

Realis 19: The Death Procession 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: It is easy from within a crisis to presume a past of placidity. It is simple from the clutches of despair to imagine another's life graced with hope. It is common for those visiting the grey moon of Sapryc to reminisce about the colors of other moons that are so bright, so saturous as to be nauseating with life.

These are, of course, acts of folly. Mistakes of ontological category.

Sapryc is not a moon of reduced hue or increased chaos. It is and always has been a parasite world. Long before its light grew monochrome, it drew away the happy pigments of smiling cheeks. Long before the Venerant See or the Imperial Empest arrived, each with grasping claws, Sparyc's own kings extended their talons.

It is not a broken place. It is a place that breaks. Ask any lucky enough to leave it. Ask them! Ask them if the fields they once stomped through on their way to the schoolhouse are still the right shade of green. Ask them if the potato mash is buttery the way it was in

the memory of their tongue. Ask them to place a hand on your shoulder with love, and find the fear with which they tremble at the thought of real connection.

And so if Sapryc is a breaking-thing, the question down the path is what broke Sapryc.

Introduction

Austin: Y'all have just left the village of the Velutines, the wooded village, the village of the wood people. You've once again escaped the snare of Lady Gothgeier. The world of Sapryc has been under siege from the Imperial Empest, a fallen empire that has become, I mean, it's a risen empire. It's a very strong, powerful, insectile empire, but it used to be a human empire and now it is an empire of weird bug people, and it used to be less aggressive in its locustal spread than it is now, but boy, is it spreading. And it has been attacking Sapryc here for the last, you know, for many, many, many years, to the degree that the original people who ran Sapryc, Sapryc used to be part of the Leo Suzerainty, which Lady Gorthgeier is from, for instance. And in the time since the war started, the Leo Suzerainty has basically fled this world, leaving its, the Leo Suzerainty rich people, the nobility has fled this world, leaving behind, you know, the civilians and, you know, maybe some local mayors and things like that.

And the only group, the only, you know, powerful faction, fighting against the Empest here is the hypocritical Venerant See, who believe, who teach that the holiest space is an empty space, that the Immaterial One exists in emptiness, away from land and sea and even further beyond the sky. And so, they preach austerity and often take on the symbols of wealth and power and prestige to keep them away from, to keep you from ruining your life with them. That would be bad. Deep sacrifice they're making here.

And you were in a town that they were running called Krater that was attacked. And before it was attacked, you took a job with lovable Danny DeVito-esque Mirador Cantata, a mysterious merchant who seems to have some mystical stuff going on also. And yeah, you've been on the journey since then heading north towards the Cloister of the Hollow Heart, some sort of place where Mirador says that there is transportation to take you to your true destination. And the last thing that we saw was over to the east of

where you are, you know, kind of on the other side of this continent, the type of thing you wouldn't be able to see, except that it is a giant space elevator in the shape of an umbilical cord, or like, what if a Roman column was an umbilical cord, you know? And also, a space elevator. Classic, classic fucked up science fantasy stuff. That space elevator and the town, the city below it, Allant, were being attacked by a new part of the Imperial Empest's armada. And we last left seeing that off in the distance.

And I think today we pick up right in the middle of the results of that. We don't see exactly what happens. I mean, if I'm imagining this as the beginning of the episode in an HBO drama, you are all moving through the ruins of the Cathedral Omphalic, because it has fallen. It is black and white here on Sapryc, as always. There is no color here. And you are moving through what looks like the broken interior of a giant space elevator that is set up like a giant tower, not like an elevator. It has an elevator in the middle, but the outskirts of it, the kind of circumference of it running all the way up was like a massive cathedral, basically. And so, you're moving through the ruins of a space elevator-sized cathedral that has fallen across the entire continent, kind of drawing a line, you know, westward. The city of Allant is all the way on the east coast of the trunk, the northern continent of Sapryc. And then just like, you know, it's basically like a bunch of ruins have fallen and dotted the entire landscape, right? So tall is this elevator. And so, you're like moving through it, you know, lit by white fire. And the, you know, every, the vibes are rancid. Because not only are you moving through what was already, or what is now these ruins, you're moving through territory that was already covered in ruins, covered in parts of the past, and also covered in things that were ruined by the falling of the space elevator.

I'm going to give you a Moon Sentence that you might want to write down. Maybe this is, you know what I'm going to do? I think that this is its own moon. Even though you're still on the main moon, you're still on Sapryc, and those Moon Sentences still count. Let's fuck it up. We're allowed to do this. Moon inside the moon. A moon could be many different things. This is the Ruins of the Cathedral Omphalic. Boom. And then the impulse inside of the moon, or inside of these new ruins—as a reminder, you get your token back when you succeed at, or when you pursue an impulse with a Sentence. The

impulse here is to “reveal a buried secret.” And the Sentence I’m going to just straight up give you is “the Ruins of the Cathedral Omphalic always intersect with other ruins.”

And so, it’s like, you know, you’re moving through a place that’s like an old ruined town that also has the side of a space cathedral crashed into a barn, you know, or crashed into a tavern or something. And it’s like, I don’t know when, you don’t even know when that town is from necessarily, right? Moving through this has been confusing. It’s not labyrinthine because it’s not whole enough to be labyrinthine, but it is very disorienting. And the worst part comes when you have to actually move through parts of the cathedral that landed in big chunks. That may mean that you have to like... You know, you’re basically briefly moving through the strange—you are basically in a labyrinth, right? The interiors are labyrinthine, and the exteriors are confusing because they ruined the way the world looks and it’s hard to make sense of where you are because all the natural landmarks have been covered up.

And Mirador has been getting increasingly nervous as time moves on. You know, I think we get a moment here. As always, I’m going to ask a very a very traditional tabletop fantasy game situation or question, but like what’s the walking order here? Where in the sort of little caravan y’all got? Who’s up front?

Sylvi: I feel like I’m up front because that’s kind of my job, is to be the muscle. The eight foot tall guy going first makes sense to me.

Austin: That does make sense. You can see over stuff, too. You’re eight foot tall.

Sylvi: Yeah, exactly.

Austin: That’s good.

Sylvi: I can move debris easier than other people as well. Clear space for Scrundle.

Austin: Yeah, Mirador and Scrundle, who I believe is still with you. I had expected Scrundle to get left behind at some point, but y’all have been doing a good job of keeping Scrundle happy and healthy, which, [inaudible??? 11:05] you know, you might need Scrundle at some point.

Austin: You went through the Velutines in a way where I was like, damn, I don't know if they're going to be able to get Scrundle through there. And you did. You know?

Dre: I have an important question.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Can I ride Scrundle?

Sylvi: Scrundle's pulling a cart.

Austin: Scrundle's pulling a cart.

Dre: Okay. Can I be in the cart?

Austin: You've been in the cart, though. Yeah, in the past we've seen you in the cart, for sure.

Dre: Okay, perfect. I'm in the cart still.

Jack: I think that Jud is also in the cart. My arm is not doing good. I think it is in a bad way. There was a bit in the village where I think the adrenaline and the shock of it was still powering me through. But I think that we have not necessarily been able to take care of it the way we would otherwise. And I am not having a good time. So, I'm just, you know, sitting in the back of the thing with a sling, wincing at every bump as the... Because the cart has to navigate through the ruins too, which, that cannot be easy.

Dre: Woof. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. I'm going to draw some lines here that represent broken ruins. Sacea, where are you?

Janine: I feel like I last recall also saying that Sacea was like sitting in the back of the cart kind of with her legs hanging off the edge.

Austin: Sure. That makes sense.

Janine: Ready to go if needed.

Jack: We're a very cart focused three.

Janine: I'm an old lady. I'm literally an old lady.

Austin: I seem to remember you're also some other things?

Janine: One of them's real.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: What?

Jack: What?

Austin: You don't remember this? Y'all don't remember? That in the middle of... Was it when trying to save Jud? When was this, Janine? Do you remember?

Janine: Mm, I feel like it was relatively early on, kind of in the forest. I think it was one of the first tricks I did. Swirling the censer around and being a bunch of different people in the smoke.

Jack: Yes, yes. But that's all fake, right? That's just censer magic.

Austin: Yeah, for sure, mm-hm.

Dre: That's just normal stuff.

Sylvi: That's the shadow step.

Janine: Sentences can do anything.

Jack: Oh, it's the shadow step.

The Empest [13:15]

Austin: Sentences can do a lot. It's true. Okay. Does anyone have a Sentence that can overcome the Means "Empest worker drones always work day and night"? You can hear the sound, the familiar buzzing of the back wings of a group of Empest drones flying overhead. This is not the first time that they've shown up, but this is the closest they've come to where you are, which in my mind is sort of a set of these ruins inside of, let's stay inside of this like old ruined town that was already abandoned.

There were signs that the town had been hit by the Bile, which is this plague that has spread across Sapryx. Or Sapryc, rather. And so, it had been abandoned and quarantined, and then the people there just died, the people who remained there just died. And, you know, there's like the—some broken windows, giant windows, where there used to be space stained glass. There are beautiful carpets, all their color now drained, right, the cathedral used to go high enough up that it got color at a certain point. Which will become important in a bit. But here you just are in and among the ruins of the stone cathedral, mixed in with the ruins of this abandoned town, and then above it you can hear the sound of these drones approaching. They tend to carry stuff out eastward towards some sort of Empest base, you think. But this is the closest that they've come to you. Do you have any way of stopping them from, you know, effectively, that's the Sentence I'm using to try to see if they see you. Does anyone want to try to counter it?

Jack: What's the Sentence again?

Austin: "Empest workers always work day and night."

Jack: I'm trying to, I'm trying to intuit how real that Sentence is. I've used the Sentence before... It's, "I always protect those traveling with me." But this is a 0 Reality Sentence. It has not been advanced. And so, there's a chance that it might get beaten by the Empest Sentence. But if somebody else wants to try something else.

Dre: No, I think you should go for it.

Janine: I think I also only have Reality 0 stuff right now.

Sylvi: Yeah, the non-0 Sentence that I have does not... Could be applicable, but things would go from zero to ten very quickly with it, I think.

Jack: Right. Yes.

Sylvi: Yeah, so maybe give it a shot with yours.

Jack: Okay. Yeah, so I'm going to use the Sentence "I always protect those traveling with me."

Austin: What do you do? Describe what you're doing to counter.

Jack: I have got a horrible headache. It feels like the headache has settled behind my eyebrows. And I can feel it with the beat of my heart. And also, I can feel the pain in my arm at the same time. It's as though the pain behind my brow and the pain in my arm are the same. So, I lie back in the cart to try and, you know, rest my head and just get this, like we get this straight point of view shot looking up into the sky and seeing it dotted with these Empest drones. And I think, I think I call out, but I think I call out in a kind of gluey, headached passivity, or there's no urgency to just, like,

Jack (as **Jud**): There are Empest above us.

Jack: You know? And I think it's that that alerts the other people to the knowledge that we need to, like, get undercover or hide the cart or something like that.

Austin: Yeah. So, yeah, what do you do? Where do you hide the cart?

Jack: There is a... One of these buildings was a pub that had been turned into a kind of triage center/morgue for victims of the blight, where they had stretched this huge sort of like white canvas or white tarp down from the front of the pub to essentially, you know, like during the pandemic when they were like, "we have outdoor seating now," and the answer was basically just like a gazebo outside on the street. It's a massive one of those for treatment, but ultimately, you know, body storage for people in the blight. It's

been marked with a huge black charcoal mark indicating quarantine, indicating, you know, the blight is here. And I think that we pull the cart down underneath this massive, heavy tarpaulin surrounded by, you know, cots and skeletons and, you know, the remnants of first the blight and then the war and then the cathedral falling on it.

Austin: Please, Jack, it's the Bile, not the blight, you know.

Jack: Oh, my God.

Austin: It's so much more bile-y than blighty.

Jack: Blighty is just when the tomatoes go bad. Bile is... Oh, it sucks.

Austin: Yeah, no, I have notes on how the Bile works, and it's not good, so. It's not good.

Jack: Oh, can you name one—can you—

Sylvi: Oh, I've got the Bile notes, don't you worry.

Austin: Well, yeah, because the specific thing is... Yeah, yeah, yeah. Do you want me to tell you?

Jack: Oh, I just wanted to say, can you say some of the equipment that people trying to either treat or mitigate this Bile would have in this... beneath this tarpaulin?

Austin: Yeah. I mean, so, there's a lot of stuff that's like treating any sort of fever, right, so. And now completely ruined, you know, washcloths and rags, you know, things that are meant to keep the lotions and similar salves for the pain in muscles and skin, and to treat things like boils. But there's also a record player that is currently off, or something similar to that. There is... And, you know, if you look at whatever the, I don't know what sort of traveling music device there is here on Sapryc. Any thoughts on what that would be?

Jack: Do you mean an instrument or like a method for playing back?

Austin: No. Like a vinyl, like a record player, like a, you know. I don't think this is a cassette world.

Janine: Wax cylinders!

Austin: Wax cylinders!

Jack: Wax cylinders!

Sylvi: Oh yeah, wax cylinders is perfect.

Austin: There's wax cylinders that have things written on them or that have their "Calming Music for the Feverish Mind" written on the side of them. There are now long-dried petals of flowers without color, which are stockpiled in a way that make you think, or that are—they're not just like by the side of the beds, you know. Maybe there are some there, but they're also gathered next to medicines, or what you've probably ended up finding is like a little chart where you would, you know, mark what you still need. And it's, you know, twelve irises, five sunflowers. A note that says "Patient C responds well to the smell of mint." Because the Bile is not simply a thing that gives you fevers and boils and carbuncles, but it gives you anger, it gives you ire. That is why it is called the Bile. It is said that those who suffer from it feel anger at others, themselves, and the world, so raw and wretched that sometimes it turns violent. So, there is both the traditional kind of plague-like symptoms, but also a raw anger that is contagious and deadly in many ways.

This works, by the way, Jack, to compare those Sentences. Jud's Sentence succeeds here. The drones fly away. I have marked on my side one of the, this Sentence. It is a +0 Sentence, and I've marked it once. So good job countering that. I'll cross it out.

Jack: Just to clarify, when a Sentence succeeds, I don't strike it off.

Austin: You don't do anything.

Jack: It's only when it fails.

Austin: What do you mean strike it off? Do you mean...

Janine: Put it in brackets. Like, tap it.

Austin: Yeah, on your Sentence, you mean?

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Yeah, your Sentence is fine. Your Sentence, you succeeded. You countered it. Their Sentence is the one that's scratched out for now until the next scene, right? They will not be reappearing with this, right? They fly away. I'm also going to just trust, you know, that fiction is true. But I do want to introduce another Sentence basically immediately here inside of the ruins of the Cathedral Omphalic. The group of you is now hidden under this big gazebo. And, you know, the bodies here have things on and around them. People are wearing rings. They have, like I said, things that would calm them near them. Paintings, pictures, these wax cylinders we talked about. One person is holding... Or I think maybe around one person who seems to be dressed, you know, more—at this point it's bones and skin, right? It's not, it's gross. Just to be clear. It's gross here. But around them, and they are dressed in finery, things feel colder. And next to a little flower pot, there is a little saucer dish with a single ice cube that has not melted, that seems to be projecting a sort of cooling field around them. And so here is the Sentence from the ruins of the Cathedral Omphalic. It is "the Ruins of the Cathedral Omphalic always hold danger and reward in equal measure." This is just a true thing about this place. You know, this isn't acting on you in any way at this point, but, you know, there's rewards. There's magic stuff here. This whole area is a combination of ruins from different eras, and sometimes you'll stumble into part of an ancient religious vault and sometimes you'll stumble into a town where everyone died and left their belongings behind. And this sometimes brings people in who look for wealthy stuff or looks for valuable stuff. Those people could be you, but hey, danger and reward in equal measure. So. Just putting it down there. That's a rank zero Sentence. So actually, wait, that's a rank one Sentence because it is danger and reward in equal measure. And I'm just giving that to you. It's not acting on you. It's simply a true thing about the world. This immediate danger having passed, what do y'all do?

Searching the Clinic [25:35]

Sylvi: I think I'm like, I... would come out and say, it's like,

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): I don't like lingering around this type of place. There's enough death here that I'm sure it still lingers, and I don't want to get caught by it.

Austin: Anyone else have feelings about whether to move on or poke around in this place?

Jack: Is there any way that... There is no way Jud would say, "let's try and find medical supplies for my broken arm here in this field hospital." Is there any impulse in that direction from other people? Or do we think that...

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: How does that manifest?

Janine: I kind of picture Sacea just starting to poke around. Like, I think I've described her as having a walking stick, like a cane. And I can imagine her using that to like tip some stuff over and like noodle around a little bit. I think mostly like looking for stuff that might have been protected from obvious dirt and stuff.

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hm. So, you're looking for, you're trying to find something valuable.

Janine: Yeah. Ideally medical supplies, but.

Austin: Ideally medical supplies. Sure. Yeah. I mean, I think this is an intent. This is declare intent. You're looking to find something valuable, ideally medical supplies. Do you have Means that you're pursuing this with? And I say this, you know, saying out loud, "the Ruins of Cathedral Omphalic always hold danger and reward in equal measure" is a Sentence you know exists. So.

Janine: Yeah. Um, remind me of how tokens work again.

Austin: If you have your token, you can spend it—actually on the right hand side of the sheet, there's this token discharge effect section.

Janine: Oh, okay.

Austin: For the length of the current conflict, you can add +1 Reality to your chosen Means. You can use an established Moon Sentence as your Means. If a slot is available on the moon sheet, you can also add a new +0 Moon Sentence representing some capacity or characteristic of the moon in question. If you're currently in a conflict, you can then immediately use that new Moon Sentence. So, if you were like I want to add a thing that says "the Ruins of the Cathedral Omphalic" or "Sapryc..."

Janine: Well, that would be level one, that would be 0 Reality, so that's not.

Austin: Yeah, it would be. Correct. Correct.

Janine: That doesn't give me a ton.

Austin: It does not.

Janine: It's fun, though.

Austin: It is fun. And as a reminder, and this is actually, I'm looking at the sheet, does not say this outright. But defenders win, right? This is the classic Realis thing. The counter only needs to tie in order to succeed, right? The actor is the one who has to beat the counters.

Janine: Oh, so really you would need a 2 Reality.

Austin: Right, correct.

Janine: To trump a 1.

Austin: To trump a 1. There are also times when you might want to have a fail, right? As a reminder, once per session, each player may frame one scene in which a chosen Means fails against an uncertainty or opposition. The Means chosen for Illuminating

Failure is countered until the end of the next scene that the player character is in. The Realization can allow it to be used again as normal. So, you could go, like, hunting for a miss, you know? This could be a thing that Sacea does that gets her deeper into trouble, but that's kind of interesting. You know, as a way to purposefully give yourself a little boost, you know?

Janine: Mm-hmm. Is that what this sheet is missing? A way to mark, like, was this countered?

Austin: No, you can do a strikeout. Boop. Right? I think that's the easiest thing. That's the way I've been doing it on my side.

Janine: Okay, that makes sense.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Oh, crap. I'm trying to find, like, a way to succeed, and I just don't think I have one.

Austin: No, I don't think you have one. I'm looking at your stuff and I guess you could use a Bond and both players could use tokens, right?

Sylvi: I unfortunately don't—oh, I don't have a Bond with you either, but I don't have my token.

Dre: I don't have my token.

Austin: Yeah, does no one else—are we sure about this? Because I'm looking at the other sheets and it looks like everybody should have their token, on the other sheet.

Sylvi: Okay. Hey, I'm not going to say no.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Okay!

Janine: What happens if I—

Sylvi: I do not have a Bond with Sacea though.

Janine: Yeah. What happens if I level up my Jud one? Like what happens at three ticks for a Bond?

Austin: You get your token back and you can rewrite the token. That's it. There's no like, you're not leveling up the Bond in a progressive way.

Janine: Okay.

Dre: Okay. So now that I have my token, what is it that I can do to help out Sacea? Since we have a Bond together.

Austin: You could theoretically use a Bond and both of you could spend your tokens on it in order to boost it to a +2. Which would beat the +1 that you know you're going to run into here.

Dre: Hm. I do like the image of, like, Sacea, like, tipping stuff over. And Flemming kind of, like, huffily walking over there and just being so put upon that he needs to offer his help. But...

[**Jack** and **Janine** chuckle]

Janine: What would we be applying the tokens to, then?

Austin: The Bond Sentence.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Right?

Janine: Well, if that's the case, shouldn't Jud do it and then my thing will—no, wait, it doesn't—when does it—it doesn't... When do I check it? It's been so long.

Austin: When you use it, you check it.

Janine: Okay, so if I...

Austin: Jud would be using Jud's, right?

Janine: Yeah, but if I checked, if I spent my token and checked the Jud Bond, would I immediately get that token back?

Austin: You would. That's correct.

Janine: That kind of seems like I'm going to do it.

Austin: Mm-hm. Fun.

Janine: I don't know if Jud has a token to spend.

Jack: I do have a token to spend. I... Hmm.

Austin: But it wouldn't... Yeah, yeah. Sorry, yes. Jud would have to spend his token.

Janine: And Jud's token wouldn't renew.

Austin: Correct.

Janine: Because Jud only has one for me.

Austin: Correct.

Jack: Yes. You would need to... Jud is in no position to help. And you would need to make a case for Jud helping you here.

Austin: Right. Well, in this specific case, the way it's written is like, you almost need Jud to be the one to get into trouble and then you save him, right? Because your Bond with Jud is, "without my attention, Jud will die on the vine."

Sylvi: No. Well, no—

Janine: Jud's kind of already in trouble.

Sylvi: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: No, that's what you're actually trying to do, right?

Janine: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: What you're trying to do is, I'm finding the medical stuff I need to fix to help Jud, right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: So, I think that it applies.

Janine: Because I wonder if the thing that's happening here is that Sacea's kind of like chattering and trying to get Jud to engage and stay...

Sylvi: Conscious?

Janine: I don't know if it's that... Is it that dire?

Sylvi: Is it that bad? I don't know.

Austin: Jud, is it that bad?

Jack: It... What's the foundation Sentence? "Show where the sword goes, but never where it does. Never what it does." Something is going wrong with the way the arm is healing. And it is getting worse.

Janine: Mm.

Sylvi: I guess we didn't really have proper bandaging out in the forest, huh?

Austin: Not so much.

Sylvi: Probably some rags.

Jack: And I had to flee from Gothgeier.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Janine: I wonder if maybe there's also an element of Sacea being like, in what way does it hurt? Because then she can maybe figure out, like, is this, like, a bone thing? Is this, like, a meat thing?

Austin: As written, the rules don't say Jud has to, like, do something to add the token. Jud is being active, Jud is simply in the scene and so can add the token, do you know what I mean? So, I think this is totally fine to use. I think there's no, I have no, there's no complaint about you spending a token and Jud spending a token to overcome this.

Jack: Yeah. I have unchecked my token. And I have added to my relationship with Sacea... Yes. "Sacea's methods are otherworldly, and I am afraid of her. I need to stay in her good books." I am doing this because Sacea is frightening to me, not because I believe that it is in my best interest to be healthy.

Austin: Right. Then yeah, so, and again, so it sounds like your intent is actually, "I want to find and use the medicine I need to help Jud." Is that right, Sacea?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: All right, so then that is our intents. You've declared your Means, which is your Bond with Jud. You've both spent tokens here. The moon itself tries to counter you with "the ruins always hold danger and reward in equal measure." We compare those. Yours is ranked two because you both spent tokens. You've succeeded. You have succeeded here. And you get your intent, right? So, go ahead—and you've marked and recovered your token, right? And if you want to, you can change this Bond. You could rewrite this Bond. But I want to just get back into the actual play. What do you find? How do you try to help Jud out here in this medical pavilion?

Janine: I wonder if what I find is like a... I'm picturing a metal tin, like, you know when you have a metal tin for like a product or something, and it's kind of old and like there's no like label or anything on it anymore, and the surface is kind of like pitted and like

maybe a little bit rusty like on the tin. But it's a thing where as soon as her walking stick hits it, makes a really distinct sound. And I think she can from that sort of like pull it out from under whatever it's under, and bend down and pick it up, and like open it. And it's like a very—does anyone know what Penaten Cream is?

Jack: No.

Dre: No.

Sylvi: Cream that's very sorry?

Austin: Yeah...

Dre: [giggles]

Janine: Not penitent. Penaten.

Austin: Oh. Penitent cream is very Realis, though.

Janine: Yeah. It's Penaten Cream.

Jack: Yeah. It's the cream that you extract from the penitents.

Austin: Oh, I see, it's like a rash cream.

Janine: Yeah, it's like a rash cream that's like extremely thick. And kind of one of those patent, it feels like a patent medicine that is still around, kind of thing. It's got like a blue design on the tin and then like a Greek statue lady. And it's very like, you could tell that this is how this product has looked for a hundred years. But it's like this really thick paste with a very, like it just smells, to me, like bandages. I don't know. I hate it.

[surprised laughter]

Janine: And when it's old—my parents really liked it. I never got it. And when it's old, it also starts to kind of separate. You'll get these dew drops on it as the cream gets more solid... [laughs] I think that's what we find.

Jack: Excellent.

Dre: Good.

Janine: I think there's... It's probably a little magical, obviously. It's probably not just a thick cream for your bones. But I think it's something that you... I think Sacea would want to work it into the bandage, so it holds on.

Jack: Huh. Yeah.

Janine: Or work it into cloth that is wrapped around the wound so it's like...

Jack: A poultice.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: A poultice. A classic.

Janine: A poultice, a salve.

Austin: A classic poultice. Yeah.

Jack: God, we got ourselves a classic poultice here.

Austin: Love it.

Jack: Of the horrible cream.

Austin: Apparently also called a cataplasm.

Jack: Whoa!

Janine: Yeah, sure.

Dre: Fuck, that's awesome.

Austin: Good word. Banger.

Jack: Welcome to Realis, our nastiest season.

Austin: [laughs] It's true. Are you... are you applying the cataplasm? Or are you letting—like, are you nursing Jud in this way?

Janine: Yes.

Austin: You know?

Janine: I think this a thing...

Austin: Nursing Jud isn't the way I should say that. That's different.

Janine: No. Uh-uh. That's very different.

Austin: [laughing] Very different. Gross.

Sylvi: [inaudible 38:10 ???]

Jack: Our nastiest season.

Austin: [laughing] Our nastiest season!

Dre: [laughing]

Austin: No!

Sylvi: [laughing]

Janine: [sighs] Yeah, I think this is a thing of Sacea, you can't really grab his arm when it's hurt and stuff, but it's probably like tugging his sleeve up and just kind of like... Not really being like, hey, do you want, can you do, should I? But just being like, okay, with the gusto of when you scrape your knee and a parent is just like okay, well, I'm gonna lift you up and put you on the counter and we're gonna put a bandage on this. And like just that kind of like gusto.

Austin: Yeah. Is this reducing the pain? Is this healing the break? And is it bones—it is bone specific. This is like four broken bones.

Janine: Yeah. The way I imagine this is like a thing where it's short term anti-inflammatory kind of thing.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: And then long term kind of like... This is stupid. I'm not saying it should be this, but the idea that came to my head was time cream.

Austin: Oh, sure. Oh.

Janine: Which is like cream that reverses the breaking. By reversing time. [laughs]

Austin: No, chronoplasm. Chronoplasm cream. Yeah, yeah, yeah. "My chronoplasm cream always heals with time." Or "always heals through time." I think this is a +0 Ephemera that you can get.

Janine: Cool.

Austin: That you got. So, boom. Love it.

Jack: Part of the way it works is that it slightly weakens the thing that it used to heal in the past so that it can use that energy to re-heal it in the future. And so excessive and incorrect use of chronoplasm cream can actually cause the injuries that you will then use to heal it in the future.

Austin: Right, of course. Yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Janine: I love...

The Hetman's House [40:20]

Austin: Perfect. I think while this is all happening, Mirador is like,

Austin (as **Mirador**): I think I know where we are. I'm going to go to the Hetman's house and see if I can find evidence.

Dre (as **Flemming**): Whose house?

Austin (as **Mirador**): The Hetman?

Austin: It's like the, you know, the head of the...

Jack: The boss.

Sylvi: The straight guy in town.

Austin: Straight.

Dre: Oh, headman's.

Austin: No, well, it's a T. It's a T. The hetman is like the head military commander of an area, basically. Sometimes also a headman, like the headman of a village, but like, you know, this is, thinks he knows where he's going. Um, so. And yeah, asks if anyone will come with him.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Oh yeah.

Austin (as **Mirador**): All right, I guess not. I'm just, I'll go myself.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): No, I'm going, I'm going.

Janine: [laughs]

Sylvi: He's the boss! The job is to protect this guy.

Austin: That's right. All right.

Dre (as **Flemming**): I will also go. It would be irresponsible to let the two of you wander off on your own.

Austin: Then the three of you. Wow!

Sylvi: God damn...

Austin (as **Mirador**): It is your job.

Austin: He says.

Jack: God, everybody in this party, *everybody* in this party is condescending to at least one person else in the party.

Austin: That's true. This is true.

Dre: Hey, I'm condescending to everyone in the party. I'm consistent.

Janine: I'm just nurturing and confident.

Austin: Right, that's right. Uh-huh. You begin to head towards this sort of, the remnants of this house, which, you know, it's a big house, and then on the kind of... you know, let's say the northern end of it has been completely collapsed in with what you would think of as being like a wing of a cathedral. But like,

Austin (as **Mirador**): Oh, I guess I guess we might not be able to find what I'm looking for, but let's check.

Austin: And, you know, goes into this house, which is completely abandoned, and there is—you know, a thing I want to say really quick is, it is dark. It is the winter here, now. It gets dark early. You know, it is 4 p.m. or something and the, you know, the Realis is already setting, probably.

Sylvi: Oh, we're in Canada.

Austin: You're in Canada.

Dre: Yeah, I'd love to play a game to escape reality. [laughs]

Austin: But no, wait, pause. That was not the end of the Sentence. It's hot.

Dre: Oh.

Austin: It is like too hot for it to be this dark out. You know? It's one of those things where it's like it's sweaty and humid here in a way that's like, it's not supposed to be like this this early in the day, you know? Maybe there's a million moons, actually there's a thousand moons, and you've been on moons where this has happened to you before, but it feels, that is what the feeling is. And to me that would be uncomfortable and strange, the idea that I have, you know, a 90 degree seven straight hours before it's even bedtime. You know what I mean? But it's dark out. It's like, you know, most of the day is dark, but it's also all the way hot here right now. And is this also just...? We're not just describing... That doesn't happen. I know that the... Yeah, no, that's just reverse. This is just broken. This is just, yeah, yeah, yeah. Sorry, I was thinking about how the southern hemisphere gets its cold months in what our northern hemisphere warm months are and vice versa, but the light remains the way the light works, right, their summers are still long days, that's what makes it summer. All right, phew. Making sure I didn't just say something stupid.

Jack: Yes. Just at a different time.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Jack: Oh, also, I do just want to, very briefly, since we haven't recorded for a long time. We described the, what's it called? Chromoplasm?

Austin: Chronoplasm. Yeah, of course.

Jack: Cream as being in a blue case. It is in an ashy gray case.

Austin: It is an ashy gray case. Yeah, there's no color.

Jack: Sapryc is black and white.

Austin: Sapryc is always seen in black and white.

Janine: Sorry, I was talking about Penaten Cream being in a blue case. This thing is a battered, shitty, metal, yeah.

Jack: Oh, I see.

Austin: Metal tin. Yeah, right. Anyway, so that is the vibe. And as Mirador opens this, the front door of this house that's been also crashed in with parts of the cathedral, cool air comes out at you. It's the cool air that was in the air-conditioned space elevator that is captured inside of this house. And it actually feels really nice to walk in. And then inside, it's a kind of well-appointed house. There are paintings of famous Suzerainty battles. There are little things, like the little evidences of everyday life everywhere, umbrellas in a little bin by the door. The, you know, the classic, you know, there is a teacup out of it that still has old tea in it, you know, or maybe the stain of old tea in it. But just one, like someone was having their morning tea when they got the news that they had to leave town immediately, you know. No bodies as far as you can tell. But you begin to kind of poke around or Mirador begins to poke around this place. Looking through drawers, looking through cabinets, stuff like that. What do the two of you get up to inside of this place? I'd say it's probably like a two-story house with an attic and then at, you know, at some point the kitchen just gives way to part of a strange cathedral.

Jack: Huh.

Dre (as **Flemming**): [sighs] Okay, Mirador, what is it we're looking for?

Austin (as **Mirador**): I think that this is, I think that we're in, uh, a town. We're in Vortigern. It's really called Vortigern's Hollow, but everyone just calls it Vortigern. And if we're at Vortigern, then I know a shortcut through a little canyon pass that'll get us there a little quicker. But if we're not in Vortigern, then I don't know. So, I'm looking for evidence of it being Vortigern.

Dre (as **Flemming**): Right, okay.

Austin: So yeah, that is what he is looking for, or that's what he says he's looking for at least, right? And so yeah, he's looking through, he's looking for like, you know, the town records or something, right? He's looking for a, what is the thing that I'm thinking of? What is the—hey! Hey, what's the thing I'm thinking of? Anyone want to do a little ESP on me? An almanac. He's looking for a town almanac.

Dre: A census?

Austin: A town census would be great, yeah. Town census is what I should have been thinking of, but yeah, town census, something like that. Because towns don't have almanacs, really. That's not a thing a town has, but...

Dre: Oh, maybe.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It says things like, in the morning, go out and buy the groceries. In the afternoon...

Austin: Exactly.

Janine: On October 28th, Fred is gonna die.

Austin: Right, exactly. God. That's a Realis-ass thing, though.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Jack: On the moon of Almanac, yeah. Oh—now we're just describing the cycle. That's, yeah.

Austin: That is on cycle.

Jack: Just a world of cash.

Sylvi: Chaos ensues when Fred dies a day early.

Austin: Everyone freaks out, right?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Holy shit. Our almanac.

Sylvi: Was there foul play?

Austin: Or do they say, you know what? Close enough. About as good as a weather almanac gets.

Sylvi: Well, that's where the schism forms.

Austin: Right. Of course.

Sylvi: You know, Friends at the Table. We love a schism.

Austin: We love a schism. Every scholar a schism. Yeah.

Jack: Every village an almanac.

Austin: Every village an almanac. That's how it goes. So, yeah. What do y'all do in here?

Dre: Hmm. Um, let's see.

Austin: And I'm not looking for Sentences here. I'm looking for, play your characters. You're in a weird place.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Talk to me about how you're, what you're up to.

Dre: Sure. Yeah. I mean, I, listen, I'm not going to look for things. Why would I look for something? That's a lot of extra work that's unnecessary.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Um, I'm going to use magic to find the answer here.

Jack: Yes!

Austin: Love this. What do you—

Jack: Roll dice, seek consequences!

Dre: As always, I “respond to a mundane problem with magical Means.”

Austin: You do. This is good. This is, recharge your token. If it wasn’t charged, you would be recharging your token right now, I believe. That is, you’re pursuing—

Sylvi: Flemming has definitely lived through the Magician’s Apprentice, that Disney short, for sure, with the brooms.

Austin: [amused] Yeah, for sure.

Dre: Oh god.

Sylvi: Absolutely. Exactly that type of motherfucker.

Austin: Are you “always knowing a few showy tricks” in order to do this? What are you doing?

Dre: Yes, absolutely. I mean, you know, it could be a couple of them, but I think it’s a showy trick because this is just pure asshole behavior. This is showing off. This is not efficient.

Austin: What’s it look like? What are you doing? What are you trying to do? What’s your intent?

Dre: I find a room that has a bookshelf in it. What was the name of this place?

Austin: His hope... They said...

Dre: Or the place that he wants it to be.

Austin: Yeah, Vortigern is I believe what I said it would be.

Dre: Okay. I take out a, so I have my curated book of grand spells. There is, of course, room in the back, for notes.

Austin: Oh, sure.

Dre: And other things. I cast a spell in which I can begin transcribing the words from books and other written objects around me. So, I'm basically just trans—I'm using this mental transcription and I'm just, every time the word Vortigern shows up in my mind, I'm writing down, you know, the Sentence surrounding it.

Austin: Yeah. It starts slow at first, you know, and at first you can't be sure, because it's like, "a shipment of 12 bushels to Vortigern." Right? This is for the listener. And for y'all. It's V-O-R-T-I-G-E-R-N. Vortigern. You know, normal names.

Dre: Sure!

Austin: And so, it starts like that. And then, you know, you get some Sentences where you're like, I guess this could be saying that this is Vortigern, right? Where it's like, you know, "the history of Vortigern's Hollow." And you're like, I guess this could be, you know, yeah, maybe the head of this town would have that. Maybe they would, you know, but maybe they're just from there, and we don't know for sure. Eventually, you get the census. You get the town census, and it's very clearly describing this town, and it is a list of, it is the list of the population, and it is the numbers dropping because of the Bile spreading through it. And a list of the causes of death. And the thing about dying by Bile is that you end up with these kind of sub-records where you will die by violence that came from the Bile, right? A scuffle, you know, the earliest is there are just like someone dies from a scuffle in the tavern. And then that happens again. And then after that, the tavern deaths and the fights begin to be tied to the Bile. And you're like, ah, shit, okay.

And then at some point, the automatic writing stuff just goes at such a speed that you have to stop it because it'll burn through your pages. Unless you have like a magical set of infinite pages. Maybe that's, I don't know how your book works. Because it becomes clear. It is no longer writing Vortigern once or twice or even a dozen times. It is rewriting a book about Vortigern. It is rewriting a book that floats in front of you, *The Life and Conquests of Vortigern Gothgeier*, who the town is named for. Who seems to have been the person from the Leo Suzerainty who first came to Sapryc and put it under his blade and conquered it and brought it into the Leo Suzerainty. Using your magician's apprentice speed reading spells or whatever, you're able to very quickly surmise that

Vortigern was the sort of legendary figure who is kind of the, almost like an Arthurian, or like that style of ancient king, you know? Oh, came to the planet, conquered the Trunk, which is the northern continent. A big chapter in the middle about crossing the Strait of Cicatrix. A big section on how, you know, he had a knight called the Knight of Cicatrix or the Cicatrix Knight, who was his bodyguard, conquered the Root, the southern part of Sapryc. And this is ages and ages and ages ago, right? This is not recent. And then was laid to rest north of, or west of Allant by a few days travel, in a place that would come to be called Vortigern's Hollow. The place that you now are. And so that is where you are. That is what the thing is. I'm going to add it to the map as Vortigern's Hollow.

Austin: You might be thinking, I've heard the name Gothgeier before.

Dre: I was thinking that, Austin.

Sylvi: Yeah, immediately.

Dre: Hm.

Austin: I wonder if there's any relation.

Dre: Does anyone remember where we've heard that name from?

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvi: That's the woman chasing us, right?

Dre: Oh, okay. Yep. All right.

Austin: Her name is...

Jack: Geretraine.

Austin: Is Geretraine Gothgeier.¹

Jack: And I'm just saying that if Geretraine is a member of the cult, then there's a chance that her immensely powerful, unbelievably competent ancestor was also a

¹ Also Geretraine Gothgeier.

member of the cult. So, if anybody wants to eat some Vortigern, the offer is on the table that we will gain his power.

Dre: Oh, sure. It's party time, huh?

Jud's Arm [54:30]

Austin: Jud, you don't remember your arm being this hairy.

Jack: Uh-oh. [laughs]

Dre: Uh-oh. [laughing] That's not good!

Sylvi: Congratulations on puberty.

Jack: Huh. Mm. [laughs] Good work, Jud.

Austin: But hey, it doesn't hurt so much anymore.

Jack: Is that a side effect of chronoplasm cream?

Austin: Are you checking the tin?

Dre: [giggles]

Austin: Are you asking Sacea this?

Jack: I'm asking Sacea this. I think what I'm doing is I'm holding up my arms next to each other, you know?

Janine (as **Sacea**): How hairy were you as a baby?

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

Austin and Dre: [cackling]

Janine (as **Sacea**): Were you a hairy baby?

Jack (as **Jud**): I don't know. I don't—were you a hairy baby?

Janine (as **Sacea**): It takes you back, you know? Usually, you see it the other way because kids have much fairer, finer hairs. It's, you know, like to feathers what down is. But if you were a very hairy baby, then this could make sense.

Dre: [laughing]

Sylvi: I love Sacea so much.

Dre: Let's say, this is so comforting, I imagine.

Jack (as **Jud**): Miss Sacea, I don't know if I ever was a baby.

Austin: [snorts]

Dre: Whoa.

Janine (as **Sacea**): Oh, dear.

Sylvi: Hold on.

Janine (as **Sacea**): Dear Jud, you were a baby.

Jack (as **Jud**): Well, it's, you know, earliest memory is, get the water. Boil the kettle.

Janine (as **Sacea**): No one remembers being a baby. Well, some people remember being a baby, but most people don't.

Austin: Jud, what's your earliest memory?

Jack: My earliest memory is a plowing team near a field in my village being swallowed by a chasm that opens beneath them.

Austin: Okay, now what's your actual earliest memory? Because that's not it. That's someone else's.

Jack: My earliest memory is spooning hotcakes onto a griddle as a child.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: Hm.

Austin: One of those is Jud's. The other is Vortigern's.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: You have both of them, right now.

Jack: Is...

Austin: Neither baby is particularly hairy, by the way.

Jack: Oh, God. [laughs] Oh, dear. Okay.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: Actually, maybe Vortigern was a hairy baby. That's kind of funny.

Dre: Oh, hairy, is it?

Austin: Maybe the chasm. Yeah, let's go with chasm is Vortigern. Let's just be direct. Chasm opens up and swallows... You know, the perspective here is that Vortigern is the child of some noble, looking out on...

Jack: Like sitting on a fence watching the plowing team.

Austin: Sitting on, right, watching the plowing team that works for his father, you know. Or work for his uncle or something, right. They are serfs on his parents' or his family's territory, his family's land, and they are swallowed. And we get the shot of Flemming. You flip to the beginning of this book, and it's describing this as like an early sign of that Vortigern's life would be marked, you know?

Jack: Right, it's the goats, it's Ged coming down the mountain surrounded by goats at the beginning of *Earthsea*.

Austin: Right. Except in this case, it's Vortigern watching as people get swallowed by the earth, you know, by the moon that they are from originally, which was not this moon, right? Anyway, Flemming, yeah, definitely, definitely Vortigern's Hollow.

Jack: Found the right place.

Mirador's Prize [58:20]

Austin: I think Mirador yells out like,

Austin (as **Mirador**): I found some necklaces. Does anyone want a necklace?

Dre (as **Flemming**): No.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Don't think it'd fit.

Austin (as **Mirador**): More necklaces for me!

Dre (as **Flemming**): We are where you think we are. Where do we go next?

Austin (as **Mirador**): North. North until we see the big tree, if it's still standing.
And then east down into the barrow.

[pause]

Austin (as **Mirador**): Get through the barrow.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Let's get the other two and leave.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Say again?

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Let's get the other two and leave this place. I don't like it here.

Austin (as **Mirador**): All right, all right.

Sylvi: Were there signs of treatment for the Bile for people in this house that we're into at all?

Austin: No, what there are is signs that... Oh, that's actually interesting. Yeah, yes, yes, there probably were, right?

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: You notice it in small things. There's, you know, a particular flower shows up again and again across the building, right? Across the house. Again, dried, now ruined.

Sylvi: Um...

Austin: What's up?

Sylvi: When... Oh, go ahead. I was just going to say, whenever we're in a place where it seems like it's a space that's been used for triage or any sort of impromptu medical care, Gaje is noticeably tenser than he usually is.

Austin: Interesting. Okay, sure. Important notes, for sure. And I will say the thing here is maybe Gaje picks it up in a way that others don't, because it is hidden here. There is not a corner of a room that's been turned into a place for care. Maybe you would have picked this up, Flemming, through scanning these books, but in someone's diary, it explains that the master of the house insisted that they did not have the Bile. And that even if they did have the Bile, they could never let the people of Vortigern know that they had the Bile. Right? And so it was hidden, maybe even from them, that they were being treated for that specifically, you know, at some point, right? Or someone in the household, maybe, right?

Anyway, Mirador shows up wearing three necklaces, three chains with some pendants.

Sylvi: Damn, dripped out!

Austin: Yeah, absolutely dripped out. Wet King.

Sylvi: [cackles]

Dre: [laughs]

Austin: Is ready to go. And heads back out towards the, you know, I think stares down the cathedral part of this and says,

(as **Mirador**): [sighs] This wasn't supposed to happen. Ugh. We should get a move on. Gaje is right.

Sylvi: If we're walking back to where Sacea and Jud are, I am standing outside of that little camp place we found, arms crossed. Which is hard with a giant stake attached to your wrist, but he's doing it somehow.

Dre: Yeah, you make do.

Austin: Yeah. Flemming, do you notice this? Do you have anything to say about this?

Dre: I notice it. I don't need to say anything about it.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: What the, you know.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: What you're doing is your business.

Austin: Yeah. Uh, yeah. Mirador comes back over. Jud. Sacea.

Austin (as **Mirador**): How's the kid?

Jack (as **Jud**): I'm feeling a lot better, thank you.

Janine (as **Sacea**): A little fuzzy, but getting stronger.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Necklace?

Janine (as **Sacea**): What kind of necklace?

Austin (as **Mirador**): Well, I got a couple kinds. Yeah, okay.

Austin: Just reaches into a pocket and tosses you a long necklace with a strange pendant on it. What's the pendant look like?

Jack: I don't see it, because the moment it touches my hand, I drop it and it rolls under the bed, as though it's really, really hot. And I say,

Jack (as **Jud**): It's not cursed, is it?

Austin (as **Mirador**): Iunno.

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

Austin (as **Mirador**): Yeah, give me a sec.

Austin: And grabs them. He's like holding, there is a pearl necklace. There is, you know, this is just someone's big jewelry collection that he has snatched up.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Yeah, these just seem like necklaces. Let me just do a little.

Austin: Like, passes them between hands. You know, they're a little tangled up.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Yeah, no, these seem good.

Jack (as **Jud**): Okay, yeah, all right. Give it over, then.

Austin (as **Mirador**): It's under... I threw it. It rolled under.

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

Austin (as **Mirador**): One necklace each, I swear. So what about you, Sacea? Pearls or gold? I can't really...

Janine (as **Sacea**): If they're not cursed, I'm not that interested in them, but thanks.

Austin (as **Mirador**): More necklaces for me, like I said before.

Austin: Pockets.

Austin (as **Mirador**): You never know. Anyway, I have a shortcut. We just go north, through the barrow, out into the canyon. We'll be there before this time next week. Ready to get a move on?

Jack (as **Jud**): Is it safe? What's the catch?

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

Austin (as **Mirador**): Well, the catch is it's Sapryc, isn't it? If it were safe, I wouldn't need you.