE: Didn't it have like that weird purple glow to it?

AUSTIN: Oh, it *does* have that weird purple glow to it, you *do* have armor on. You totally do.

DRE: Can I just use armor?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, use armor. I totally gave you that, that's 100% accurate.

DRE (laughing): Whoo. Okay! [laughs]

AUSTIN: He feels it *rebuffed*, but it snaps? Like there's a thunder crack and then the material throughout the entire outfit falls slack.

MAELGWYN: [sighs] Sige. *Move*.

AUSTIN: *Clink, clink, clink. Clink clink.*

ALI AS CASTILLE: Sige, just—stand down. This is what we came here for.

SIGE: You really—you think this is right? Like this? When he's like this?

AUSTIN: Maelgwyn steps forward again. He's a foot or two away from you, Sige.

SYLVIA: Um...

AUSTIN: Mm-hm?

SYLVIA: I wanna... there's a click—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: And Aubrey's got the hammer of her gun pulled back and pointed at Sige.

AUSTIN: Of course. Uh-huh.

SYLVIA: And she's like, shaking and crying, and she's like

SYLVIA AS AUBREY: Please just step aside!

DRE: Aw, okay, I think what I wanna try to do is, I wanna try to... almost like, grapple with Maelgwyn and spin him around between me and Aubrey?

AUSTIN: Okay. Give me a *Desperate-Limited Skirmish*.

DRE: Um... I think I would be, with the *Brutal* since I get +1 effect that would put me at *Standard*, right? No?

AUSTIN: No. Not with Maelgwyn. Not with the son of god. [DRE and AUSTIN laugh] That's *Desperate Limi*—um, you know what I'll give you *Standard*. I'll give you *Standard*. *Desperate Standard*. There's enough shit that you have that's good. [DRE and ALI both make noises in reaction to DRE's roll] Alright, um... you do it but there's—right, you're *Desperate Standard*, you do it but there's a consequence, you suffer severe harm, a serious complication occurs, or you have reduced effect. Um... I think you... you do it, you manage to pull him in front of Aubrey, but in the split second, almost like iaido, or kind of like, katana-style quick draw, he like, quickly slashes your other leg with the blade. Um... take the severe harm... it's worse than—the fact that it's this blade is really bad. Take the severe harm *darkened*.

DRE: Oh boy. [DRE laughs, ALI sighs] Is that something I can try to resist or is it just done?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you can try to resist it, tell me how you resist it and what you roll.

DRE: Um...

AUSTIN: But you got *Standard* effect so that's at least, hey, you got something.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You got two ticks on Maelgwyn. Maelgwyn is an eight-tick clock. You've ticked it twice.

DRE: So I think the way it would just be like, seeing the knife coming and trying to just kind of like, twist out of the way? Or maybe it's just him like, kind of counter-chopping his wrist down so it slides by.

AUSTIN: Sure. So give me a resistance with *Prowess*.

DRE: And that's just straight-up rolling the dice for *Prowess*, right?

AUSTIN: Correct. Where are you at on stress?

DRE: Uh...

AUSTIN: You're at three, that's not so bad.

DRE: And now I'm at four 'cause I took one stress from that.

AUSTIN: Nice. Okay. Aubrey, Maelgwyn is between you and Sige at this point.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Edmund and Castille, what are you doing also?

ALI: So that means that Sige is closer...?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'll move stuff around.

ALI: Um... hoo-whee.

AUSTIN: Yep.

ALI: Um... [laughs]

AUSTIN: And again, heat of fire, heat of the lava, heat of like, heat of the sun, right? Like this lava is the sun. That is what it is. Samoths reached up to the sun and brought part of it to earth.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: And so it is *bad* here. It is divine power that you're not just dead here. It is Samoth's blessing in a sense. And above they're dancing on the glass. You can look up and see that.

ALI: And, um, *god*. Yeah, this doesn't seem like the time for like, considered actions.

AUSTIN: Mm. No.

ALI: I super don't wanna steal Aubrey's thunder here, but I think I have to attack Sige?

AUSTIN: Go for it.

ALI: Yeah, I think I'm gonna, um... I'm gonna release some of my plasmic energy. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, shit.

ALI: At Sige. Because he has directly attacked Maelgwyn and that's not a good... that's... okay, so the way that that works is that I don't have to roll for it, it's dependent on *drain* for each level of magnitude?

AUSTIN: Right, and we're just using stress. What's your stress at?

ALI: My stress is at 6.

AUSTIN: Okay. So you could do a two hit—you could do a level two harm basically?

ALI: Right, yeah, I don't think that she's—I think that she's attacking Sige to communicate to him that she will hurt him if he doesn't stop, but like, right now this is probably a one or a two.

AUSTIN: Okay. It takes a stress for each one, so you tell me what it should be.

ALI: Um... two. Because I think she's a little panicked?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: But still is not giving him her full-force. You know? So I'm gonna take the two stress there, and then I think, yeah, I described it before as it sort of having the, like, aiming and then sort of like, shock effect? Like the Golden Lance guns, too.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Yeah. So, it's a level two harm, Sige. [ALI exhales and laughs nervously]

ALI: How do we describe...? Um...

AUSTIN: Yeah, what is it, what type of harm is it?

ALI: It's, uh...

AUSTIN: Last time it was a knock-out thing.

ALI: Right, it's, uh...

AUSTIN: Is it concussive, is it like a heavy punch? Is it like... is it ghost shit? Does it feel weird and magical and terrible?

ALI: I think it has to, right? 'Cause it's...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: 'Cause I've described it as her like, ghostness extending out of her? It has the same sort of look that Bolster did. So.

AUSTIN: I have a question.

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: This comes from your hands?

ALI: Um... yeah. I guess. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Does the magic skin stay on? [ALI GASPS]

ALI (sadly): Aw... Austin... [DRE laughs, ALI joins in]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh? I'm askin' you a question, that's all.

ALI (sadly): Aw... maybe not... aw... I guess not... maybe just on her hands, though, I like the idea of it just burning it off of her hands.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fine.

ALI (still sad): Aw...

AUSTIN: Alright. Sige, take, um—are you going to resist this, or are you going to take it? It's probably...

DRE: No, I think I'm gonna resist.

AUSTIN: Alright, then give me the resist roll. Which in this case, I think is... probably *Resolve*.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: 'Cause it's not just about the physical effect, it's about not—you just got filled with ghost power, it's bad. You just got shot with ghost beam. [DRE laughs]

DRE (in response to rolling): Aw!

AUSTIN: Aw, man, full resist!

ALI: Oh, boy.

AUSTIN: Rolled a six. Goddamn! Edmund, what are you doing?

JACK: I have this pistol?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you do.

JACK: I noticed it when I checked my notes earlier. [ALI snorts]

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's just a regular pistol that you have.

JACK: Yeeeah.

AUSTIN: You have like a ball—like it shoots a pistol, it's a pistol—or is it one of these guns? And if so where did you get it?

JACK (overlapping): No, oh, no, god no, it just shoots a bit of metal.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay.

JACK: Can I try and put a shot in Maelgwyn's leg?

AUSTIN (a little surprised): Sure! Hm. Give me a *Hunt*.

JACK: I think I might have zero in that, so...

AUSTIN: Oh, well.

ALI: Take a stress!

AUSTIN: He could not take a stress I don't think.

ALI: Oh. [giggles]

AUSTIN: I don't think that he could. Or maybe he could.

JACK: O-*kay*.

AUSTIN: You're not as close as Sige, so...

JACK: No, it's definitely...

AUSTIN: But definitely *Risky-Limited*.

[TIMESTAMP 1:10:01]

JACK: Okay, here we go.

AUSTIN: Is anyone helping, is anyone...?

JACK: This is probably happening simultaneously...

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, this is a very quick event. Agreed. Go ahead.

JACK: I was hoping to see if someone would help...

AUSTIN: Ah, well.

DRE: Oh *boy!*

AUSTIN: My friend, you rolled a one.

JACK: Just a perfect resistance. [ALI sighs]

AUSTIN (laughing): Almost. Just about. God, what happened—I think you just shoot him in the leg. And the iron ball hits his flesh, it like, pierces the pant leg, and then falls to the ground with a little *clank*. And he sighs. And like, turns and looks at you with fire in his eyes. And then just *gestures* at you. And one of the—probably... one of the mages, let's see... Like, in a moment, Garner, Garner Halisham has teleported to behind you? Like in a quick dash? And has a, kind of a—it's like a knife on one hand and it pops up the other direction as a baton, or like a club. And he has the knife up against your throat, and he says

AUSTIN AS GARNER: Stay calm. We promised Aubrey we wouldn't hurt you.

AUSTIN: And he clenches the knife a little closer.

JACK AS EDMUND (weakly): Thanks Aubrey!

AUBREY: No problem!

JACK: Uh... uh, oh, god.

AUSTIN: Maelgwyn just—I guess you're still trying to grapple him, Sige?

DRE: Yeah, well, I was spinning him around to get him between me and Aubrey.

AUSTIN: Right, and so you did that, and now he's just like, he's just gonna turn and keep trying to walk to Samoths. He's kind of just facing Samoths again. And goes to take a step.

DRE: (whispers) *Fuck*. Um... Can we even see what Samoths is working on? Are we close enough yet to see that?

AUSTIN: No, not from there. You're like, directly behind him.

DRE: Um, yeah, I guess—I want to try and knock the knife out of his hand. Or I guess it's now a sword at this point, right?

AUSTIN: It is like, almost a sword. Actually, I think at this point it's almost like a rapier. It has the length of a sword, but it's a thin blade. Or like a saber, it probably looks like a saber at this point. Again, give me a *Skirmish*.

DRE: Is this *Des...perate*?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Anyone who's trying to fight Maelgwyn up close is *Desperate*. But again, because you have all that bonus stuff, I'll give you *Standard. Desperate-Standard*.

DRE: Five.

AUSTIN: That's a five. That's not that bad. But again, *Desperate*'s kind of bad. Um... so yeah, I think you like—he senses you coming to hit it out of his hand, and flips it so that the bladed side of the saber is upwards so that you hit it with your forearms and cut yourself. But you do manage to knock it onto the floor out of his hands. But take the harm, um... *bleeding*. Or resist.

DRE: Yeah, I'll resist.

AUSTIN: Alright. Give me a... I think this is *Prowess*, this is like a body thing. But you have to tell me how you resisted it.

DRE: Okay. Um... god, I almost wonder if it's just, if he just powers through, but he just fuckin' powers through. So I'm at five stress.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: *Eugh*.

AUSTIN: How's everybody doin'? [pause] Maelgwyn sighs and like, looks down at the sword, at the saber, and shakes his head.

SYLVIA: Where is it? Where did it fall?

AUSTIN: It's just in front of him. Or maybe it's a little further away? I have to mark him, he's been hit two more. [ALI laughs] Maelgwyn is at four of eight.

ALI: Can I try to grab the...?

AUSTIN: I'll mark where the sword is. One sec.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Sword is like, right in between Maelgwyn, Sige, and Samothos.

ALI: Okay, so that would take a little...

AUSTIN: I mean it would be a run, you could try to run past Sige, but I would give you a *Prowl* or something to get around Sige.

SYLVIA: Could I get it?

AUSTIN: You could totally try to get it. Yes. You totally could. Aubrey's a little closer and doesn't have to run around Sige to get it. So yeah, Sige, Aubrey is now standing above the knife-slash-blade. Are you picking it up?

SYLVIA: Yes.

AUSTIN: Sige, are you stopping her? And like, Aubrey, I imagine you have the gun still pointed at Sige this whole time?

SYLVIA: I don't know if pointed at him, but she has it out for sure.

AUSTIN: Okay. Sige, what are you doing? As Aubrey leans down for the knife.

SIGE (pleading): Aubrey, you don't wanna touch that! *Please* don't touch that.

AUBREY: I have to!

SIGE: No you don't!

AUBREY: You don't... you haven't seen it.

SIGE: Aubrey, I don't give a shit if we kill him, but it can't be with that *fucking* knife.

AUBREY: Well with *what* then?

AUSTIN: As you argue, Maelgwyn reaches out a gauntleted hand and the knife zips back to him. And he takes a step forward. And is now like, still in between Aubrey and Sige, like almost directly in between both of them. Edmund, how're you doing? As this guy has a knife—go ahead.

JACK (overlapping): Can I try and wriggle out of this—I don't, like, what's the—

AUSTIN: Yeah!

JACK: What's the protocol here?

AUSTIN: I don't know! It's probably a *Skirmish* or a...

JACK: How did Hella get out of this situation? [DRE and ALI laugh]

ALI: What?

AUSTIN: Didn't she get killed?

JACK: Wasn't Brandish, didn't Brandish have a knife to Hella's throat?

ALI: Oh, yeah, she, uh, headbutted him.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah, I think—

JACK: Oh, can I headb—yeah... I'll give that a shot.

AUSTIN: Yeah, give me a *Skirmish*. Sure.

JACK: Yeah, okay. Um... or like, a reverse headbutt.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's like a backwards headbutt. Yeah.

JACK: Um... okay. This is *Desperate*.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah.

JACK: Standard effect.

AUSTIN: *Desperate-Standard*.

JACK: Let's do it! [pauses to roll] Oh my god!

AUSTIN (quietly): Oh, boy.

SYLVIA: [laughs sympathetically]

JACK (laughing): That's a...

AUSTIN: You're going to take *bleeding* now—Jack rolled a two!

ALI: Oh, my god.

AUSTIN: It's not—he didn't even cut you, you just like—[laughs] Threw your head back—

JACK (laughing): And then just cut my throat!

AUSTIN: And cut your throat, yeah! [JACK groans] And he like, [makes surprised noise] and like, drops you! Because he's like, [makes surprised noise again], he didn't mean to cut you!

JACK: Oh, god, okay, so now I have level two harm *bleeding*.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's bad. It's not good.

JACK: That removes one dice.

AUSTIN: That actually might be a level thr—if you're in *Desperate* it's a severe harm.

JACK: Oh—okay, yeah, I was in *Desperate*. There is a lot of blood.

AUSTIN: So instead of *bleeding*, that is *bleeding out*.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or are you resisting?

JACK: I don't know if I can with my stress.

AUSTIN: What's your stress at? Oh, eight. Yeah, that's—mm-hm!

JACK: Okay, I'm bleeding out.

SYLVIA: Do you wanna be traumatized or dead?

ALI: Yeah...

JACK: Well I also need, I mean—need help. Is the thing. [DRE laughs] Um... yeah. G...good.

AUSTIN: *God*. I could have hurt you *more*. Their example of *Desperate* severe harm is “the ghost rides the energy directly into your mind; you suffer two types of harm: Level two *burned* from the energy and also level three *possessed*. Which would you like to resist first?” [ALI giggles]

JACK (laughing): Holy shit.

AUSTIN: Don't forget I could be *that* sort of GM!

SYLVIA: *God*.

JACK: Oh, wow, um... yeah, no, so yeah I'm, I can't resist—

AUSTIN: So Edmund is bleeding out and holding the wound, presumably? With one hand?

JACK: Yeah, I think he's holding the wound and he's trying to get the map out of his pocket.

AUSTIN (pityingly): *Oh*, honey... yeah. And there's like, blood dripping all over it.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. God. And it's *the* map of Hieron, right, you get that?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh, god, d'you know—it's not just *the* map of Hieron, it's the map of Hieron that has a burn mark in it.

JACK: Yeah...

AUSTIN: The other half, the half that the priest had, that Silas had, has a burn mark in it, and next to it is a strange phrase. Do you know what the phrase is?

JACK: Is it "The Mark of the Erasure"?

AUSTIN: It is "The Mark of the Erasure." And there's this weird fucking island that you don't know what it is.

ALI: [claps in the distance] Sorry.

AUSTIN: And time is weird.

JACK: Yeah. I don't notice any of these things.

AUSTIN: No. You're looking for the treasure probably. I mean, you see the little mark in the woods! [ALI and JACK chuckle] It's like a little house! It's right there. South of Rosemerrow. Near the sea. That place your mother went. Castille, what are you doing?

ALI: God, okay. So Edmund is... bleeding out from—who was holding him?

AUSTIN: One of the mages. Um... Bewilder. No, Garner.

[TIMESTAMP 1:20:03]

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Garner Halisham.

ALI: Um... Sige and Aubrey are having a... stand-off, I guess?

AUSTIN: Sort of. With Maelgwyn in the middle. But Maelgwyn is also not being held down by either of them and is just like—slow step forward, slow step forward.

ALI: Okay. And has the knife again, and is... whatever.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. Yep.

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: I think when the mages see the knife, I don't think any of you see this, but one of their eyes—I think probably, um, Fester Finlay's eyes go wide. This was not part of the plan.

ALI: [laughs] Yeah, well he trusts me and it's fine.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

ALI: [laughs sadly] Um...

AUSTIN: It is time to pull all the triggers.

ALI: Yeah, I know, so this is, the reason I'm so torn about this is 'cause, um... Castille is Charter Castille? [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yep!

ALI: And Charter would want to help Maelgwyn, Castille wants to help Edmund? And they are like, two people living in this body, so it's tough.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah! That don't sound easy!

ALI: It's not great! Um, oh man...

SYLVIA: Would Aubrey be able to see Edmund, or Ethan? Which one is it again?

DRE: Edmund.

AUSTIN: It's Edmund.

SYLVIA: Edmund. Edmund bleeding?

AUSTIN: From that position? I don't think through Maelgwyn.

SYLVIA: Oof. Okay.

AUSTIN: You probably heard the yelp maybe? Ah, mm, I don't know, it was all very fast. And—yeah.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: For what it's worth, I think that Garner is like, kneeling down with Edmund and like, has his head on their lap.

JACK: Oh, yeah...

AUSTIN: And is trying to hold the blood in also? Garner didn't want to hurt—wasn't trying to hurt you. Maelgwyn takes a step forward. What do you do? He is... he's within striking distance now, but is getting closer.

ALI: Yeah, I think it's probably Aubrey's move, 'cause I think that if Castille's gonna do anything she's gonna... interrupt? 'Cause her stakes are kind of clear here and I don't wanna like, break the Aubrey-Sige conversation to take an action.

SYLVIA: Well the thing is, the conversation's gonna end the second she sees Edmund if Maelgwyn steps forward—

AUSTIN: Yep, that happens.

SYLVIA: 'Cause what I want is to have her run over once she sees that—like literally drops her gun when she sees Edmund bleeding out.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. [makes sad noise]

SYLVIA: And run over and try to help.

AUSTIN: Alright. Give me a roll.

SYLVIA: Alright. Um...

AUSTIN: This a *Tinker*? "You can tinker with bones, blood, and bodily humors to treat wounds, stabilize the dying, or study a malady or corpse. Also, your crew gets +1d to long-term project healing rolls!"

SYLVIA: Oh, that'll be handy!

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Um, *Desperate* or *Risky*? I'm just saying this now, I'm taking an extra stress, two stress, to give myself an extra die just immediately.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think it's, um... god. I think it's *Contro*—ah, it's *Risky*. It's *Risky* because it could go bad. You don't wanna make it worse. But it's not *Desperate*.

SYLVIA: Because I have... do my tinkering tools still give me a bonus for this?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: 'Cause you're just using those same tools. And it's *Standard* with those.

SYLVIA: With those. Okay.

AUSTIN: 'Cause you're trying to get rid of *bleeding*. Or, *bleeding out*. You're trying to drop it basically from *bleeding out* to *bleeding*. Yeah. Tinkering with the throat. Like Dre says.

SYLVIA: [exhales in disappointment]

JACK: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: That's a two. That's not good. [ALI sighs]

JACK: This is a high stress situation.

AUSTIN: It is. It's a very high stress situation. Um... ah, man. I think you take a, um... Hitchcock?

JACK: Yeah?

AUSTIN: You take a level two harm here.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which is like... *drifting*.

JACK: Okay.

ALI (quietly): *God*.

AUSTIN: You're drifting in and out of consciousness at this point. And like, not just in and out of consciousness. In and out of like, the memories you walked through before.

JACK: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: You're like, dying on the ground of the battle that Samoths gave that speech at, you're dying on the ground in the yard where your mom and Maelgwyn play. You're dying in the train where on its first ride, when Samoths and Primo rode it together, Samoths a huge grin on his face, proud of what Primo did. And meanwhile, on the other train, the real train, Ethan boards. And loads a plate into the map. And the train begins to pull away.

JACK: He's just leaving?

AUSTIN: He's just leaving. There's a candlestick under his arm. Sige, what're you doing?

DRE: Oh, boy. Can I—I guess I can see what just happened—when Aubrey runs over I look and see.

AUSTIN: Yes. And as you turn, Maelgwyn takes the opportunity to step a little closer. And the blade is in his hand. And his gauntleted hand is like, beginning to rise.

DRE: Yeah. I just... I pull out the gun and I just rush him. And I think the move I do is I shove the cane part into his back and then pull the trigger.

AUSTIN: Gimme a *Skirmish*.

ALI: Can I interrupt?

AUSTIN: Totally. What do you do?

ALI: Um... I would like to shoot Sige again, but this time take three stress for it?

AUSTIN: Sure. Which would give you trauma.

ALI: Uh-huh! [laughs]

AUSTIN: So with three, I think this is the thing I just read, isn't it? Sige. You have two resistance rolls. [ALI laughs a little hysterically] One is with *Prowess* and that is *burned*, and the other is with *Resolve*. And that is *haunted*. Or I guess you can't use haunted since haunted is a—what's like—*disembodied*.

DRE: [laughs incredulously] Yeah! That's a lot more horrifying.

ALI: Yep.

DRE: Let's do *Prowess* first.

AUSTIN: Okay. [DRE rolls]

JACK: Oh my god!

AUSTIN: Take two stress. That was not as bad.

DRE: So I'm at seven.

AUSTIN: Alright. Now give me, uh, *Resolve*.

DRE: [rolls, laughs, the other players make noises of appreciation]

AUSTIN: Oh, shit. He rolled a six. He gets zero stress from that.

ALI: Jesus Christ.

AUSTIN: Castille.

ALI: Yeah—[laughs] Oh... um...

AUSTIN: What's your—tell me your, um... and again, the flesh like, pulls away from this hand more. [ALI groans] What's your trauma?

ALI: I was traumatized by attacking Sige, which means that Charter has... basically won? So I think that my...

AUSTIN: Cold, haunted, obsessed, paranoid, reckless, soft, unstable, or vicious.

ALI: Um... She's been unstable for a little bit, so it's not that.

AUSTIN: No, in fact this is being more stable, right?

ALI (amused): Which is great. Good for her. Um... I think vicious is a little extreme, I think it's gonna switch to cold.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I could see cold or haunted, but like, the haunted is literally just like—it's the opposite? It's that you're Charter that's being haunted by Castille now.

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: But cold is fine too.

ALI: Yeah, I, um... I'm gonna go with cold I think.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That sounds good. Alright. And then you drop to the floor. Like all of that energy, it's like the last of Castille, in a sense. Um... *god*. It's literally a ghost—it's literally the pala-din shape of Castille like, slams into Sige, who just like, bare-chests it. Sige, make your move. Shoot your shot. Gimme that *Skirmish*.

DRE: *Desperate-Standard?*

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: So close. Five.

AUSTIN: Alright. You continue to—you get the front of the gun like, jammed into him? And you pull the trigger, but the trigger doesn't go. And he like, you like, um... so you have it in his back, basically, like through the cape? And you pull the trigger and it's not going, and you look up again and he has his gauntlet up in a fist facing like away from you still, with the gauntlet *closed* as if he's like, stopped, as if to say *stop*. And you're pulling the trigger and it's not going, but like, the front of the gun is like, deep in there, and definitely has like, stalled him. But you rolled a five on *Desperate* which means... you get a—I think that's just reduced effect. So I'm gonna remove one of these things. So you have him down to three pie slices on his clock. You kind of stumbled him, but like, that's it.

[TIMESTAMP 1:30:00]

AUSTIN (CONT): You know, actually, as he closes the fist, the trigger mechanism breaks. You lose this opportunity for action, also. And then the gun like, catches—it doesn't catch fire so much as it like, becomes ember and floats away from the middle until you're just left with sticks.

MAELGWYN: Sige, this is your last chance. You don't want to be here.

AUSTIN: And he like, throws his arm over the side to like, flash his cape, and the blade is out and like reflecting the fire of the volcano. So like, left fist up in a fist, right arm out with the blade... what do you do?

DRE: How close are we to Samoths at this point?

AUSTIN: He's... this is it. He could just as easily cut you or kill Samoths with this blow. It is unclear.

DRE: Um...

AUSTIN: Is anyone else doing anything in this moment? Castille you're done, Edmund and Aubrey you're both up, but Edmund is in a worse place than even before. Edmund, did I give you a negative thing?

JACK: Yeah, I'm drifting right now.

AUSTIN: Drifting, right, you're drifting. Right, I forgot. That's a shame.

JACK: I'm also still bleeding out.

AUSTIN: Yes. You are.

JACK: What, actually, what did Aubrey *do*?

AUSTIN: Um, I bet—

SYLVIA: She was just trying to stop the bleeding.

JACK: It went extremely bad.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, my guess is that there was a residue on the tools.

JACK: Oh... yeah.

AUSTIN: Some of the dream dust? From being in the shop.

JACK (overlapping): Oh, that's absolutely what it is.

AUSTIN: And it like, immediately took you away.

JACK: Part of me... wonders whether or not some of the dreams that Hitchcock is experiencing are just the workings of his mind at this point.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: Like I wonder whether or not...

AUSTIN: Probably.

JACK: The dream dust is only going so far.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: But no, I don't think I'm doing anything because I don't... think I *can*.

AUSTIN: Right. You could try. But it would not be pretty.

JACK: No. I'd probably end up shooting somebody I didn't want to shoot, and I've already done that twice I think?

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yes. Yep! Alright.

SYLVIA: Is there anything I can—Can I try to help him again?

AUSTIN: Totally. You could totally try to help him again.

SYLVIA: I wanna...

AUSTIN: You didn't lose the opportunity.

SYLVIA: Can I ask some of the mages to help me with what like, help me with like...

AUSTIN: Absolutely. Take another die.

SYLVIA: Awesome. I'm gonna take stress again as well.

AUSTIN: Okay. Where are you at on stress?

SYLVIA: I'm at four now.

AUSTIN: Okay that's not so bad.

SYLVIA: Standard effect still?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: *Risky* again?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Two extra dice, I swear to god.... [rolls, exhales in relief]

AUSTIN: Look at that six! Look at that six.

JACK: O-kay!

AUSTIN: Reduce *bleeding out* to *bleeding*.

JACK: That's a level two harm now.

AUSTIN: Or not even to bleed—um, yeah, to *bleeding*. It's a level two harm.

JACK: So I'm now...

AUSTIN: You're not dying, you're still *drifting*, you're still not in a good place.

JACK: I'm *drifting*, and I'm *submerged*, and I'm *bleeding*.

AUSTIN: I forgot that you were *submerged*. God. Edmund.

SYLVIA: What's submer...ged? [chuckles]

JACK: That was when I was in the storage room.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: In those dreams, yeah.

SYLVIA (laughing): I thought you were in the lava for a second!

JACK (laughing): Oh, no!

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're in the lava now—[ALI laughs] Sige. The mages are now like, crowded around Edmund trying to save him. Distracted by that, they also have lost sight of the blade and aren't interceding. It's now—what're you doing?

DRE: Uh... I think he just yells at Samothos. And is like:

SIGE: Get off your ass and do something!

AUSTIN: Yeah. [sighs] Oh, man. Give me a *Command*.

DRE: Oh god! [laughs hysterically]

JACK: You can't just ask a god to do something!

AUSTIN: *Limited. Limited. Risky-Limited.*

DRE (laughing): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Unless you have something that boosts your *Command* skill that I don't know about.

DRE: I don't think so, no. [pause as DRE rolls] Oh, three! That's appropriate.

AUSTIN: And that's a three. And he turns. And Samoths, in his like, apron, all covered in soot and dust... turns with a sword in his hands. Like, not holding it by the hilt, it's resting in open palms. Like a gift. But Maelgwyn doesn't stop to see it. I think if Maelgwyn had taken that blade and done what he was supposed to do, a lot of things would go differently here. But he doesn't. He uses this one instead. And grabs his father by the shoulder, and leans in, and cuts deep. And it's almost instantaneous. The volcano *shudders*. And the ground rises up around Samoths. Almost like a, like a wall rising behind him tight, and then to the right, and he leans forward as he bleeds and whispers something to Maelgwyn. And the bright blade that he'd been working on drops to the ground and clanks in front of your feet, Sige.

AUSTIN (CONT): And Maelgwyn is *furios*. He turns and is like, sobbing. And his father like, leans back and the walls that were coming up around him, another thing kind of raises from below and it's like a throne—it's like a chair, it's like a throne from the volcano. And around the entire—this entire, like, room, around this entire forge, walls spring up and it tilts downward and like, begins to—if you see it, I'll just grab it 'cause it's at the bottom of the map here. It tilts on an angle and begins to ride across the top of this lava. And it is incredibly jarring, and you're being thrown all over the place. And Maelgwyn, in tears, turns his attention to the mages as his father bleeds out. And he, unlike you, is not rolling around on the ground here. He steps with clean and clear determination.

AUSTIN (CONT): And the blade now is just a sword. It has a handguard with—Ali, you said that Hella's sword has one big ruby in the middle?

ALI: Yeah. With little ones around it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So it has one big one, and then with each kill of one of these mages, another little ruby gets added. And this thing, like, this platform shudders through the volcano. It happens very quickly. And—[laughs] this is also the first time that any of you are back in Marielda today. It is... hell. You're being shuttled, almost as if through another railway, back down through the entire city, across the Wall of Gold, and then into where the Maelgwyn Park is, of course.

AUSTIN (CONT): And I think Ethan sees this happening from the train line. Like, sees this speeding disc fly through the air as the city is reconfigured around it. Turning the park and the hanging gardens into a new tower. It happens very quickly, and I think we just get flashes of what's happening here—maybe from Ethan's view, because Ethan, from the train, is able to look

down and see that the city is in revolt. It is High Sun Day, it is the hottest day of the year, and the Black Slacks have chosen it as their day to make a move.

AUSTIN (CONT): And they're lucky, in a sense. First, because of this death, what Samol had said was true—and Samoths said it too: The city springs itself naturally into reconfiguration, into a protocol that happens once he's been killed. And because of that, all of the pala-din have been moved to the tomb, into this tower, this mausoleum that is now at the center of the Chrysanthemum Parish. And they stand in rank, in salute, as their god dies. And they don't stop the Black Slacks, or any of the other groups, as they slowly push into the rest of Chrysanthemum and Orchid, and take back what they believe is theirs.

AUSTIN (CONT): Nor do the pala-din gather as the forces of Samot arrive on the northern shore and begin to build a bridge. It's slow going, but with the magic of Samot they'll be here in no time. And to the south, with no other option, Samol arrives again in that other form, old and scaled and massive. And crashes through the wall again into Iris Parish, slamming down the factories with a roar. And all of you are there at the top of the tower where the throne has slowly become a casket. What do you do?

JACK: I think probably start praying. [AUSTIN laughs a little]

SYLVIA: I think Aubrey's making sure that Hitchcock is, like 100% stabilized before doing anything.

[TIMESTAMP 1:40:02]

AUSTIN: He's stabilized.

SYLVIA: Okay. Where's the casket again?

AUSTIN: It's where the word "Divine" is. And Maelgwyn is back there in tears, both blades at his feet. And you can see out among—like, from the tower now, on the top floor of the tower, and like Maelgwyn's Park, like the Park of Maelgwyn, it's like columns neo-classical style, and you can look out down onto the rest of the city from here. It's, for people who've been listening since Season 1, it is the same view that Hadrian sees from the tower in the City of First Light. Except, again, revolution is happening, along with a war. Along with a huge monster attacking. There's no peace here, not yet.

JACK: Is there any sign that the thing we might've been looking for is happening, whatever that is? Or is it just all noise?

AUSTIN AS SAMOL: Well, Lem, from that perch above Marielda, the Six watched as two things happened that would reshape Hieron forever. The first thing is what Charter Castille noticed as she rose to her feet. She saw a struggle in the erratic energies of the

room. As Samoths wheezed, sittin' in that throne of clay and blood and fire, his divine life *fled* from his physical form. And as it fled it was torn in four different directions. Partially, it was pulled by a gentle force into the blade that Samoths himself had forged; a shining thing, bright like the iron sun in its true form.

SAMOL (CONT): That fool loved me. Loved Hieron so much, and had his confidence shattered so thoroughly, that he figured how to make his own demise a panacea for what ailed the world. For the cancer that was killin' me. If... If Maelgwyn had used that blade to slay his father, it would've become a weapon strong enough not only to hold off the Heat and the Dark, but to defeat it utterly. To fill it with the *force* of *will* of Samoths's own life. It would've replaced the void of emptiness with the breath and love of Ingenuity Alive.

SAMOL (CONT): But Maelgwyn did not use that sword. He used the Blade in the Dark. A tool crafted under shadow by the apocalyptic scholars of the Yellow House. And theorized by some members of the University, including the esoteric Charter Castille, to be able to use the power of the Dark to hold off the coming of the Heat. And while the sword of Samoths tugged gently on the spirit of my son, that hungry blade dragged the god of invention with a startlin' hunger.

SAMOL (CONT): But I swear to this day, if all this had happened just a year or so earlier, everything would be different. Even in the force of that power. Even under the hunger of the Blade in the Dark. Normally Samoths would've been able to resist. But with Tristero... well, you see, back then it was the case that when you try to kill a thing like Samoths, like *me*, our demise would not last long. The Lord of Death, Tristero, was the one who stood at the door to Void itself and he and us, well—we're on what you might call a first name basis. So he'd stall the ravenous pall of Nothin' long enough for us to gather our strength and use our divine authority to rewrite history such that we were not killed at all.

SAMOL (CONT): But Tristero, well. He'd abdicated his throne by then, seein' the world at war, and anticipating the terrors that the desperate and powerful would soon unleash. He'd moved to a little seaside resort town that he loved, a place called Nacre. Where he used all the strength of his divinity to protect that city and those in it from what was to come.

SAMOL (CONT): Or—or things might've been different if I'd made it there in time. I was stronger then than I am now, but... I was tired. And I thrashed through the city, rushed towards that tower all fins and scales and whatnot—you should've seen me as a younger man, I tell you. But I moved too slow. I failed to stop it. With no one mannin' the door to the void, it reached through and sapped the strength of Samoths, my son. And under that shade of Nothin', well. I can't quite be sure exactly what happened to him. I don't know if he was split, if some of him still lingers on in that waiting room near the

void. If some of it walks Hieron in a spiritual form I can't detect. Or, or maybe some of it did make it into that holy saber. Though I'm not quite sure where that sword is. What I do know is... a large amount of his selfhood was captured by that blade. By the blade you carry now, Hella.

SAMOL (CONT): As for the fourth direction Samoths was pulled, well. That's tied tight to that second thing the Six witnessed in the tower. Samot, Maelgwyn, the mages. They were right. When Maelgwyn saw his error he *did* have a holy desire, the sort of thing that results in the creation of a new divine power. Except... seeing his father there, bleedin', dyin' slow, well. With his confidence shattered, the only thing that boy Maelgwyn wanted was his daddy back. And so the Six watched as my grandson's glowin' hair turned ashen. Watched as his figure gained a childish approximation of the bulk of his father. And so Maelgwyn, in his final act, turned around and faced the Six and there he was, Samoths alive again.

SAMOL (CONT): But ah... there was that fourth pull. That last little hungry thing. Desperate for the soul and strength of Samoths. Like I told Sige, Samot and Maelgwyn believed that the tomb would have an artifact of power, something to hold of the Heat and the Dark. What they did not understand was that the tomb *was* the artifact. And seeing this new Samoths, naked and distraught, it found what it needed and *bound* him to that tower. Leading him by force of will into a deep chamber underneath the surface of Marielda where it held him down and began siphoning, not only his power, but our entire divine authority in a way that changed everything forever.

SAMOL (CONT): You know, sometimes I hear you talk about divine authority, you mortals, in a way that's metaphorical. As if to say that, you know, this king or that queen has the divine authority, that is, the right to do this or that. But the sort of authority we wield is not metaphorical. It ain't about rights, it's about ability. We weren't authorities because we were allowed to change the world. We were authorities because we were *authors*. Because we wrote and rewrote history and materiality as it pleased us. But that was before the tomb.

SAMOL (CONT): That tomb. Maelgwyn. Samoths. It took all of our authority from us. It concentrated it and it *stabbed* it through Marielda itself. Pinning the city in place, safe from the hunger of the Heat and the Dark. You know, other folks tried similar things. All throughout Hieron. Some of 'em are still tryin' now. Sometimes it didn't go so well. But that's another story.

AUSTIN: So what happens to the Six? Because I can tell you what happens to Marielda.

JACK: We can't just all... go home together. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Is that not what happens after a heist? [DRE and JACK laugh a little] You don't all just go back to your home?

JACK: I think Edmund's gonna try and get back to the school.

AUSTIN: [sighs] There's a—he finds a hand-drawn version of the map of Hieron. And the mark in the woods is circled, and underneath Ethan's written "I'll be here." Sige?

DRE: I think after the fight Sige picks up Aubrey's gun and goes to give it back to her.

AUBREY: I'm sorry.

SIGE: Me too.

SYLVIA: She puts the gun down on a surface somewhere, anywhere. And she doesn't pick it up again. And she just leaves it there.

AUSTIN: Castille? [ALI exhales] Charter, sorry.

ALI: Yeah. Hi. Hey. Um... god...

[TIMESTAMP 1:49:57]

AUSTIN: Maelgwyn can't leave this building, ever. Sorry, Samoths can't leave this building, ever. [ALI chuckles quietly] The day you became Charter, he became Samoths. In this broken version of him.

ALI: She might stay there with him, right? She's the one who fucked this up.

SAMOL: Well, from that high perch, Castille watched as Samot and his forces rolled in. Within weeks he'd taken control of Marielda, and he made that tomb, that tower, his new palace. High above the city, but still among the people. A divine structure, but a somber one, too. With pressure from the Black Slacks, and stripped of his ability to rewrite history, well. Samot was forced to be a lord who listened to the masses of Marielda. Who had to move with care and caution, whether it was a human or a weaver or a cobbin, or anything else speakin'.

SAMOL (CONT): He made a decree: there would be no more reconfiguration. Just the things we build and destroy with our own two hands. He would need to be a new sort of god, he realized. One who worked with his people, instead of just for them. One who taught them to run their own affairs with a unique, mortal sort of competence. This wasn't the shifting, stifling city of Marielda any longer. This was somethin' altogether new in Hieron. And it needed a new name. So, one year after the death of Samoths, Samot

held court and redesignated the island with a new moniker: The City of First Light. Named not for the mountain where Samothēs first struck tool to iron, but for Samot's very own first light, Samothēs himself.

SAMOL (CONT): And that somber city, well. It survived. Unfortunately for Hieron, well. Y'see, Samot... god of books and wine, right? That left him, let's say, uniquely suited for livin' in a world where you can't fix your mistakes. Where you have to live through 'em and figure out how to do better in the future. The rest of us... us egoists you call gods? So convinced that we could cause no harm we couldn't undo. And that's just me and my kin. The mages? The *dwarves*? You've seen the world. You call it the Erasure, right? All those problems, all at once? With no way to turn back the clock? These days I don't even wanna turn back the clock. I just want it to reach midnight. I just wanna move on. Damn Hieron, damn whoever's left livin' here. As for the Six, well. They *did* move on, bless 'em.

AUSTIN: Do you go? Does Edmund go?

JACK: Oh, god, to the place?

AUSTIN: After Ethan?

JACK: I think absolutely. I think he probably packs bags—I think probably still feverish, still fighting off whatever this is. And tries to leave this city that's falling apart, to try and get to this place.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think you get there, and... let's do all of them and come back to this last. Sige, where are you a year after this? Under the rule of Samot. Or not.

DRE: No, I think he's still there. And I think all he does is he, like, just tries to do small little inconsequential good deeds to try and make up for the fact that he felt like he's responsible for all of this.

AUSTIN: Rebecca knocks on your door one day. She has a coat and a gun. What do you do?

DRE: I put on the coat and I take the gun.

AUSTIN: Aubrey. A year from now, what do you do?

SYLVIA: Samot wanted his own Primo and he's getting it. She's staying by his side.

AUSTIN: He loves working with you. You make small improvements. The world doesn't change dramatically over the course of your life. It's not—there's no reconfiguration, there's no miracle

cures, there's no gods from machines. But people live happier lives because of the things you build. Charter?

ALI: I think she serves Samot with guilt and with loyalty.

AUSTIN: Do you keep in touch with the mages?

ALI: Probably.

AUSTIN: One day, the letters stop coming. They said they wanted to try something. The ones that remained. The ones that weren't devoured by the sword. In fact, it's their disciples that tried something. It didn't go well. And Edmund, as you approach, as you move through the woods on a horse, presumably.

JACK: I guess so, yeah.

AUSTIN: You hear music. Guitar, and then a clarinet. And you see a little house in the woods. A little manor. And you're scarred and wounded and probably hungry, because you could not have known to pack as much food as you needed. And you knock on the door and it opens. What do you see?

JACK: I think it's my brother.

AUSTIN: Is he alone?

JACK: Mm... no.

AUSTIN: And he leads you in, and there's a beautiful living room that's filled with stuff, and a dining room, and he goes:

AUSTIN AS ETHAN: Oh, there's some food in there if you'd like, of course, there's, uh, there's anything you could ever want.

AUSTIN: And there's the yard. And out in the yard there's an old man, sittin' on a stump with a guitar. And it's weird, there's like—it's like a piece of him, his skin like bark has been cut away and it hovers nearby in orbit. It's like his shoulder has been detached. Like I said, the mages didn't do so good. But he's strummin' that guitar anyway. One more song.

SAMOL: And, well... you've seen the work them boys did here. Good work. They lived good lives. They helped people, helped themselves. Really, they did. But ever since that day in Marielda, well. Speakin' personally? I never felt the same.

[MUSIC - I HAVE SEEN THE STARS - BEGINS]

SAMOL: And I think it was on that day all those years ago that Maelgwyn saw the truth of it. Maelgwyn learned what drives us into those long nights. It isn't other people. It isn't your family. It isn't even yourself. It's the fact that all of this is built on *nothin'*. All of our achievements, and all of our misdeeds, the things that turn us sleepless, all of it lost in a void that does not care, that does not know how to care, that does not know how to *know*.

Velas. Ordena. Rosemerrow. The Archives and the University both. Marielda, the City of First Light. Hieron itself.

Funny story, Hieron. You know why they call it that? 'Cause someone misheard me once. "What is this place?" they asked, and I laughed, thinkin' about the nothin' below us, the nothin' that bore me.

"Oh, you know," I said. "This is some place higher on."

We float on *nothin'*. There is no foundation, there is no fundament, *there is only us*.

And listen to me close: for a while I hoped—I *prayed*—that there was somethin' above. That something would rescue us. And that day all those years ago, when the stars first showed up in the sky, I thought—maybe, just *maybe*, we would be saved. But now I have seen the stars too.

And they will not save us.

[TIMESTAMP 1:59:31]

[MUSIC - I HAVE SEEN THE STARS - PLAYS TIL THE END AT 2:01:29]