

Realis 17: Wooden Hospitality Pt. 1

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Opening Narration

Austin: Realis is a science fiction and dark fantasy series that contains discussion of violence, injury, slavery, cannibalism, and disease. This campaign never depicts sexual violence, always shows you where the sword goes, but never what it does, and always errs on the side of maximalism.

[“[Sapryc](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Austin: For centuries. Krater, largest city on Sapryc, has endured. Flood waters from the Straight. It has endured. War with the Empest, it has endured. Annexation by the Venerant See, it has endured. But flames from above. But flames from above...

It is behind them now, the unnamed band. Mirador Cantata’s eclectic bodyguards, traveling north into a place where even forests can be wastes. The blaze behind them rendered only in brightness and heat and odor, but not color, so they cannot answer what in what hue the fire burns here on Sapryc, in its acrid air; back in Krater with the potent fuel that is condensed life..

They can only march forward. Left foot. Right Foot. Left foot. Right foot. A march, a march. On another moon, perhaps, there might be the question of ontology: What is essentially the difference between a march and parade, a march and a promenade, a

march and a hike. Here, on grey Sapryc, there is only the mud and the boot and the force which brings them together and pushes them apart.

A march. Left foot. Right foot. A march. Left foot. Right foot. A march. Left foot. Right foot. A march. Left foot. Right foot.

A break in the trees. Movement in the trees. There's life in the trees. There's life in the trees.

Introduction

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. We're playing Realis. We're continuing our game of Realis, here on the black and white troubled moon of Sapryc. What happened last time? It's been a little bit since we recorded, I'll say. So, this recap is as much for us as for anyone else. Anyone want to take us through what's going on?

Jack: Thanks to a very elaborate map drawn by the Wizard Flemming, we entered a dense, complicated forest. While making our way through the forest, we saw two sort of like mid-tier Suzerainty nobles, right, Austin? They were like planting flags. They were calling out for people.

Austin: They weren't even nobles. They were retinue of a lady, Lady Geretain Gorthgeier.

Jack: They claimed it for her.

Austin: Claiming some territory for her, yes, saying that all within were her subjects, et cetera.

Jack: We started finding that the forest around us was almost like woolen. It had a sort of a fabric or a woolen texture. My character, Jud, feeling like he needed to pull his weight and find a safe place to rest, found himself trapped in a sort of dream manor of his former master.

Austin: You got one thing wrong here, which is that's not why you found your way there. You had previously rested instead of helping people make camp. And then in order to try to make that up after being guilted about it, you went and tried to find a good place for everybody else the next night.

Janine: Also, hang on. We weren't guilting about resting. We were guilting about... The fact that the rest happened by fucking off into the middle of nowhere where no one knew.

Dre: Wandering off.

Austin: Yes, yes. Yes.

Janine: [laughs]

Jack: Anyway, I fucked off out into the middle of nowhere and found myself first in a hallucinatory sort of memory of my master's house and then in awful black tunnels below the house where I was discovered being both kind of attacked by skeletons and force-fed sort of like an ichor by the spirit of the fear of one's own death. In the rescue, my arm was broken by Gaje, who I really wanted to impress. And I got a spoon that, don't worry about it.

Dre: Yep.

Austin: Mm. Can you read me that spoon real quick?

Jack: Yeah, "when I prepare a meal of my own flesh using the Spoon of the Exhale, any who eat are always unable to die until their next meal." So, you know, just, you know.

Austin: Good. Great. Good, good, good. Excellent meal, so nice.

Dre: Yum yum yum yum yum yum.

Jack: But we've sort of, like, we've regathered the party under the auspices of our guide, Mirador Cantata, who...

Austin: Not your guide!

Dre: No, that's our employer.

Jack: No, no, no, that's true. That's true.

Dre: I'm our guide because I made a very good map.

Austin: That's true. Who are you again?

Jack: You made a lovely map.

Dre: Oh, I'm Flemming.

Austin: You're Flemming. What's your playbook? What's your class?

Dre: I am the Thaumaturge from the Sphere of Sorcery.

Austin: There we go. And, Janine, your character hasn't been mentioned by name quite yet.

Janine: Yeah, I'm playing Sacea Duodevicesima. And I'm a Pomesse. And I think that Flemming is a dork and Jud is a baby.

Dre: Fair.

Austin: Right. And Gaje, what are your feelings about everybody else in the party? Your name was mentioned, so I already, you know.

Sylvi: Yeah. Should I mention I'm Berserker, Sphere of Steel?

Austin: Berserker. Yeah, sure.

Sylvi: Yeah, I think Jud is a little baby who can't take care of himself. And I think Flemming is a hoity-toity academic, just to sum them up, I guess.

Austin: And Flemming, how do you feel about people?

Dre: I know that Gaje has a natural aptitude for the magical.

Austin: Right.

Dre: And I also know that Sacea is, she's up to no good. I don't understand how her magic works, and listen, if I can't understand it, there's no rules. There's no rules there.

Austin: Right. No rules, no right.

Dre: Yeah, this is not the Outback Steakhouse.

Austin: This is not Outback. Yeah, uh-huh. Great, and you hate being called Flemm. That's good. There's good notes here on everyone's sheets, various additional notes here. Good.

Jack: We heard from Mirador. Mirador spoke to Flemming a bit, sort of about, I think it was in conversation with Flemming.

Austin: It was.

Jack: Flemming sort of pressed him a little more for some information.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Jack: And Mirador, the implication is that Mirador comes from an organization that believes among things that all things are all other things. And they are, they said something really weird. They said like, I'm leading you to like a lever that will move the world or something. Like a lever that will cause some great thing to move. And this seems to be tied into like a broader sort of philosophic or Gnostic quest that Mirador is on.

Austin: Yeah. And I don't know if we said as much explicitly, but in the world of Realis, or at least in this vision of it in this moment, the people who believe that all things are all other things is this group called the ReGnostica, which it's not, I don't know that your individual characters, you know, maybe the more magic-y ones among you, maybe Sacea and Flemming do, but the ReGnostica is like a kind of secretive sect of scholars

and sages and mages and, you know, occultists who believe the thing, basically, that that Mirador said. That all things could become other things or that all things are fundamentally other things just in other forms. And it's not always clear what their bigger worldview is necessarily, unless you're like, you know—what's the word I'm looking for? When you like join a cult in, you know, classical Greece. There's a word for this. For like when you're like read in on the cult.

Dre: Oh, God.

Jack: Oh, initiated.

Austin: Yeah, you're initiated. Thank you. Yeah, it's not even a special word. Just like, yeah. You got to be at least initiated into the mysteries in order to understand a bit more of what's going on there. But he speaks like that. And, you know, who could say whether or not this is someone who has been part of the ReGnostica or if this is someone who's still part of the ReGnostica. It's not even clear how, in this moment, the ReGnostica exists culturally. So. But you get the feeling that like as far as magical—like, I know that you hate Sacea, for instance. You don't hate Sacea, Flemming, but you think her magic is dangerous, right.

Dre: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Nevertheless, she's a fellow traveler in the magical arts, and I think he's kind of signaling that... You know, maybe you don't know for sure that Mirador is a mage at this point, that's not necessarily true. But it's clear that they know more than just, they're not just like some weird hick merchant, right, who's looking for an easy score, you know. They're not leading you to a big vault of gold, you know. This is something else. So. So, I mean, we'll see, right? Where, does anybody remember where you ended up at the end of the session?

Jack: We have reconvened on the sort of the—oh wait, did we have to get rid of our cart? I don't remember.

Dre: No.

Austin: Sacea made, Sacea made things cold, I want to say? Is that right, Sacea? You did some sort of very cool trick to keep it so that...

Janine: I don't... cold?

Austin: Did you make it warm? You did something.

Janine: Oh, was it that it was like stuck in the mud or something?

Austin: It was stuck in the mud. It was stuck in the mud.

Janine: Make the mud hard.

Austin: It was getting stuck in the mud because of the rain, specifically. There was this morning, terrible, muddy rain that you beat that Sentence of the moon's. And you were able to keep the cart. You were able to keep the cart, you were able to keep the wonderful donkey Scrundle. And all of you have wound up in a little seemingly empty town.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: You didn't go inside anything, but.

Jack: There's like a figure in the town, like a statue. It's like a figure of a humanoid whose head is like a barrel made of wound-together roots, is that right?

Austin: Yeah, and soil and, yeah, mm-hm. yep. That is right. I think that's about where we left off. And it was around noon. It was a little after noon, I remember saying, and that is where you are, where we left off. I think in general, you know, I've been thinking about a lot of the setup for these games as being both, like, okay, sometimes you come up against enemy threats or problems with the moon, but there's also—and those are often Sentences, often have Sentences or other Means, but often sometimes you're just up against uncertainty. And in this case, I mean, you know where you are. I think that you're about, you know, on the map where it says the Velutines, there's this little

squiggle of the northern part. And I think that you are here, like in the middle of, you're in this last little push forward, you know, right above the T in Velutines.

So, you're on what would be the closing stretch of this, but you've been traveling. You basically traveled all night after the horror of last night. And so you've gotten here. I think, you know, you can tell me how tired you are, but it has been a long journey. And the sort of trick that we saw Sacea do to help get the cart out of the mud, that was probably more than a one-time thing. That was probably a thing that you had to rely on a few times. And so here you are in this weird, mysterious little town. I'd say there's probably 10 to 12 of these kind of log cabins that are similar in some ways to the ones that were in the nightmare village that you got trapped in, Jud. Except that these—seemingly made from the same, you know, the same woolen trees, right? Except here, placed with a little more care. Things feel like they slot together more neatly. Things don't feel as, you know, it's not a house of cards, right? Things were not haphazardly placed. They were carefully constructed. But besides those buildings, and I'd say that there's probably a big burned-out bonfire in front of the giant statue figure, the kind of carved or, you know, structured, you know, sculpture figure. Right now, there's no one else like walking around inside of this little village. So, it's just y'all. It's just the canopy of the trees, the gray skies above. Remember that it's kind of autumnal in terms of climate right now, in terms of weather. It's crisp afternoon. And remember, there's no color, right? It's black and white here. And I'd say that it's a pretty high contrast day, right? The trees are hard against the white sky, where you can see it. And the dirt is a deep dark gray. What do y'all get up to here?

A Stop in Town [15:10]

Dre: Are we stopping for any particular reason, like are we just stopping because we need to rest?

Austin: The uncertainty here is exhaustion, I think. That's the uncertainty I think that you're up against. And maybe you can all push against that. I think Mirador is like,

Austin (as **Mirador**): I need to rest. I'm going to look around for a bed.

Austin: And just starts kind of wandering. Or he ties up Scrundle and starts to kind of poke around whatever the nearest place is. He's not going in any doors, but he's looking for windows to peek into, you know? Stuff like that. Scrundle begins to eat some of the grass that's just like on the ground here.

Dre: I'm going to start rearranging things in the wagon so I can just lay down in the wagon. I don't want to go in any of these buildings. But Scrundle feels this patch of grass is safe enough to eat.

Austin: Trust in Scrundle.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Love that.

Sylvi: I ride with Scrundle.

Austin: I ride with Scrundle. [laughs]

Jack: I got some suspicions about Scrundle. I'm...

Janine: What?

Sylvi: Wow.

Janine: Wow.

Dre: No, I mean, the narrow-minded amongst us would.

Jack: No, no. In fact, I think I might be giving Scrundle more credit than some people here.

Dre: [laughs] You're too wide-minded.

Jack: I'm t—... Yeah.

Janine: Are there any cellars?

Austin: Good question.

Janine: I would like to go into a cellar or, failing a cellar, if there is some kind of... This place gets winter, right?

Austin: This place gets winter, yeah.

Janine: Usually, okay, I want to say, I'm basing this on my rudimentary understanding of history of, like, Quebec and, like, olden Canada times. I believe that, like, villages, when they got winter, even if there weren't cellars, they would sometimes have to have, like, a, I forget what it's called. Like a cold cellar, where you could like keep ice and stuff, but also you would keep dead bodies there, so that when the winter ends and you can dig graves and stuff again, you can bring the bodies out. Because you can't bury them when the ground is hard.

Austin: Because you can't because of the frozen ground, sure.

Janine: Yeah.

Dre: Is that a root cellar?

Janine: Kind of, but like...

Dre: Okay.

Janine: There's like a name for it, it might, I don't know. But it's like a thing. Not necessarily every house would have one, but.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I would say that while most of the buildings don't have something like this, one of them does. And it's a fairly large structure. I think you have the intuitive sense that it would be like the village's inn or tavern or like, you know, maybe some sort of restaurant, something like that. And there is one. And the cellar is built, you know, there's an outside door to it. It's a vertical door. You know, you could imagine maybe it was just a shed or something attached. But the way it's attached, the angle of the roof

above the door makes it pretty clear it leads downwards. So, you go down there, is that your maneuver?

Janine: Yeah, I want to look for, I think it's like a specific ingredient for incenses and stuff that I want as part of my, like, thing that I'm doing, that I do.

Austin: What type of ingredient is it?

Janine: Straight up, I think it's like a kind of mildew.

Austin: Oh.

Sylvi: I was gonna ask if it was a type of like mold or something, yeah.

Janine: Yeah, I was thinking like oh, moss or something, but like no, it feels more Realis to be like, I just need to find this very specific kind of mildew for my perfume balls, thanks.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. So, yeah, you head down, you open this door and the light cuts through the dark down there. There's no other lighting. Maybe some light is coming in from the floorboards above. And I think you can find this mildew just fine. And you also just kind of get a look at what's down here. This is like a pantry or, you know, like a food store, right? And maybe also, you know, there's some big casks, you know, so maybe not a wine cellar, but something like that. And, you know, there's some shelves with, you know, there's some big trunks, which presumably would have, you know, potentially, or chests that might be cold storage in some way, you know. But there's a bunch of other stuff just like up on the shelves that, you know, you would expect to find in, again, the kind of food store. A basket with some vegetables in it, et cetera. You're able to get the mildew no problem. I think maybe it's while you're doing that that you, I guess I shouldn't say this, do you take a look at any of the food that's down here or any of the other stuff? Is there anything else you'd look for while down here?

Janine: I'm interested in potatoes, apples, onions.

Austin: Potatoes, apples, onions, the classic.

Janine: The staples.

Austin: POA, the staples. Yeah, yeah, yeah, totally. Big sack of potatoes. You know, you recognize it cleanly. And it's like fallen over already. So, there's one just on the ground. And again, I want to remind the listener, this is all in black and white. And it's dark in here too, right? So, you kind of just see the outline of it. As you get close to those potatoes on the ground, you realize that they're carved out of wood. They're not—the mildew is real, but the potatoes are not real. I mean, they're real. You can touch them, but I wouldn't eat them. I don't know. Your group eats a bunch of stuff. I don't know. There might be people in your party who are out here eating wood.

Janine: I'm going to take one.

Austin: Okay. Go ahead and take a wooden potato. This is not a piece of Ephemera. This is just a thing that you have now.

Janine: Yeah, it's a chunk of wood. Can I go back up? And... [laughing slightly] um.

Austin: When you come back, can we go see what everyone else is doing while you're down there?

Janine: That's what I wanted to do, is, well, I wanted to come back up to everyone else to rejoin the group. And I wanted to toss the potato at Flemm like underhand and be like,

Janine (as **Sacea**): Here, I got you dinner.

Austin: Jesus.

Dre: Wait, who'd you toss it to?

Janine: To you. Just like underhand. I'm not like trying to hurt you. It's just like, hey, I got you a potato. Catch.

Dre: Would you still do that if I'm already sleeping in the cart?

Janine: Oh. No.

Dre: Okay. Because that's what I was going to say I'm doing, is that I am just snoring away in the cart.

Austin: You go to do it and you hear the snore and then you're like, damn it. I can't interrupt the nap. The sanctity of the nap.

Janine: Sacea's just trying to have a little fun, but she's not, you know, she's an older lady. She's not going to wake someone up from sleeping. That's important.

Austin: Yeah. That's fair. That's fair. Gaje, Jud, what are you two getting up to?

Sylvi: I think the first thing I do is I mentioned that when we were in the forest, that I took my cloak off. My cloak's back on because there might be people here.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: And they don't like seeing a big bloody spike being hauled around most of the time. Just typically speaking. Yeah, I don't know. I feel like I'm trying to survey for people. Like, not as actively as Mirador is, but, like, I'm, like, sitting by the cart, probably as a form of guarding it. And, like...

Dre: Aw, thanks.

Sylvi: Not for you.

Austin: [sighs in amusement]

Sylvi: Peering out through all these, like, at all these buildings and stuff and trying to see if there's movement or anything.

Austin: This makes sense. Do you have anything that could beat the Sentence, I mean, now that you've done this actively, "Leo Suzerainty scouts can always remain hidden among trees."

Sylvi: You know, I actually, I don't have anything that could beat that. I don't have anything that really applies.

Austin: What's interesting there is like, I think that this is like, I think that then this is them... Are they acting on you here? No, you were like I'm going to do, I'm going to go look for them. So, you're not you're not actually able to do the thing that you said, which was "I'm going to stand guard." That's not a thing that currently Gaje can actually do.

Sylvi: I wandered off.

Austin: You can stand guard but you can't... you could stand guard if someone revealed themselves and did something to you, or tried to, but you can't just spot people hiding in the woods, for instance

Sylvi: You know what I think would be good to have happen here, Austin?

Austin: What's that?

Sylvi: As I'm, like, sitting there, and, like, it looks like I'm keeping watch, but I have also fallen asleep.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvi: I'm also tired.

Austin: Love this. So, then, yes. Well, I'll come back around to these scouts in a second. Jud, what are you doing?

Jack: I am sitting upright in the back of the cart. I think I probably... I have like a, my arm is in a sling. I think it's like a, like a sort of a homemade splint. I'm not sure who would have done it for me. Is it Sacea?

Austin: If no one else would have, Mirador would have, but yeah, if Sacea did, that would have been fine. Was it Sacea?

Janine: Yeah, I mean, that's a thing. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Yeah. I was going to leave it open for anyone else who wanted to, but sure.

Jack: I don't think I could see Flemming or Gaje doing it, but.

Janine: Yeah, that's true.

Jack: And I think, you know, there is a nervous, horrible energy to Jud, because I have seen everybody else go to sleep and I am feeling very guilty about going off last time to try and, you know, find a safe place for people. But at the same time, I don't feel safe sleeping, you know, here in the cart with my broken arm. I'm being pulled by the impulse of "do the Jud thing and go and find a little, you know, scraped place to lie down in in the dirt," and "don't leave the party and make the mess." So, I think I'm fidgeting. I'm adjusting my arm, but I can't move it very well, so I'm sort of doing that thing that you do when you have your arm in a sling where you move it from your shoulder. Just, you know, picking at the rotten wood on the bottom of the cart with my other hand, looking up at the sky. Unpleasant.

Austin: A call sounds from a horn, and it happens again.

Austin (as **Retainer**): To all who listen, to all who sleep, this is the domain of Lady Geretain Gorthgeier. You are her subjects now and eternity forward.

Austin: Called out through the woods. And then another [horn noise] horn and, you know, too quiet to hear but whoever did this is already beginning to walk away. A banner placed deep in the woods. What is she up to? You do not know.

Jack: I have a question.

Austin: Sure.

Jack: About... I mean, Realis is weird, right, where it's like, statements mean something in Realis.

Austin: They sure do.

Jack: I mean, they mean something in the world that we live in, but they mean something in a slightly different cadence in Realis. There's an extent to which if someone says, well, now you're this person's subject, you sort of go, no, I'm fucking not, you know.

Austin: [realizing something] Oh.

Jack: But this is like a speech act in a real sense, right?

Austin: Yeah, you're asking, for instance, if someone had the Sentence "I always know the direction of my subjects who have fed on human flesh," would it apply to you?

Jack: Yes.

Austin: It would.

Jack: Okay, follow-up question. Do the denizens of the moons know that this is a property of the world?

Austin: This is a, this is... You know who probably knows this is Mirador Cantata. Maybe Sacea and... Flemm, Flemming. I kept wanting to say Flemmington and I was like that's not right, that's not right.

Jack: Flemmington?

Dre: That's pretty good, though.

Jack: God, *Flemmington 2*, that movie with the bear, the little bear, Hugh Grant, the bear goes to jail.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh-huh. And Flemming might know if that's a thing that they think that their characters are brought up in. I think this is a real words-have-power type magical sphere. But do people know that there are Sentences? No. Generally speaking, no. You gotta be a Wordwright. You gotta be a... There's another thing that I haven't hit here in this book somewhere that's like a cousin to the Wordwright. I think a Witch might be cousin to the Wordwright. Syllogist...

Austin: Oh, are they the ones that they really look down their noses on?

Austin: They look down their noses at a bunch of fucking people. Yeah, I don't... They call themselves "kin and kind" to Witches. So, that's not so bad. There are also, of course, Newshounds, and there are, yeah, Syllogists, who work with logical runes instead of working with words. Anyway, you know, it's a subtype of super magic that is not super well known, is what I would say.

Jack: Yeah, although to people like Jud and Gaje, it probably feels like this. When powerful people say things, it goes that way. You know, the wind blows in the direction of the powerful.

Austin: Now listen, sometimes it breaks bad for them, though.

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: This is the thing. Sometimes they say the wrong thing, right? And it's, again, like this is why it's not as clear as... The person who says "this is my territory now" and then dies of the plague because the plague was ravaging their territory was ravaging such and such a place already and now it applied to them. All that is karma, you know, or it's like whatever the colloquial equivalent to the way karma gets talked about. You know, people are, you know. The golden rule.

Jack: Yeah, to steal from another show, the wheel turns.

Austin: The wheel turns, exactly. This is how this stuff gets talked about, right? Well, shouldn't have conquered it if you didn't want to have to deal with the plague that was ravaging it, you know? You know, Mask of the Red Death type logic starts being applied in the way that people think about these things. It's not... It wouldn't ever be "she said it was hers and then in saying it, the magic applied." If anything, people, I think, especially in a place like Sapryc, which has been conquered and contested for the last 150 years, would think it's the banner being put in the ground, right?

Janine: Oh, yeah.

Austin: It's that she and her retinue are marching all over it, you know? Though, of course... They're part of the Leo Suzerainty, which is the group that got run off of this place by the impasse to begin with. So, and was replaced by the church, by the imperial, sorry, by the...

Jack: Venerant See.

Austin: Venerant See, right. So, you know, in some ways, people might see this as being a return to what should be, people not meaning your characters, but people on the planet or on the moon, rather, might be like, ah, finally, like, this is back under Leo control, you know. Really depends on who you ask. Those of you who are not sleeping, which I guess is just Sacea at this point.

Jack: Sacea and me, right?

Austin: Oh, yeah. You're still up, you didn't fall asleep. Right.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: What are you up to?

Janine: Do we have a fire?

Austin: There's a big bonfire that's not going currently. But the, like, you know... It was probably put out by the rain earlier this morning. Some of the wood is probably wet, but, you know, you can get it going again if you fed it right.

At the Fire [31:40]

Janine: I think I try and do that, but, like, I beckon Jud over. In that sort of, like, it should feel like when your grandmother is like, "come pick green beans with me." Like, it's that.

Jack (as **Jud**): Wh, what's going on? What are we doing?

Janine (as **Sacea**): I was going to relight the fire.

Jack (as **Jud**): Oh, yeah, I can do that. Yeah. You, uh—yeah, I got that. Don't worry.

Jack: And I just go out into the edge of the forest line and look back as if to say, I'm not going any further than this. I'm not running off.

Janine: I laugh a little.

Jack: And just start picking up little twigs, carrying them back. One-handed.

Austin: With one hand, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, which limits the amount of stuff that I can bring.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: But, yeah, backwards and forwards.

Janine: I'm assembling a little, like, ball of hair. Like, shed hair.

Austin: Mm. As kindling?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Fun. Yeah. You know, I think it takes you a little while, especially with Jud only being able to bring back a little bit at a time. And you kind of, like, get in there into the middle that's still dry, you know? And add enough new stuff that it'll catch and hope that the sun comes out long enough to, you know, continue drying the wet wood. And also the sun is, you know, not the sun. Realis. You hope that Realis Itself's light, you know, shines enough, bright enough that it does. Corpse Sun does not do a great job of keeping anything warm these days. And, I think, you know, it takes you a little longer than you would like, but it gets going. I'm not going to make you declare Means for this. You're both capable enough. You know, you've both made fires in your days. You both camped out from time to time. Is there any conversation between the two of you while this is happening? Do you try to fill the time in any way?

Janine: Sacea definitely would try. I don't know if Jud would respond.

Jack: Yeah, let's do it. Let's give it a go. I was trying to think of what a good Jud conversation starter would be. And it is something like Thisbe's Is Corn Grass, except...

Austin: [laughs]

Janine: [laughs]

Jack: It's like, I think it is probably like, have you ever had potatoes or something, you know? Just the most like...

Janine: Wow. Is that how it goes?

Jack: No, I want to do another one now that I've said that out of character. I think that what he says is—are you waiting for Jud to make the first move, because if you are, Jud is getting extremely uncomfortable.

Jack: Oh, no, no. I think Sacea is doing that thing that like, again, I associate this with like grandmothers, where it's like, you want to start a conversation, so the thing you do is you start talking to yourself. But you start talking to yourself in, like, an open-ended way of, like,

Janine (as **Sacea**): [murmuring] Oh, gotta put that one over there. It's getting a little smoky over here, isn't it? Okay, we'll turn this one. There we go. That's a nice, that's a nice one. That's very warm. It's good. Move this rock around here. We could do breakfast on that later. It'd be nice.

Jack (as **Jud**): You, uh, you ever made bread?

Janine: [laughs quietly]

Janine (as **Sacea**): At a campfire or in general?

Jack: Oh, proud of himself for figuring out the first question. Baffled by a follow-up.

Jack (as **Jud**): Well, you know, out and about, like here. Here in the woods. You ever made woods bread?

Janine (as **Sacea**): I've made bread while I've been traveling, sure. I haven't made it out of wood, but...

Jack (as **Jud**): No, no, I didn't mean... oh. [laughs] You're making a little joke.

Janine (as **Sacea**): You can make it in a pan. You can make it on a warm rock. There are some places where they've got volcanoes.

Jack (as **Jud**): Could make it in a stove.

Austin: [snorts]

Janine (as **Sacea**): They'll put it in a little container and then bury it. And then the heat from the volcano will cook it. That's a good one to do when you're out and about and there's volcanoes.

Jack (as **Jud**): No, that's not real.

Janine (as **Sacea**): That's real.

Jack (as **Jud**): No, no, that's not real. No.

Janine (as **Sacea**): It's nice. We'll get you some sometime. It's nice.

Jack (as **Jud**): Uh... You been in any of the buildings around here?

Janine (as **Sacea**): Yeah, I went into the... The dead cellar over there.

Jack (as **Jud**): What?

Janine: Gestures at the cellar.

Jack (as **Jud**): There's dead things down there?

Janine (as **Sacea**): I didn't see any.

Jack (as **Jud**): Okay, yeah.

Janine (as **Sacea**): Wooden vegetables, which is strange.

Jack (as **Jud**): What?

Janine (as **Sacea**): Wooden vegetables.

Jack (as **Jud**): Oh. Like—like—

Janine: I show you the potato, but like I have it in my sleeve. I just pull it out under my cloak. Toss it at you in a gentle underhand lob. Maybe extra gentle because you can only catch with one hand. [laughs]

Jack: [laughing] Catch with one hand.

Jack (as **Jud**): They have other ones of these? Why aren't we burning these? I can go and get them if you want.

Janine (as **Sacea**): It's quite dense. I don't know how well something like this would...

Jack (as **Jud**): But they're dry, they were in the cellar.

Janine (as **Sacea**): But they don't have as much bits to catch on to for the fire. They don't have all the bark, the little twigs, the little threads.

Austin: Yeah, it's very polished, it's worth saying. But it's also very detailed. You know, there is, holding it now, you can, like, feel the bumps that are so organic and so hard to imagine someone practicing making. Do you know what I mean? Like, it would be hard to make a sack full of potatoes that all have the feel and touch and irregularity of the potato, while nevertheless being polished wood.

Jack: Jud looks up at the effigy, you know, standing over the bonfire. Looks back down at the potato.

Jack (as **Jud**): You think these are like witched potatoes? You think these were like real potatoes that got witched into wood? Or are they...

Janine (as **Sacea**): Might be.

Jack (as **Jud**): Can you tell?

Janine: I'm just quickly... I'm reading through my Sentences.

Jack: "I always know when a vegetable has been witched."

Austin: [laughs]

Sylvi: [laughs]

Janine (as **Sacea**): I am better at changing what things are, less good at seeing what they used to be.

Jack (as **Jud**): Oh, so you could make it back into a real potato again.

Janine (as **Sacea**): I can make it into a real potato, but I can't say it ever was one to begin with.

Jack: Does not follow. Does not understand.

Austin: Jud, do you have any way of figuring out if these things used to be potatoes or if they're witched?

Jack: Um...

Austin: I don't know. I'm not saying you do.

Jack: I don't think I do.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: I have "I always fight my way to safety," which is ready, primed for realization, but I have not realized it yet. I have "I always find somewhere to rest," I have "I always

protect those traveling with me,” and I have “I am always under threat,” none of which I think, even loosely... This might be a Flemming thing. I’m not sure.

Austin: This is a quick note. Go ahead. I just want a quick, quick, quick note. I think Gaje is the only person who has their token right now. Who has a token right now, right?

Dre: I do not have mine, yeah.

Austin: Everybody else is spent. Okay.

Janine: I desperately want Sacea to jokingly be like,

Janine (as **Sacea**): For all I know, that potato could have been a man yesterday.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Dre: Fucked up.

Janine: But she’s like smiling as she says it and doing that thing that like crafty, crafty grandmas do when they want to see if you believe them. They’re like looking in your eyes a little too intensely. Like, yeah, I told you that in the 1940s, I ate my shoe. Do you believe me?

Jack: No, it’s like a really nervous smile from Jud as he realizes that you’re joking and then like looks down at the fire to break eye contact with you and then like glances back up to see if you’ve noticed.

Austin: Two things happen at once.

Janine: Oh, boy.

Wooden People [40:00]

Austin: It’s in this moment you realize you’re actually more lit by the fire than by the light of Realis itself.

[“[Wooden People](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Austin: The sun, as it has, you know, the makeshift sun that is the big, I guess from here, white-gray planet of Realis has set beyond the trees. The second thing that happens is a door from one of these buildings opens. In fact, all of the doors open. And the people start coming out. And they, too, are carved from wood. Irregular shapes, not as simple or as straightforward as the big carved idol in the other side of the bonfire from you is. They look angular because of how they've been carved. Imagine you've cut a piece of, and they're not bamboo, but imagine, you know, you get that great thing of like a piece of bamboo that's been cut diagonally and you can see that hard line or the hard edges or the hard lines of like a stick bug, you know?

Sylvi: Oh, are we getting stickbugged?

Austin: You're getting stickbugged right now. Actually, this whole game has been a big stickbug video. You've been stickbugged. They have that sort of angular irregularity, right. Some of them, it feels as if their arms are cut off at the elbows and others have one leg that's longer than another. And they have... The wood is like the wood of the Velutines. And some of them still have the big woolen bark on, and some of them have that bark removed. Some of them have bark—parts of the bark on and parts that aren't as if it's like facial hair, you know, or chest hair. And they move with a sort of sing-song rhythm out the doors and about the town, now that Realis has set.

They are doing what I can only call a pantomime of living. Someone, you know, begins making the visual motions of being a town crier, but no sound is coming out. Someone else comes over and begins to try to make the fire go, and it seems like it takes them a moment or two before they realize it's already going. People begin to shuffle into rows and begin walking up and down the street as if they're going somewhere, but they reach the end of the town and they turn and start walking the other way. It's like you're in a sudden life-size diorama filled with wooden people. And it's quiet, except for all the wood hitting each other. There's the sound of if you've taken a bunch of dress forms and like shaken them all at once as if you're like puppeting them. You know, it's the sound of 200 big marionettes being puppeted at once. I'm not saying they're

marionettes, but that's the sound, you know? That wood-on-wood clattering. What do you do?

[music ends]

Austin: For those of you still awake, I suppose.

Sylvi: I feel like this would wake me up. It's loud, right?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. I think so.

Janine: I can tell you the thing I just did, which was go on YouTube and look up marionette ASMR, and there's nothing. I'm, like, shocked.

Dre: Oh, wow. Yeah.

Janine: I'm so shocked.

Austin: We could corner the market.

Janine: The closest thing I could find was ASMR squirrel scratches your hair and it's one of those squirrel hand puppet things.

Sylvi: Eugh.

Dre: Ah, I don't like that.

Jack: I think I'm looking down at the potato in my hands and looking up at the wooden figures and just silently mouthing the word "witched."

Janine: I think I'm looking at them kind of just like... I think Sacea would be more interested than afraid or concerned in that way, you know? Just kind of like, oh.

Sylvi: Do they react to us being there at all? Are they just, like, going about, like, a routine, basically?

Austin: The one who started making the fire seems like they may have noticed you properly. But seems confused. Lots of head tilting. I think after a certain bit goes into the big building, looking over their shoulder at you as if they might go tell someone about you. But no one has accosted you, you know?

Sylvi: Okay...

[pause]

Austin: The ball is truly in your court at this point. I think Mirador shows up coughing, and, you know, leaves in their hair from having slept on a pillow of leaves somewhere. And is like,

Austin (as **Mirador**): Hey, what the hell? What's going on here? One of you bring these folks to life?

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Don't look at me. I woke up and everything was like this.

Jack: Is Flemming awake?

Dre: Yes. I think they are trying to like kind of peer over the side of the cart. As to be like, okay—

Janine: Like a coward?

Dre: No, as someone who wants to sleep and is like all right, do I need to wake up for this or is this or is this just shenanigans that I can go back to sleep for?

Janine: [laughs] Do I need to wake up for this village of puppets or no? Are we good?

Austin: Again, they're not literally puppets. They are—

Janine: Well, yes, puppets in the... in the broader sense.

Austin: Yes. I want to make sure that it's clear that they're too irregular to have been puppets. They're too, you would have to, if you're a puppet maker who made these puppets...

Dre: You'd suck?

Austin: You would be... I don't know if you'd suck, but like, I guess you could, but it would be an art piece and not working puppets.

Janine: Everyone starts somewhere.

Austin: It's true.

Janine: Maybe this is just their first puppet village. [laughs]

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: God. If nobody else is going to act, I guess I'm going to rise from the fire and offer my wooden potato back to one of these people.

Austin: Which one? What's the one doing that you offer it back to? Paint me a picture.

Jack: They are... Hm.

Austin: You know, you're in a Bethesda, you're in Skyrim, and people are going about their daily routines, but you can't hear it. They're not speaking because they don't have mouths. They don't have mouths or eyes drawn on. They don't have any, you know what I mean?

Jack: They don't have props either, do they?

Austin: Some of them have props. Some of them have grabbed, with odd claw-like hands, a broom or a rake, you know? There is someone—I mean, you're not inside of the building, right? Or any of the buildings, right? So, you don't see what people are doing inside.

Jack: I don't go in buildings anymore.

Austin: You're done with that.

Jack: I find one who is working a little, like raking a vegetable garden where there's no...

Austin: There are no vegetables. True.

Jack: No, they've cut... It's like a facsimile of a vegetable garden. They've cut rows in the dirt, but there are no vegetables growing there. But this person—

Austin: There are things in the dirt, Jack. There are little wooden fingers in the dirt.

Jack: Oh, mm—

Dre: Hmm.

Sylvi: Hmm.

Jack: Huh. Huh. Okay.

Janine: Oh, like fingerling potatoes?

Austin: Maybe.

Dre: Oh, fuck.

Jack: No, like fingerling man. Fingerling hand.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Um, I guess—

Austin: Well, and I'll... Yeah, go ahead.

Jack: So, I had been going here to hand this potato to this farmer, being like, well, you're producing the potatoes, you'll know what to do with this, this is probably yours. And on seeing the fingers, I kneel down next to the rose and brush some of the dirt off from the fingers in the dirt.

Austin: Yeah. It falls over. It's a finger that has been propped up with dirt. It's a wooden finger that's been propped up with dirt. One of these wooden, you know, finger claws that they have. And then your eyes turn back up to see the farmer. And it strikes you that the wooden rake that they're holding is made from the same wood that they are. And they're like, they pick up their rake as if to say like, now, wait a second. You're getting close to my, they don't say anything. They're like, but they're not threatening you. They're like, now, come on, get away from there. I have work to do, you know.

Jack: Yeah, I guess I put the finger back up, like I prop it back up and put some dirt around it to be like well, yep, I'll replant the finger, and sort of like, back off.

Austin: As you begin to back off, they raise their hand. She has on a like a big wide brimmed wooden hat that has the detail of a straw hat, you know? And waves you forward and points at your arm, your broken arm.

Jack: Ooh. Yeah? I'm like,

Jack (as **Jud**): No, no, I'm good. I'm good, with my other hand.

Austin: And like a little nodding, are you sure?

Jack: No, I think that people probably should be made out of meat. I don't say this, but I believe this.

Austin: [laughs] I don't think she's offering you necessarily a wooden arm. I think she's seeing someone who's injured.

Janine: Also, to be fair, that splint is probably wood, so it's probably doubly confusing.

Austin: It's true. She's not, like, pressing you on this.

Jack: No, no, no. You know, if it becomes clear that this is not, like, look, buddy.

Austin: In our town, we get wooden arms when our arms break, and that's that.

Dre: Don't try to have... No, I'm not.

Jack: I'm, you know, I'm 15. I would like some help. My arm hurts. Nobody in this stupid party is really offering me any warmth except for Sacea.

Janine: Hey. Okay.

Jack: Except for Sacea. Yeah, I'll go over and sort of gently...

Janine: I was—no, go ahead.

Jack: Oh, go on.

Janine: I was just going to volunteer that if Sacea saw him kind of uncertain about this offer, I think she would probably stand up and get close as sort of a like, if this goes bad I'll help you get you out of it .

Jack: That gives me some confidence. Yeah.

Janine: Yeah.

A Gift [51:20]

Austin: She puts out her clawed hand and like gimme, gimme. And then points at, the other hand, to the potato.

Jack: Oh, absolutely. This is what my goal was. I will return the potato to you.

Austin: You return the potato. She holds it and she like, head tilt, head tilt. Big, again, the head looks like it's been slashed through diagonally. Actually, no, it doesn't, because she has the straw hat on, so she doesn't have one of those. But, like, her left arm is a little bit shorter than her right arm is, right? And she, like, goes down on a knee. She's, like, really looking at the splint that you have set up. And then takes the potato and produces a carving knife and begins to carve away at it to make something. And I think, you know. makes a mistake and then shrugs and then carves away a part of her shoulder.

Jack: Whoa!

Austin: To produce a replacement piece of wood that she then puts back onto the potato and closes it inside of her hand such that you can't see it anymore, and it's added wood back to the potato form. And then goes back to carving it down. Seemingly couldn't have done it with the potato carving, but could do it with her own body. And eventually produces a much nicer splint than the improvisized one. That's not the right word. Improvised one. Improvisized. Improvised one that Sacea made for you. Or maybe it's like a supplemental splint, you know? And it's just more comfortable for you. It's not, you know, maybe it'll help it heal quicker, who knows. Mostly it's more comfortable. It's built, it has a curve carefully carved into it for the shape of your wrist to fit into nicely. It seems like she extended the length of the potato in a way that seems like it's impossible, almost like it's clay.

Janine: I was gonna ask how big the potato was that a splint could be carved out of one.

Austin: Mm-hm. Well, and again, she adds to it with her own wood flesh.

Janine: Yeah. Right.

Austin: Right? And it's not such a big ass because you have all that good potato material to begin with, you know? A big potato.

Jack: Good material.

Austin: So, yeah. A little more comfortable. Again, this is not Ephemera, but...

Jack: No. Bow my head.

Jack (as **Jud**): Thank you. This is great.

Jack: Nervously goes back to Sacea. Shows Sacea proudly the splint.

Janine (as **Sacea**): Oh, that's a nice one.

Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah.

Austin: Gaje and Flemm. What are y'all up to?

Dre: Gaje, are you still standing by the cart?

Sylvi: Yeah, I think I'm like... Kind of just like idly petting Scrundle. Because I'm like, they don't seem hostile here, but I don't trust any of this.

Austin: Flemming, what are you doing?

Dre: Hmm. I'm not sure. I mean, I think kind of similar.

Austin: Have you ever run into anything like this before?

Dre: That's what I'm trying to think. Probably not. I mean, I've seen people make very nice splints before.

Austin: I'm sure, yes, but this sort of living town of wood is not a thing that you have come across?

Dre: No. And I'm trying to figure out how Flemming would react to that, if that would be like just completely nonplussed, like oh, sure, yeah, of course. There's wood people. That makes sense. There's all sorts of people. I guess one of my Sentences is "I always reject the use of unorthodox magic."

Austin: Sure. Is this unorthodox, do you feel? Maybe you don't know yet.

Dre: I don't know yet.

Jack: But that's your fourth Sentence, right?

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: There's a way there to get your token refreshed.

Austin: There is.

Dre: Oh.

Jack: You know, if you're looking for something to guide Flemming's character, right? You have a Sentence that says "I always reject unorthodox magics." And if I'm wrong, Austin, using that Sentence to get you into trouble would result in your token being discharged?

Austin: Using any Sentence would let you recharge your token here if it gets you into trouble. Again, this is... I'm going to make sure I get my actual terminology here, right? Because it's not Illuminating Failure. It is... What are we... Tragic Success. You can use one of your Means to lead the Band deeper into chaos. When you do this, describe something consequential and undesirable caused by one of your Sentences. Then recharge your token. So, this is, you know, like the Sentence works, effectively. It doesn't fail. If you had a Sentence like, for instance, Dre, "I always reject the use of unorthodox magic," you could use that to try to dispel this, right? Or to go cause a fuss somewhere and things would snowball from that and that would recharge your token. Now, do you want to do that? That's up to you.

Dre: Hm. Maybe not yet.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: Yeah, I don't think so. Not yet. I definitely think this now has like, you know, Flemming went from asleep to faking being asleep with one eye open to now like fully like leaning on their elbows looking out at the cart over the scene.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Dre: So, maybe he just he just mumbles to Gaje.

Dre (as **Flemming**): I don't know if I'd put a weird splint on my arm like that.

Sylvi: I don't know. It's like,

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Would you ever put yourself in a position where you'd even break an arm? You don't seem like the type to get in many fights.

Dre (as **Flemming**): Now, I'll have you know, I broke my wrist several years ago.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Oh, yeah. And how'd you do that, Flemm?

Dre (as **Flemming**): I fell off a tall ladder.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Heart of a warrior on this one.

Sylvi: And I think I'm going to walk over to Sacea. [laughs] Or at least over to the fire.

Janine: The doctor said it was the best broken arm they'd ever seen. Broken exactly by the book.

Sylvi: Never seen a fracture that clean.

Dre: Mm. Well, it was before I had earned the privilege to cast spells within the library, so I had to get all the books physically, you know?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Jack: Um...

Dre: I guess I will hop out of the cart and follow over, and I think kind of gesture to Jud being like,

Dre (as **Flemming**): Let me look at your splint. Let me make sure there's not any weird, obvious curses on it.

Jack (as **Jud**): What are you doing?

Austin: Do you—yeah, go ahead.

Jack (as **Jud**): What are you doing?

Dre (as **Flemming**): I just want to check it out. Does your skin feel like wood at all?

Jack (as **Jud**): No.

Dre (as **Flemming**): Do you feel any more or less pain?

Jack (as **Jud**): What? No, the same amount. I mean, less.

Dre (as **Flemming**): Okay. Hmm. Does it feel any more difficult to move your arm?

Jack (as **Jud**): No, easier.

Dre (as **Flemming**): Hmm.

Jack (as **Jud**): What?

Dre (as **Flemming**): Does your bone feel like wood?

Jack (as **Jud**): What are you getting at?

Dre (as **Flemming**): I just want to make sure it's not like a... What if that's how they're all made?

Jack (as **Jud**): She's a doctor. She helped me.

Austin (as **Mirador**): I think she's a gardener, kid.

Austin: Says Mirador.

Jack (as **Jud**): Shut up.

Dre (as **Flemming**): Well, you just keep an eye on it, let me know if you feel your bone turning into wood.

Jack (as **Jud**): Buddy, you're more scared of this than I am. Look, it's fine. Don't worry about it. Go back to sleep.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): I mean, it's an improvement over the one they had before.

Jack (as **Jud**): What? Yeah. Thanks, Gaje.

Sylvi: Little nod. Gaje is feeling guilty about this still.

Jack: [laughs]

Dre (as **Flemming**): All right. Well, we've all gotten a nap in. Is it time to keep moving?

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): I mean, how's Mirador? Is Mirador good to... How are the two of you?

Sylvi: Sacea and Jud is who I'm referring to with "the two of you."

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): How are the two of you doing? Are you ready to get a move on? I feel like we've barely stopped.

Jack (as **Jud**): No, we gotta give them something. They helped me out. You know. I don't just want to take it and leave.

Janine (as **Sacea**): What do you want to give them, kid?

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Do you have something to give them?

Jack (as **Jud**): Well, I can work.

Janine (as **Sacea**): Not sure they want you to do that.

Dre (as **Flemming**): You're also previously employed.

Jack (as **Jud**): What?

Austin (as **Mirador**): Kid can moonlight, I. As long as we get where we're getting.

Jack (as **Jud**): She took some of her own body and made something for me. I'm not going to just get on a cart and go, you know? I don't want to... Look, I'm going to go find the boss.

Repaying the Favor [1:00:20]

Jack: Jud turns, starts walking into one of the buildings. [laughs]

Janine: [sighs]

Austin: Which one? How do you make a decision?

Jack: The village center.

Austin: Right, the sort of bigger one.

Jack: The biggest house. You know...

Austin: People are dancing. Someone's up on a stage.

Sylvi: I'm following him, by the way.

Austin: Yeah. You have to duck to get inside here.

Sylvi: Yeah, definitely.

Austin: People are dancing. There's someone up on a stage. Singing, question mark, but there's no sound.

Jack: But silently? God.

Austin: Silently. Uh-huh. There is a... We get the shot, we get the killer shot of the bartender cleaning out the wooden glass. [laughs] You know? And, you know, everyone turns to look at you as you come in, strangers, and they go back to their own stuff. I think there's probably one table that has like a few more people around it in such a way that you're like, ah, these are the big shots, you know? I don't know that it's clear that there's a mayor or like a headman or something necessarily, but this is the group that seems like, based on where the position of the table is, the fact that they're all kind of, [yawns] they're looking out. Excuse me, they're looking out, you know, at everyone else more than they are, like, you know, facing inwards. You know, it's almost like they're not

customers so much as they are holding, if not court, then, you know, this is like where you find them, you know?

Jack: Yeah. You know, I point at my sling, at the splint and I, you know, I just say that, you know, one of the farmers helped me out and we're passing through and I want to help you out. I'm happy to work. You know. But it's Jud, so it's like, mumbled, and you only get half the Sentences.

Austin: It again takes them a second to almost like find—in the same way the person who like it took them a second to realize the fire was already going—it takes this group a second to realize now that you're talking to them. It feels like it's like an act of effort to pay attention to you. But they like nod as you talk. Like, yeah, okay. There's a little shrug. One of them leans in as if to whisper something to the one in the center. Who, yeah, okay, well, maybe. You know, that type of position, that type of gesture. And says, doesn't say anything. Looks at the, it says—it gets up and gives you a little wave. Like, come with me, you know, and begins to head outside.

And here at night, you know, lit by this big bonfire, points out to the tree line where you were getting twigs before, right? And then like big clawed hands points to, let's say, five or six trees, right? And they're big. And it's like one, two, three, you know, not saying one, two, three, but like that one, that one. That one, that one, and that one. And then, like, does the axe chop motion and then says, you know, bring them in, you know, hand to chest. And then points to, like, a pile of wood. Just a big lumber pile, basically, and is like, go ahead and fell those five trees for us and bring them in and we're even, basically, is what you get from this. And then, like, quick pat on your back as if to say, all right, we're agreed. And then starts to head back in.

Jack: Wow! Hmm.

Austin: Don't ask for homework if you don't want any.

Janine: I think Sacea just says, get chopping.

Jack: [laughs]

Janine: Like, is very amused by this. Of just like, yeah, you, here you are. Good one.

Austin: [laughs]

Jack: I mean, yeah, okay. I would like to head out into the woods, Austin, and I would like to draw your attention to my final Sentence. Ah, what's that say? My fourth Sentence is "I am always under threat."

Austin: That's a good Sentence. So, are you triggering a Tragic Success? Are you using this Means in order to draw the Band deeper into chaos?

Jack: I am. Although I would like to say that the last episode structurally was Jud gets us into trouble. So, I would... If folks would like to move on from this town, we can elide this task. But if folks would like to get into increasing trouble with the woods folk, I am prepared to...

Austin: You don't know how it's going to fail.

Jack: No, no, I don't. I mean, increasing trouble with the woods folk as the woods folk, peripheral, or, you know, the woods folk are going to be involved one way or another.

Austin: Yes, this is true.

Jack: But I am structurally conscious of Jud got in a pickle, let's get him out, being the last episode and I don't want to do that again if folks would rather move in a different narrative direction.

Sylvi: Mm.

Dre: Listen, if you want to cause trouble, I can be the person that causes trouble.

Sylvi: Oh my god.

Austin: I think partly, also, Jack wants their token back, right?

Jack: But I want people to have an opportunity to play their characters outside of "what's Jud's problem" [laughs] more than I want my token back.

Austin: Well, in this case, I will tell you I have a suggestion for how this plays that is not Jud did something wrong tonight. Now, did Jud ever do something wrong? Maybe.

Jack: Sometimes you're just so hungry, Austin.

Austin: Yeah, I know. I get it. And the knight that you're the squire of is right there and very powerful.

Sylvi: And kind of tasty looking!

Austin: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Dre: Mm-hm.

Jack: Oh, it was a bad night. Um. Yeah, okay. Then I will go into the woods. Is Gaje still following me?

Sylvi: I am absolutely fucking following you, kid.

Jack: And this gives me the power.

Dre: Yeah, I'm also going to follow. Because of how bad this went last time.

Jack: Because I'm like, I'm not going off on my own.

Austin: Oh...

Jack: Sure, I'm plunging into the forest, but... You know, they co-signed it. Brackets. They did not co-sign it. Close brackets.

Austin: They did.

Jack: Brackets. They did not co-sign it. Close brackets.

Austin: Well, and listen, they didn't send you that deep into the forest, you know? There were five trees within... You can see the bonfire from there, right? And Jack, I'm reading the rules, and the rules as written say that you can describe something consequential

and undesirable caused by one of your Sentences and recharge your tokens. You can make the pitch on this. You can decide what this is. I certainly have a pitch, but I'm... totally open to what you might want to see happen here.

Jack: God, that's a great question. Do you want to pull the trigger on consequence from... Gorthmeier? Gorthmeier? Grothmeier.

Austin: [struggling] Gorthgeier.

Jack: Gorthgeier.

Austin: Yeah. Geretaine Gorthgeier.

Jack: Do you want to pull the trigger on Gorthgeier consequence?

Austin: Yeah, I think that's where I'm at in terms of what seems like where the story has been rolling towards on that stuff, you know? If you're up for that.

Jack: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, totally.

Austin: Then, yeah, then I think, you know, you're looking at the white light of the bonfire from the dark of the trees. Maybe you cut down one. I'm guessing, Jud, you're doing it, right? You're cutting the trees. You're not, you haven't—Gaje, you're not doing this, right?

Sylvi: No, I'm mostly there to make sure that he doesn't, like, hurt himself.

Jack: Oh, it's not going well.

Dre: Oh, oh, oh, oh! You're not going to ask me if I'm cutting the tree?

Austin: [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: Well, you know, Gaje has cut a lot of trees down. Flemming, are you cutting...

Dre: Oh, you think I've never cut trees down before?

Austin: Flemming, are you cutting down the tree?

Dre: Yeah!

Austin: Aw!

Dre: With magic!

Austin: Oh.

Jack: Whoa.

Austin: How's that work?

Jack: Good, because I can't really do this one-handed. I'm trying, but it's not going well.

Dre: Listen, I always know a few showy tricks.

Austin: You do. You do, this is very showy. What's the trick look like?

Sylvi: This motherfucker.

Dre: I just... I chop with my hand, and it just, chunks of the tree start coming out as if I was chopping it with an axe.

Austin: Fantastic.

Sylvi: I think before you do this, I go,

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Oh, wait, you're going to break your wrist again. You're going to have two broken bones.

Austin: You get a little bit into this. Maybe you drop the first tree. And we get the framing of y'all in the woods with just enough trees in front of you that you can't fully see the village, but you can see the bright white of the bonfire and the canopy above and above that, or where there isn't one of those, the dark night sky. And then some

additional bright lights of fire appear as someone starts shooting flaming arrows into this wooden village. What do you do?

On Fire [1:09:50]

Jack: Ah, fuck.

Sylvi: Oh. I mean, which direction are they coming from?

Austin: That's a great question. Sounds like you need to declare a Means here.

Sylvi: Motherfucker.

Austin: How do you try to find where they're coming from?

Sylvi: You know...

Austin: What Means are you using?

Sylvi: The Sentence "I always learn through violence," does that imply that I'm always the one inflicting it? Or can sometimes it be because I've been hit with an arrow?

Austin: That's not a bad— [kisses fingers] The system works, folks! Realis! It absolutely can be because you got hit by an arrow.

Sylvi: Sick!

Austin: So, your intent is to determine where you come from, where you're coming from.

Sylvi: Where the arrows are coming from.

Austin: Where the arrows, sorry, not where you're coming from, where the arrows are coming from. The Means you're using is "I always learn through violence." They are opposing you with "Leo Suzerainty scouts can always remain hidden among trees." Are you using your token?

Sylvi: I am the only person with a token, so I am holding on to it right now.

Austin: All right. They are coming seemingly from everywhere, Gaje. You cannot pin them down. Your attempt here fails. And that Sentence gets Countered. Which I think speaks to the degree of this attack, right? Also, as a reminder, when your Sentence is Countered, you cannot use that again in this scene. Go ahead and also mark that you failed with it so that it's one step closer to priming. Somebody has a primed Sentence, right?

Jack: I do.

Austin: Jud does. Okay, fun. Good to know. So, yeah, the arrows are coming in hot and quick. You've been hit. We see you get hit twice, Gaje. And it's like you turn to face where the first one came from, and another one hits you from the other direction. And you're able to put out the fire or whatever, but you're hit. It hurts. I mean, maybe it doesn't hurt. I don't know how your pain situation works.

Sylvi: I mean, no. It's gonna hurt. I can handle it. But it's... There's still arrows in me.

Austin: Uh-huh. Sure are.

Jack: Saint Sebastian. No, yes? Saint Sebastian. Who got arrowed?

Sylvi: Saint Sebastian. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Arrowed? I think this potato was arrowed.

Austin: Sacea. Where are you during all of this? Because we know that Flemming, Gaje, and Jud are in the woods.

Janine: Yeah, I think I was hanging back a bit just because it was so much walking.

Austin: So, much walking.

Janine: And they got it covered. Like, it seemed like, you know, they're fine. They don't need me. But I think when arrows start flying at the village, it's like a little bit different situation. Now, what do I do about that?

Austin: What do you do about that? That's the question.

Janine: Shit. I'm thinking. Because I have an answer that's easy, but I want an answer that's good, you know?

Austin: Sure. I get you.

Janine: I'm trying to find a fun way to spin "I always invite the uninvited with my fragrances," is what I'm really trying to do.

Austin: Fun as in get you out of this problem or also recharges your token by getting you deeper in?

Janine: Fun as in it solves the problem.

Austin: Okay. It's a hard one because if you're... if it's positive for you...

Janine: If I'm inviting it, then it's by definition invited.

Austin: Right. Though it could be a thing that's uninvited by everyone involved and therefore still bad. You know what I mean? There's lots of ways to...

Janine: Yeah. I guess that's true. I am inviting in the action. That is in the Sentence. "I always invite the uninvited," which could mean so many things. I think the thing I want to do kind of applies to that, that I want it to just like start like torrentially raining.

Austin: Oh, sure.

Janine: And, you know, I was hung up on like, well, I'm inviting it, but, but people generally hate when it starts torrentially raining out of nowhere. That is a generally quite uninvited force.

Austin: Mm-hm. What's your intent with this?

Janine: To get the wood place all wet and hard to burn.

Austin: Okay, so you're trying to prevent the fire from spreading, effectively. Yeah, I think this makes sense. The thing that I'll offer you is that it can make the situation... It could be a token recharge here if it puts out the fire. Because then you're also in the dark. And if it's not so hard that it puts out the fire, then you're not going to get your token back. But I'll say that, yeah, sure, the uncertainty as to whether or not this place catches fire is addressed.

Janine: I think it should put the fire out.

Austin: I think so, too.

Janine: Like, I could take or leave the token. I mean, I'll take my token. But it does feel just like if it's raining that hard, the fire should be put out.

Austin: The fire should go out.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. But I do think that that leads you deeper into chaos, as now the only light is coming from the arrows that are on fire, which are no longer setting fire to things, at least. What's it look like when you summon this? What's the actual physical act of you using your talents to make it pour look like?

Janine: I think... I wonder. So, I think when Sacea gathered up the like mildewy material, it involved bringing a little pocketknife and like scraping as much as she could into like a little like a folded up piece of paper, like a little paper packet like they used to put old timey powdered medicines in. And I imagine it's like her sort of grudgingly pulling one of those paper packets out and just like, I just gathered this, and I have to use it. Like, what a fucking waste. It's just, she pulls out the little paper packet and like opens it up and then folds it so there's a little spout in the paper. And sort of feeds it into one of her existing pomanders with some existing like mix on it. And then I think she just like throws it in the fire. Just like at the base of the fire where like, you know, the chain is still hanging out. She can like reel it out when she needs to, but for the moment, just like,

eh, here. And then it just, there's just like a shit ton of smoke that just smells like probably like basement, like neglected basement. And it just is like a thick smoke that doesn't disperse as it goes into the sky. Like you'd think it should, but it just stays kind of the same. And then suddenly it's fucking pouring.

Austin: And then it's pouring rain. Yeah, great. Great. A voice yells out through the dark.

Janine: And also the fire is being extinguished, we have to say—

Austin: Yeah, the fire is extinguished, yeah, to be clear, 100%, yes. Through the dark, a noble voice yells,

Austin (as **Noble**): Oh, my little gourmand. Oh, my little pig. Give yourself over and we will not attack.

[“[Sapryc](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]